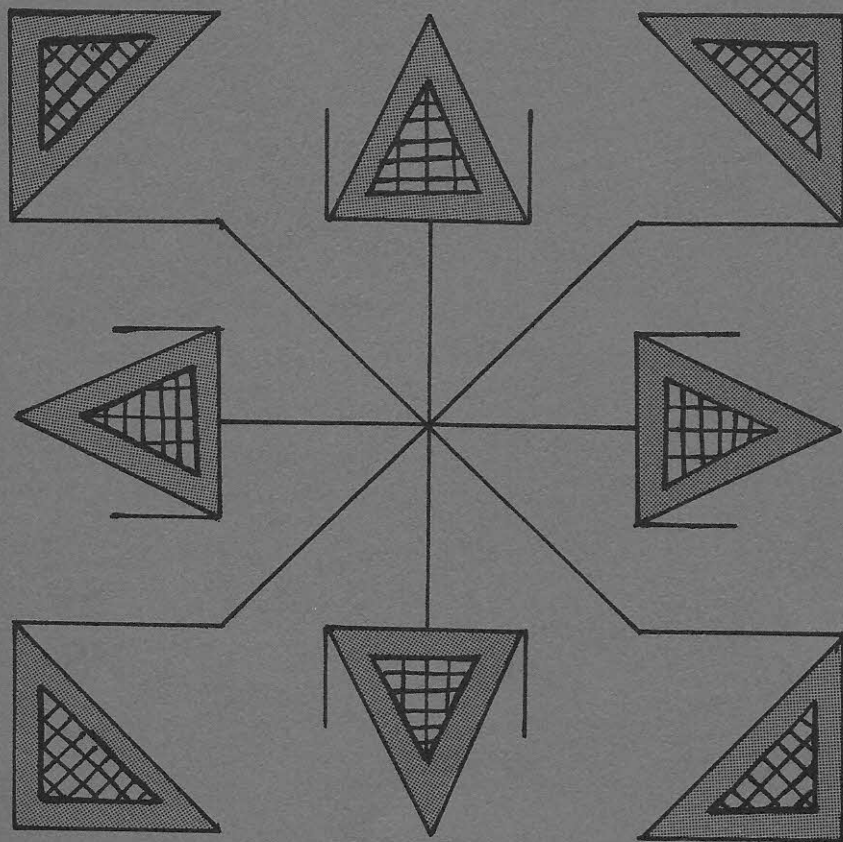


ARAPAHO LANGUAGE

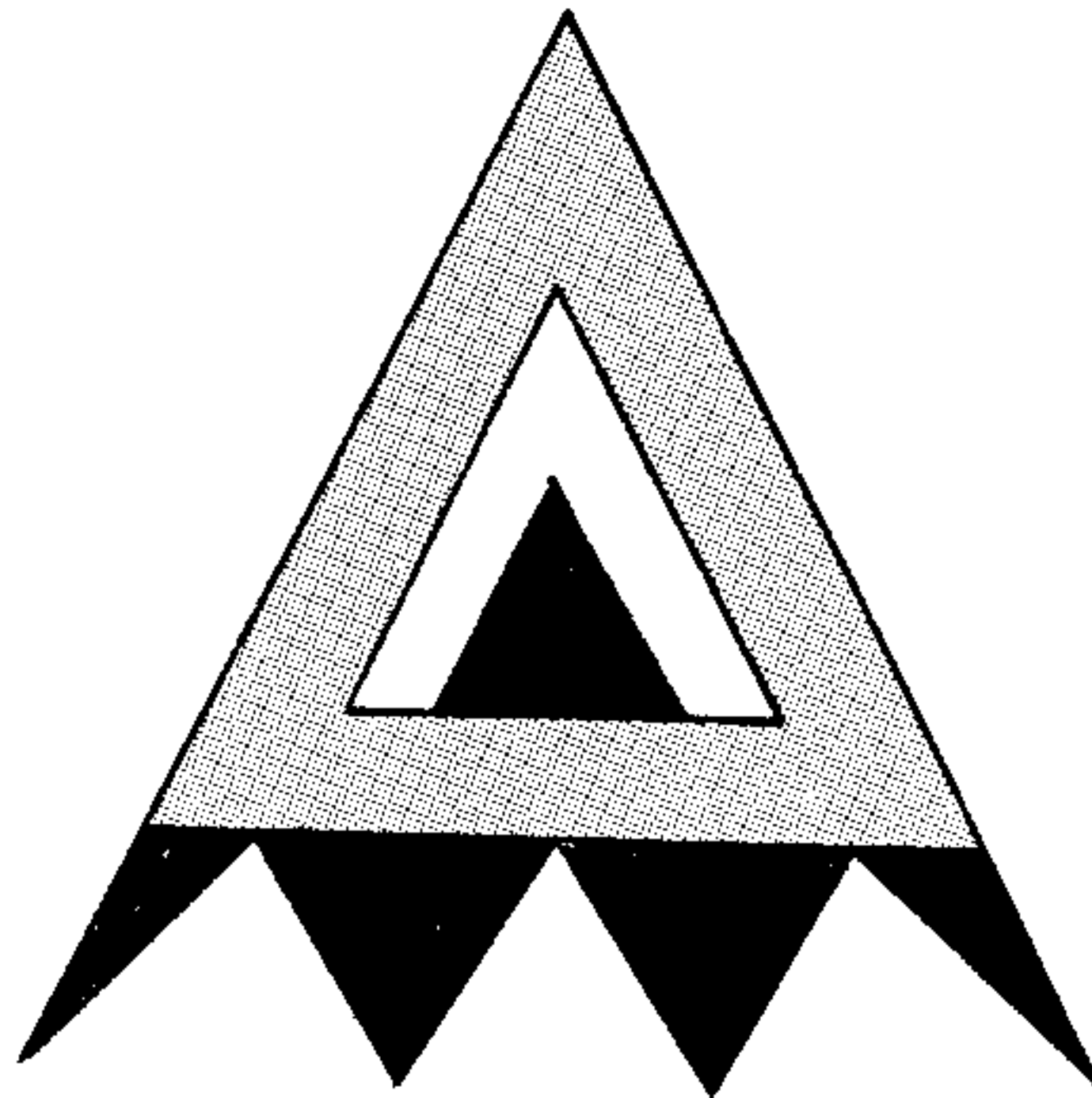


Student Workbook

Name: _____

ARAPAHO DESIGNS AND SYMBOLS

Prepared by
Bob Spoonhunter



Title IV Curriculum Development Project
Wyoming Indian High School
Ethete, Wyoming

1983

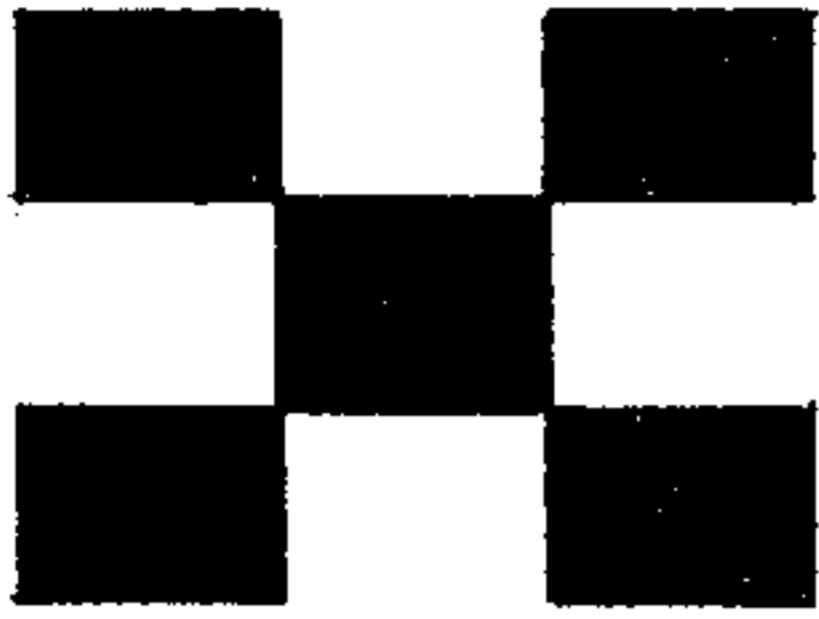
Before the arrival of traders in the early West, with their manufactured beads and other trade items, the Arapaho decorative art was done mainly with porcupine quills and natural paints.

The designs and symbols used by Arapaho artisans and craftsmen were geometric, and colours used were limited to those derived from natural materials. The colours used on older surviving artifacts are generally orange, yellow, red and black. As the Arapaho acquired beads from the traders they began to use a multitude of colours in their bead-art. The first beads used were rather large and uneven and are called "pony beads." As the market developed, trade beads became smaller and more uniform; these "seed beads" gradually replaced the use of porcupine quills and natural paints.

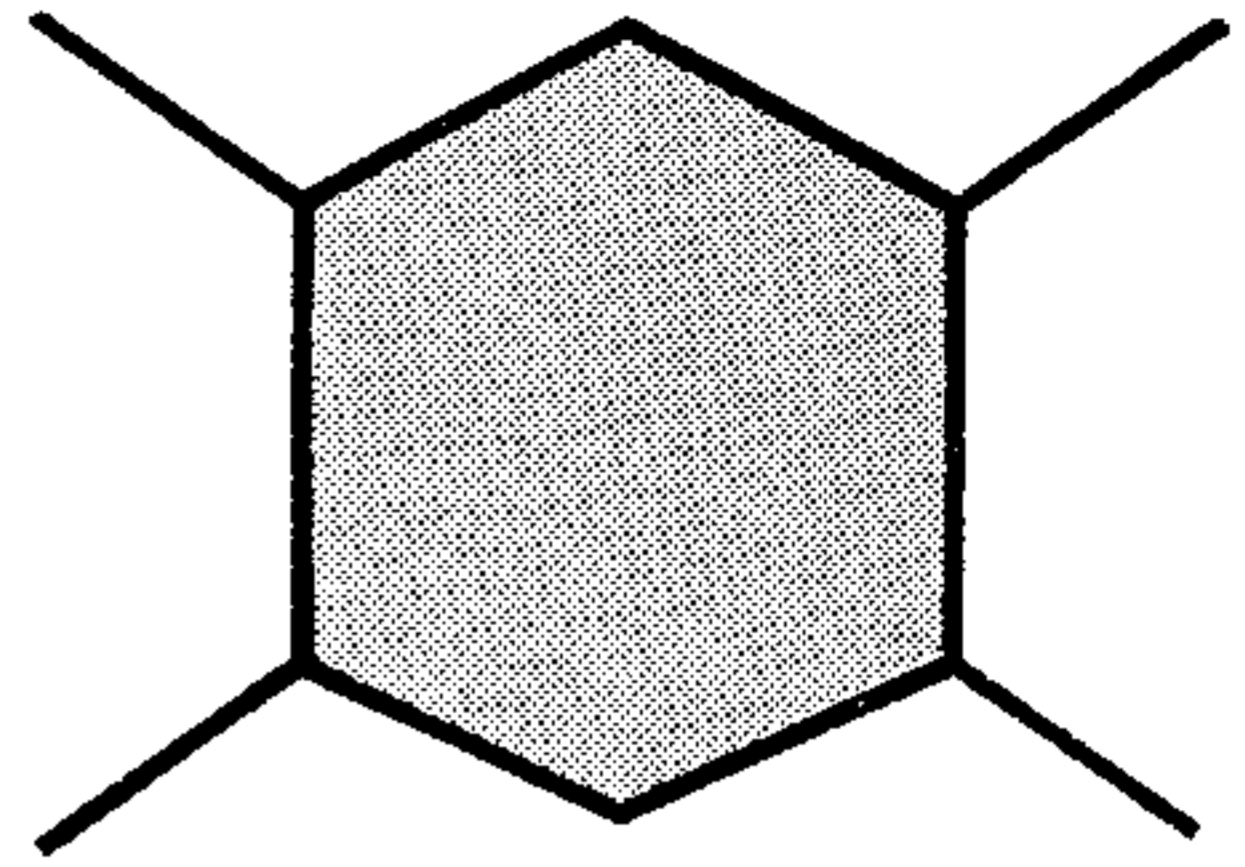
The symbols used in Arapaho art had specific meanings and often were associated with certain articles and perhaps rituals. Through constant use and acquaintance with the symbols, Arapaho people must have learned to "read" the meanings associated with them. As the people adjusted to a more settled reservation life much of their culture changed or became disused. One aspect of the culture that has become lost is the interpretation of symbols used in beadwork. A few of the old symbols and designs are sometimes seen in modern beadwork, but their origin and meanings are no longer known.

In 1902 Alfred L. Kroeber wrote a report on the Arapaho Indians, and his report was issued as a Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, Volume XVIII. Included in this report are 458 symbols used by Arapahos in their quillwork, beadwork and painting. These symbols are shown in Plates XXVII through XXXI of the report, with their individual interpretations given as well.

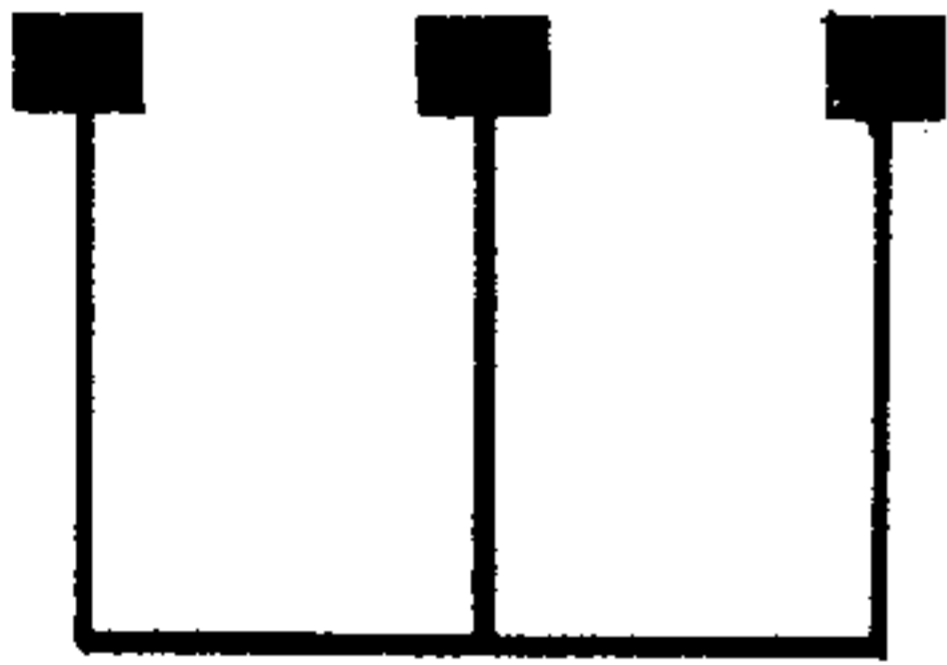
Twenty-four selected symbols from these plates are reproduced on the following pages. These are followed by four pages of designs created from combinations of individual symbols. The symbols and designs have been rendered for use in graphic arts, beadwork and woodwork, and are used with the permission of the American Museum of Natural History.



