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Jaf Kurd Bagface

Welcome, [Filiberto Boncompagni](#).
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Virtual Show and Tell Just what the title says it is.



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October 2nd, 2020,
07:56 PM

#1

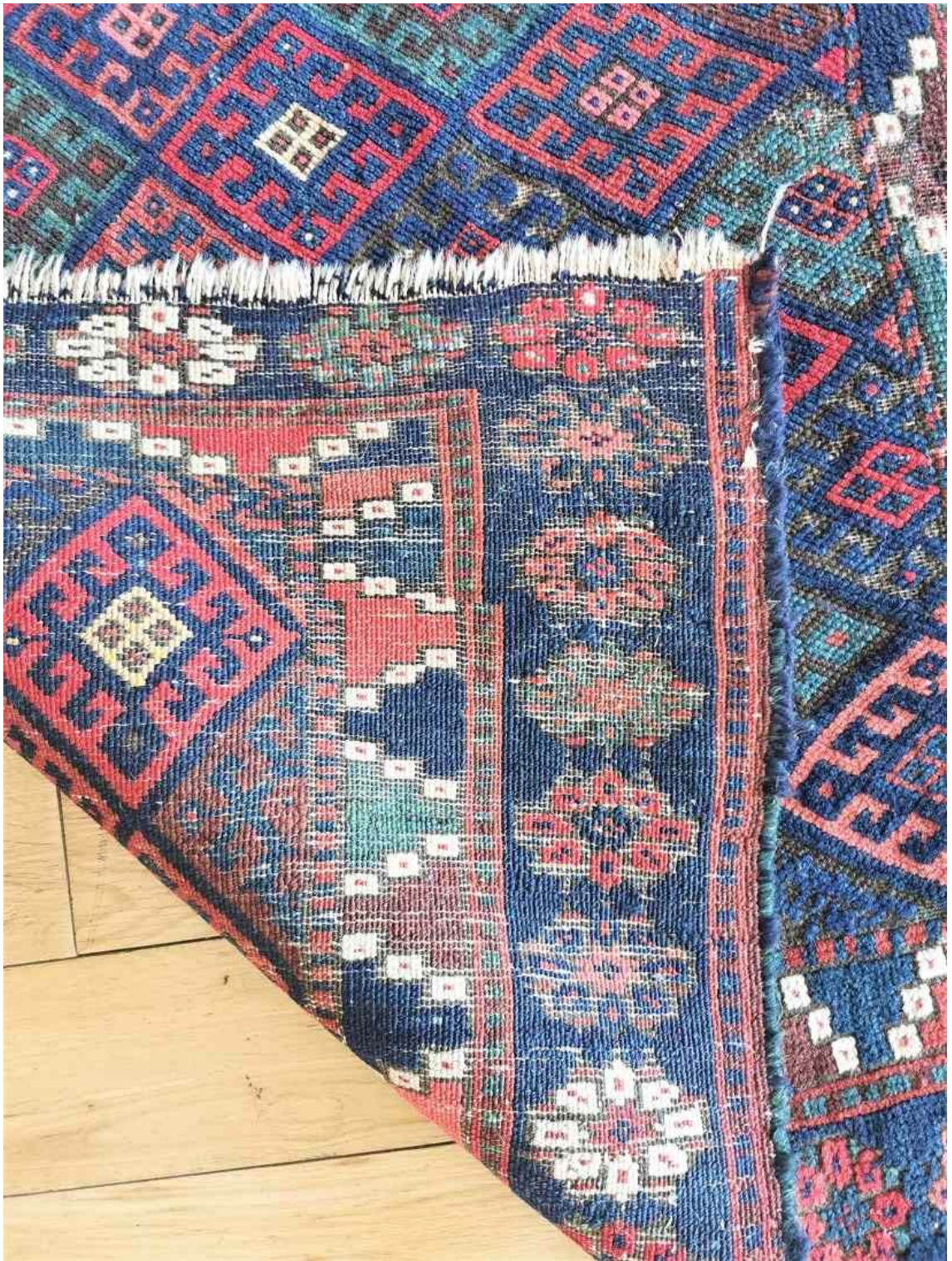
[Gerry Gorman](#)
Members

Jaf Kurd Bagface

Join Date: May 2009
 Location: Wicklow Ireland
 Posts: 3

I thought to show you my Jaf Kurd bagface. Dimensions are 3' 1" X 2' 6". You'll notice the evidence of the chevron kilim edge. Nice colours, one or two holes but overall in pretty good nick. Doesn't have the regular standout central motif but still I think nice. What age would you reckon... late 19th Century??







Thanks for looking

Gerry



October 3rd, 2020, 03:53 PM

#2

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 116



Hi Gerry,

As far as I know there aren't established criteria for judging the age of a Jaff Kurd bagface.

If you don't know it already, here is the link to the seminal article "Diamonds in the Pile" by Mark Hopkins:

<http://www.tcoletribalrugs.com/article50HopkinsJaf.html>

Where you can find more information about them.

Yours seems a good one with nice colors, so why worry about its age?

For your enjoyment, here there are a couple of threads of old discussions on Jaff Bags:

http://www.turkotek.com/salon_00088/s88t6.htm

http://www.turkotek.com/misc_00078/jaff.htm

Regards,

Filiberto



October 4th, 2020, 12:09 AM

#3

[Joel Greifinger](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 118



Hi Gerry,

Early this year before the pandemic hit, I led a rug society meeting where forty or so participants were shown pairs of Jaf Kurdish bag faces and asked to compare and rate them. There were two categories of criteria. The first, "color considerations" included choice of colors, juxtaposition of colors, saturation and use of abrash. The second, "drawing considerations", included field designs, border designs, juxtapositions within the field, juxtapositions between field and borders, balance, eye movement and symmetry/dynamism.

Each bag face was paired with another that was of a similar type within the Jaf design pool. So, for instance, your bag:



