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 **Kuhi khorjin?**

Welcome, [Filiberto Boncompagni](#).  
You last visited: October 14th, 2015 at 03:38 PM  
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### Virtual Show and Tell Just what the title says it is.



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September  
15th,  
2015,  
05:31 AM

#41

[Patrick Weiler](#)  
Members

Join Date:  
May 2008  
Posts: 115

 **Extraction or distraction?**

Joel, you asked how the "Baluch "star-in-octagon" bag design fits the 'single-gul bag extracted from lattice rug".  
In an exhaustively researched google study, I have imaginatively traced the design from the Baluch star octagon to the Salor lattice.  
Granted, the octagon design has been used by many tribes for centuries. Can the para-Mamlukes be wedged into the timeline? Sure, why not, along with the Holbein version. Whether or not any lineage is direct or peripatetic is uncertain.  
Rugrabbit:



© rugrabbit

Jozan 2009 Ron Hort piece:



Spongobongo:



jozan Ron Hort



Steppemagazine:



Hali:



There, that ought to comprehensively elaborate on the exact and conclusive relationships.



Patrick Weiler



September  
15th, 2015,  
09:26 PM

#42

[Joel Greifinger](#)  
Members



Hi Pat,

Join Date: May  
2008  
Location:  
Massachusetts  
Posts: 103

Quote:

In an exhaustively researched google study, I have imaginatively traced the design from the Baluch star octagon to the Salor lattice.

Uh...OK 🙄👍

Sometimes, the process appears to go the other way. Both Afshar and Kurdish weavers have produced bags with a field design that was extracted from herati-pattern rugs and geometricized. In some instances, the extracted versions are reinserted into the larger rug format as a repeating pattern.

This first Afshar rug is particularly notable because it is dated 1245 (1829-1830). It suggests that perhaps the Afshar were contemporaneously producing khorjin with this pattern:





Here is another rug and a bag face from probably a half century or so later:





The 'Baluch' also occasionally pull this reversal. Many of them, as the last three below, are symmetrically knotted:











Joel

*Last edited by Joel Greifinger; September 18th, 2015 at 03:46 PM.*





September  
23rd, 2015,  
05:08 AM

#43

[Joel Greifinger](#)

Members

Join Date: May  
2008  
Location:  
Massachusetts  
Posts: 103



Hi all,

A thoughtful 'Baluch' collector has sent this picture of a bag face from his collection that is quite interesting in the context of the design of the 'Kuhi' bags that have been the focus of this thread. A number of contributors have drawn attention to the 'Baluch' resonance with these pieces starting with Filiberto's response to the opening posting. Some of the bags have been marketed and sold as Baluch.




The bag was previously published as the cover photo of *Oriental Rug Review* Vol. 9 No. 2. It was attributed to the "Turshish or Nishapur area" (i.e. northern Khorasan).



Joel

Last edited by Joel Greifinger; September 23rd, 2015 at 05:32 AM.



  
 September  
 23rd,  
 2015,  
 06:58 PM

#44

[Patrick Weiler](#)  
 Members

 You need new glasses

Joel,

Join Date:  
 May 2008  
 Posts: 115

These are two different bag faces.  
 Specifically, note the two birds appearing at the bottom of the published piece, at either side of the bottom of the medallion. In the posted piece, there are two S shapes in this location. Also, the latch-hooks surrounding the medallion do not match up and the direction of the "endless knots" differs between the two pieces.

Interesting pieces, though.

Patrick Weiler

*Last edited by Patrick Weiler; September 23rd, 2015 at 07:02 PM. Reason: Hooked*



September 23rd, 2015, 09:04 PM

#45

[Joel Greifinger](#)

Members

Join Date: May 2008  
Location: Massachusetts  
Posts: 103

**My optometrist keeps telling me I need new glasses (?)**

Quote:

You need new glasses

Quote:

These are two different bag faces.

Pat,

Well, obviously! That is, now that you mention it. 🙄

The collector who sent me the image of his bag face passed along the ORR cover citation. I guess I should have looked a bit more closely before excitedly posting. 🙄

On the good side, now we've got two examples of these interesting pieces.



Joel



September 24th, 2015, 03:57 AM

#46

[Dinie Gootjes](#)

Members

Join Date: May 2008  
Location: Canada  
Posts: 28

Hi Joel,

Now that we know what OOR said about the cover piece, do you know whether your collector considers his piece Baluch or something else? Can you get a picture of the back? Interesting pieces in this context.