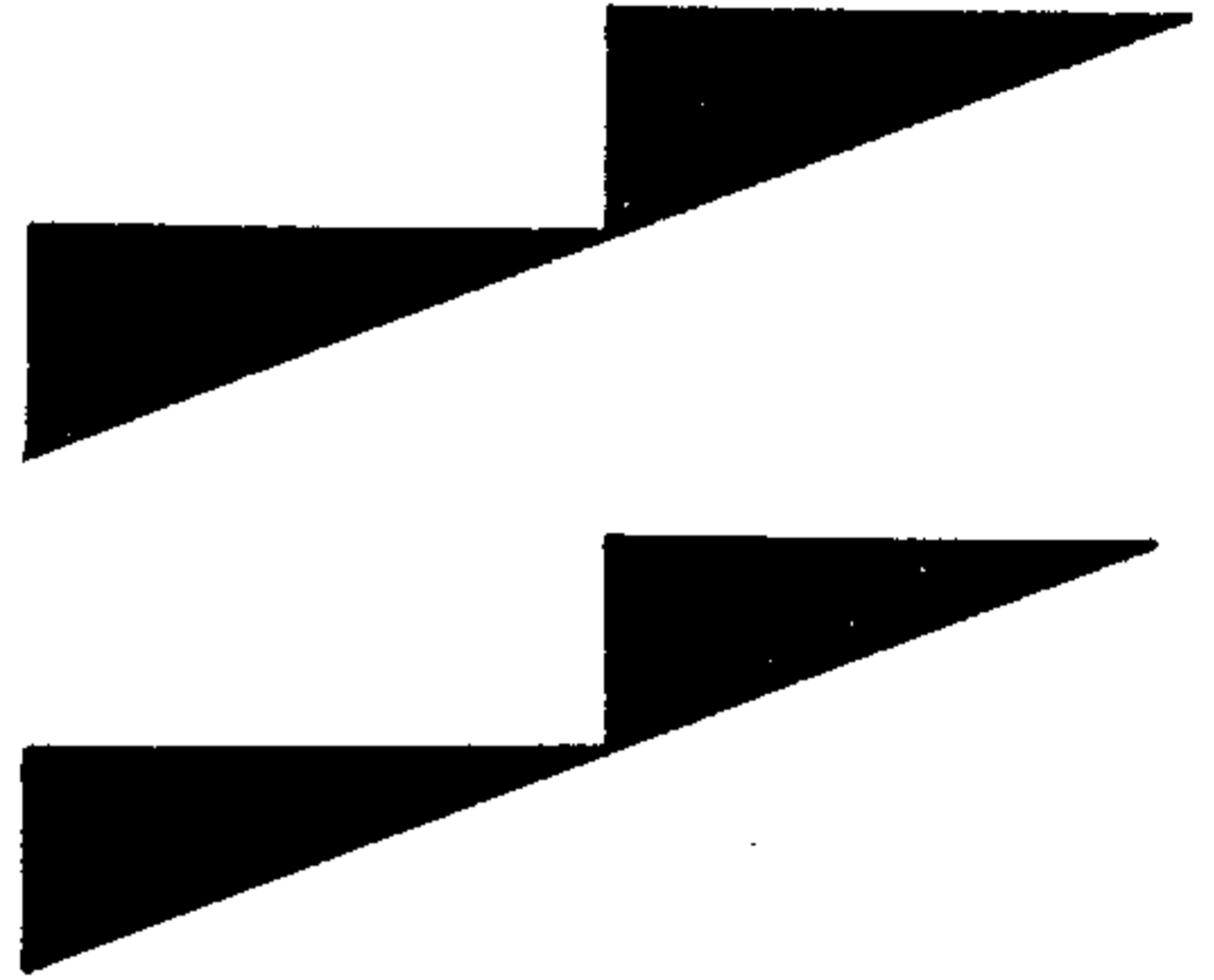
1. Turtle



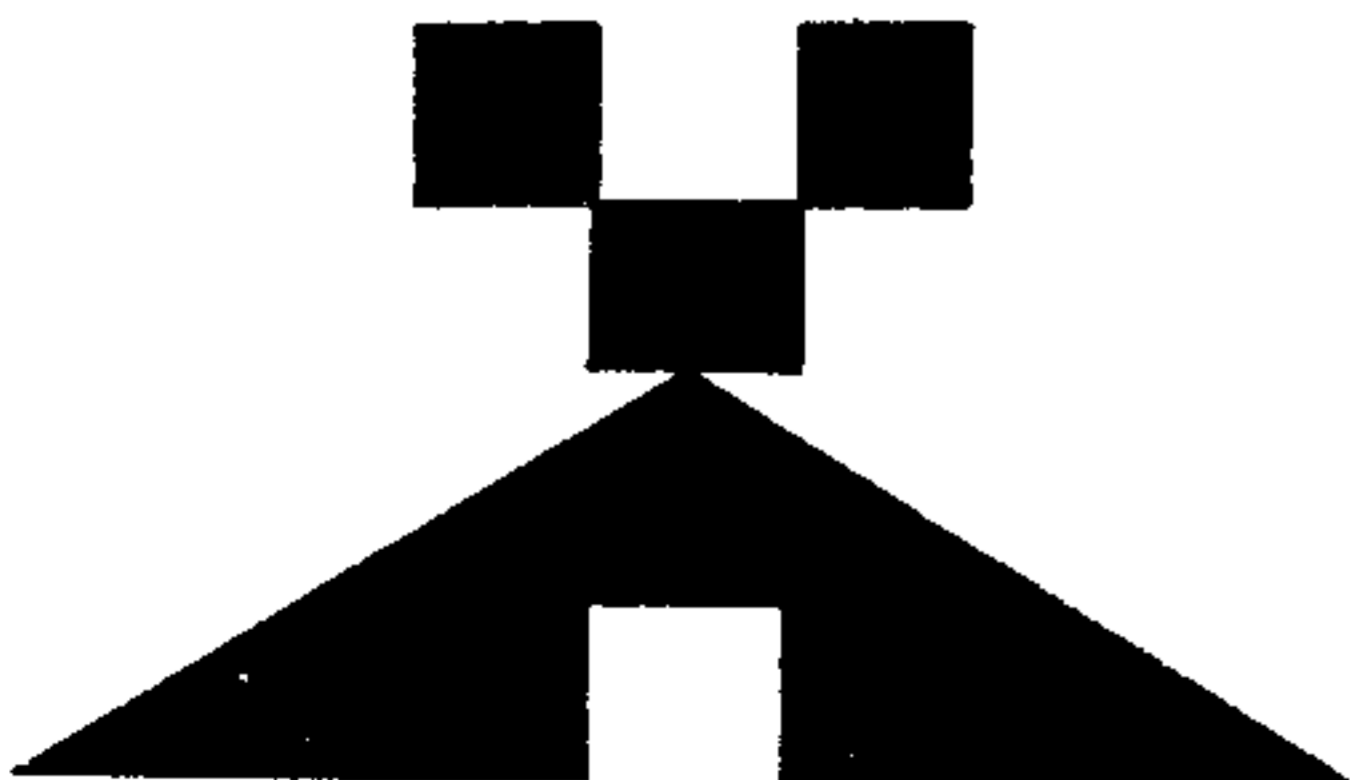
2. Turtle



3. Turtle Claw



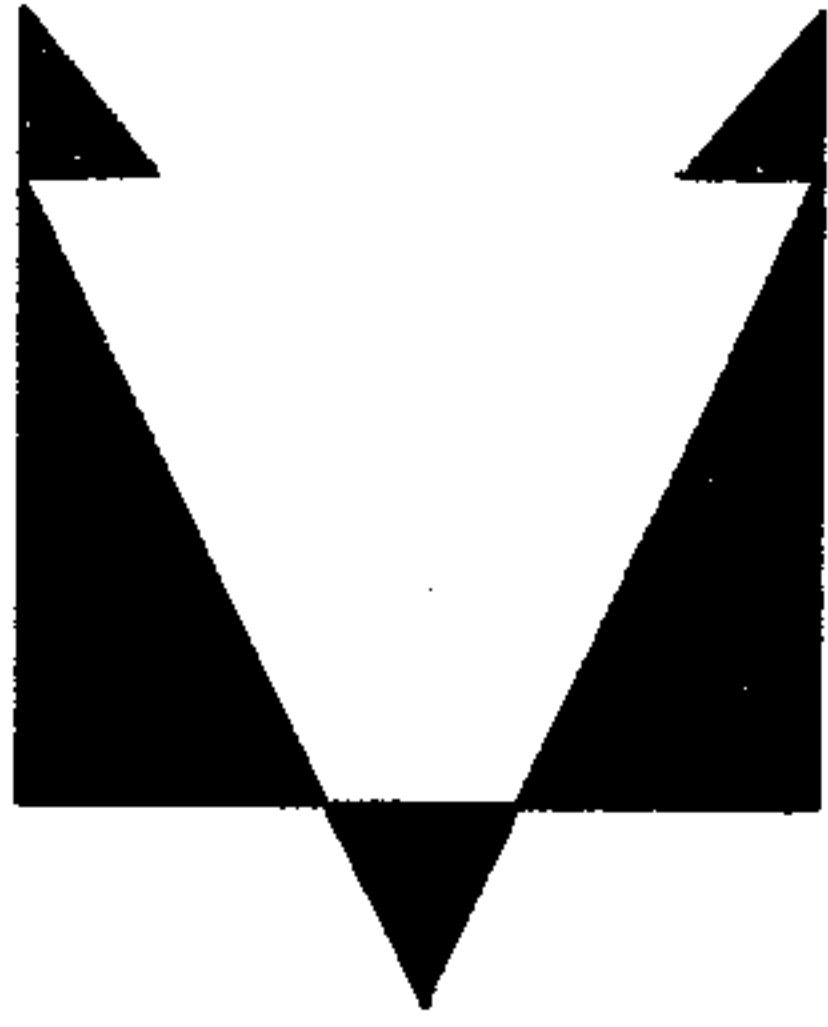
4. Holes in a path



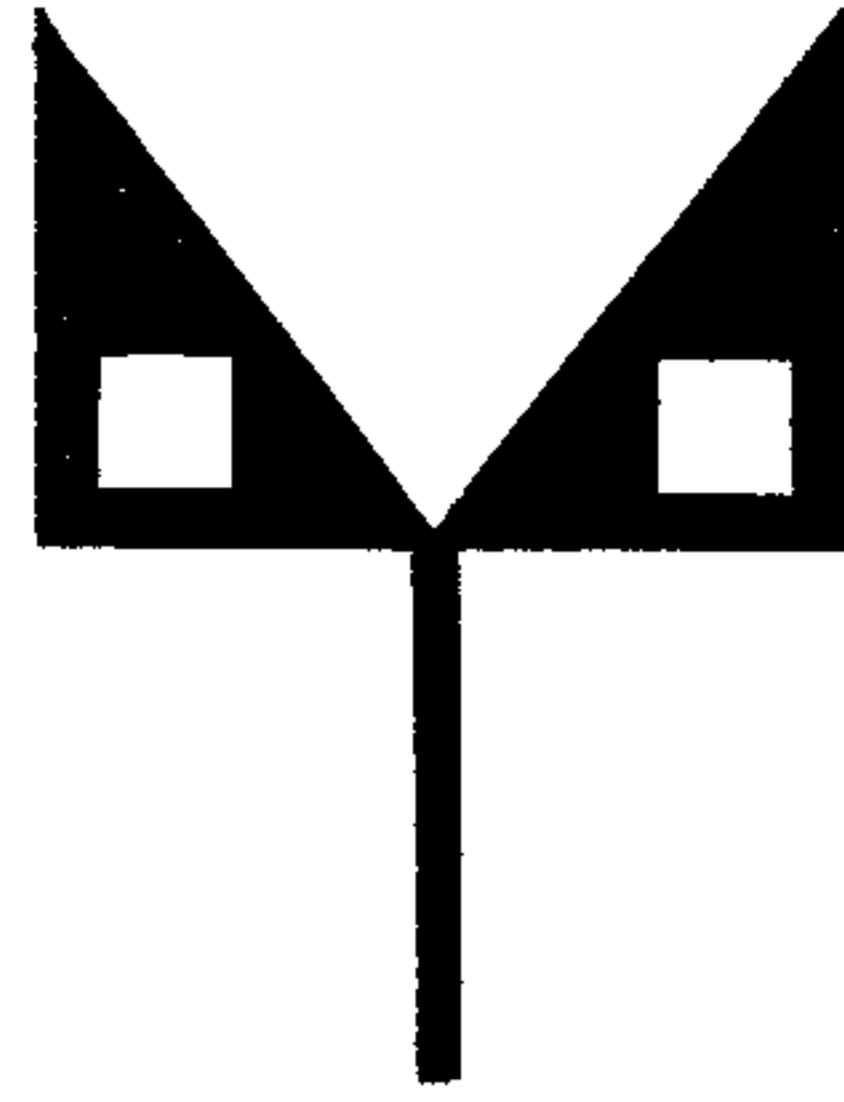
5. Trees on a mountain



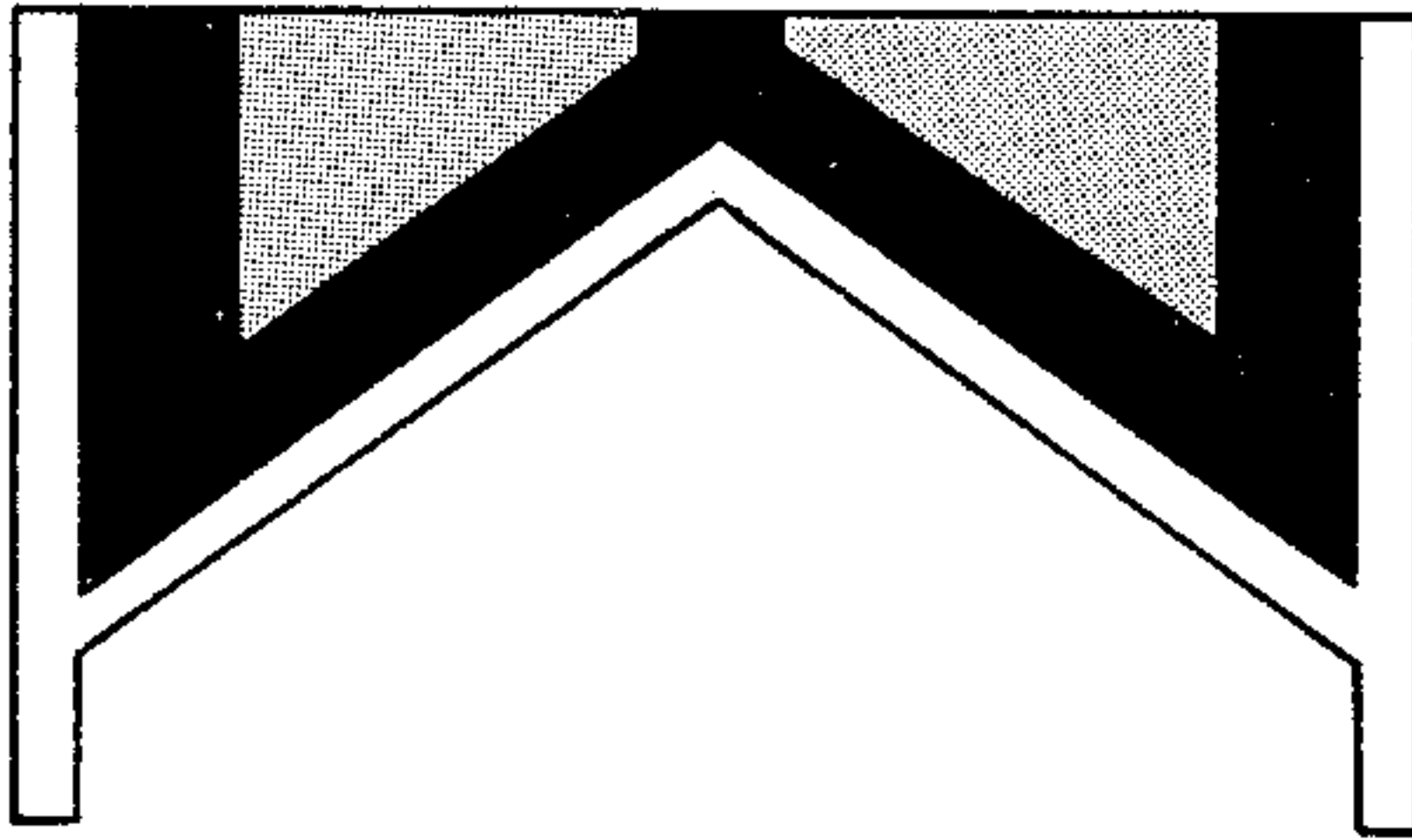
6. Trees on a mountain



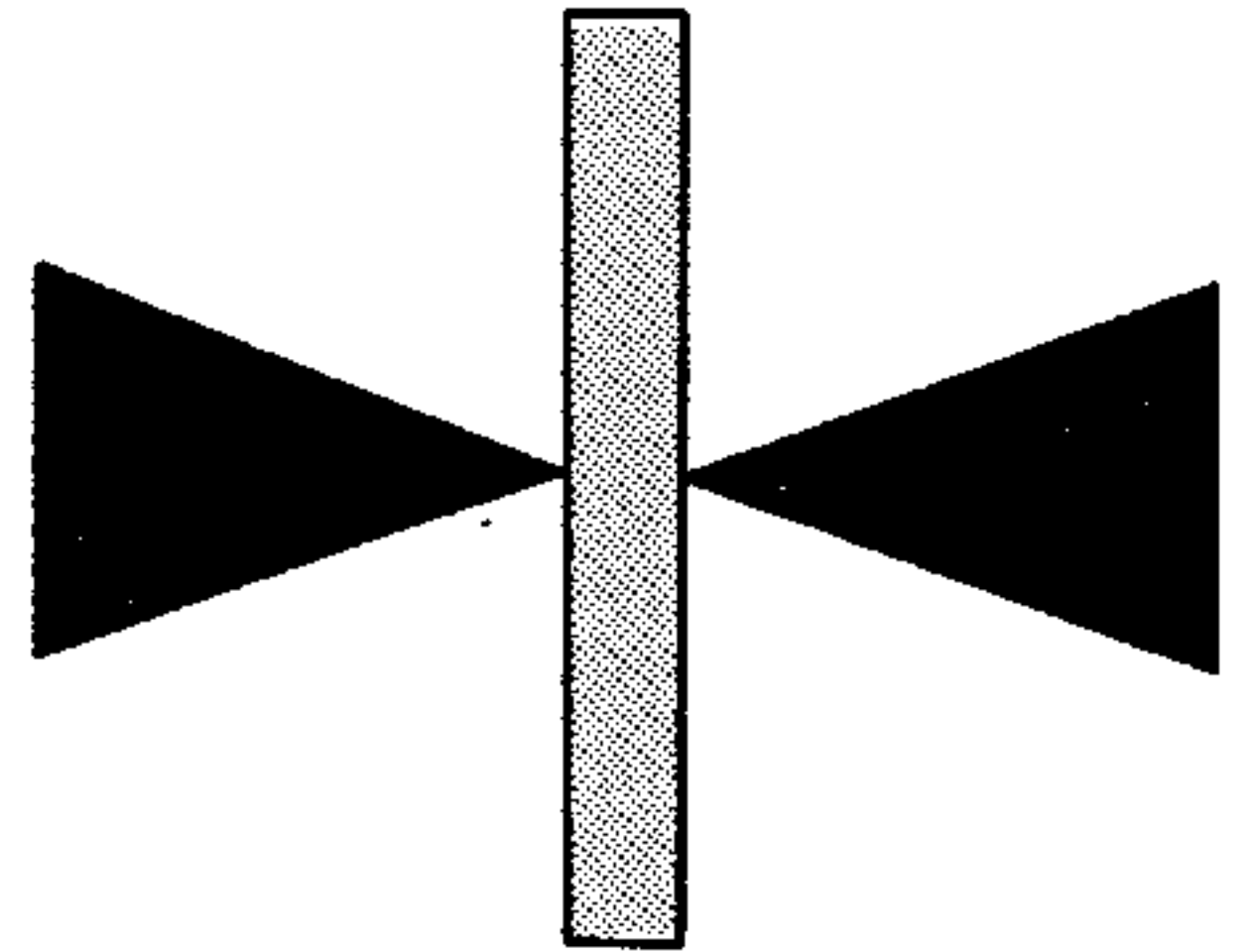
