

Two Tablet-woven Bands in Three Color Pebble Weave: One Single-faced and One Double-faced

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TABLETS CAN BE USED to weave bands similar to those woven on back-strap looms by Native Americans. There are several advantages to this method of weaving. The warps can be made on a standard warping board and threaded through the cards quickly from a threading cross. It is easy to weave a complex pattern if you fasten the draft to a knitter's magnet board, marking the completion of each row with a magnet. You can provide the tension necessary for weaving by fastening the weaving to a stationary object and weighting the warp instead of tying the weaver to the loom.

Many tablet-woven bands contain groups of warp threads that rotate; after the tablets are rotated in the same direction many times, a build up of twist forces the weaver to rotate the tablets in the opposite direction or unwind the twist. To weave this band I never turned a tablet more than one step forward or backward to lift the desired color, so there never was any build up of twist.

This splendid pattern was woven into a belt pictured on page 56 in [The Art of Bolivian Highland Weaving](#) by Marjorie Cason and Adele Cahlander. This rare, five color belt was found in a 1000 year old tomb still attached to the back-strap loom on which it was woven. The little ducks in the pattern swim along diagonally within two counterchanged bands. The repeat of the pattern is 144 blocks long which is exceptionally long for this type of weav-

ing and while I was plotting the draft on graphpaper, I feared the repeat would never end!

To weave this elegant pattern I cut 60 triangular tablets from matt board, 5" on each side, rounded the corners, sanded the edges lightly and punched 1/4" holes in the corners. I threaded each hole with a rotation of navy blue, royal blue and brick red ramie yarn in size 2/16's lea.

The first time I wove the pattern, there were long floats on the back side just like those on the ancient belt cited above. See Figure 1 below and Figure 2 on page 2. The interlacement was loose and the threads slippery. Using a worsted weft helped hold the picks in place but I wanted to find a way to weave in the long floats on the back side.

Eventually I realized that by tipping the tablets up on one corner, every shed was split in two. Then I discovered that the floats are woven in if you weave the lower shed after weaving the upper shed, for every set of the tablets. The result is a two-faced textile: the back and the front sides have the same structure, but the colors are shifted.

The second time I wove this band I used hexagonal tablets, the shortest dimension being 5+1/4" with holes punched in each corner. I threaded every other hole with a rotation of brick red, gold and yellow ramie. These tablets produced two nice sheds and the belt woven on them is double-faced. See figures 3 and 4 on the next page.

Figure 1, front side, actual size.

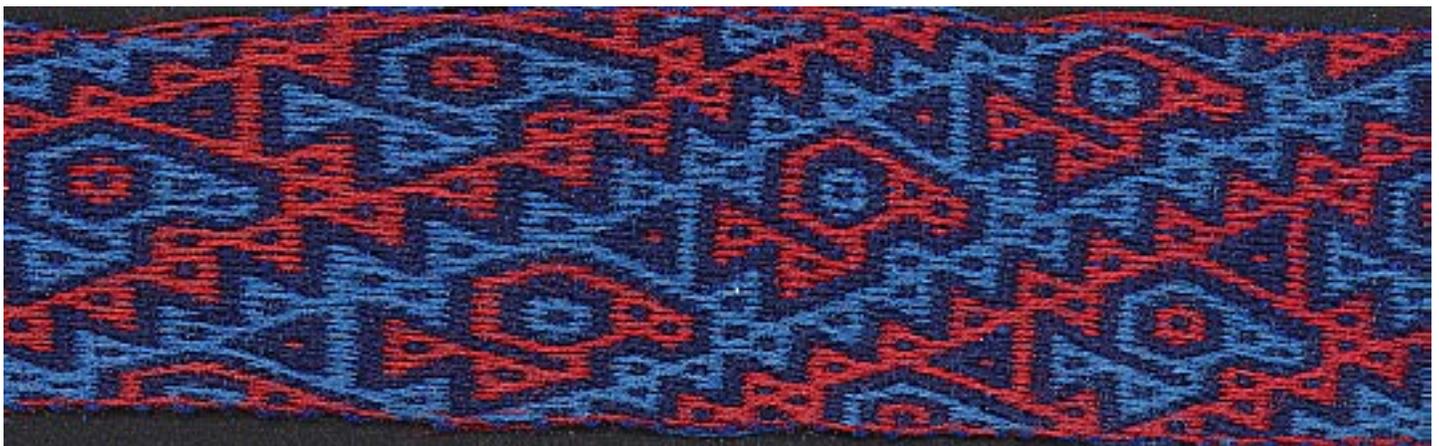


Figure 2. Back side of the first band, actual size.

