

A DISCONTINUOUS WARP AND WEFT TEXTILE OF EARLY HORIZON DATE

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Overview

Ongoing research on the Uhle collection at the Robert H. Lowie Museum of Anthropology of the University of California, Berkeley, has resulted in the discovery of another textile from the Yauca Valley designated Ocucaje Phase 8 in style.¹ Though extremely fragmentary and incomplete, this textile, cataloged as 16-2077, is a significant addition to five other fabrics from the Yauca Valley which were discussed by Anna Hadwick Gayton in 1961.²

This recent discovery resembles later Ocucaje Phase 9 style textiles in the use of a balanced 1:1 plain weave which is executed in four colors, red, yellow-white, brown, and black. All are Z-spun, 2-ply S yarns. At least two anthropomorphic figures were woven in discontinuous warp and weft technique with double interlocked joins.³ Each extremely angular figure has a square face and a stepped diamond body with features such as rectangular eyes and mouth, and hands with only three fingers (see figs. 1, 2). Because of the fragmentary condition of the textile and the subsequent conservation efforts, the placement and relationship of the two figures cannot be determined, nor can the original dimensions of the complete web be projected. As to the function of the textile, the size of the figures and the size of the preserved fragments are compatible with a mantle or shirt.⁴

Perspective

There are two major reasons to explain Anna Gayton's failure to publish the Yauca fabric under discussion here. Until recently this textile was stored wadded up within a small box in such a manner that the design could not be seen. The textile fragment thus appeared to be of only technical interest, a particularly coarse example of discontinuous warp and weft technique which lacked pottery associations. The significance of the textile could be assessed only after remedial conservation work which was undertaken in 1975 as a graduate student project under the auspices of the Program in Visual Design.⁵ Furthermore, because of cataloging problems discussed below, this textile was not stored in close proximity to the other five textiles of the Ocucaje Phase 8 style.

Context

This textile is part of a large group of textiles which arrived from the field at the turn of the century lacking precise provenience.⁶ In addition to the textile discussed here, this group included the five published by Gayton in 1961.

Upon arrival at the Museum of Anthropology, all the specimens

were compared to the descriptions recorded in the original field catalog. If an artifact did not conform to the description in the field catalog, the piece was recataloged with a 16- accession number prefix, followed by the individual object number. Uhle collected many textiles in the Yauca Valley and they were cataloged in two lots. Numbers 4-8082 to 4-8153 correspond to the lot numbered Yauca 1 to 72a-e in the field, and 4-8164 to 4-8212 correspond to the lot numbered Yauca 83 to 131. While most of these textiles can be attributed to styles of the Late Intermediate Period and Late Horizon, Gayton recognized the stylistic affinities of the five textiles discussed below, all of which were cataloged near the beginning of the first numbering group. The second numbering group of Yauca textiles would have begun with the discontinuous warp and weft textile now numbered 16-2077 had there not been a problem in matching the specimen to the catalog description.

There can be no doubt that 16-2077, the newly discovered textile, is part of the Yauca Valley collection for it has a portion of the original field tag, though only the top half of the designation "Yauca 83" still exists. The textile which now bears the museum number 4-8164, which should belong to the textile field cataloged Yauca 83, lacks any correspondence with the original field description, "Fabric with figure."⁷ Moreover, this short and cryptic catalog entry suggests that the fabric 16-2077 was in substantially better condition upon excavation in 1905. Because it has a 16- rather than a 4- prefix, this newly discovered textile was not stored close to the other five early textiles (4-8082, 4-8083, 4-8086a, 4-8087a and 4-8087c). Thus, this textile had to wait another fifteen or so years to be united with fabrics of the same stylistic affinities.

The textile sample published by Gayton provides both the technical and stylistic parameters of the five other textiles attributed to Ocucaje Phase 8.