7. Buffalo foot



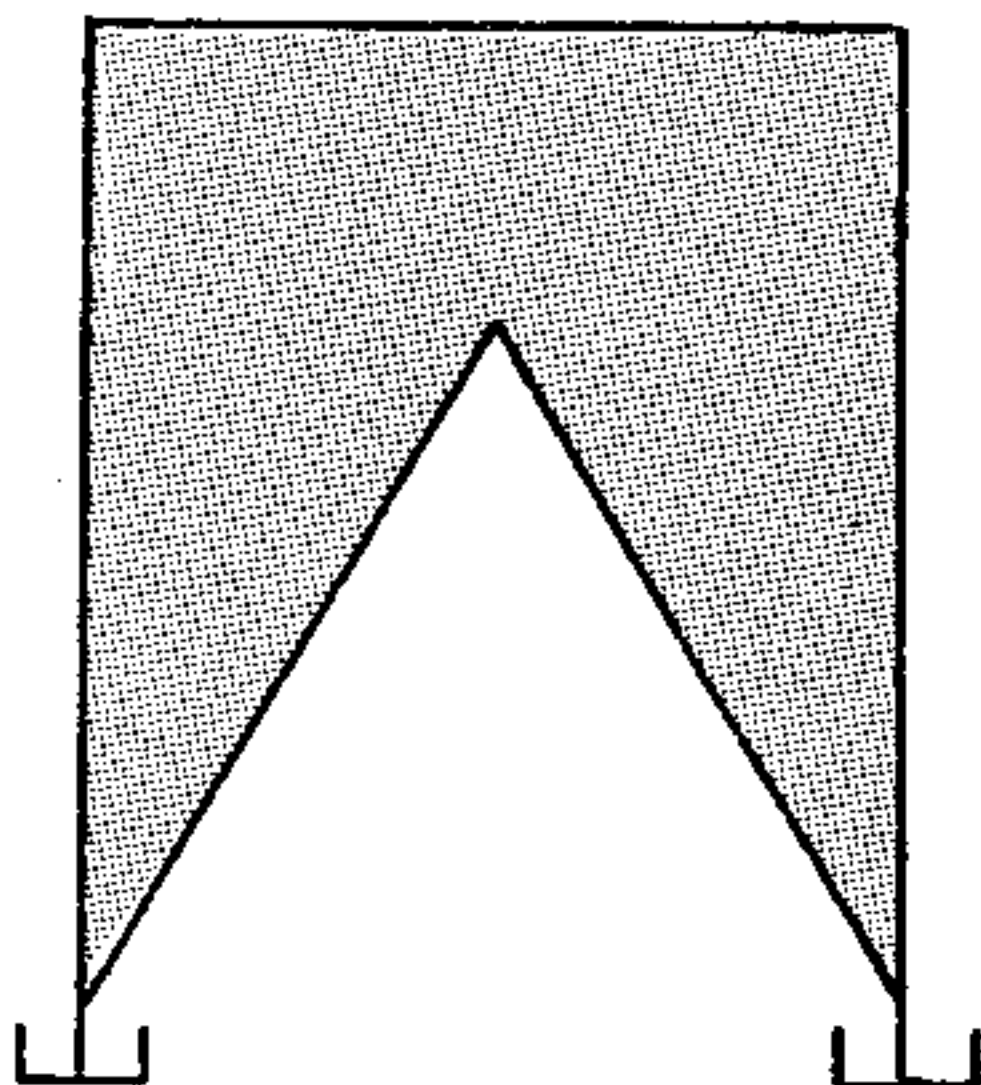
8. Buffalo foot



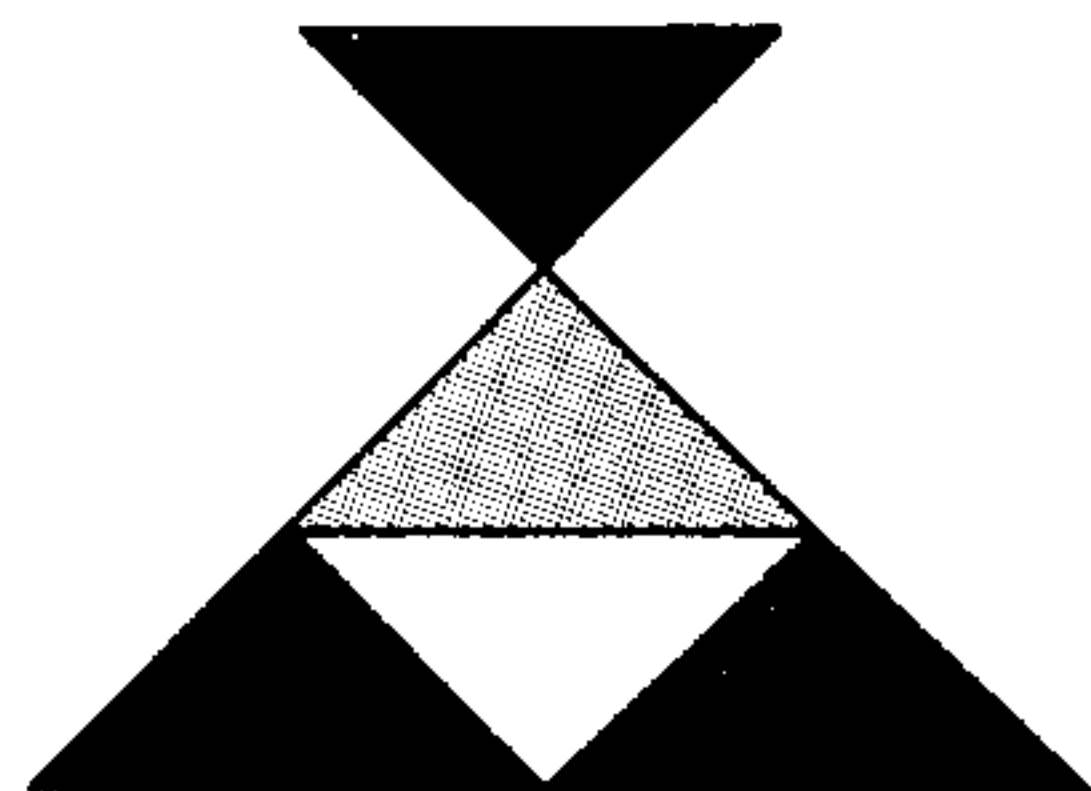
9. Lake



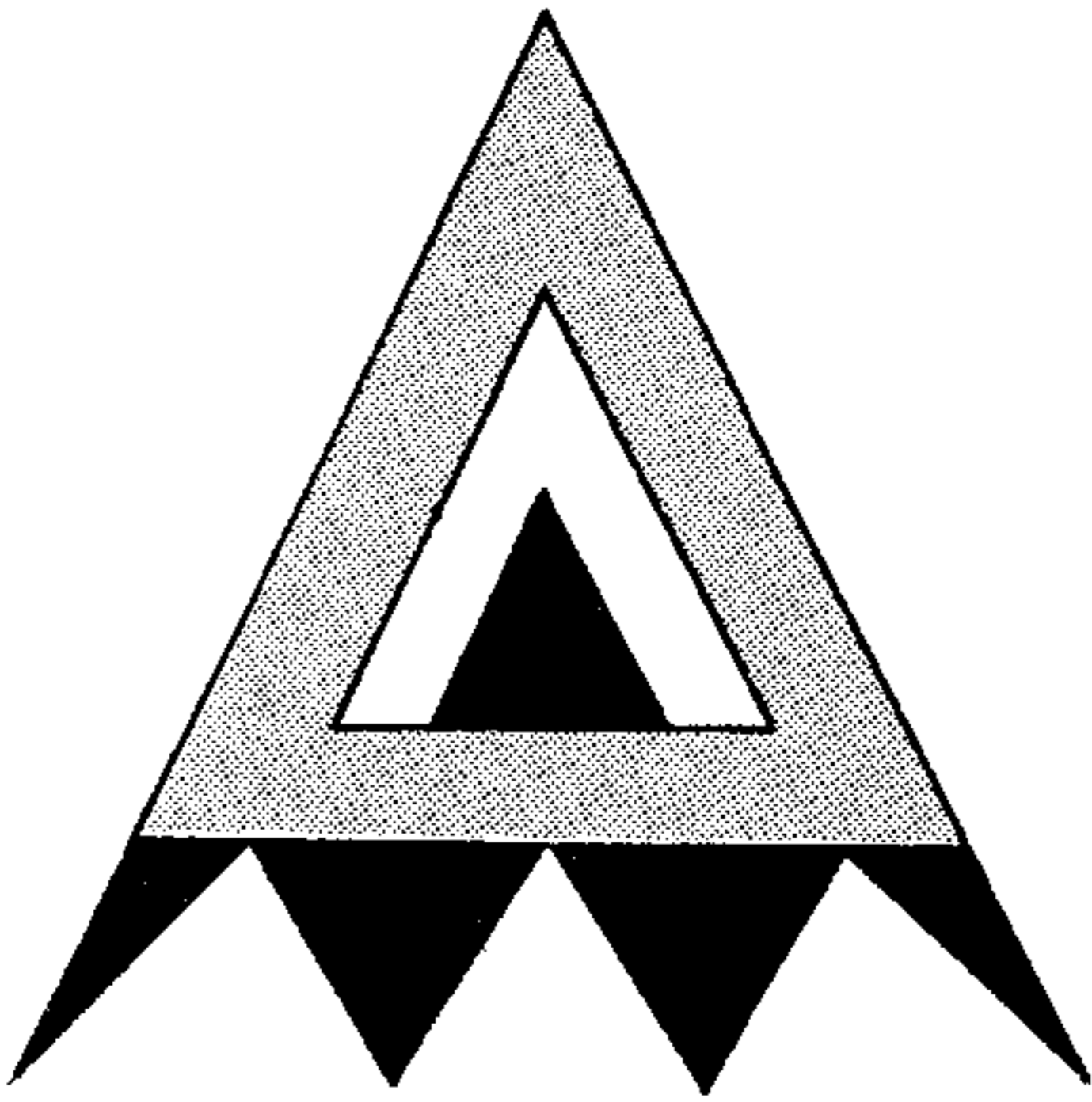
10. Star



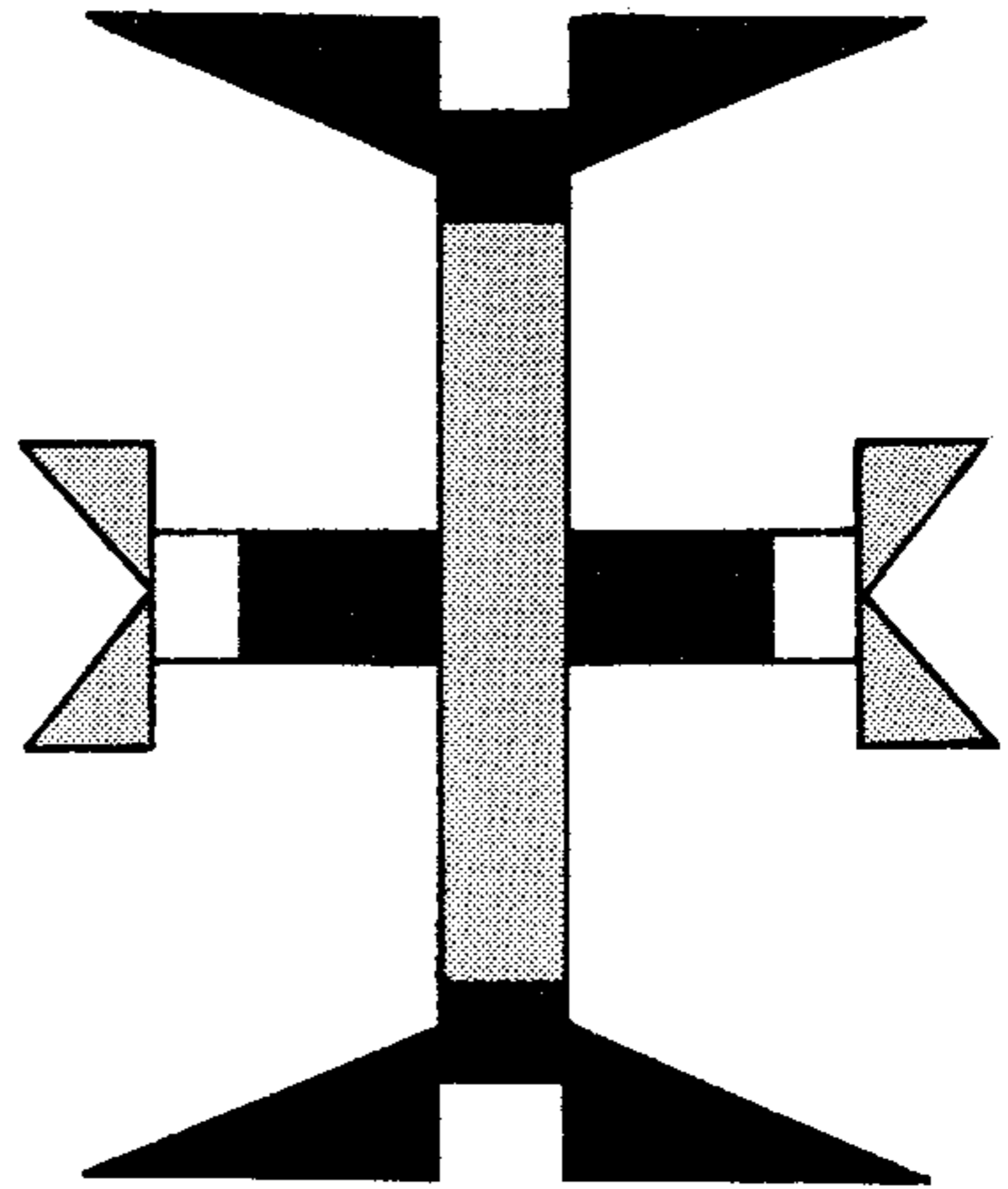
11. Saddle blanket



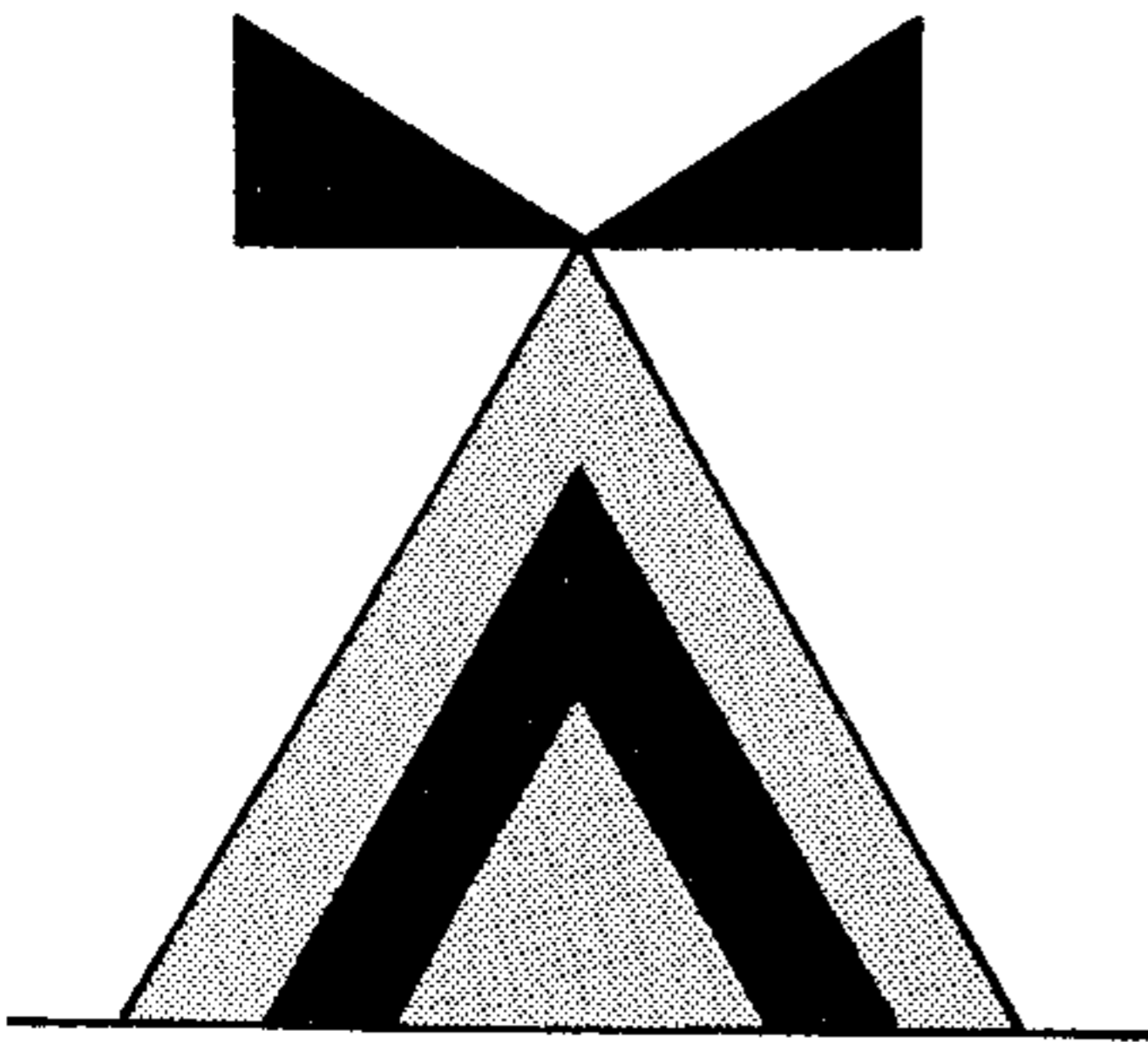
12. Rocks



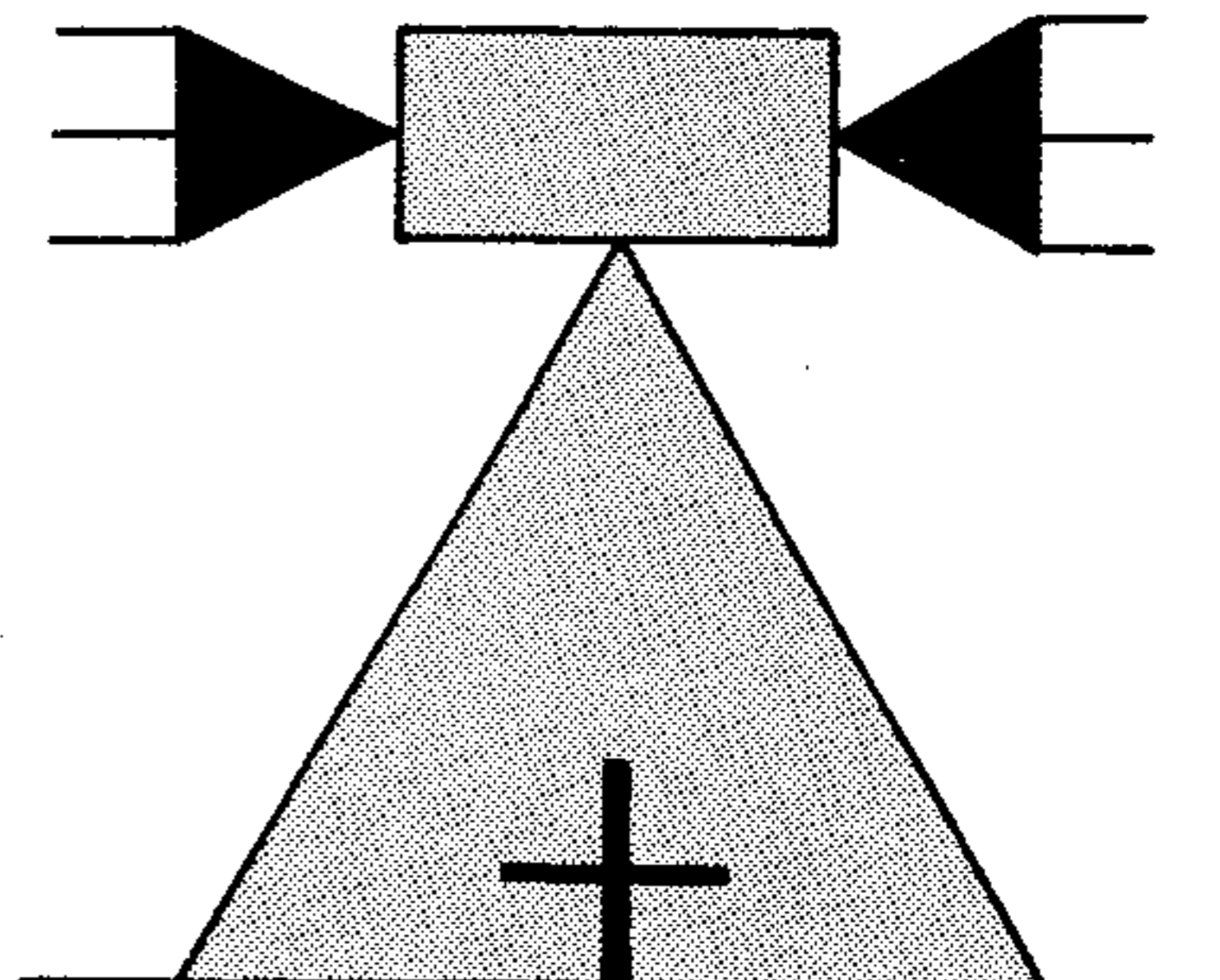
