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Turkotek Discussion Forums > Virtual Show and Tell
Bag Your Pardon, bumper-bottom-bags

Welcome, **Filiberto Boncompagni**.
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Virtual Show and Tell Just what the title says it is.



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April 3rd, 2020, 06:09 PM

#21

Filiberto Boncompagni
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 93



OK, if you don't mind I will post here my complete Jaff bag, even if it hasn't the pile 'skirt', because it's also interesting to compare the backs, and I find mine is very similar to Dinie's in post #2 and to Joel's #4 and #5.

It is also very heavy and shaggy, like Rich's.

The photos are old. Probably I could do better with my new camera.





April 3rd, 2020, 06:45 PM

#22

Joel Greifinger
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 68

A little Bakhtiari chanteh. If you look almost half way up the sides of the elem (I didn't want to direct anyone to "look up the skirt" 😊 😊), you can see where the fold was:



Joel



April 4th, 2020, 01:36 AM

#23

[Rich Larkin](#)

Members

Join Date: Jun 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 181

Hi Filiberto,

Can you give us measurements on that complete double bag? Approximate if you do not have it handy.

Rich



April 4th, 2020, 08:14 AM

#24

[Patrick Weiler](#)

Members

Join Date: May 2008
Posts: 72

Steve,

Thanks for magically transporting the pictures over from the Threadbare post!

Dinie, I am holding you to your promise to shred some of your collection for the Threadbare cause.

Rich, I may have been also thinking of the Kurdish pieces as generally having a lighter colored appearance. The bag I posted seems dark, with not much contrast between the colors. This piece I am posting also has a very dark field, but the white border is a bright contrast.

Filiberto,

I notice that there is brocade work at both ends of your bag. Perhaps this extra, thicker treatment also protected the most vulnerable part of the bag the same way pile elems do. And Joel's Extra-Long bag is

interesting - not quite as long as their balisht-size bags but an unusual size.

Chuck's finely woven soumak Bakhtiari bag is unusual in having a pile strip along the bottom. The one I have, and most others I recall seeing, don't have that, but they do have a very durable and thick black goat-hair covering - as seen along the sides and top of that bag.

This piece is a little survivor I acquired a number of years back from another Turkotek regular at the time. It is 19" wide by 33" tall. It looks like it is posted upside down, but this side of the khorjin was woven first. The weaver started with some small crosses, a few bubbles and botehs, then a row of shield shapes before settling into the cross-shapes at the top. The closure tabs are the "beginning" of the bag. He said that the other face was a strict and regular stepped-diamond design. I like the abstract/free-form style of this half, though. The strip shows obvious wear at the fold - especially at the corners - which would get bumped and scraped more frequently when the bags were being moved around. Which reminds me of my boss at the funeral home where I worked for a couple of years to pay for college. As we were snaking through the hallways with a nice, shiny new casket, he said "keep your hands on the corners. Because when we hit something your hands will heal up, but the casket won't."





The orange color is actually a bit more ocher in tonality. From the back you can see the floating soumak wefts - and a change in weft halfway through the pile strip - a not uncommon effect in tribal weavings.





The striped plainweave back also has a few rows of pick-and-pick in red/white and green/black to add some interest.

Patrick Weiler



April 4th, 2020, 05:31 PM

#25

[Chuck Wagner](#)

Members

Join Date: May 2008
Posts: 109

Hi all,

I'm starting to feel better about my own impressions of these two pieces now; I had always suspected that the piled sections at the bottom may have folded around to the back but hadn't seen examples.





I have a couple more Bakhtiari examples that I'll post later.

But now, I'll show you a real anomaly.

