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Looped Wrapping

We frequently find rows of either *twining* or *soumak* wrapping at the ends of our village and nomad rugs. These constructions are not only decorative, they help to combine or separate warps, and to space them evenly across the loom. These details are often used along with warp loops or heading cords.

On the Bijar saddle cover below we see another structure-- *looped wrapping*. It is indeed unusual. At a glance it appears so much like ordinary soumak, that I suspect we have overlooked examples. I suggest that when we examine NW Persian rugs we look closely to see just where, and on what kinds of pieces, this detail appears.

In textile terminology, "loop" has a specific generic meaning: the yarn locks by crossing itself. Although the term has been used inaccurately in descriptions of various structures, in this case it applies. The yarn simultaneously wraps and locks, making a secure foundation against which to begin packing wefts.

The tiny detail below was nearly impossible to capture in a scan; the small loops behind and slightly above the large diagonal spans are hardly visible. By probing with a needle, however, the structure is easy to identify.

Bijar Saddle Cover

36" x 41" (91.5 cm. x 104 cm.). Late 19th century.

STRUCTURE: Symmetrical knots; H: 12, V: 12, 144 per square inch. (H: 47/dm, V: 47/dm, 2209 per square dm). Discontinuous wefts and weft inlays. Complete warp depression.

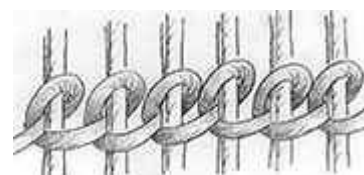
YARN SPIN: Z.

WARP: 2-ply ivory/brown wool.

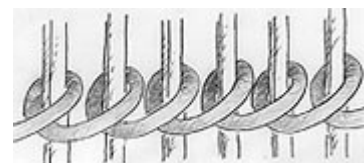
WEFT: Tan wool singles, sometimes 2 tan wool singles; 2 picks.

PILE: 1 or 2 wool singles; 3 used occasionally.

SELVAGES: Not original.



Looped wrapping



Ordinary soumak wrapping



UPPER END FINISH: Plain weave.

LOWER END FINISH: Plain weave; looped wrapping with 2 pink wool singles; plain heading cord.

[AA-70. Allan Arthur]



The *looped wrapping* in this saddle cover is directly above a plain heading cord. Details like this, with localized use, may have great diagnostic value if more examples are found. (Front)

Bijar Knotted Pile Rug. Northwestern Iran
3'6" x 7'3" (165 cm x 343 cm)

STRUCTURE: Symmetrical knots, H: 9, V: 8, 72 per square inch (H: 34/dm, V: 32/dm, 1088 per square dm). Complete warp depression.

YARN SPIN: Z.

WARP: 2-ply ivory wool.

WEFTS: Heavy 2-ply taut ivory wool alternates with 2 sinuous peach wool singles.

SELVAGES: 1 warp pair, overcast with red wool singles. The overcasting interlocks with each taut weft.

LOWER END FINISH: A wrapped heading cord is followed by a row of 4/2 soumak; then a row of looped wrapping across half the rug, with a row of 4/2 soumak on the other half. Next come countered rows of 4-span black and white twining, and two more rows of 4/2 soumak. There are no wefts in the end band, merely one heavy plain-weave pick before the knotting begins. (See the *Heading Cord* page for a back view.)

[AA-1005. Allan Arthur]





The row of red wrapping just under the black and white countered twining is *looped wrapping*. Unfortunately, it is even more difficult to see the structure in the photo here than on the saddle cover above. This specialized structure only extends across half of the rug. Two people must have been at work here...one who was familiar with this structure and thought it appropriate, and one who had other ideas. The first, third and fourth rows are all ordinary 4/2 soumak.

There are no ground wefts in this band. The heading cord has been wrapped with yarns similar to the warps.

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