13. Tipi or tent



14. Eagle



15. Tipi or tent



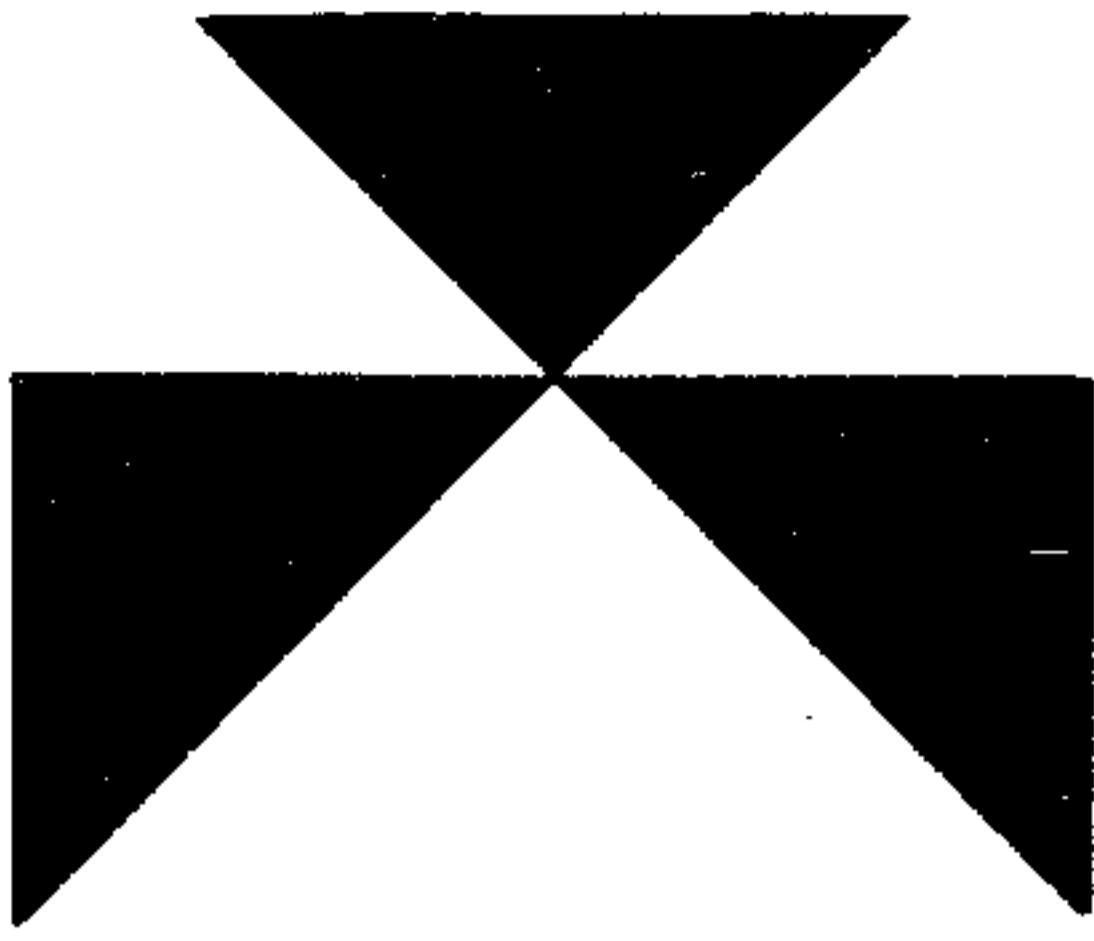
16. Tipi or tent



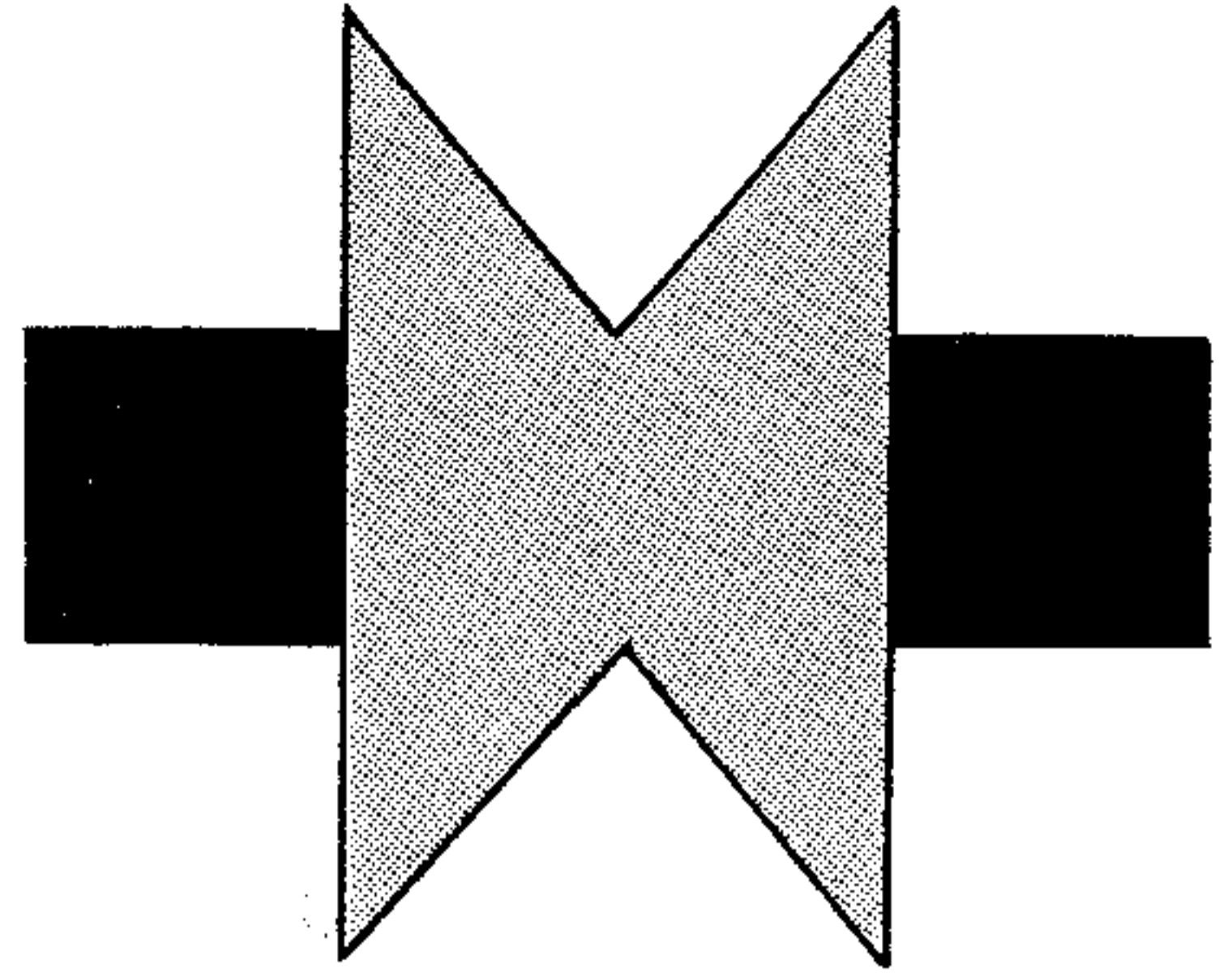
17. Mountain



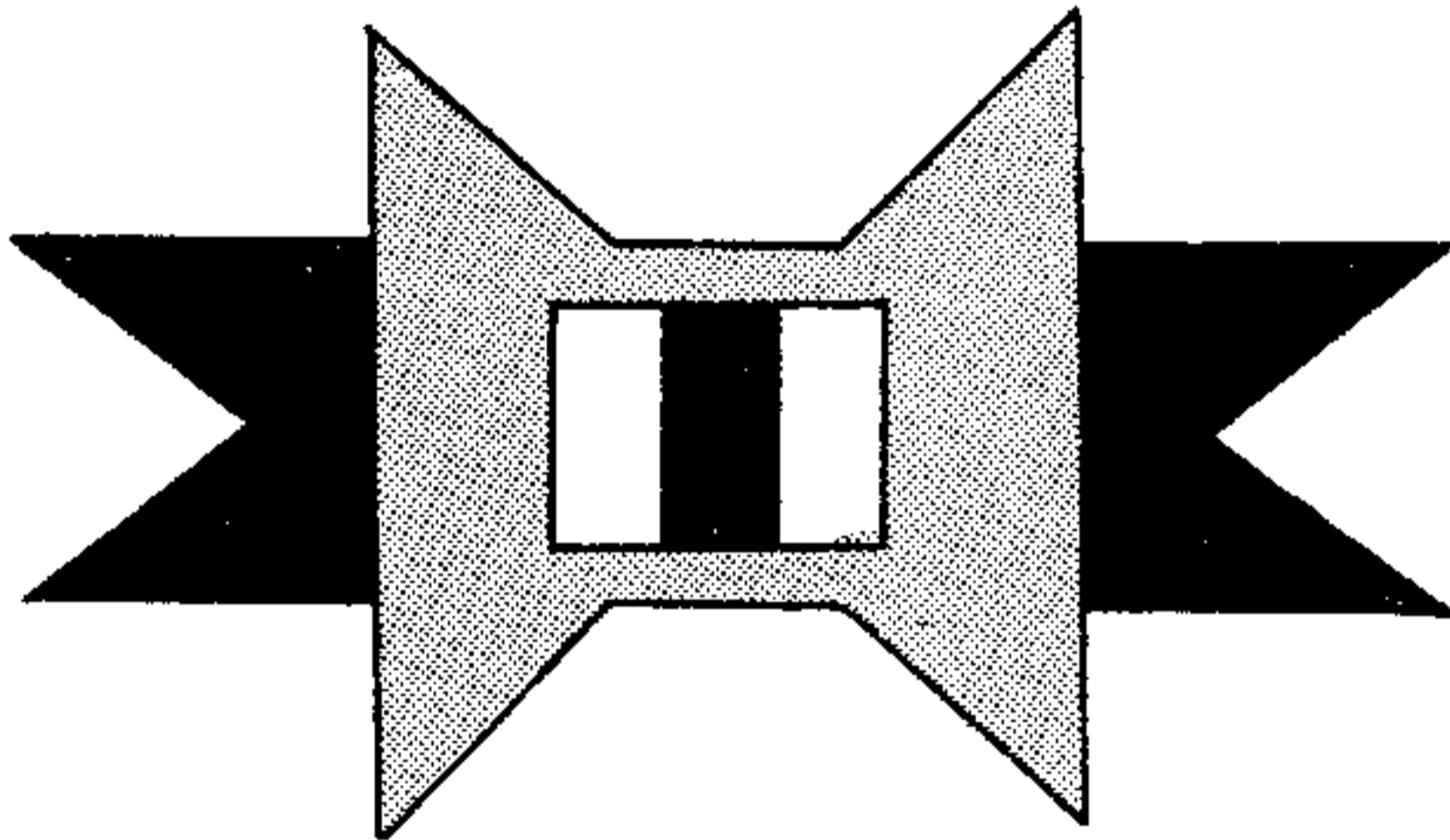
18. Mountain



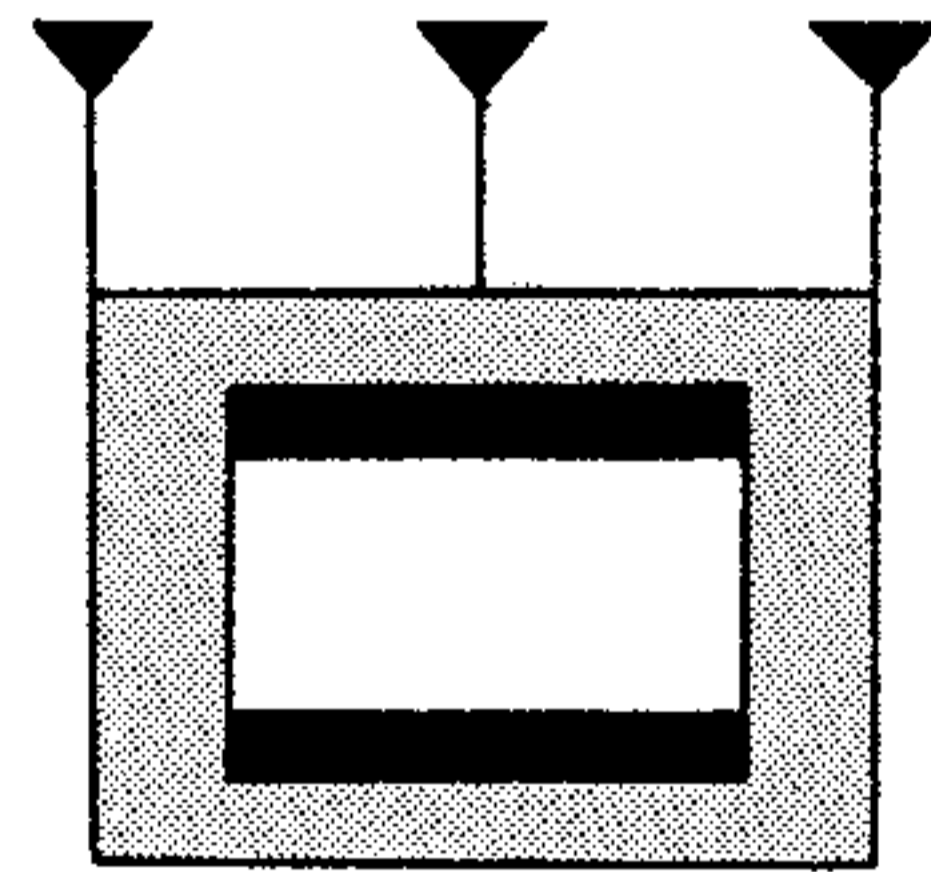
19. Heart and lungs



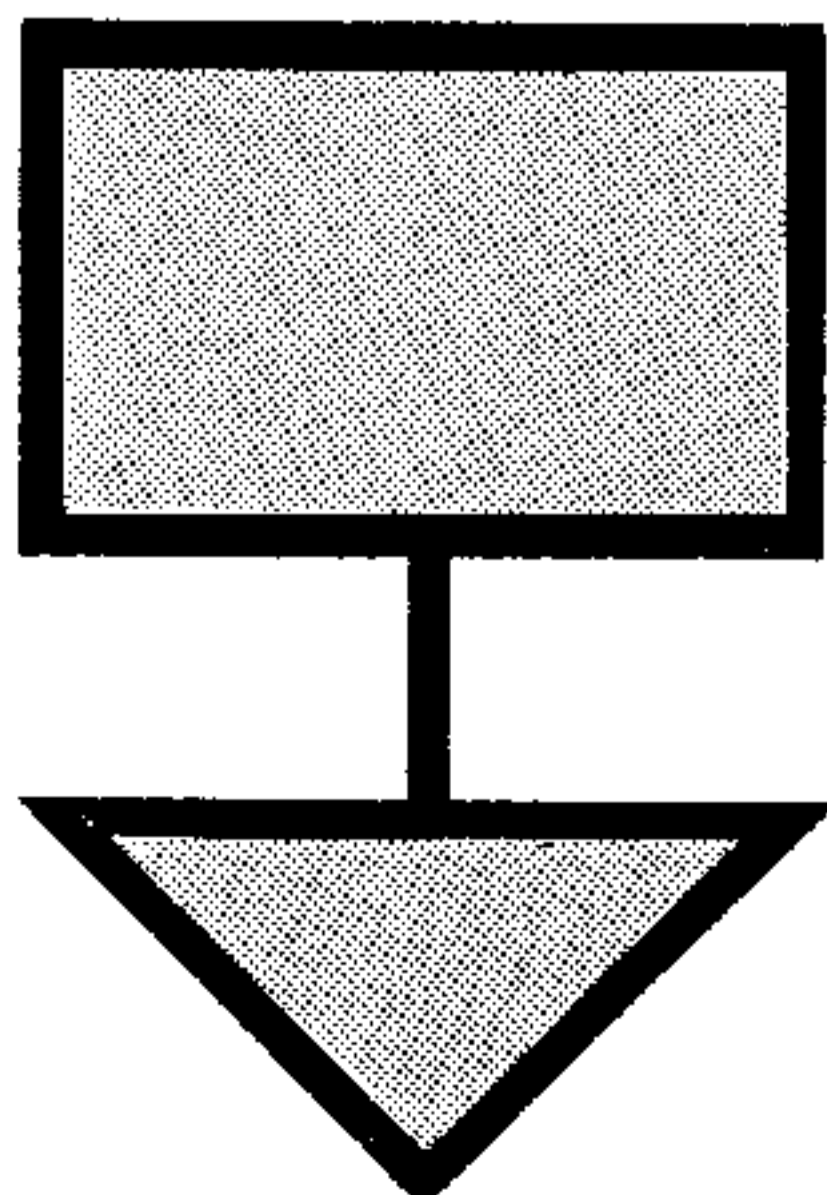