I have historically referred to this as Qashqai but I anticipate being Weiler-d shortly...:





Regards
Chuck



April 4th, 2020, 06:18 PM

#26

[Joel Greifinger](#)

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 68

Quote:

I anticipate being Weiler-d shortly...:

Chuck,

Is being "Weiler-d" the more formal version of being "Pat-ed down"? 🤔

Joel



April 4th, 2020, 11:59 PM

#27

[Andrew Leng](#)

Members

Join Date: Aug 2018
Location: Suffolk
Posts: 20

Is this a jaffa bag ?

Is this a jaffa bag?

size pile is 26in x 39in wide



Purchased at the last sale before lockdown. I was wondering what this was. I loved the look of the wool, colours and design despite the dirt and it looked truly ethnic.

It is not like the small diamond checkerboard jaffa bags but with the wonders of the internet and a timely Turkotek discussion on and the links I wondered if it is a jaffa bag.

Looking at links from the early jaffa bag discussion that Steve put up I came across two bags with chevrons: one posted there by Chuck Wagner and one on Cole's site.
<http://www.tcoletribalrugs.com/article50HopkinsJaf.html>

Cole also has a diagram which includes large diamonds that are less common about which he says "As the diamonds are enlarged, additional hooks and even concentric hooks will be added".

Then Dinie Gootjes said "chevrons. A Kurdish elem design if ever there was one" so I thought I may be on the right track.

Any ideas about the arrow design in the white border. Now I spot them on a post by Joel above of a Luri-Bakhtiari khorjin with inward pointing arrows in the red ground main border.

What is the consensus?

My offering on the question of "why the chevron at the bottom". Is it partly a smart aesthetic move to keep the perfection of the design visible when the bag is sat on the floor by the tent wall. I looked at bags and a cushion on the sofa and the bottom few inches of the design is not visible, it is tucked under and sat on by the rest of the bag.

With the bags with more ornamental bottom panels; if the bag is free standing as opposed to leaning against something it will often fall on its back. The extra knotted panel running round the corner will provide a softer edge to lean on rather than the fold and change to stiffly woven back. I have just checked this idea with a really ?fresh off the loom? modern bag that came in the lot with this ?jaffa? (it is not to bad colour wise but is bedecked with tassels and an ornamental line of dayglow green and dayglow yellow tufts at the top so it is in hiding till lockdown is over and it can make its way in the world). That woven back on a new bag is quite stiff so makes a firm line at the changeover, a folded tufted area would be softer. These bags may have more decorative woven backs if they are specially intended for used as cushions and will be moved round the tent for resting on, nice to have your best ?underwear? on show in that case.

I rest my case. For what it is worth

Last edited by Andrew Leng; April 5th, 2020 at 01:34 AM. Reason: added size



April 5th, 2020, 12:31 AM

#28

[Joel Greifinger](#)

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 68

Hi Andrew,

As you mention, your Jaf bag is of the less common variety that has only one or two large prominent diamonds. Here is another of the sort that also has a chevron elem. In this one, the two diamonds 'bleed' over into the border:



Joel



April 5th, 2020, 03:49 AM

#29

[Patrick Weiler](#)

Members

Attribution, Retribution

Chuck,

Join Date: May 2008
Posts: 72



My cursory research has shown that the "spiky leaf" border is most common in Khamseh and Afshar products. According to Patent Records from 1862, the original design has never been satisfactorily determined.

That chevron design is interestingly found in Bakhtiari work, on their tacheh bags, purportedly representing the seeds flowing out from the bag onto the fields - as shown in this piece from the Threadbare thread:





If the Kurds stole the piled elem from the Bakhtiari, they probably stole the chevron from them, too. Some historians believe that Kurds and the Bakhtiari-Lor were the same group at one time. " Michael M. Gunter states that Lur people are closely related to the Kurds but that they "apparently began to be distinguished from the Kurds 1,000 years ago. Michael M. Gunter is an authority on Kurds in Turkey and Iraq and has written seven books on the Kurdish struggle. He is a board member of the Center for Eurasian Studies."