could be paired with this one (from one of James Cohen's Jaf exhibitions):



or perhaps this one:



This Jaf that I got recently:



might be paired with this other ivory 'S' border example (published by Cohen):



The pattern of responses at the meeting was quite interesting. While all were members of the rug society, the group had eight or nine participants who were very experienced dealers, museum curators and collectors. The largest differences in the evening's ratings came between those folks, as a group, and the others on a number of pieces that drew polarized responses.

Quote:

You'll notice the evidence of the chevron kilim edge.

The chevron 'elem' on your bag looks to be pile, not flat woven (kilim).

Joel Greifinger



October 6th, 2020, 03:00 PM

#4

[Gerry Gorman](#)
Members

Join Date: May 2009
Location: Wicklow Ireland
Posts: 3

Jaff Kurd bagface

Thanks Joel, the comparison study you mentioned is interesting and it would have been nice to see how my bagface would have been received. I also agree with Filiberto, I bought the bagface because of it's simple beauty and striking colours not because it was old though I am always curious of age as it gives me a reference point if I am doing more research.

Regards

Gerry



October 7th, 2020, 05:18 AM

#5

[Dinie Gootjes](#)
Members

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Canada
Posts: 43

Joel, you mention that there were two groups in that rug society meeting, with very different opinions on certain pairs of bags. Could you elaborate on that? Can you describe the difference between the more experienced group and the other participants? Was there anything particular that one group prized more than the others? Maybe you can give a few examples?



October 7th, 2020, 06:14 PM

#6

[Joel Greifinger](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 118



Hi Dinie,

All of those in attendance were members of the rug society, so were interested in and appreciated rugs and textiles. Most would not consider themselves collectors though they own some, usually decorative, rugs. There was also a small group of dealers, textile curators and collectors with many years of experience with tribal and village weavings.