20. Lizard



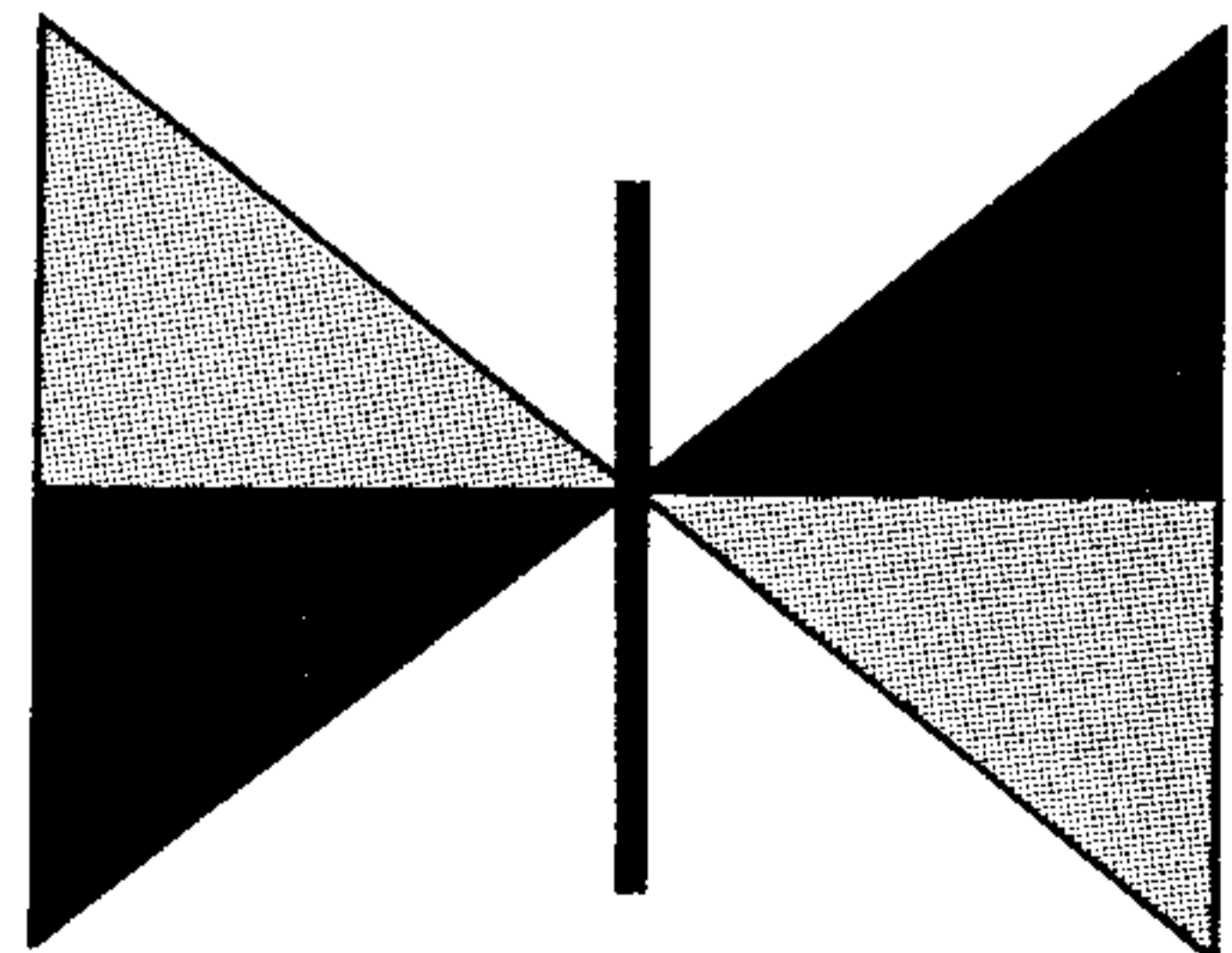
21. Caterpillar



22. Bear foot



23. Dragonfly



24. Butterfly

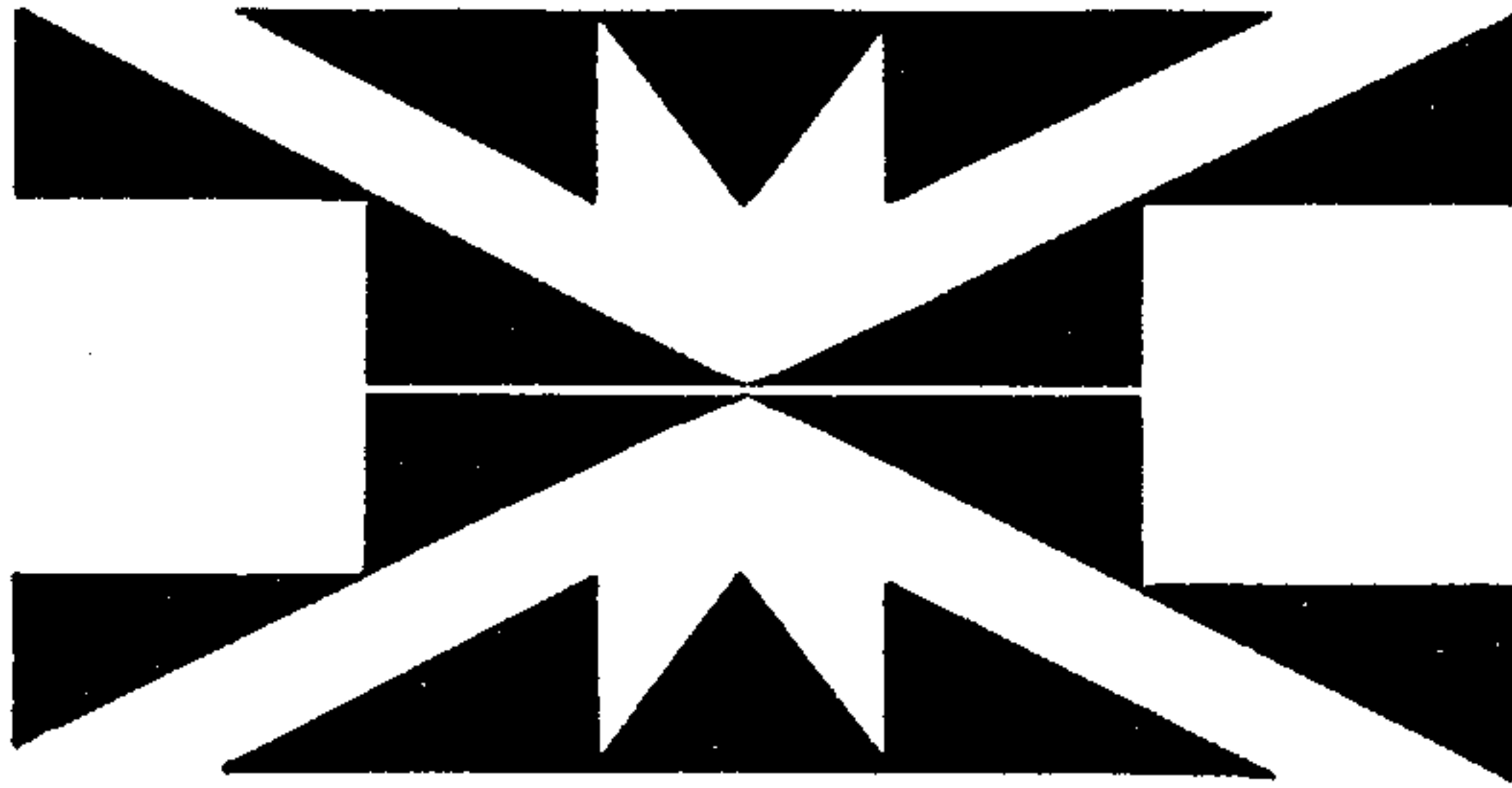
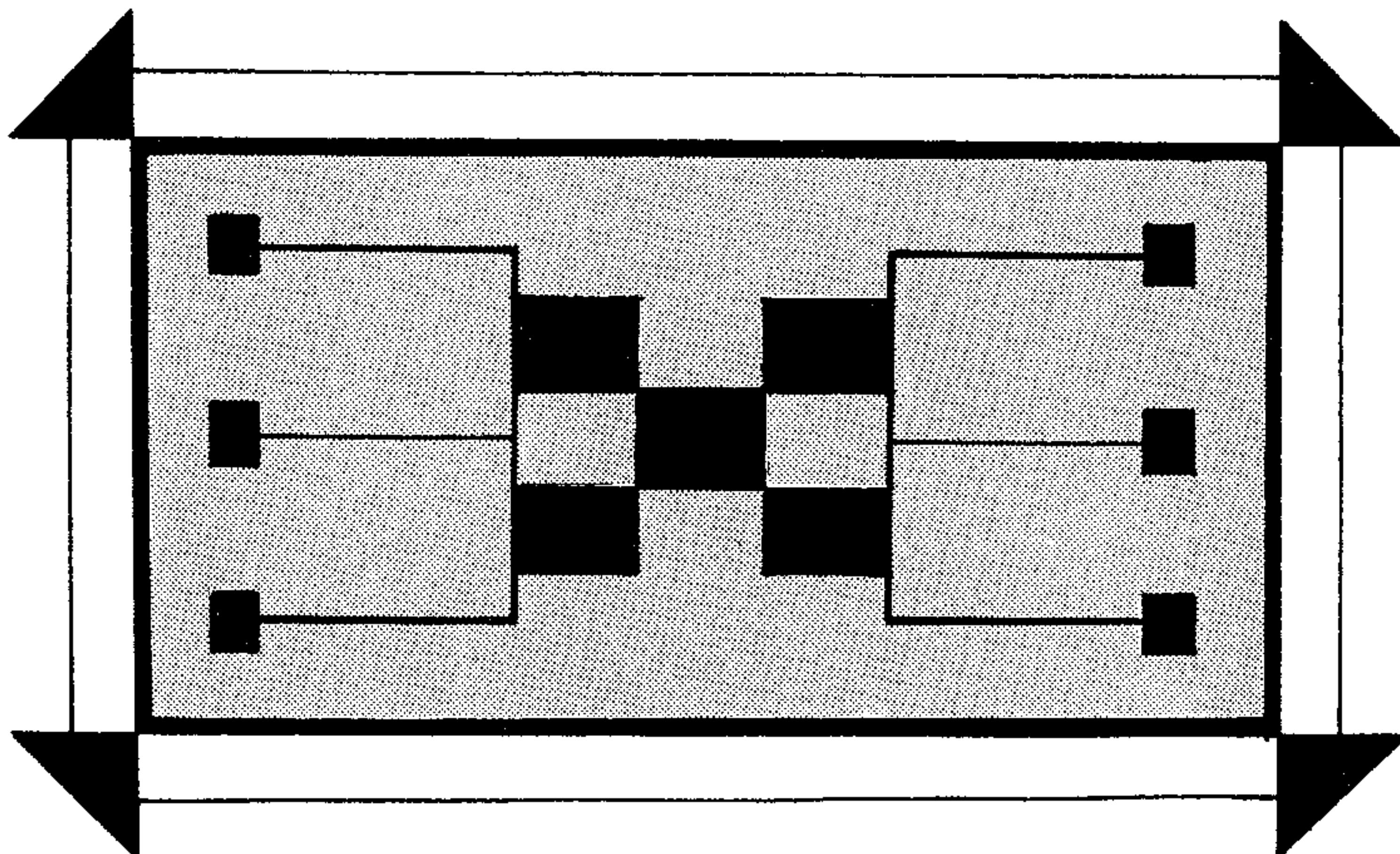


Figure A is a combination of symbols #4 and #17.

Figure B is a combination of symbols #1 and #3, enclosed by a simple geometric border.