The first textile, a double-cloth of dark blue and brick red camelid fiber yarns, consists of two separate webs. The larger web has three "Chavinoid feline deity figures" one of which is outlined in whipping stitch with faded yellow yarns so that the outlining is apparent on only one face. This figured web measures about 17.5 cm. in width along the weft. The smaller web, with a three-strand guilloche border in a double-cloth technique, is attached to a plain white cotton web by means of a loom join.⁸ Uhle cataloged these two fragments as Yauca 1, and upon accession by the museum they received permanent collection numbers of 4-8082a and 4-8082b.⁹

The second Gayton textile is woven in a supplementary weft technique in which the extra wefts are placed discontinuously to produce large rectangles, each containing a single figure. Further, each of the rectangles is bounded by a single row of weft wrapping in red camelid yarns.¹⁰ In addition, another web, a fragment of a red-striped blue-black plain weave cloth is sewn to one side. The figurative web of white cotton with blue camelid supplementary yarns is about 25.5 cm. in width as measured along the weft direction.¹¹ The original field number, Yauca 2, was later superseded by the museum catalog number 4-8083.

The third textile in the Gayton series of Ocucaje Phase 8 style fabrics exploits a supplementary weft technique with blue and henna-red camelid yarns to produce a series of diagonals formed by repetitive cross shapes interrupted by a single "H-shaped mouth" which is centrally placed. In addition, a red-striped blue-black cloth is sewn along each side of the web. The fragmentary condition of the textile prevents any conjecture as to warp length, but the weft width is ca. 20.5 cm.¹² Designated Yauca 6a by Uhle in the field, this specimen was recataloged as 4-8087a in the permanent museum collection.

The fourth fabric, a double-cloth structure of dark blue and brick-red camelid yarns, is composed of articulated diamonds each containing a cross. Supplemental strands of yellow, orange, and green camelid yarns emphasize the crosses and zig-zag lines but are found on only one face of the fabric.¹³ About 15.5 cm. in weft width, this textile was originally cataloged in the field as Yauca 5a, and later reassigned the number 4-8086a within the museum numbering system.

The last of the textiles published by Gayton is yet another example of supplementary weft virtuosity. The geometric patterning of diamond bands interspaced by hourglass bands is woven with dark blue camelid yarns on a cotton ground and spans about 21.5 cm. in weft width. Fragments of a cloth with red stripes on a predominantly blue ground are still attached by whipping stitches to the sides.¹⁴ In keeping with the number reassignment for the Yauca collection, the original field number of Yauca 6c was replaced by museum number 4-8087c.

Technical Description

In all likelihood all sections of textile 16-2077 were woven, though at present there are numerous unwoven areas of parallel warp yarns. The remnants of the two anthropomorphic figures are executed in only four colors, a red, yellow-white, brown, and black (or blue-black). All yarns are Z-spun, 2-ply S camelid fiber, woven in a generally balanced 1:1 plain weave. Both the brown and black sections are interlaced, so that the yarns occur at a density of 8 yarns per cm. of warp and weft, while the red and yellow weft count ranges between 8 and 9 per cm. The maximum density of warps can be found in the narrow yellow-white framing sections with 11-12 yarns per cm. as indicated in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Yarn Attributes

| Color | Count per 1 cm. | | Thickness | | Degree of Twist | |
|--------|-----------------|------|-----------|--------|-----------------|-------|
| | Warp | Weft | Warp | Weft | Warp | Weft |
| Red | 9-10 | 8-9 | 1-1.1 mm. | .8-1.0 | 15-45 | 15-30 |
| Yellow | 11-12 | 8-9 | 1-1.1 | .6-.8 | 15-30 | 15-30 |
| Brown | 8 | 8 | .8-1.0 | .8-1.0 | 15-30(?) | 15-45 |
| Black | 8 | 8 | .8-1.0 | .7-.8 | 15-30(?) | 15-45 |

The total warp length is now 53.5 cm. as measured from above the top of the headdress to the row beneath the feet/pedestal. The projected weft dimensions are uncertain. Only two stepped streamers or serpentines are preserved on one side of each figure. On fig. 1, A, the stepped streamers or serpentines extend from the corner of the headdress. If there was a total of four streamers or serpentines of equivalent width originally, the weft width would have been about 92 cm., but if only two streamers were present the weft would have been only 66 cm. wide. In contrast to the other five textiles published by Gayton in 1961, which range from 12.5 to 25.5 cm. in width in the weft direction, this discontinuous warp and weft textile is at least twice as wide as the shortest distance as measured along the warp.

