

[End Finishes Project](#)[Woven Structures Update](#)[HOME](#)

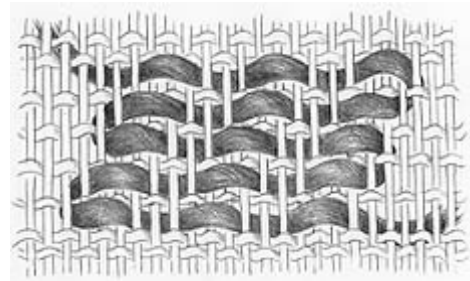
Assorted Brocade Borders

Brocades have been an important part of the nomadic weaver's technical repertoire, and several types turn up as decorative borders on pile rugs. We will collect assorted examples here.

Overlay-Underlay Brocade

This is the most versatile and indeed the most common kind of brocading found in the Middle East. It is the woven structure often mistaken for embroidery.

With their fingers, brocade weavers interlace either short lengths or tiny skeins of loosely-spun pattern yarns. These yarns are often doubled or tripled, so that they cover the ground well and do not look 'skimpy.' The thick, fluffy brocading yarns lie or float on the front surface of the fabric to form the design, then float on the back to produce negative design parts--thus the term *overlay-underlay*. The loom does nothing during the process to help the weaver: With the shed closed, she does it all, pushing the yarns alternately from front to back to form the design. After interlacing all of the colors in each row of patterning, she lays in at least one thin plain-weave ground weft from selvage to selvage, using a regular shed.



For more detailed information on brocading, please see Chapter 13 in *Woven Structures*.

Jaf Kurd Saddlebag Face
36" x 27" (92 cm x 70 cm)

PRIMARY STRUCTURE: Symmetrical knots;
H: 5, V: 13, 65 per square inch (V: 20/dm, H:
51/dm, 1021 per square dm. Offset knotting used
to articulate the field design; transitions made
with overlapping knots. Extensive use of

discontinuous wefts to correct problems. No warp depression.

SECONDARY STRUCTURES: 3 cm-wide band of overlay- underlay brocading in 'diagonal comb' pattern. .8 cm- wide band of weft-float pattern in a zigzag motif, edged with rows of 2-color, 2-span twining. Heavy groups of 3 or 4 wool singles used for these details.

YARN SPIN: Z.

WARP: 3-ply ivory wool.

WEFT: Primarily 2-ply brown wool, but also various colors combined and alternated; peach-colored singles in some areas. Wefts crossed between sheds.

PILE: 1, 2 or 3 wool singles, mostly 2.

OVERCAST SELVAGES: 3 warp units (1,1,1) overcast with brown wool singles.

[AA-9966. Allan Arthur]



In the wide brocaded border of this Jaf bag face we can just barely see the thin pink ground wefts. A weft-float border of black and ivory occupies the center; red and ivory rows of twining separate the bands and edge the knotted pile area.



The back of the brocaded border.

Since brocade weavers nearly always work from the back side of the fabric, and knotted-pile weavers from the front, we sometimes find the structure of decorative brocaded bands reversed on pieces like our next example, a Gaziantep rug. We can assume that this weaver probably had some prior experience as a brocade weaver, and she apparently thought that the normal "back" was quite presentable, as long as she did not leave any loose weft ends on the front of her rug.

This odd, but not unusual practice sometimes occurs on saddlebags in which we see the back of a strip of brocading serving as the "front" of the bridge. If the brocade front actually faces outward on such a bridge, it suggests that the weaver may have gone around to the other side of the loom to do just that one bit of work, although that would not have been essential.

Gaziantep Knotted-Pile Rug

Southeastern Anatolia. 32" x 57" (223 cm x 127 cm)

SECONDARY STRUCTURE: Decorative bands of overlay-underlay brocading, with the normal "back" side used for the front. Two-color, two-span twining edges the brocading.

[DD-136. Harry Koll]



On the front surface of the Gaziantep pile rug, overlay-underlay brocading displays the face of the pattern that we normally would call the "back."

The under side of the rug, below, shows the normal "front" face of the brocading.



Jaf Kurd Saddlebag

29" x 37 1/2" (74 cm x 95 cm)

PRIMARY STRUCTURE: Symmetrical knotting, H: 4.5, V: 12, 54 per square inch. Knotting offset throughout the field to articulate diagonals. Slight warp depression.

SECONDARY STRUCTURES: Wide bands of overlay- underlay brocading on the ends of the bag faces, and also on the back, where they are bordered with weft-float patterning. These bands alternate with bands of weft-faced plain weave.

YARN SPIN: Z.

WARP: 2-ply ivory wool.

WEFT: 2 picks between rows of knots.

[FB-101. Filiberto Boncompagni]



Front and back of overlay-underlay brocading on the back of the Jaf Kurd saddlebag.

The narrow borders are weft-floating patterning.



Overlay-underlay brocading on the front (ends) of the Jaf Kurd saddlebag.



Back of the Jaf Kurd saddlebag with wide bands of overlay-underlay brocading and narrow borders of weft-float patterning.

[Back to End Finishes Page](#)

MARLA MALLETT
1690 Johnson Road NE
Atlanta, GA 30306 USA

Phone: 404-872-3356
[E-Mail: marlam@mindspring.com](mailto:marlam@mindspring.com)

Š Marla Mallett

[End Finishes Project](#)

[Woven Structures Update](#)

[HOME](#)