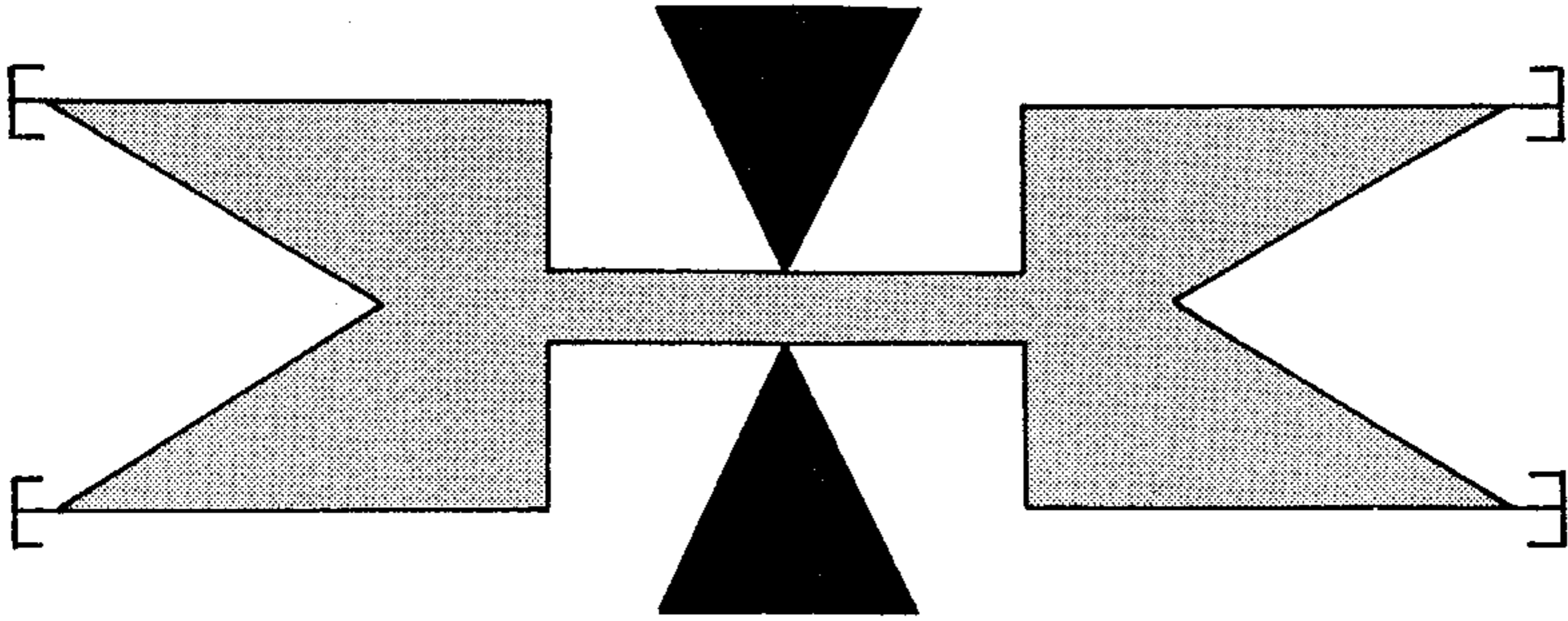
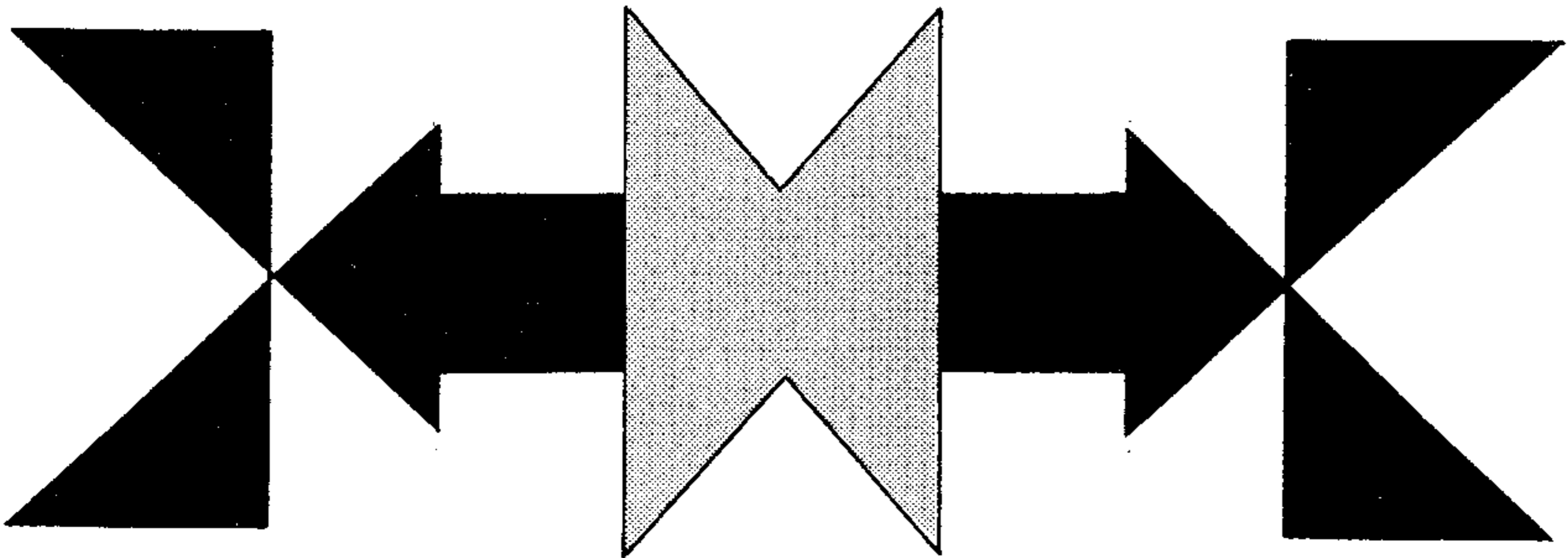


Figure C is a combination of symbols #10 and #11.

Figure D is a combination of symbols #19 and #20.



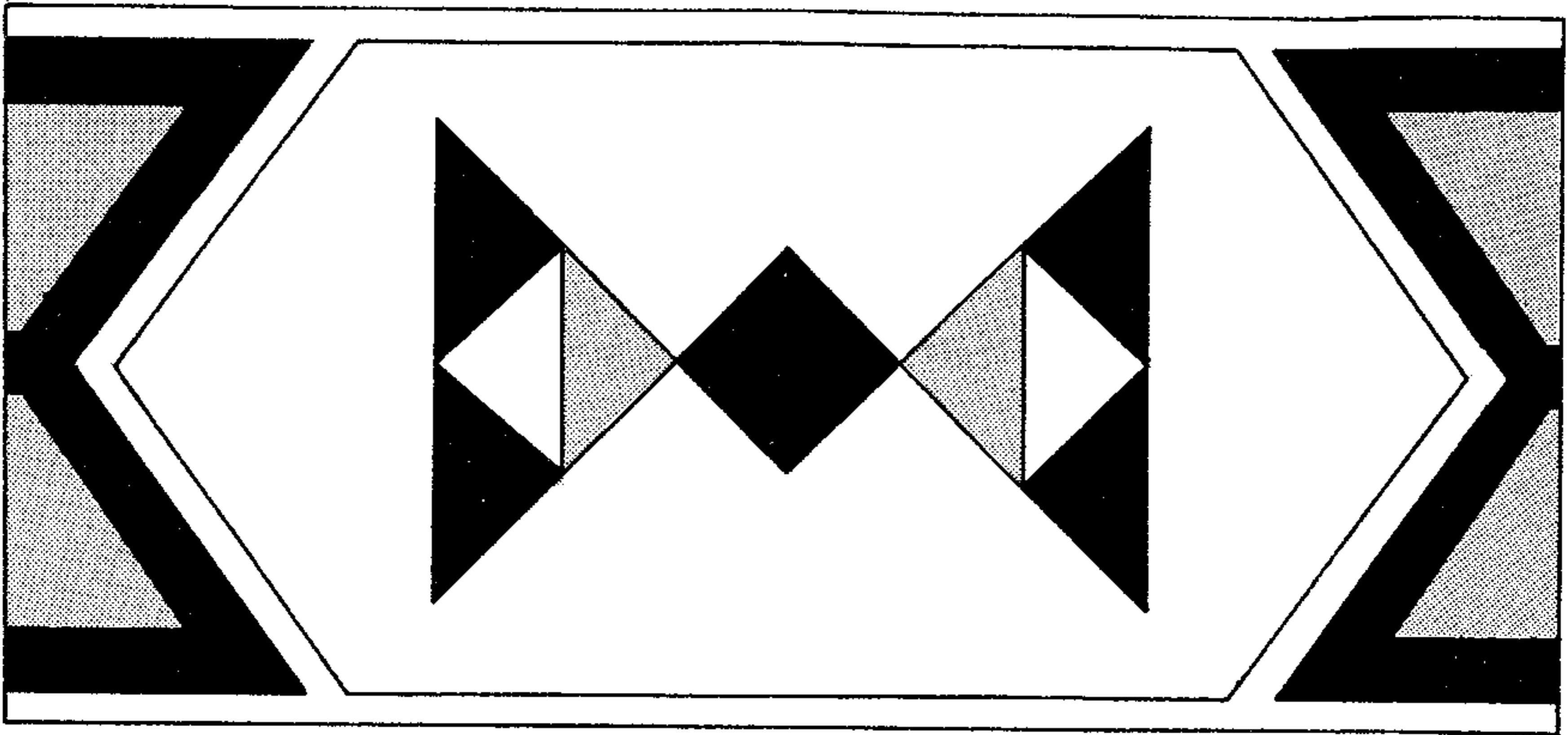
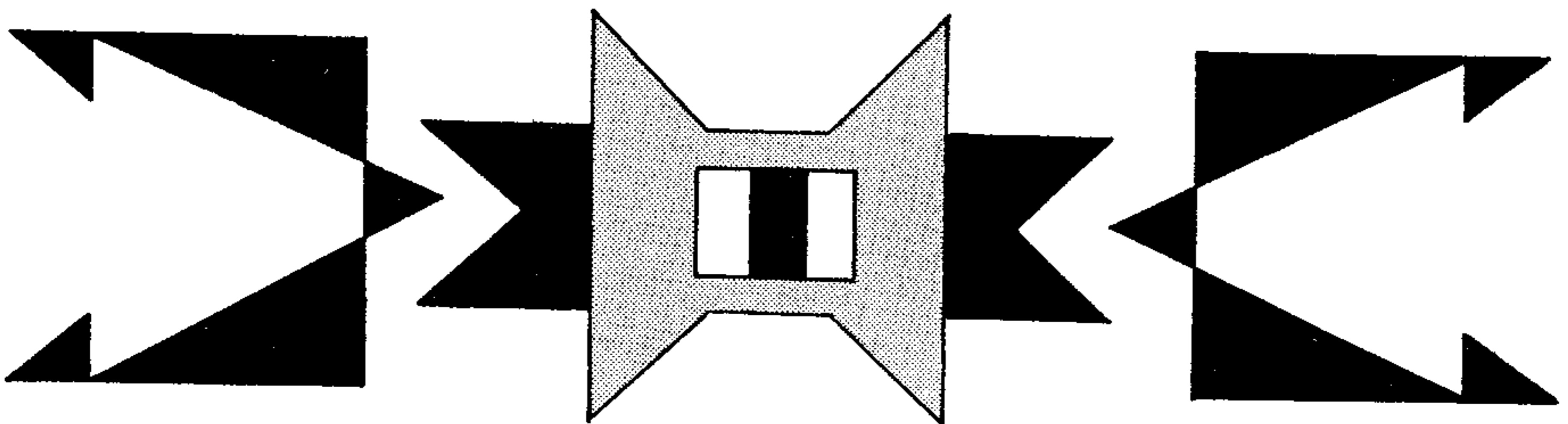


Figure E is a combination of symbols #9 and #12.

Figure F is a design made up of symbols #7 and #21.



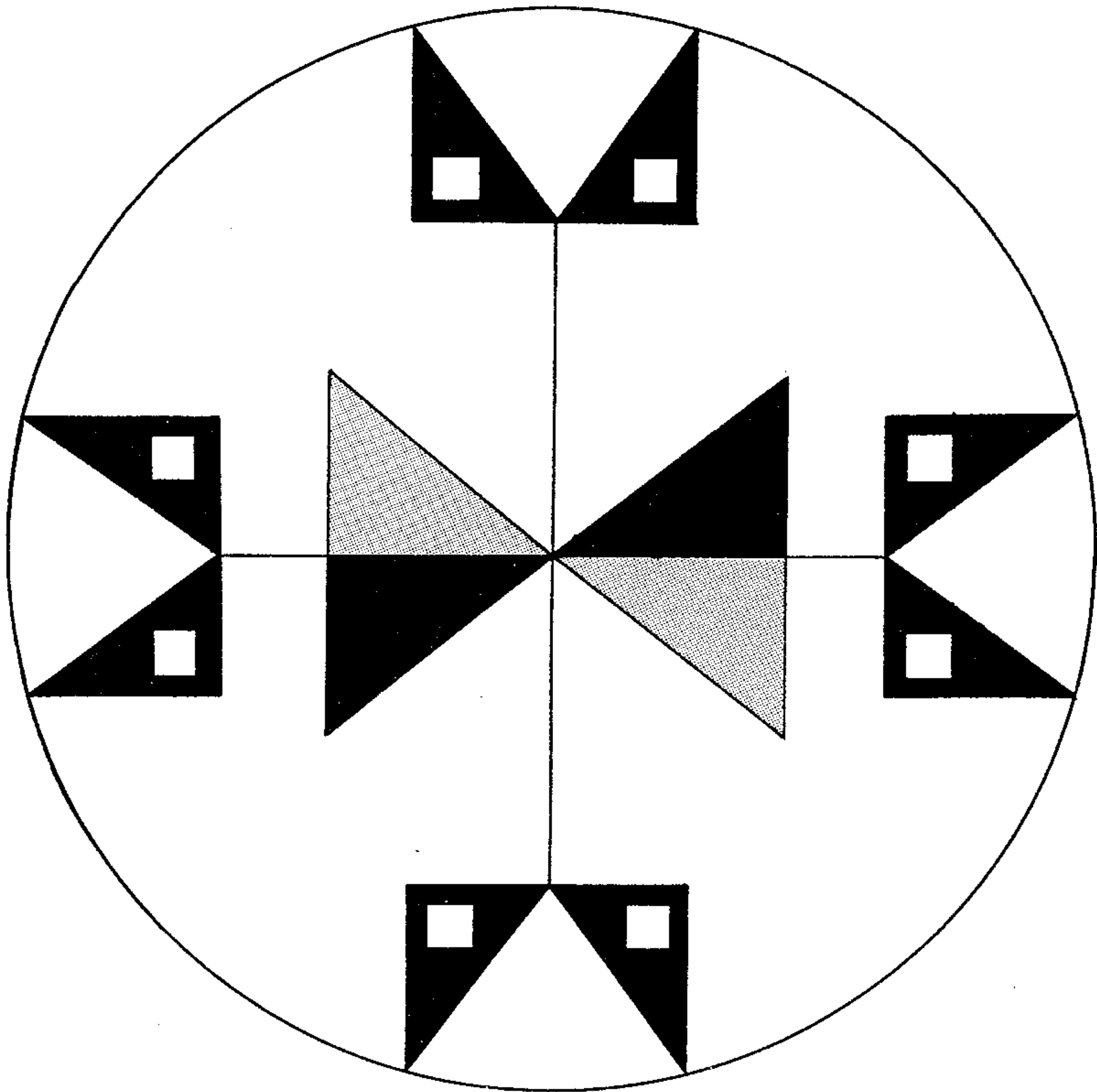
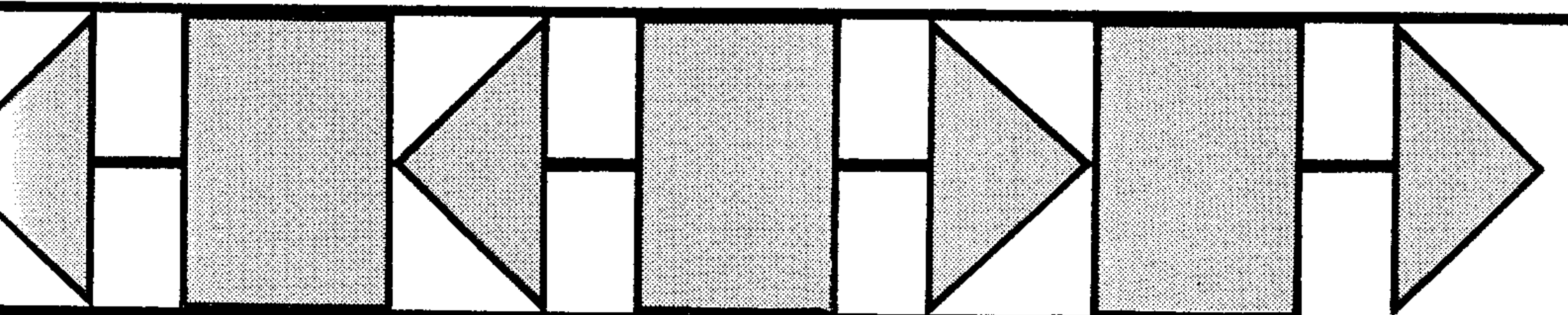


Figure G, above, is made up of symbols #8 and #24.

Figure H, below, is repetitions of symbol #23.

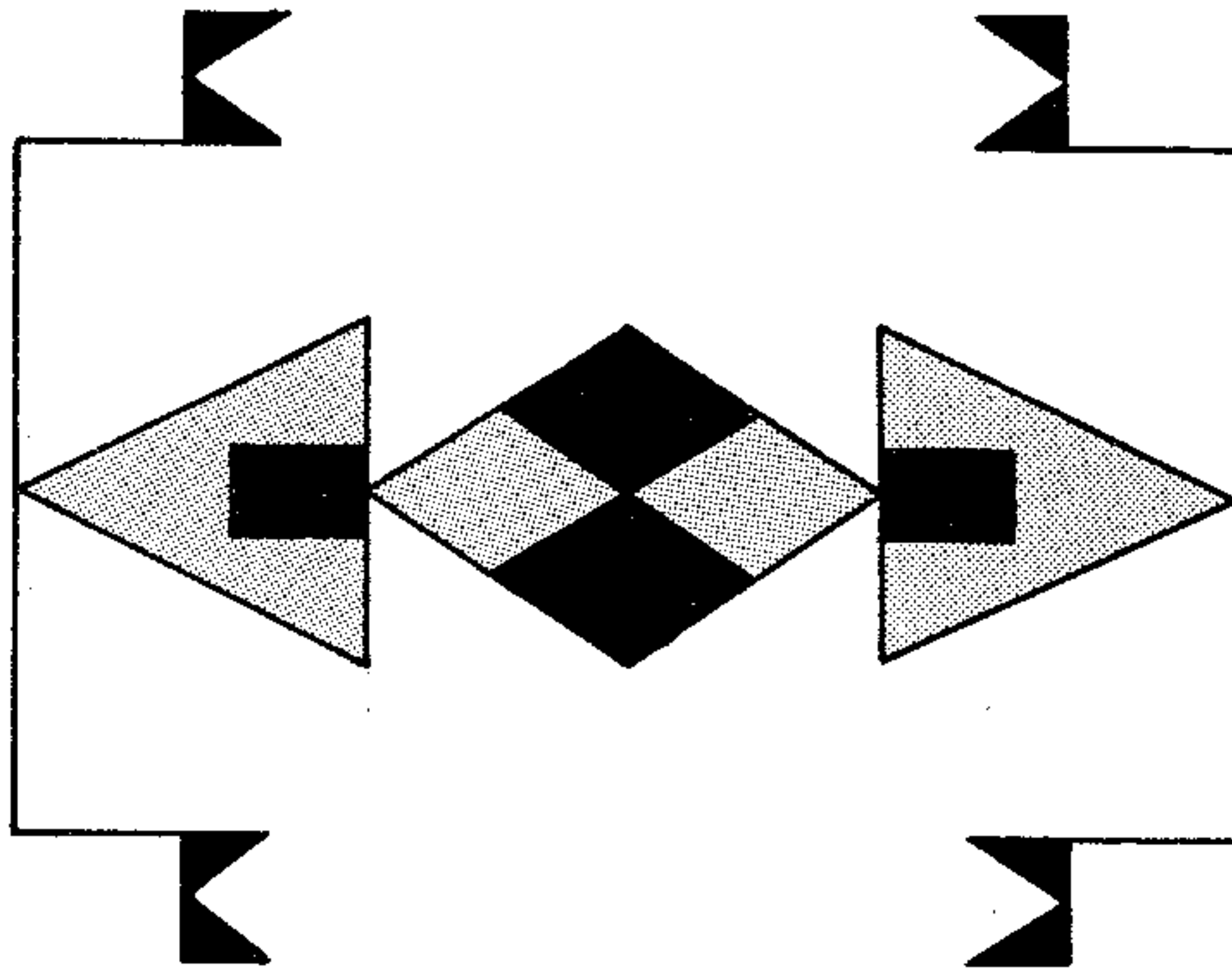


The designs shown on the following pages were copied from a set of crayon drawings done by a group of Arapaho women in the 1940's.