The use of the double interlocking join for both the warp and weft joins is a most important feature.¹⁵ This type of join is characterized by the interlocking of a discontinuous warp (or weft) yarn with two other warps (or wefts) of an adjoining color.¹⁶ According to both Mary Elizabeth King and Ann P. Rowe, such double interlocking joins are found in two discontinuous warp and weft textiles of Early Horizon date in the collections of the Textile Museum, Washington. One is a fragment of a mantle with angular bird motives attributed to Phase 10B of the Paracas style¹⁷ and the other a large shirt with a stylized snake pattern attributed to Phase 9.¹⁸ Ann Rowe further notes that double interlocking joins continue in Nasca 1A, while single interlock "seems to be a Nasca 1B innovation."¹⁹ Thus, the technique of textile 16-2077 is appropriate for the Ocucaje (Paracas) Phase 8 attribution given its stylistic grounds.

On the topic of color use and contrasts, the yellow-white hue dominates in both contrast and degree of coverage (figs. 1, 2). Yellow-white is used to form the body, nose, and two of the stepped streamers or serpentines. Dark red is confined to an incidental role, as filler for the mouth (which may have had an elongated tongue); as single stepped triangles filling the area between the chin and shoulders; to outline the torso between the arms and feet; and as a center color band between the two yellow-white streamers. Brown yarns, which are extremely stiff, occur only within the body; as rectangular eyes and two contiguous stepped diamonds of the torso, each of which has a black center; and in the grooved rectangles within the feet/pedestal. The last and most deteriorated color, a blue-black, functions as a buffer, intensifying the red and yellow-white features and providing a barely discernible color contrast with the brown sections.

An examination of the canons of proportion employed for the figures reveals that the head of the larger figure, exclusive of the ears, is about 15 cm. square, while the distance between the chin and bottom of the feet/pedestal is 29 cm., essentially a 1:2 ratio. The stepped diamonds of the torso which are about 16.5 cm. high appear to echo the proportions of the head in a 1:1 ratio. The modular width of the discontinuous sections is generally 1.2-1.4 cm.; the red sections range from an extreme of 1.0 to 1.5 cm., while the brown is consistently 1.4 cm. The extreme variation associated with the color units is probably a result of red areas being woven last. The longest continuous

horizontal section which is located along the top of the figure and is now incomplete is 12 cm., while the longest vertical line of the lower section of the arms extends 20.9 cm.

These measurements and the idealized drawing (fig. 2) can be considered only the vaguest approximation to the original textile, because of the fragmentary condition of the piece and the results of remedial conservation procedures. This conservation included humidifying, pinning, steaming, and tacking the textile to a ground fabric. The deteriorated condition, interlocking technique, moderate weaving tension on the warp and the flexibility of the large size of camelid fiber yarns combine to allow great variation in the projected size of the textile. At the very least, there are considerable internal irregularities as seen in the larger figure. For example, the length of the face varies from one side to the other, as does the treatment of the ear lobes (or pendent earrings).

The most intriguing aspect of this textile relates to the beginning of non-right angle depiction during Epoch 8 of the Early Horizon. The two non-right angle units consist of a distinctly diagonal line found on the right ear lobe (or pendent earring) of fig. 1, A, and a curved upper portion of the single remaining ear of fig. 1, B. Even though the diagonal ear lobe could have been the result of slippage along a preparatory scaffold yarn, the curved ear cannot be attributed to a simple technical failure. More than scaffold yarns would have been necessary to achieve the curvature. A finger or template, such as a cut leaf, would have been sufficient to hold the discontinuous warp strands in alignment.²⁰

Final observations regarding technical features concern the use of repairs within each figure. The most conspicuous repair is found within the framing of the larger figure (fig. 1, A), and is best described as a bungled repair in which a red stepped streamer or serpentine has been twisted and stitched so that the streamer does not follow the outline of the figure (compare fig. 1, A to fig. 2, point marked X). The other repair is a simple reweaving within the yellow-white of the left shoulder of the smaller figure (fig. 1, B). These repairs may have resulted from the reuse of the textiles by the weaver or individuals of a later time, or been carried out at the time of the recovery of the textile by Max Uhle in 1905.