Patrick Weiler



April 5th, 2020, 05:34 AM

#30

[Dinie](#)
[Gootjes](#)
Members

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Canada
Posts: 24

Andrew, I think your rug easily falls within what most people would call Jaff. The border is pretty unusual though, I have only five or six pictures of it, which works out to around 1%. I always wanted a Jaff with this border, but it just never happened 🙄. Here are two of the ones I found. One with a white ground border like yours, another one with also a chevron elem, and a yellow ground border.





Funny thing is that a very similar border can also be found on Khamseh rugs, right on the other side of Persia.



Rich, twice yesterday I was working on a reply to your questions, twice I had to interrupt my writing for a few hours, twice I then got the message that my "ticket had expired". That greatly tick(et)ed me off, but let's try once more.

I found two other rugs with basically the same design variant as your pair of bags and my 3D Jaff. With field and borders so similar, I would think they all come from the same area. These last two seem to be missing the quinquax border though. But there is enough similarity left.





I think that your idea that the weavers made extra sturdy bags for heavy loads makes a lot of sense. We don't carry a gallon of milk in a paper gift bag either. I have a bag face that is exceedingly heavy. The scary thing is that the pile is rather worn down on most of it. Only the (double) elem has the original thick and long pile. If the rest of the bag was of similarly heavy construction, I am for once happy that I didn't find the complete bag or even pair of bags. 🙄





April 5th, 2020, 09:03 PM

#31

[Andrew Leng](#)

Members

Join Date: Aug 2018
Location: Suffolk
Posts: 20



Dinie Thanks for your interesting reply.
First just a quickie Re losing your ticket; after reading the posts draft your reply/post in Word or some such, just as you would on the site, then log in again if it has dropped you (which it always has with me), copy and put it in the draft panel then all you have to do is check the pics look right and post.

There is a bag with a waving vine type border on white like Riches on Coles website.
<http://www.tcoletribalrugs.com/article50HopkinsJaf.html>



April 5th, 2020, 09:33 PM

#32

[Dinie Gootjes](#)

Members

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Canada
Posts: 24



Thanks, Andrew, I should do that. Just too lazy to go to Wordpad ;-).

You found Mark Hopkins' "Diamonds in the Pile" article. As far as I know the first, and one of the few, resources for Jaff bags.



April 6th, 2020, 09:39 PM

#33

[Rich Larkin](#)

Members



Join Date: Jun 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 181

Oh oh! I have been lagging behind this stuff.

Andrew, I would say there is no doubt your piece is Jaff, and a very nice one, too. For me, the clincher in judging whether these kinds of bags are the real McCoy, given that the basic indicia (mostly, diamonds in the field and certain borders) are there, is the use by the weaver of offset knotting, chiefly where there are diagonal lines. That technique allows for sharp delineation. The Mark Hopkins article from Tom Cole's site (more remotely from *Oriental Rug Review*) describes the phenomenon technically. Given that criterion, one notes that the range of texture and, to some extent, palette, among all Jaff bags is quite broad. Nevertheless, we (or I, at least) call them all "Jaff."

Dinie, thanks for bird-dogging all that. Some nice things there. Truly,

Quote:

You are the Queen of Jaffs!



The examples you show in comparison with my large double bag reflect what I was talking about in terms of that field layout. Not necessarily one red diamond within a frame of blue diamonds, but that general framework approach, and with red and blue the dominant colors used. Here is an example that you may recognize, given that you helped me with it logistically, dealer not-to-be-named under the prevailing rules!



I suppose that reflects some connection among the weavers of those pieces within the larger Jaff context, whatever that was. Certainly, it is true that there is a broader range of heft and texture and general feel among the Jaff bag *oeuvre* than virtually any other group of weavings that tend to go under a single label.

Chuck, I really like that little non-Qashqai 😊 you posted. The neat feature is that the back looks completely different from the front, almost as though a foreign back was sewn on (I know that wasn't the case), mostly because the weaver consciously eschewed the many skeins of madder-red that were right in front of her when working that part of the piece. Marvelous discipline there.