The original drawings are of various articles such as moccasins, leggings, dresses, a vest, several styles of bags, and other items depicting the material culture of the Northern Arapaho.

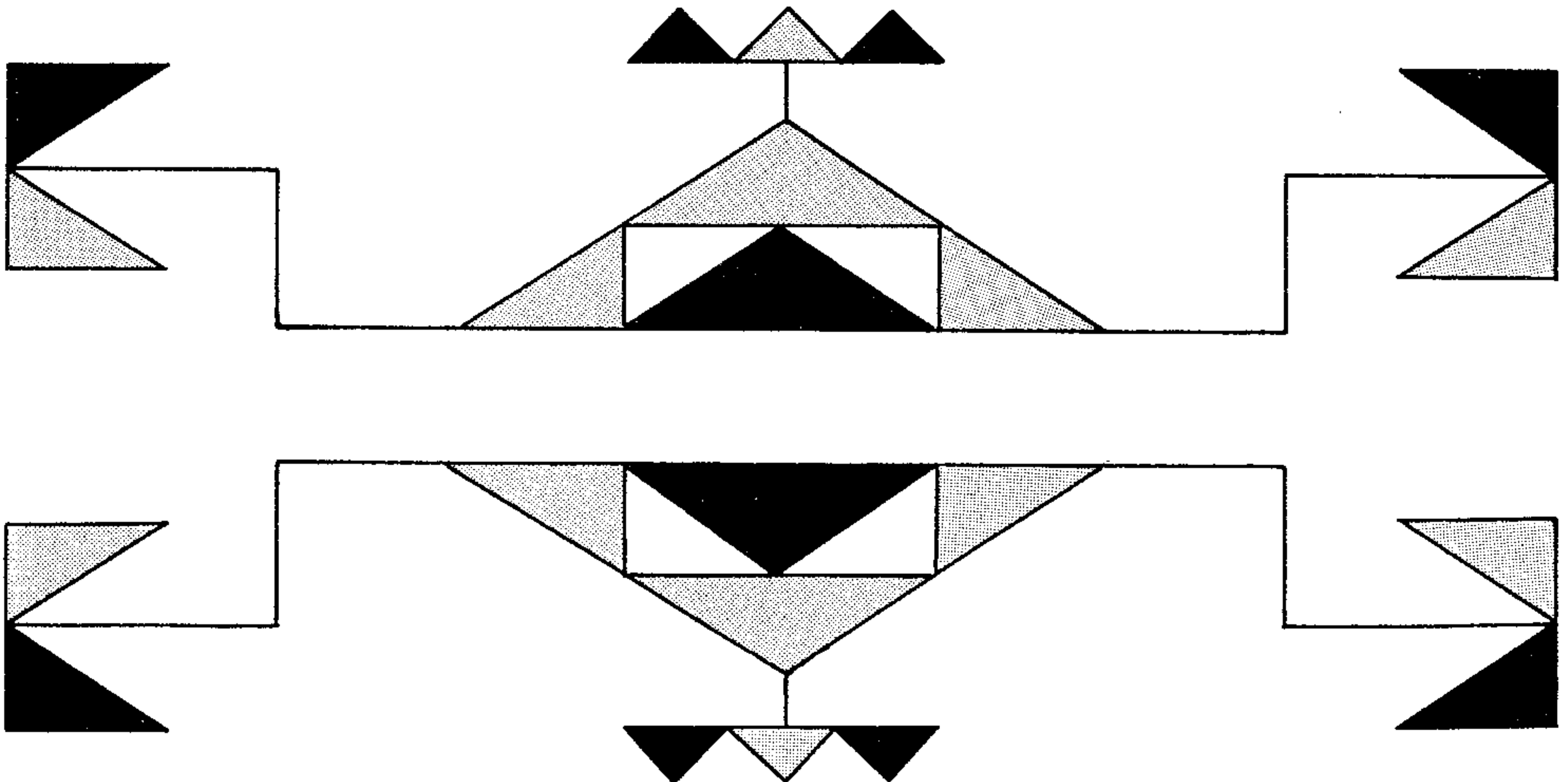
These particular designs were worked in beads on buckskin, with red, dark blue, white, orange, green and black being the primary colours used. The original technique used in beading these designs was the lazy-stitch, but they can be readily adapted for loom-beading and over-lay beading techniques.

The original crayon drawings were donated to the Title IV Curriculum Development Project of Wyoming Indian High School by Mr. Arnold Headley.

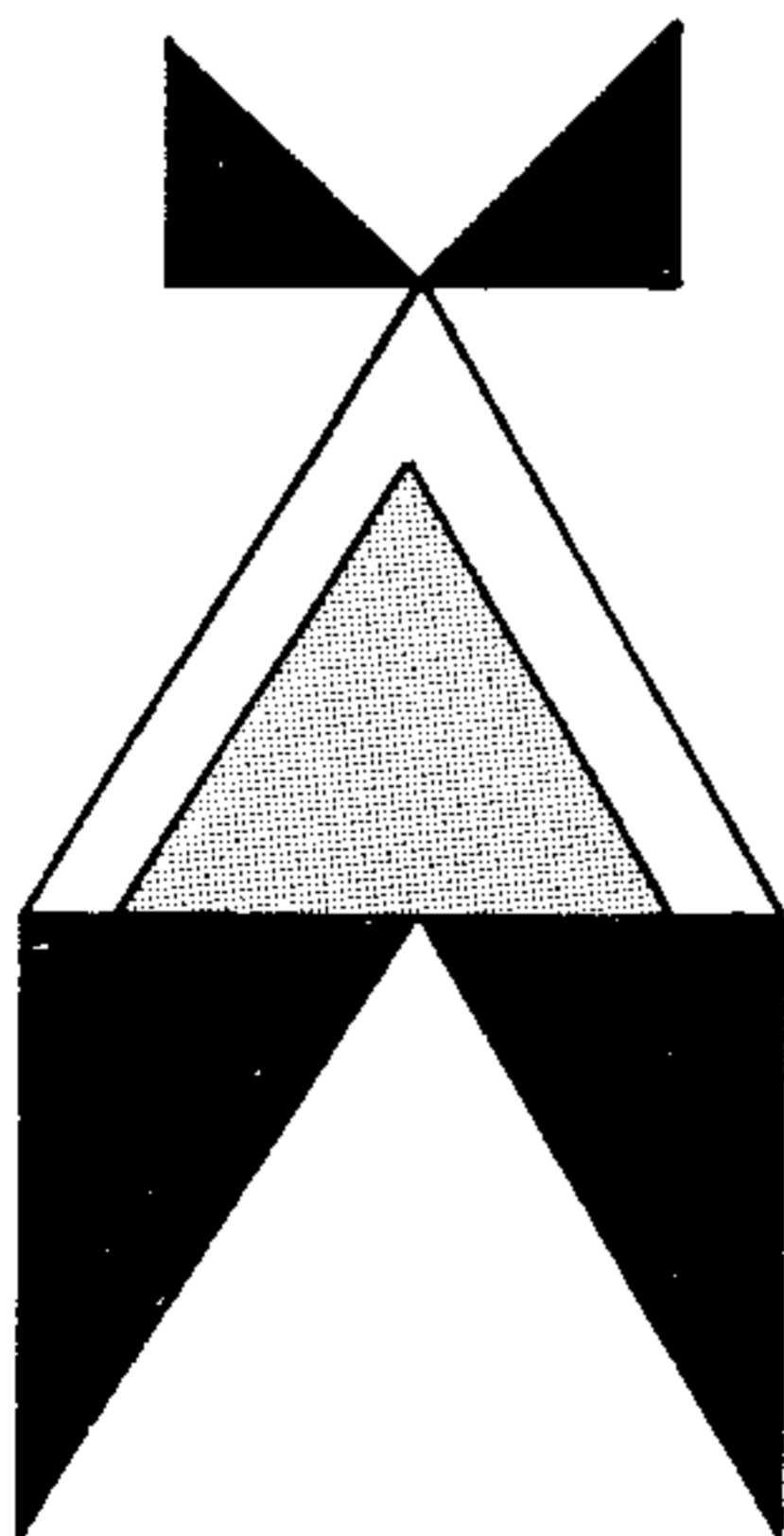
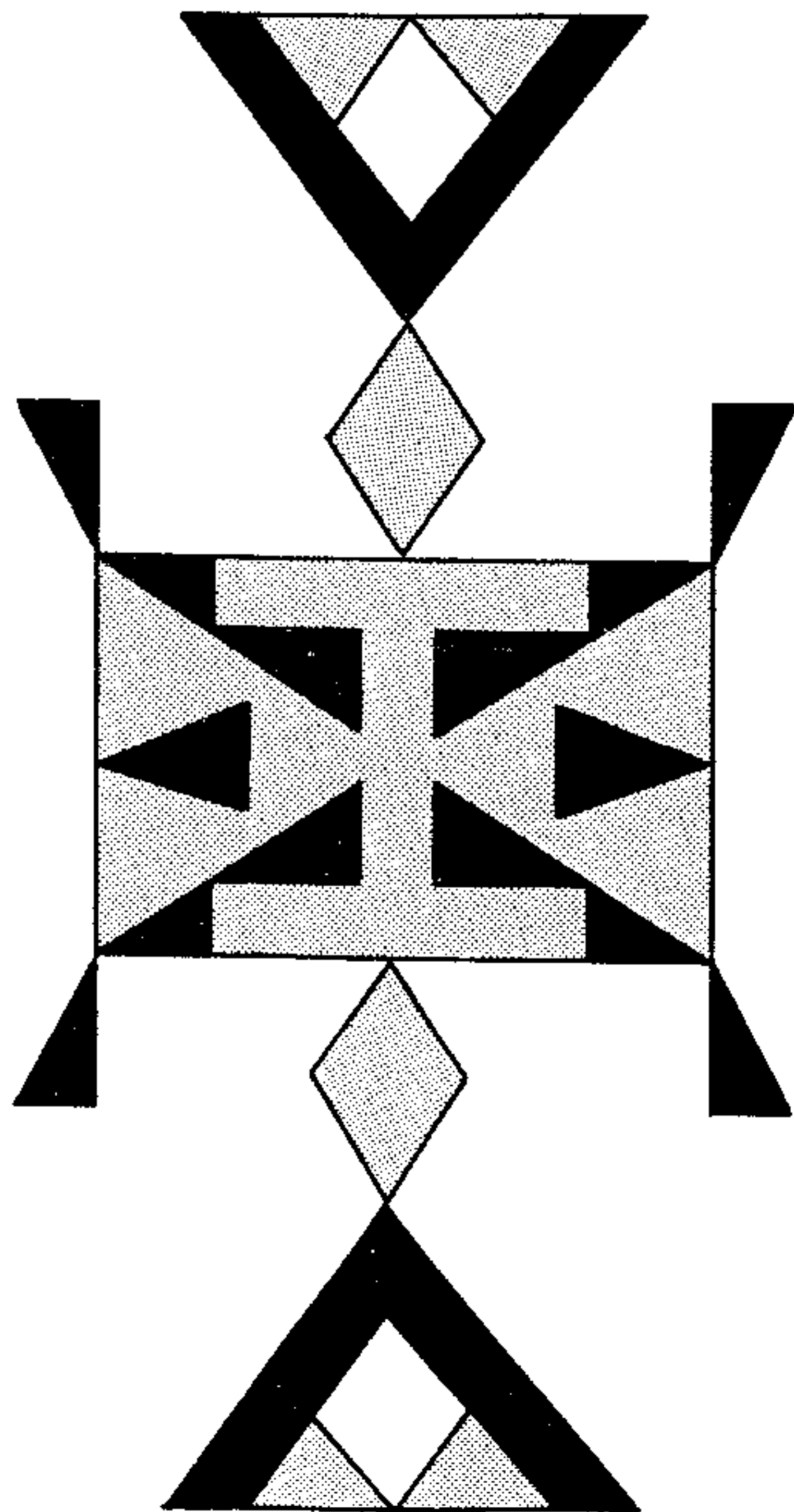
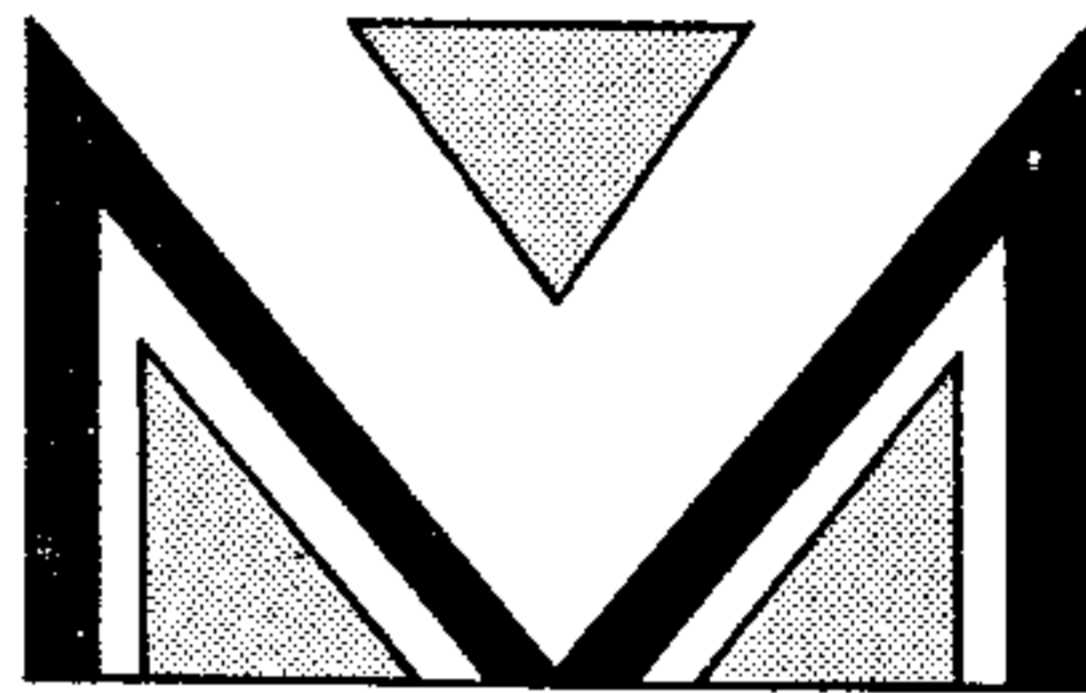
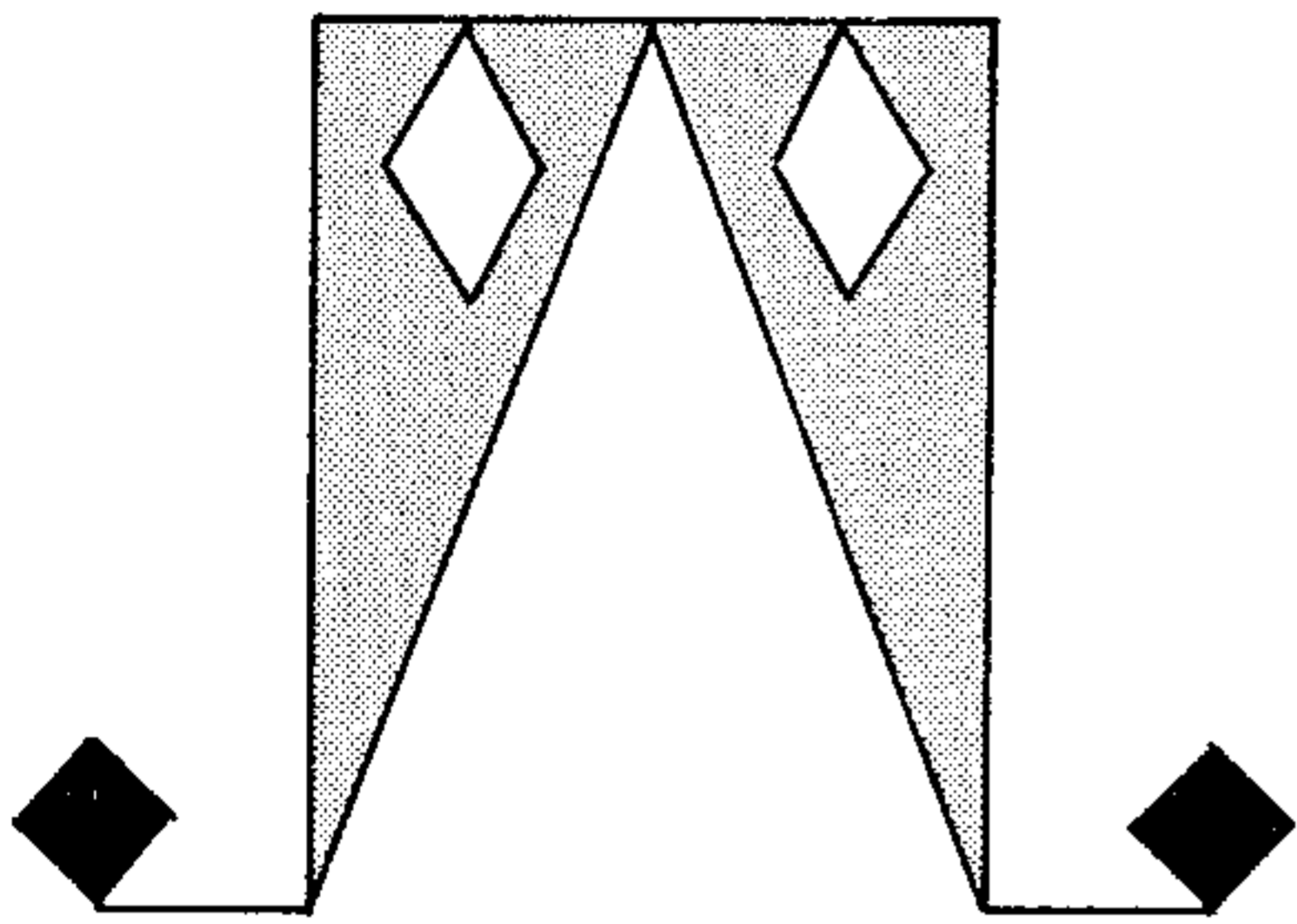