## Dinie



September  
29th, 2015,  
05:06 PM

#47

[James  
Blanchard](#)

Members

Join Date: Jun  
2008  
Posts: 14



Quote:

Originally Posted by **Dinie Gootjes**

*Hi Joel,*

*Now that we know what OOR said about the cover piece, do you know whether your collector considers his piece Baluch or something else? Can you get a picture of the back? Interesting pieces in this context.*

*Dinie*

Hi Dinie,

On first glance, I would probably attribute that rug to the "Khamseh confederation", or another tribe in that domain. It doesn't look "Baluch" to me.

James



September  
30th, 2015,  
05:15 AM

#48

[Joel  
Greifinger](#)

Members

Join Date: May  
2008  
Location:  
Massachusetts  
Posts: 103



Hi Dinie and James,

Though I haven't asked the owner of the bag face, I'm fairly sure that he considers it to be 'Baluch'. The similar one on the cover of ORR 9/2 was clearly considered 'Baluch' by George O'Bannon who chose to put it on the cover of an issue with an explicit 'Baluch' theme.

From another quarter is this related design on a bag face on the cover of Hali #86 (May 1996). It was published in *Oriental Rugs from Pacific Collections*, the catalogue from the 1990 ICOC in San Francisco (#66, p.92). The description there reads, "Persian Bagface, probably Karadagh region, 19th century" and cites its "strong Turkic feeling."



Joel



October 11th, 2015, 06:31 PM

#49

[Rich Larkin](#)  
Members



Hi Folks,

Join Date: Jun 2008  
Location: Massachusetts  
Posts: 38

Getting back in the thread by several frames, here's another khorjin evidently from the Jabal Barezi. If I hadn't already been convinced they weren't 'Baluch,' I knew it when I picked up the box it came in: It was too heavy for a Baluch khorjin.



This one obviously omits the star surrounding the para-mamluk device. (Aside to Dinie: How did you find that? Aside to Joel: How did it survive to these khorjins?) It also features a flatwoven back. Quaere whether these features

differentiate the piece from the ones with the star and the piled back in any particular respect. Age? Provenance? Etc. Who knows?

It has a solid, robust character as a rustic weaving. An average density of 80 symmetrical kpsi (8.25H x 9.75V) with nearly fully depressed warps. Wefts are white wool, one shot per shed with two sheds worth between each horizontal row of knots. Each such shot seems to consist of two strands of yarn.



All in all, the weave character and balance is distinctive, providing a good quick reference point in assessing these pieces.

One especially interesting characteristic of the piece is the selvage finish.



I won't play the fool here and try to analyze it in full technical fashion, as my

pay grade does not allow that. 🌩️🌂👉 As can be seen, there are a few extra flourishes included in the process. The first thing to be noted is that the weaver included a substantial bundle of supplementary edge warps to be wrapped. The wrapping material is pile yarn beefed up into multi-stranded lengths, which can be seen in a careful look at the image. Also visible in the image is the fact that the selvage-wrapping material is given a special twist where it adjoins the edge of the pile area before it is brought over the warp bundle to the outer edge, where a more elaborate twist is executed. (I hope Marla is being spared this description. 😊 ) Certainly, the weavers of these pieces devoted quite a bit of attention to the technique used in these finishes, in contrast to the comparatively casual approach to edge finishes of most khorjins.

The distinctive appearance of the outer selvages is reminiscent of practice sometimes encountered in Kurdish weavings. The following piece I take to be East Anatolian Kurdish, though we would have called it "Yoruk" thirty-five years ago.





It has a selvage treatment that resembles that of the Kuhi khorjin.



I didn't attempt to compare them in technical detail, nor do I suggest anything like a direct connection between the weavers.

Rich



October 11th, 2015, 07:43 PM

#50

[Patrick Weiler](#)  
Members

At your service

Rich,

Join Date: May 2008  
Posts: 115

The closest analog to that selvage treatment discussed by Marla in Woven Structures as an overcast selvage. She notes, describing a southwest Persian piece, that the "Two yarns of each color, however, wrap from opposite directions to form rough horizontal banding on one face, crisscrossing colors on the other." And "Sometimes similar two-color overcasting appears that is more widely spaced, with the two pairs of yarns carefully crossed on the edge instead of the front or back. This produces a neat braided look." There, that should clear things up a bit.



Patrick Weiler



October 11th, 2015,

#51

08:08 PM

[Rich Larkin](#)

Members

Join Date: Jun 2008  
Location: Massachusetts  
Posts: 38

 **Clear as mud, but it covers the ground....**

Quote:

There, that should clear things up a bit.