Comparative Comments

In general, all six of the Yauca textiles which are attributed to Ocucaje Phase 8 rely upon red and blue-black camelid yarns and are occasionally relieved by yarns in yellow, orange, and green. All yarns, whether of cotton or camelid fiber, are Z-spun, 2-ply S. In addition, all the striped webs which are whipping stitched to the more figurative panels depend upon red camelid yarns for the warp stripes, while the white and blue-black areas are exclusively of cotton yarns. Within the more figurative webs, camelid fiber predominates, with blue yarns used most often and woven so as to be balanced with or accented by red yarns.

Further, the textiles with supplementary weft and double-cloth structures are often embellished with needlework added after weaving, so the design is complete on only one face. The supplementary weft textiles also employ a small number of rows of weft-face plain weave to frame the figured brocaded sections.

The rediscovery of this textile, 16-2077 from the Yauca Valley, adds to the growing number of textiles identified as Ocucaje Phase 8 in style. Moreover the presence of discontinuous warp and weft techniques in the Yauca Valley extends the known range of this technique beyond its previous southernmost occurrence.

Acknowledgements

I should like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to everyone that I have come in contact with in my whole academic/museum life.

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NOTES

¹All stylistic attributions were provided by Lawrence E. Dawson, Robert H. Lowie Museum of Anthropology. For a photograph of the textile under discussion see fig. 1; fig. 2 represents an idealized drawing.

²Gayton, 1961, p. 119, fig. 1 left and right for 4-8082a and b, originally Yauca 1 (see J. Rowe, 1974, Abb. 355 for a more encompassing view of the larger portion); p. 120, fig. 2 for 4-8083, originally Yauca 2; fig. 3 for 4-8087a, originally Yauca 6a; and fig. 4 for 4-8086a, originally Yauca 5a; and p. 121 with fig. 5 for 4-8087c, originally Yauca 6c.

³The terminology used in this paper relies on Emery, 1966.

⁴Emery, 1966, p. 81, figs. 102, 103; King, 1965, p. 156.

⁵Patricia L. Hickman, 1975, Program of Visual Design at the University of California, Berkeley, "Study of Peruvian 'scaffold' techniques." Later, museum staff member Eugene R. Prince photographed this textile after which the piece was tacked to a supporting fabric by me and Geoffrey Brown, also of the museum staff.

⁶Uhle, ms., vol. VIII, p. 74.

⁷In fact textile 4-8164 is comparable to A. Rowe, 1977, p. 72, fig. 83 in technique and style.

⁸Gayton, 1961, p. 119, fig. 1 left and J. Rowe, 1974, Abb. 355 for 4-8082a; Gayton, 1961, p. 119, fig. 1 right for 4-8082b.

- ⁹Uhle, ms., vol. VIII, p. 74.
- ¹⁰Emery, 1966, p. 214, fig. 302 for weft wrapping.
- ¹¹Gayton, 1961, p. 120, fig. 2.
- ¹²Gayton, 1961, p. 120, fig. 3.
- ¹³Gayton, 1961, p. 120, fig. 4.
- ¹⁴Gayton, 1961, p. 121, fig. 5.
- ¹⁵Emery, 1966, p. 81, figs. 102 and 103 for the most similar degree of compaction.
- ¹⁶King, 1965, p. 576, fig. 19.
- ¹⁷King, 1969, pp. 373-374; A. Rowe, 1972, p. 72 and fig. 6.
- ¹⁸A. Rowe, 1972, p. 72; compare King, 1969, p. 374.
- ¹⁹A. Rowe, 1972, pp. 72-73; quote from p. 73. Compare King, 1969, p. 374.
- ²⁰A cloth template as proposed for the Nasca 2 textile discussed by A. Rowe (1972, pp. 71-73) would appear to be too complicated at this early date. The earliest examples of diagonals and curves in discontinuous warp and weft known to Ann Rowe were Nasca 1 (1972, pp. 72-73).

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KEY TO ILLUSTRATIONS

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Fig. 1. Photograph of specimen 16-2077, Robert H. Lowie Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, showing present condition with horizontal tacking threads in place. Photograph by Eugene R. Prince, courtesy Lowie Museum of Anthropology.