The palette on that back section brings to mind the first Jaffs I ever encountered, that continue to haunt me. I am not necessarily suggesting a connection with your khorjin (chanteh?); just that the yellow/light green palette evokes one of them.

It was over fifty years ago, and a picker of my acquaintance brought two pieces to me that in retrospect I realize were Jaffs, though I had never heard of the type at the time (when I was quite green as a ruggie). Both were small and delicate in a format of width exceeding height, one by a factor of about 1 X 1.5. and the other about 1 X 1.8. The smaller one was about ten inches in height, the other about a foot. It was clear they were closely related in provenance because of the foundation materials and weave, and the design, which was classic Jaff diamonds in the field, the proportion of them being similar to the pieces themselves, i. e., flattened.

Two other factors stood out about these two weavings. One was that they had completely different palettes. The other was that they evidently had possessed considerable black pile that had virtually completely disappeared, exposing the foundations of light straw-colored wool. In both of them, the black had served as the base color of the field, which had become straw. It seemed to me that the black wool had been on the high end of corrosive and had largely disappeared, and that someone had subsequently finished the job by picking out the vestiges of any black that remained. There were just a few black knots in the smaller piece that still sat buried in the border, and they were very glossy and very black.

The palette of the smaller piece was dominated by deep indigo and a fairly comparable deep wine color. This made me speculate that piece at least was Baluch. On the other hand, the second larger piece had a palette with a tone very similar to the back of Chuck's bag, i. e., warm light green and yellow. There were other colors as well, but no darks to speak of (excepting the late lamented black of the case).

I have been looking ever since for pieces that seemed to be close relations of the two pieces without success. Though the size formats and delicacy are not so common within the genre, there is no doubt they were Jaffs, and related to one another. That being so, it was remarkable how different the palettes were. I took the scarcity of the type to be an indication of age. I mention it here at great length in case one of our faithful readers is fortunate to trip over another example or two.

BTW, that picker wanted a price not too far above a hundred bucks for the pair back then. With all that black pile gone, I thought they were too expensive. See references above to "green ruggie" and "continuous



haunting."
Rich



April 6th, 2020, 09:57 PM

#34

[Joel Greifinger](#)
Administrator

Sanjabi too

Lest we cede the Kurdish skirts to the Jaf, here is a characteristic Sanjabi Kurdish chuval with elem:

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 68



This common pattern is almost always in the same color combination. Here is one of the few exceptions I've seen:



Joel



April 6th, 2020, 10:45 PM

#35

[Rich Larkin](#)
Members

Join Date: Jun 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 181



Good, Joel. I have been trying to come up with "Sanjabi" all week, and somehow producing "Sanandaj," demonstrating how truly corrosive these exercises can be.

Dollars to donuts, there is some reciprocal overlap of provenance between the alleged "Jaffs" and "Sanjabis." We will probably never know.



April 7th, 2020, 12:16 AM

#36

[Joel Greifinger](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 68



Quote:

Dollars to donuts, there is some reciprocal overlap of provenance between the alleged "Jaffs" and "Sanjabis."

Rich,

According to a number of sources, the Jaf and much smaller Sanjabi groups live adjacent to each other at the Iraq-Iran border. Given the wide variety of technical features in bags that are attributed as Jaf, as well as the variations in those called Sanjabi, it is very likely that there is more than a bit of overlap. Even bags with the design of these Sanjabi chuvals that, at least since O'Bannon's speculations, have been seen as quintessentially Sanjabi, are found with quite different weaves and weft colors.

A question that has interested me for a while is: when did the bags with diamond fields utilizing offset knotting come to be called Jaf?

I had been looking for something in Jim (PRJ) Ford's "Oriental Carpet Design" when I came across this: "The carpet trade employs almost exclusively five names only for the very wide range of products of Persian Kurdistan: Senneh(...); Bijar(...); Kakaberu(...); Kolyai(...); and Senjabi (another tribal name) for several not precisely defined types from the south of the region, reaching down into Luristan."