A lot, actually. Marla's describing the Kuhi selvage to a T. I can't say I recall it coming up in South Persian pieces, but maybe so. Interestingly, the remote,



heretofore unknown (to YHS ) Kuhi trace out to South Persian roots as well as any. Weaving-wise, I'm saying.



October 12th, 2015, 01:35 AM

#52

[Rich Larkin](#)

Members

Join Date: Jun 2008  
Location: Massachusetts  
Posts: 38



Hi Folks,

Well, old age is a fearful thing. The manifestation this time is, I said the knots on that Kuhi Khorjin were asymmetrical. Oh boy! They are SYMMETRICAL. That was what we call a *thinko*, as contrasted with a *typo*. 😊

The other thing was that I referred to the edge finish on the khorjin as "selvage." The correct term is "join," courtesy of my friend, Joel. Of course, we are speaking of the sewing-up of a bag, not the edge finish on a rug. I hope nobody has been permanently damaged.

Rich



October 12th, 2015, 03:06 AM

#53

[Joel Greifinger](#)

Members

Join Date: May 2008  
Location: Massachusetts  
Posts: 103



Quote:

we are speaking of the sewing-up of a bag, not the edge finish on a rug. I hope nobody has been permanently damaged.

Hi Rich,

I'm pretty sure that your rapid correction has averted permanent damage. Only time will tell. 😊

Unlike selvages which are edges where wefts reverse direction, joins are assembled using a needle after the bag has been removed from the loom. The joins on your bag look to me like what Marla describes in *Woven Structures* as "two-color looped chain stitch" (WS 16.17 & 16.20, p. 159).

I think these joins from an Afshar bag that I have are of the same type:





Joel



October  
12th, 2015,  
04:08 AM

#54

[Rich Larkin](#)  
Members



Hi Joel,

Join Date: Jun 2008  
Location: Massachusetts  
Posts: 38

Amazing. Have you seen this particular style of finish ("join") often? I immediately dredged up my two Afshar chantehs to see whether I'd been overlooking the "joinery," but it was a different approach. Can you show the rest of the piece?

Rich



October 12th, 2015, 05:47 PM

#55

[Joel Greifinger](#)  
Members



Hi Rich,

Join Date: May 2008  
Location: Massachusetts  
Posts: 103

This style of two-color chain stitch join looks to be a frequent feature in these 'Kuhi' khorjin in both pile-back and plainweave-back versions. In these two, the alternating colors are black/white, as in the join I showed in the earlier post:





In this pile-backed double khorjin, it's red/blue like on your bag:



As for the piece that the join I showed earlier is from, it's a different sort of Afshar-related bag with clear 'Baluch' influences. But that, as they say, is another story. 🐫🔨🍷



Joel



October 12th, 2015, 06:58 PM

#56

[Rich Larkin](#)



Hi Joel,



Members

Join Date: Jun 2008  
Location: Massachusetts  
Posts: 38

Quote:

This style of two-color chain stitch join looks to be a frequent feature in these 'Kuhi' khorjin in both pile-back and plainweave-back versions.

Right! That was sort of my underlying point. I don't recall having encountered it in weavings assumedly from elsewhere.

That leads me to wonder how you came to the Afshar attribution on your handsome double set. Except that it has no Crivelli star nor any para Mamluk medallion, isn't it dripping with Kuhi-ness? Should we play the Afshar-i-Kuhi card? That would eliminate the need to posit one of those untidy inter-tribal marriage theories. 😊

BTW, my example also features the black and white closure loops as in your neat 9 x 8-pointed star model. How about a look at the back of the pile side?

Rich



October 12th, 2015, 07:11 PM

#57

[Rich Larkin](#)  
Members



Hi Joel,

Join Date: Jun 2008  
Location: Massachusetts  
Posts: 38

BTW2, I'm being a smart Alec here 🙄, but in truth, it doesn't seem that the various theories and attributions that you've assembled most admirably in this thread amount to much more than educated guesswork in the face of something new. My own sense of it is the ubiquitous and prolific Afshar tribe is right in the thick of all of it.

Rich



October 12th, 2015, 10:16 PM

#58

[Joel Greifinger](#)  
Members



Quote:

I'm being a smart Alec here, but in truth, it doesn't seem that the various theories and attributions that you've assembled most

Location:  
Massachusetts  
Posts: 103

admirably in this thread amount to much more than educated guesswork in the face of something new.

Rich,

I heartily agree (that you're being a smart Alec, that is 🤡).

The feature that sent me on this quest to differentiate what might well be viewed as a distinctive group of *Afshar* saddlebags was the presence of full-pile backs in a subset of them. Such pile backs on khorjin are, as far as I know, unique to this subset of these bags.