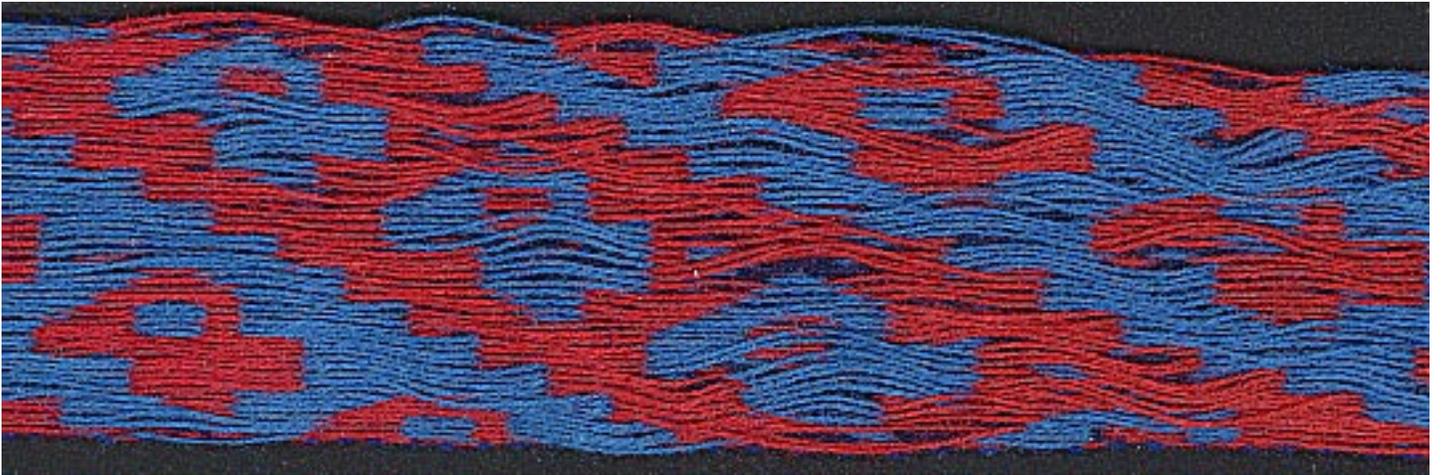


Figure 3. Front side of the second band, actual size.

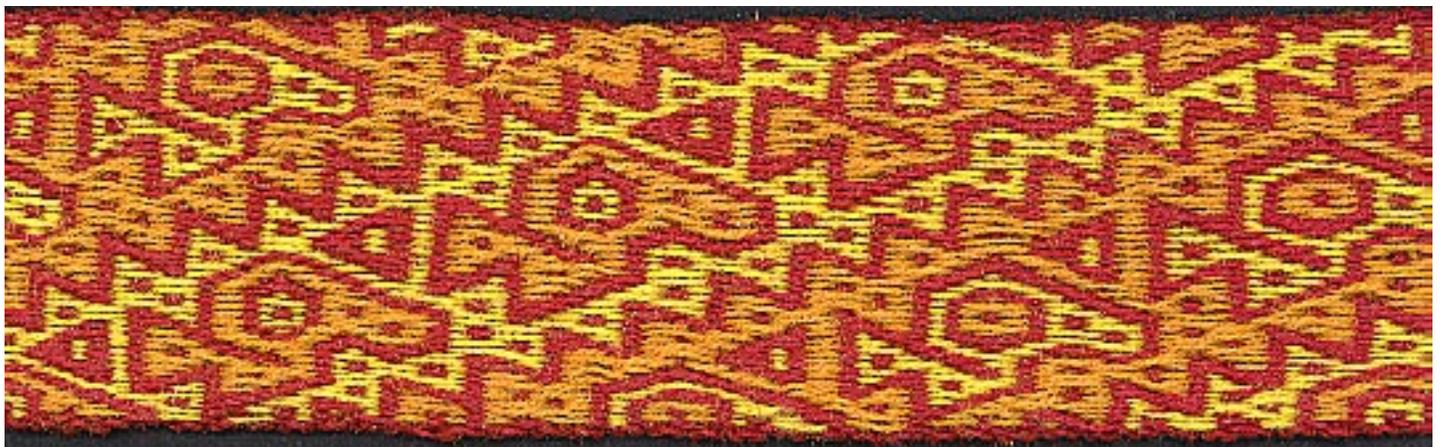


Figure 4. Back side of figure 3.

