

MULTISHAFT

OVERSHOT

Eight-shaft drafts for overshot were used in Colonial times, but we can take Mary Atwater's word that they were "extremely rare". Usually they were transcriptions of 4-block patterns into overshot on opposites. Fig.1A shows the original draft and fig.1B its transcription for 8 shafts.

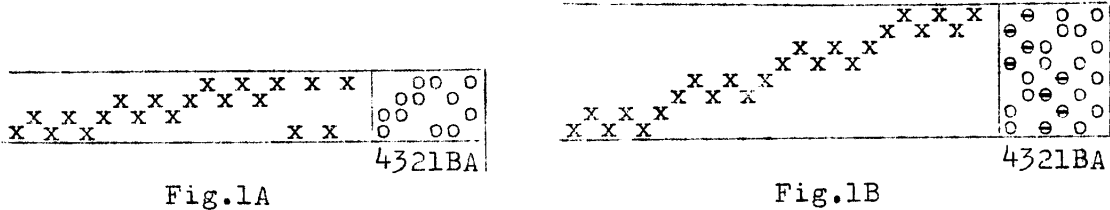


Fig.1A

Fig.1B

In the tie-up 1B ties marked "o" correspond to the tie-up 1A. Ties: "e" are stitching ties. Without them we would have very long floats at the back of the fabric, and the shots of pattern would be not very stable. The only advantage of this method is that the blocks of pattern do not overlap each other, and that they can be perfectly square.

Much more interesting is overshot with as many blocks of pattern, as shafts: 6 blocks on 6 shafts, 8 on 8, etc. Here at least we have a definite gain in the number of the blocks, and completely new patterns can be designed. A draft of this type for 8 shafts looks as follows (fig.2):

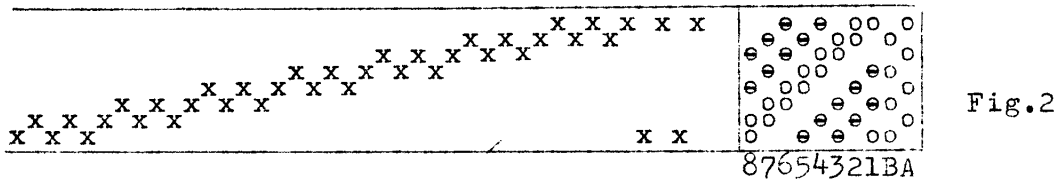


Fig.2

It will have floats of the same length on both sides of the fabric, and a faint pattern in the ground will follow the blocks of the main pattern, due to the arrangement of the stitching ties ("e"). The latter are necessary here as in fig.1B if the fabric is supposed to be reversible. Otherwise we can dispense with them: the stability of pattern shots is much better than in fig.1B, because of the half-tones. Fig.3 shows what happens when we have no stitching ties.

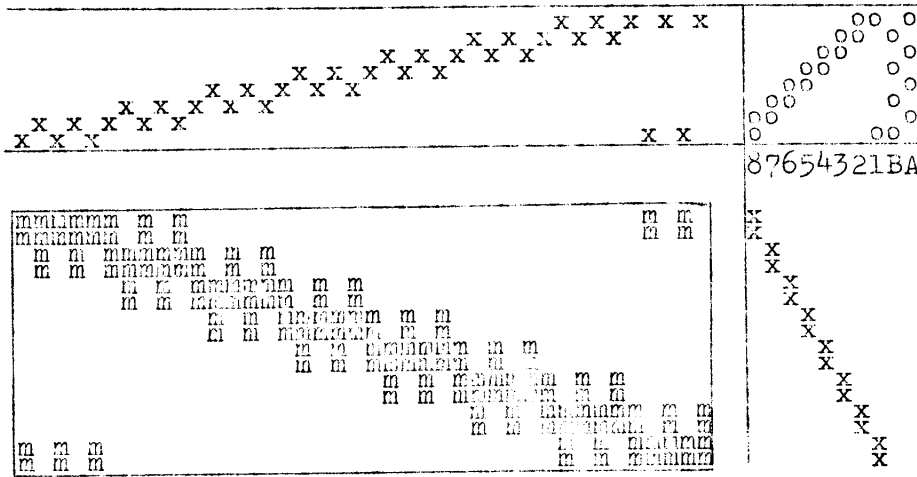


Fig.3

Here each float of pattern is stitched to the ground by two tabbies (half tones) on each side of the float. Still there are very long floats at the back, and only one side of the fabric can be used.

With or without stitching ties the 8-shaft overshot offers tremendous possibilities in designing. We shall not even attempt to describe them. If it took practically a whole book to describe only traditional patterns of 4-shaft overshot, then to do the same for 8 shafts would be more than a life-time work. In our example in fig. 2 or 3 we have only a straight diagonal with all blocks of the same size. Needless to say that the blocks can follow each other in any order and that they can be of any size. Nearly perfect circles, all sorts of curves, flowery designs, as well as modern patterns can be easily woven. But there is no literature pertaining to this subject, and the weaver must work out his drafts by himself.

Both the advantages and limitations of the 4-shaft overshot are valid here: the blocks cannot be combined, or the floats would be too long even on the face of the fabric; but on the other hand we can use as many as 8 colours following one another as in so called Italian overshot. We can have 8 "tables" of any size in modern overshot, We can have also Swivel effect.

In all, this type of overshot opens new horizons for anybody interested enough in this weave.

Eight-shaft overshot has one rather amusing possibility: we can thread the first 4 shaft to any traditional pattern, and the shafts from 5 to 8 to another pattern. Then both can be woven independently.