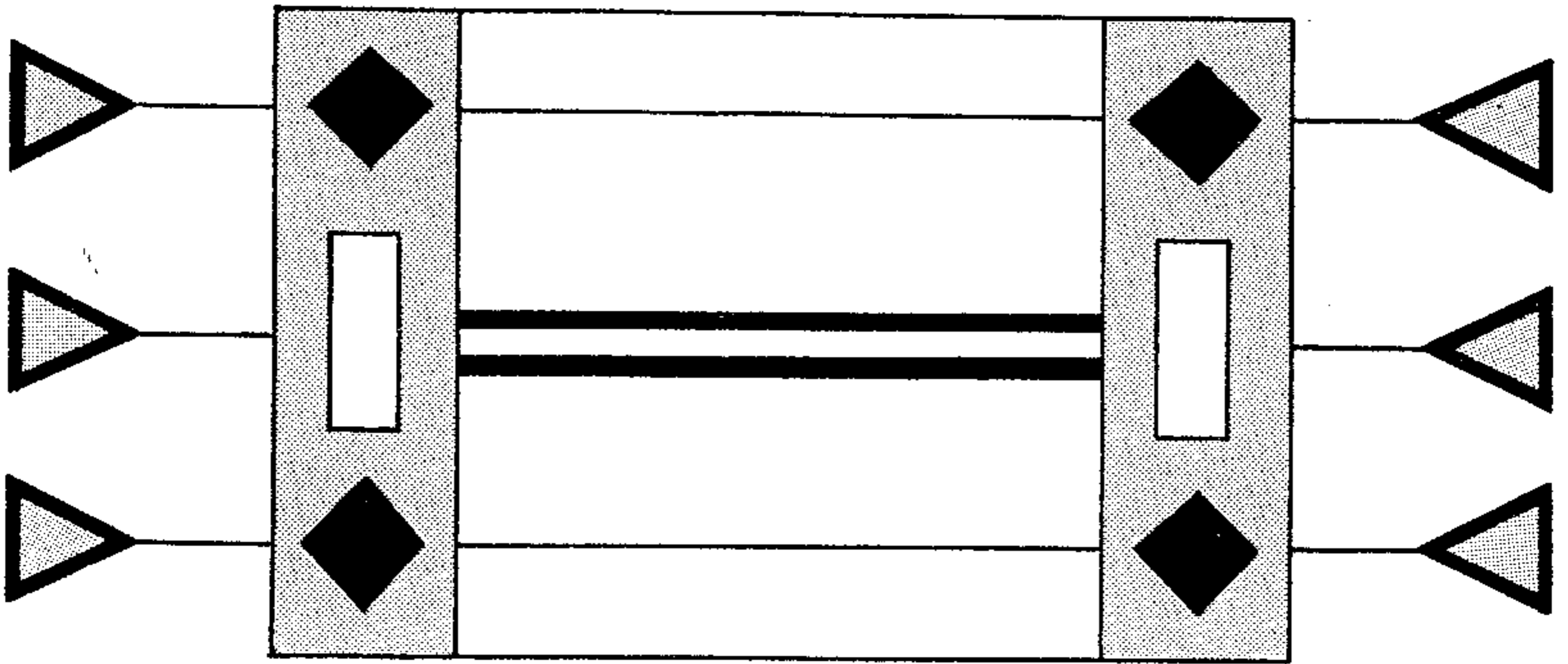
Above, design from the yoke of a dress

Below, design from a flat beaded bag



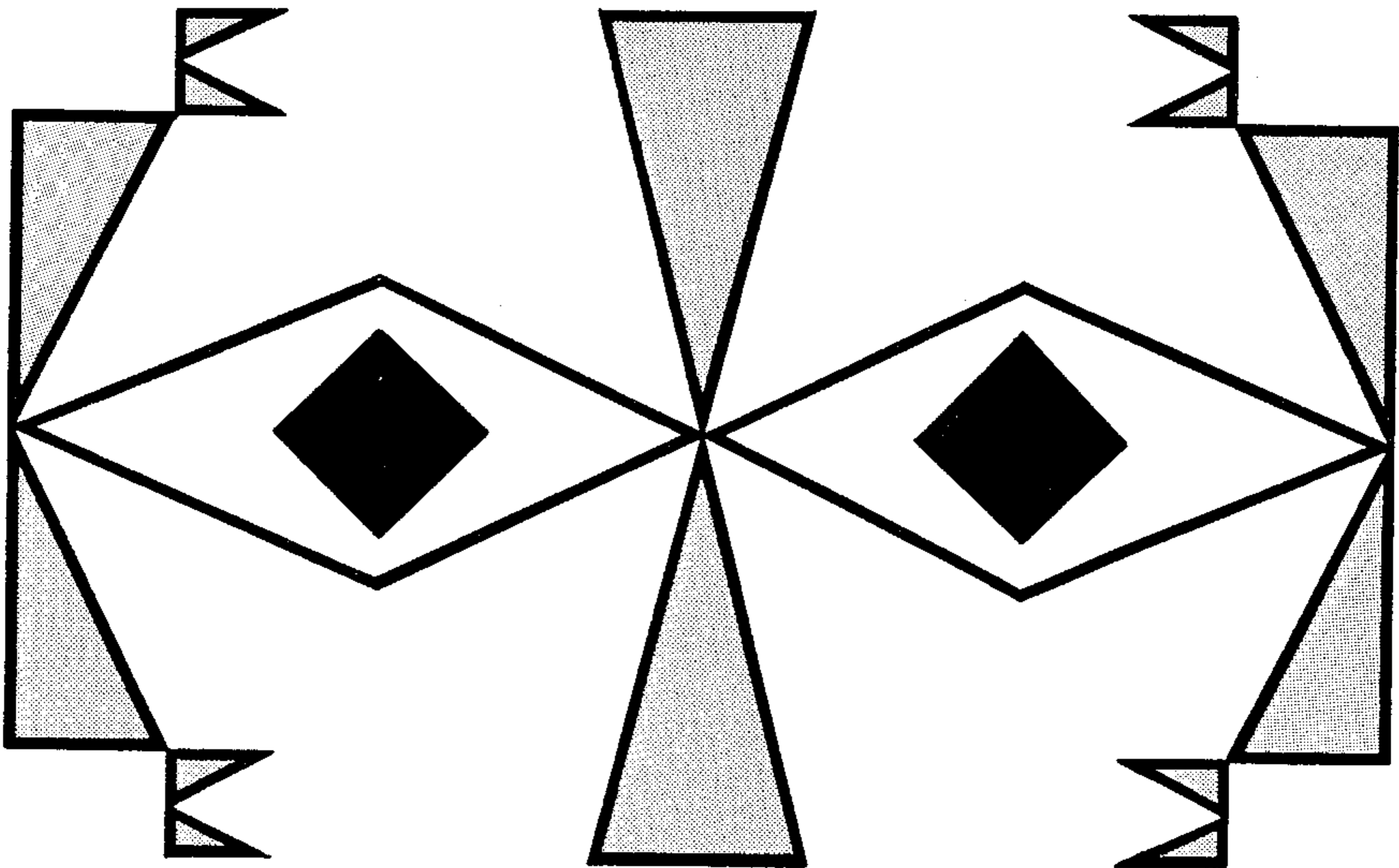
Design elements from a woman's legging and moccasin



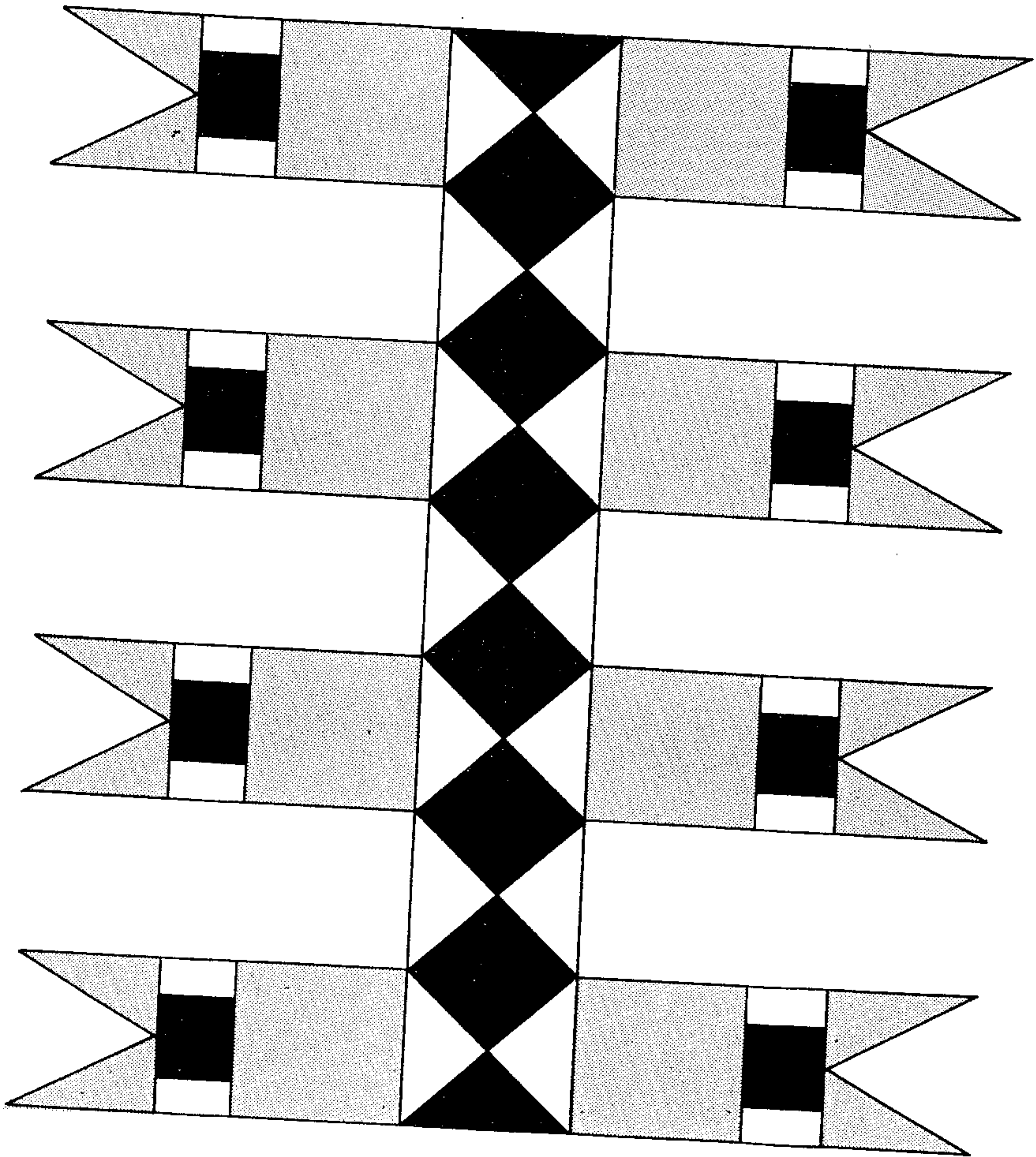


Above, design from a beaded saddle bag

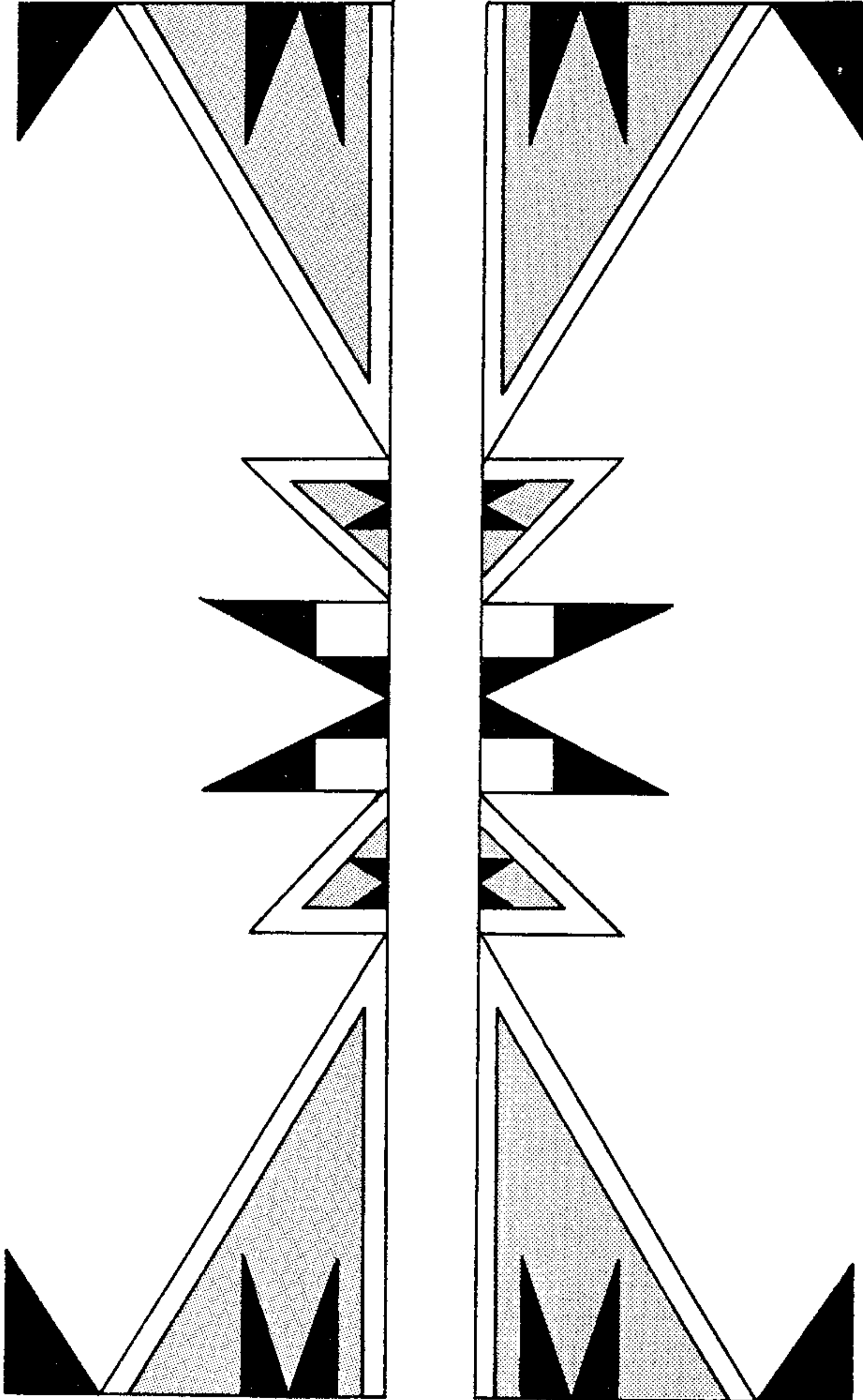
Below, design from the yoke of a dress



Design panel from a woman's beaded legging



Design from a woman's beaded legging



Additional and more extensive information on the decorative art of the Arapaho can be found in the following bibliography. These books can be obtained through interlibrary loan or through the Title IV Curriculum Development Department of Wyoming Indian High School.

Symbolism of the Arapaho Indians, by A. L. Kroeber, Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, New York.

Indian Rawhide: an American Folk Art, by Mable Morrow, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma.

The Book of Indian Crafts and Indian Folklore, by Julian Harris Salomon, Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York, New York.

Plains Indian Painting, by John C. Ewers, Stanford University Press.

Dress Clothing of the Plains Indians, by Ronald Peter Koch, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma.

The Arapaho, by Alfred L. Kroeber, Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, Volume XVIII, 1902, New York, New York.