Elsewhere in the book, he shows a typical diamond bag face and identifies it as Senjabi and in another section he wrote: "Senjabi is the name of one of the southernmost Kurdish tribes, but it is used rather loosely in the carpet trade to describe a range of tribal or village types of the Kermanshah area. The warmth of the colouring, the light brownish shade of the red and a single-wefted construction on woolen warps are typical Senjabi features."

It set me to wondering, when did the diamond bags now typically identified as Jaf in the market and the rug literature "become" Jaf in the minds of dealers and collectors. Back when Jacobsen wrote of having sold tens of thousands of them, he referred to them merely as "Kurdistan Saddlebags". For Ford, in 1981, they were Senjabi. Jenny Housego (1978) mentions that the bags were called Sanjabi in Iran, but sold as Jafs in Baghdad.

The turning point seems to have been the publication of "Discoveries from Kurdish Looms" with Eagleton's essay on "The Weavings of Iraqi Kurdistan" in 1983. There he wrote, "Only occasionally has a Jaf rug been found recently in the Baghdad bazaar. Far more important are the pile saddle bags, often having hooked diamond medallions. These are the descendants of the bags transported to the United States by the thousands from Iran and Iraq in the early 1920's."

Now all of the Kurdish bags with diamond field designs get called Jaf, whatever the weave, wefts, pile length, etc.

For me, the pieces that fit together best under the Sanjabi heading have weaves that look and feel sort of like these:





Joel



April 7th, 2020, 02:37 AM

#37

[Patrick Weiler](#)

Members

Join Date: May 2008
Posts: 72

 Spiky likes it

Chuck,

Here is my Afshar (or Khamseh) bag with not only the same spiky-flower border, but identical minor borders and even the same mini-boteh designs as your bag. These mini-botehs consist of four diamonds and a tiny cross for a foot on some of them. There is a red dye in some of the spiky flowers that is faded on the front, so it was likely an unstable synthetic dye.



These may have come from a related weaving group. I have only seen this spiky-flower border on Afshar or Khamseh pieces. The central design of your bag looks convincingly Khamseh or even Luri (which was a component of Khamseh groups). You don't mention structure, but my piece has fully depressed warps, found in

Khamseh and Afshar work.

The only thing Qashqai-looking to me is that light blue/black pile bumper strip - but I think the Khamseh "did" light blue as well as anyone.

Patrick Weiler



April 7th, 2020, 04:33 AM

#38

[Patrick Weiler](#)

Members

Join Date: May 2008
Posts: 72

 Almost bumper bottom bag

Joel,

Both of those Sanjabi pieces do appear to be single wefted. My Jaf is double wefted, but now you are forcing me to dig deeper into my pile to find the couple of other Jaf pieces to see how they are put together!

In response to Chuck's post #8 showing a Bakhtiari soumak bag with a strip of pile at the bottom, here is one where a small amount of the pile front is folded over at the bottom, though likely not intentionally as a buffer strip.





Usually, these bags have soumak on both sides, which is the way another piece of mine is constructed. If I am lucky, that one will be next to the Jafs!

Patrick Weiler



April 7th, 2020, 04:57 AM

#39

[Joel Greifinger](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 68

Quote:

I have only seen this spiky-flower border on Afshar or Khamseh pieces.

Pat,

Not Qashqa'i?



Joel



April 7th, 2020, 05:05 AM

#40

Chuck Wagner

Members

Join Date: May 2008
Posts: 109



Hi Pat, Joel,

A quick post with an image to ponder. I have a saddle pad with this border that has full depression, which I have tentatively classified as Afshar. I'll put that up here tomorrow after I have a chance to go over the comments above.

But the bag above ? Regardez:



Regards
Chuck



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