



Antique Heriz, Circa 1880

Ref: 28870

Size: 14' x 23' 5"

Content: Wool

Collection: Antique

Hand-knotted in Persia

Heriz Carpet, Northwest Persia, Circa 1880

The Heriz carpets of Northwest Persia are famed for their monumental floral designs and the expressive power of their precise, angular drawing. While they are clearly descended from classical Persian carpets of the seventeenth century, their monumental geometry seems a thing apart, but deceptively so. The Heriz region is not far from the Caucasus to the north, where a distinctive, more geometricized adaptation of classical Persian designs evolved in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and it is these 'classical' Caucasian carpets that most directly inspired the Heriz designs of the nineteenth century and later. This extraordinary Heriz is perhaps one of the most faithful heirs to such forerunners. The overall design is tied together by the Persian mina khani or trellis vinescroll, but the most dominant elements are the richly articulated floral palmettes and serrated 'sickle' shaped curling leaves that emanate from the vines. All these forms spread across the field in controlled all-over symmetrical repetition horizontally and vertically. Their bold coloration in various shades of red, burgundy, blues, greens, and orange are set off dramatically against the deep blue-black ground, allowing the chromatic richness to impress the viewer.

But the real surprise is the main border, for unlike the field, it is much more directly derived from classical Persian designs. In place of the controlled, rectilinear precision of the field, the undulating 'turtle' vinescroll of the border is curvilinear and sinuous, in the true 'arabesque' tradition, thus producing a remarkable design contrast with the field, just as the red ground of the border contrasts with the blue-black ground of the field. Yet the overall consistency of the color range in field and border alike hold the design together, allowing the contrast and the unity to balance one another. And while many Herizes have heavy central medallion designs, the all-over composition of this one is open and light, echoing the delicacy of the field. Rarely do Herizes attain this degree of subtlety.