This is the pair of bag faces that saw the largest gap in ratings between the two groups. They were introduced as having elements that made them "wonky" in their own ways:



This pair also split along the same lines, but not as dramatically:



October 10th, 2020, 05:27 AM

#7

[Dinie Gootjes](#)
Members

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Canada
Posts: 43



Hi Joel,

Now you are making me even more curious. If I look at the first pair, I would go for the left one

without any doubt. Wonkier than wonky, but in a glorious way.



October 10th, 2020, 09:46 AM

#8

[Filiberto](#)
[Boncompagni](#)

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 116

Hi Dinie,

If wonkiness is the criteria, I have to agree with you. Plus, it has attractive colors.

Filiberto



October 10th, 2020, 03:19 PM

#9

[Joel Greifinger](#)

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 118

Quote:

If wonkiness is the criteria

Hi Filiberto,

At the rug society meeting, 'wonkiness' wasn't the criterion for rating these two, it was how they were paired as a similar type. The criteria were still color and drawing.

As a judge, does that impact your evaluation? The rating scale was 1 to 5 in each of the two categories, using the criteria I listed a few posts back. What would you give them? 🤔

Joel



October 10th, 2020, 03:52 PM

#10

[Filiberto](#)
[Boncompagni](#)

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 116

Hi Joel,

Actually I was reacting to Dinie's 'Wonkier than wonky, but in a glorious way' comment. Uh, I should have written "*among* the criteria."

As for my vote, I would give it a 4 for color and 1 for drawing. And 2.5 and 2 to the one on the right.

The ones I like more in this thread are the ones with the ivory 'S' border. I am a sucker for this kind of border. 😊

I would vote yours 4.5 (also for a slightly tired condition) and 5, the second one 5 and 4.5.

Filiberto



October 10th, 2020, 06:21 PM

#11

[Joel Greifinger](#)

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 118

Quote:

I would vote yours 4.5 (also for a slightly tired condition)



Hi Filiberto,

For me, the condition on that one adds to the interest. The corrosion of the background color highlights the features of the middle diamond and creates a 3-D effect for the others:



Meanwhile, the ivory in the 'S' border is in silky full pile:



Have I mentioned that I'm really fond of this piece.  

Joel



October 11th, 2020, 04:28 AM

#12

[Dinie Gootjes](#)

Members

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Canada
Posts: 43



Hi Filiberto and Joel,

If we are talking about marks, I would give the wonky one on the left 5 and 5. The drawing is not well done in any strict sense of the word of course, I think it is a beginning weaver, who in the course of producing the bag face figures out how to do the diamonds. However, I find the result very interesting and pleasing, in contrast to many other trial pieces. I think what sets this one apart, is that she has the most fantastic colours and wool, and a sense of rhythm in her craziness. It doesn't become a mess, but because she keeps the lattice going, be it in a definitely unorthodox way, there remains structure. Also the colours are clear and practically without abrash, which in this case saves the bacon for the rug. The one on the right gets 3 and 2.

For the ones with the S border, Joel's rug gets 5 and 5, the other one 3.5 (I particularly dislike the abrash in the salmon pink) and 4.

Condition is a funny element in this case. On the one hand it should not be a consideration here, as it has nothing to do with colour, drawing or design, on the other hand corrosion can add a pleasing effect to the whole. That would then be colour, I guess???



October 12th, 2020, 09:48 AM

#13

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 116



Speaking about the ivory 'S' border, this is the very first time that I see it on a Jaff Kurd bag. Well, TWO Jaff Kurd bags, actually.

Does anybody know more examples?

Curiously,

Filiberto



October 12th, 2020, 03:01 PM

#14

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 116



Well, OK, they are not as rare as I thought...

I had a look online and I found four more examples (one was a complete set of bags) with the same border. But they are on the market, hence not to be discussed.