As I quoted earlier, a number of commentators who bother to mention Jabalbarezi weavers and their "Kuhi" products (e.g., Peter Stone in his *Lexicon*) specifically cite that their "saddlebags are woven with pile on both faces." Others, like Tanavoli (arguably the most knowledgeable writer on Afshar weaving) point to the overall similarities of 'Afshar-e-Kuhi' (a/k/a Kuhi) rugs woven by Jabalbarezi to those made by their Afshar neighbors. But Tanavoli also writes of Afshar khorjin, "The back of every *khorjin* is in plain *gelim*-weave and the colors are red and reddish-brown, occasionally in stripes." This adds to the sense that the pile-back on some of these 'Kuhi' bags marks not just a specific set of Afshar bags, but rather the work of Afshar-influenced Kerman weavers who are partial to a surprising archaic design (the para-Mamluk strapwork star) and uniquely, fully pile the backs of some of their bags (unlike their Afshar neighbors or anyone else, for that matter).

I'm just trying to get the Jabalbarezi into the conversation. And, if we're talking about tribal rugs, eschewing "educated guesswork" merely seems an



invitation to silence.

Quote:

This style of two-color chain stitch join looks to be a frequent feature in these 'Kuhi' khorjin in both pile-back and plainweave-back versions.

Right! That was sort of my underlying point. I don't recall having encountered it in weavings assumedly from elsewhere.

Here it is in a namakdan attributed by Tanavoli to the Afshar in the Sirjan area. It appears in both Wertime's article on Kerman flatweaves and in Tanavoli's *Afshar* book:



Joel

*Last edited by Joel Greifinger; October 12th, 2015 at 11:45 PM. Reason: More evidence to enhance the "educated guesswork".*



October 14th, 2015, 03:52 AM

#59

[Rich Larkin](#)  
Members



**I guess you can!**

Hi Joel,

Join Date: Jun 2008  
Location: Massachusetts  
Posts: 38

Quote:

I'm just trying to get the Jabalbarezzi into the conversation. And, if we're talking about tribal rugs, eschewing "educated guesswork" merely seems an invitation to silence.

I wasn't referring to *you* on the "educated guesswork" front. You get the gold star for pulling this stuff out in the open.   What I'm trying to do is figure out who the "guessed" weavers are. Rereading the thread and the various links, I can't be sure whether the Afshar-e-Kuhi are the weavings or the weavers. For example, in frame 1, Austin Doyle is quoted as saying, "The Kuhi have a unique khorjin in which the front and back are both piled." This is in a context of equating "Kuhi" with "Afshar-e Kuhi." In addition, in frame 4, either Doyle or his cohort Seidman seems to be referencing Afshar-e-Kuhi and "other Afshar" as though the terms describe groups. Keeping in mind that the Afshar are in large measure Turkish speakers, and the Jabal Barezi are reportedly Persian speakers, and that the bags we are talking about are Turkish knotted, I am wary of accepting the attribution to the latter group without more specific and definite information. I don't discern a firm foundation among the various spokespersons on this matter. Rug commentary historically is replete with writers dismissing the conjectures of others, then making up their own stories. Note that in the Wertime article on salt bags, he emphasizes the difficulty in confidently attributing the various examples in that format. I suspect the same obtains with the khorjins.

Can you post a nice close-up of the back of the pile face on your khorjin with the nine stars? I would think you would have some reservation about the attribution of that one in light of what you have been able to pull together here.

Rich



October 14th, 2015, 06:10 PM

#60

[Joel Greifinger](#)

Members  
 Join Date: May 2008  
 Location: Massachusetts  
 Posts: 103

Quote:

What I'm trying to do is figure out who the "guessed" weavers are. Rereading the thread and the various links, I can't be sure whether the Afshar-e-Kuhi are the weavings or the weavers...Keeping in mind that the Afshar are in large measure Turkish speakers, and the Jabal Barezi are reportedly Persian speakers, and that the bags we are talking about are Turkish knotted, I am wary of accepting the attribution to the latter group without more specific and definite information. I don't discern a firm foundation among the various spokespersons on this matter.

Rich,

Perhaps some review might be helpful.