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Fig. 2. Idealized drawing of figure from specimen in fig. 1. Drawing by the author based on tracing from fragment A with added details from fragment B. Drawing was color coded on the basis of the author's notes and inked by Jane Becker.

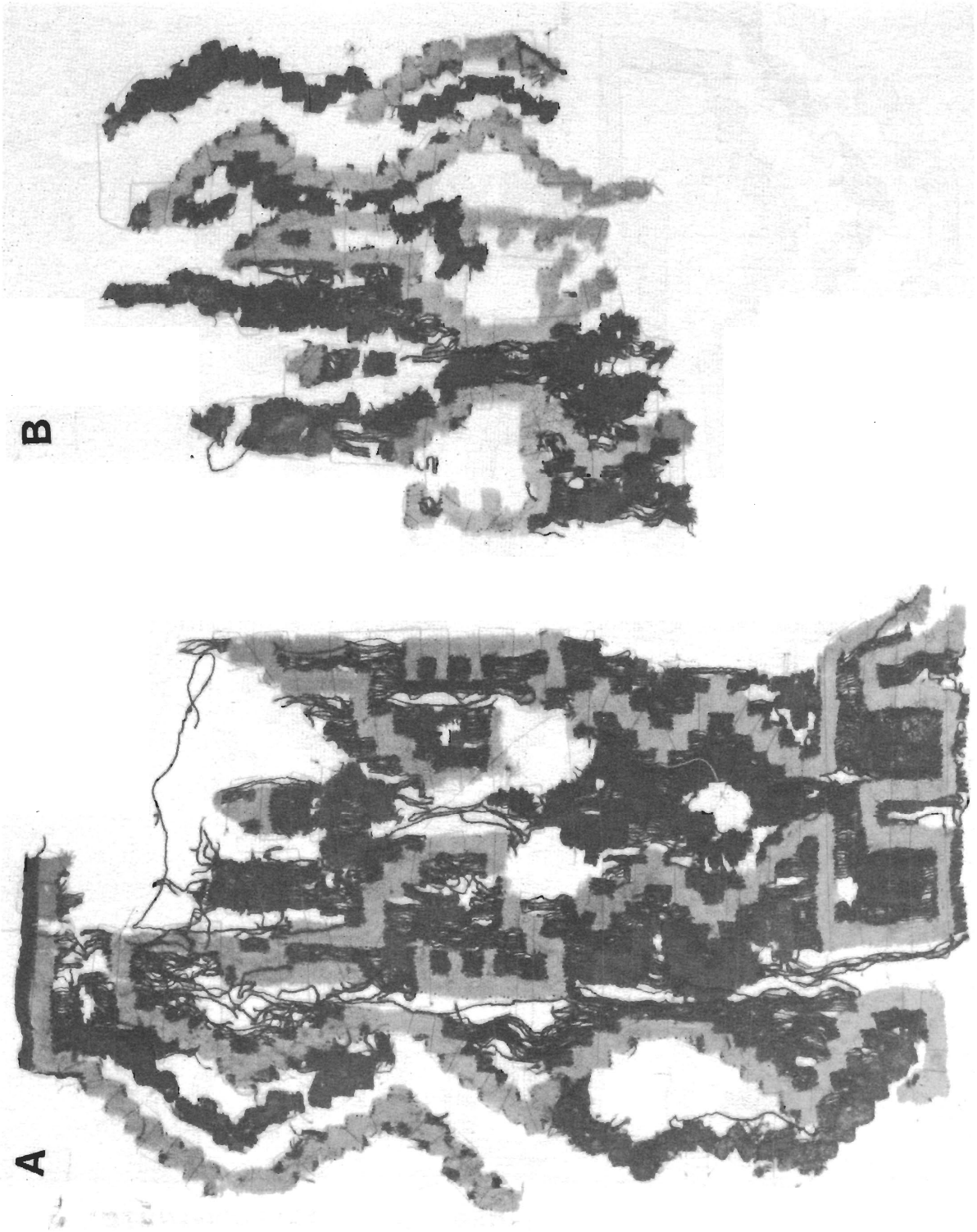


Fig. 1, Ocucaje Phase 8 textile from the Yauca Valley. See Key to Illustrations.