October 12th, 2020, 04:52 PM

#15

[Joel Greifinger](#)

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 118



Hi Filiberto,

Here's another from Cohen:



Joel



October 12th, 2020, 05:27 PM

#16

[Dinie Gootjes](#)

Members

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Canada
Posts: 43



Hi Filiberto,

I was actually surprised at how few I found in my Jaff pictures. In my pretty random sample of more than 500 (for a time I downloaded just about any Jaff I could find 😊), I see maybe 2% or 3%. Here is my own, with a lot of lovely purple:



A few more from other sources. It is obviously not an easy border to draw, plus several times there is something like an E in the lozenge:







Lastly an unusual formalized variant in a rug that was said to be Bidjar, not Jaff. The back is clearly different from your run of the mill Jaff.





There must be more out there...



October 12th, 2020, 10:08 PM

#17

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 116



Yours is another good one, Dinie. 🌍🗺️

"S" and "E", uh? Mmmh 🤔

\$ and Euros perhaps? 🌐



October 12th, 2020, 10:57 PM

#18

[Dinie Gootjes](#)
Members

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Canada
Posts: 43



Absolutely \$ and Euros, Filiberto. I now notice that the one under mine has a few C too. That may be the Roman numeral, but the two or three I see should not be taken as a price indication. I remember, because I wanted that one very much ten years ago, but there were too many Cs involved! 🗺️



October 12th, 2020, 11:20 PM

#19

[Joel Greifinger](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 118



Hi Dinie,

Great piece. 🙌👍 And throwing in that close-up of the purple...





It also highlights an aesthetic issue, perhaps even divide, among Jaf diamond bag enthusiasts: design symmetry. Many Jaf diamond bags have some symmetrical elements. A fair number have a prominent central diamond, often on white background, that initially draws the eye. Others have some bilaterally symmetrical elements that take a moment longer to apprehend, like my 'S' border bag face that I posted earlier. In still others, like yours, the symmetry of the diamonds' color configuration presents as a complete, integrated whole.

It's my impression that Jaf bags in the latter category are rarely the ones that get exhibited or published (not that all that many Jafs do, altogether). In one of the few articles devoted to Jaf diamond bags, Mark Hopkins touted that, "Symmetry of form remains. But in most cases symmetry of color is banished. In these categories of weavings, the principal artistic merit lies in the "random" juxtaposition of identical design elements appearing in widely varying color combinations... Because while the outwardly casual appearance of one of these asymmetrical weavings implies that the color combinations of its elements were quite casually conceived, in fact the opposite is true. The assemblage, at least in the good ones, has nothing random about it. It is painstakingly planned. In the best instances, it is pure artistry."

He presents this challenge to the reader:

"What kind of artistry is involved here? To answer that, try a simple test. We'll supply you with seven crayons (that's all the colors there are in Figure 1's 38 full diamonds: red, two blues, pale green, brown/auergine, plus ivory and peach as accent colors). Then we'll give you a line drawing of a Jaf diamond field that outlines the shapes but is left empty of color. Your job: start coloring.

There are three rules:

1. No diamond may butt up against another of the same color.
2. The results must be well balanced, interesting to look at, and aesthetically pleasing.
3. (And this is the hard part) You have to color from the bottom up with no skipping ahead... just the way the weaver would do it."

No disagreement here. But what about this other category of diamond bags, the ones with equally deliberate and well-planned symmetries? By virtue of those design choices, do they fall short of that 'pure artistry'?

Since I have a number of symmetrically drawn diamond bags that I quite like, it's clear for me that they can have their own, somewhat different appeal than Hopkins' ideal. I'd be very interested to hear from other Jaf bag fans.

Joel



October 13th, 2020, 10:14 AM

#20

[Filiberto](#)
[Boncompagni](#)
 Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
 Location: Cyprus
 Posts: 116



I agree with Hopkins because I definitely prefer the totally asymmetrical bags - but the good ones aren't that frequent after all, the average Jaf bagface having only a rather chaotic display of colors.

As for the partially asymmetrical (i.e. with symmetric elements) and the totally symmetric ones, it depends from the drawing and the choice of colors. I would prefer a good symmetrical one to a bad asymmetrical, of course.

Filiberto



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