Parviz Tanavoli in *Afshar: Tribal Weaves from Southeast Iran*:

"The word 'Kuhi' is neither the name of a place nor a tribe. This word is derived from the word "kuh", meaning "mountain", and it refers to people who live in the mountains. In the culture of the Kerman carpet, however, the word has a special meaning and refers to a particular group of carpets...On the east side of Jiroft and the Esfandaquh plain, there is a mountain range called Jabalbarez. These mountains are a continuation of the Hezar and Lalehzar mountains where the Afshars live...Jabalbarezi no longer the land of the Afshars, but is inhabited by another tribe, which is known by the same name as the mountain. The Jabalbarezis are native to Kerman province and are divided into different clans...Kuhi carpets are called "Afshar-e-Kuhi" and greatly depend on Afshar culture. Yet no trace of Afshar people can be found in the list of the Jabalbarezis, which is estimated to comprise at least seventeen clans.

Peter Stone in *The Oriental Rug Lexicon*:

**Kuhi** (Persian, "montagnard, from the mountains") - Rugs are tied with the symmetric knot, double-vented and with offset warps. Saddlebags are woven with pile on both faces.

Wikipedia:

The Jebal Barez is a mountain chain in the Kerman Province of Iran. This mountain range stretches for some 100 km north-west to south-east, parallel to the Halil Rud, to the north-east of Jiroft and to the south-west of Bam, rising to a maximal elevation of 3,750 m. The mountains of this range are continued by other mountains such as Mount Shahsavaran and Mount Hudian to the south-east. They separate the plain of Hamun-e Jaz Murian from that of Namakzar-e Shahdad and Lut desert.

In panel #30 of this thread, in response to your question about the Jabalbarezis:

In one of the articles on Kerman in the Encyclopedia Iranica (<http://www.iranicaonline.org/article...-03-population>), there are statistics on the tribal population in the province overall and in the sub-provinces. Using the definition of the Iran government census for which groups are considered "tribal", the three largest tribal population groups in Kerman Province are Jebālbārezi, Baluch, and Afšār. This is the only mention of the Jebālbārezi in that, or any article in the Encyclopedia Iranica, including in its very extensive and informative article on tribes in Iran, "Asayer" (<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/asayer-tribes>).

In Richard Tapper's introductory essay in Tapper and Thompson's *The Nomadic Peoples of Iran*, there is a very useful discussion of the confusing conflation of nomadism, pastoralism and tribalism in much of the discussion of "tribes" in Iran. The main census classification has been according to political and administrative units with each il (i.e., tribe or people) divided into smaller tayfeh based on kinship and social/political ties. The Jebālbārezi are counted among the 17 "major il" in the census. They are the twelfth in

size, more numerous than the Afshar, Kurds or Baluch in Iran. In the map on the book's frontispiece, the Jebālbārezi are named as a group of "Iranic-speaking nomads". Tanavoli writes that the different clans of the Jebālbārezi are native to Kerman Province.

Quote:

Rug commentary historically is replete with writers dismissing the conjectures of others, then making up their own stories.

Yes. That's why I've tried to base my explicitly tentative 'Kuhi' attribution for these bags on the work of the most authoritative sources available in the published literature. I wrote previously that Parviz Tanavoli is arguably the most knowledgeable writer on tribal weaving from Kerman. His *Afshar* book was based on "hundreds of field trips and studies" (p. 7). The fact that other commentators (e.g. Doyle and/or Seidman) may sometimes conflate the product (Kuhi weavings) with their makers (Jabalbarezi tribespeople who *are* Kuhi, i.e., mountain dwellers) shouldn't lead to any diminution of the credibility of Tanavoli's formulations. While not based in first-hand field study, I consider Peter Stone's work to be based on careful research and not prone to either conspicuous conjecture or "making up stories". Perhaps I am being too credulous, but I think that Tanavoli and Stone are both credible sources.

You note that these bags are symmetrically knotted and the Jabalbarezi are Persian speakers. Given the acknowledged influence of Afshar weaving on this group, I don't think this poses much of a problem for attributing these bags as Kuhi. In Tanavoli's structural study of twenty five rugs from the nineteenth century that he attributes as Afshar (i.e., Turkish-speakers) five are Persian (i.e., asymmetrically) knotted. As he notes, "Many people, such as Kurds, Lors, and Bakhtiari, who weave their rugs with symmetrical (Turkish) knots, are in fact of Iranian origin, and, in contrast, some Turkoman groups whose rugs are woven with asymmetrical (Persian) knots are of Turkish descent." (p. 32)

Quote:

Can you post a nice close-up of the back of the pile face on your khorjin with the nine stars? I would think you would have some reservation about the attribution of that one in light of what you have been able to pull together here.

I posted the join from that bag to illustrate the two-color chain stitch on an Afshar khorjin. How would the weave structure of that piece lead to reservations about attributing it as Afshar based upon my description of the features of this group of 'Kuhi' khorjin? 🤔

Joel





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Virtual Show and Tell

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