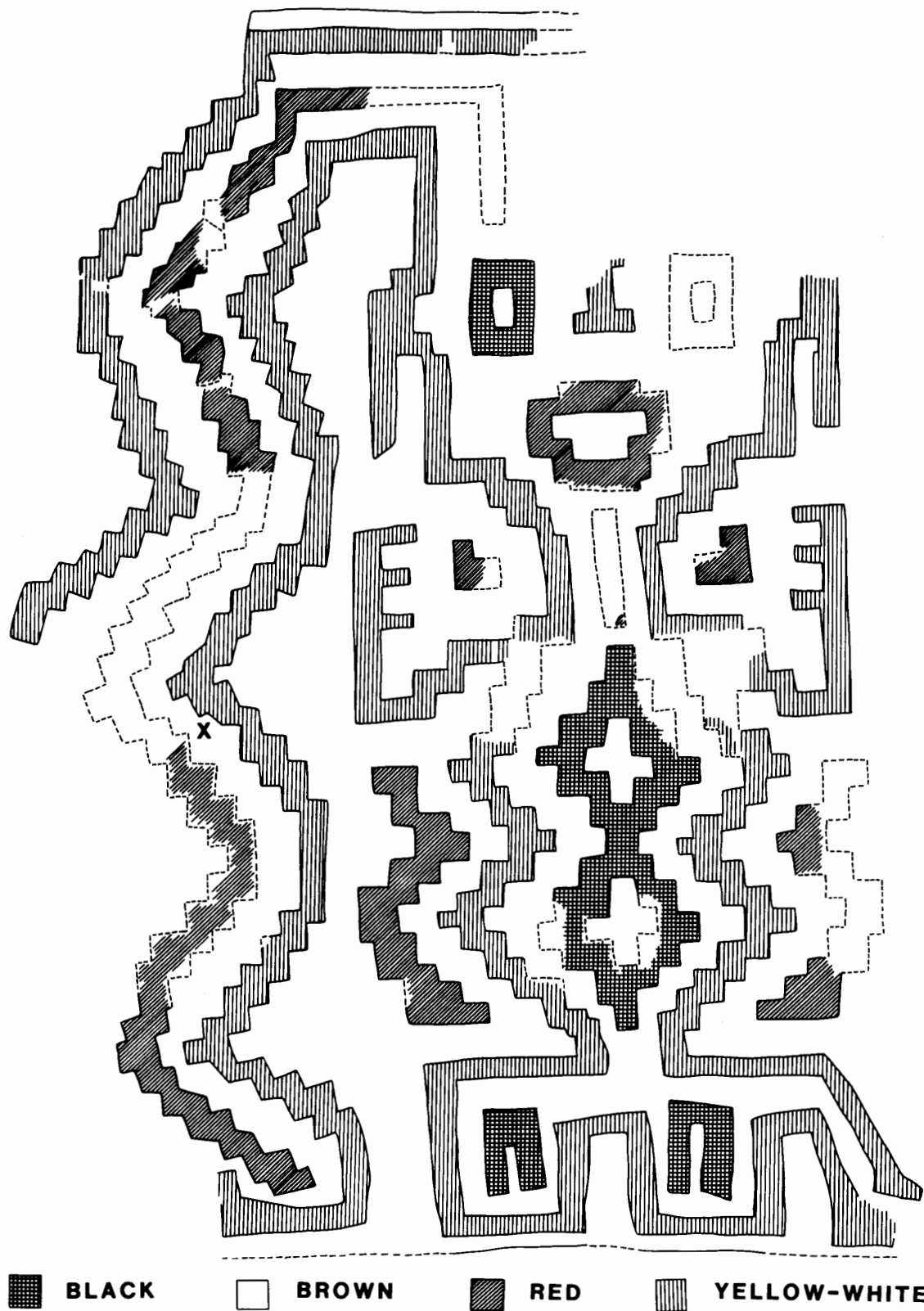


Fig. 2, idealized drawing of figure from specimen in fig. 1. See Key to Illustrations.