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Pachacamac Style Tapestry Panel of a fish

This is a rare and unusual shaped weaving where the edges are finished on all four sides and is a stellar example of the time-honored Andean practice of tapestry weaving irregular shapes. This all cotton Rimac-style fish displays a rare X-ray view making the backbone visible. A similar example is illustrated in Taullare, *Tejidos Y Panchos Indigenas de Sud America*, (1949: pl. 144) and in Max Schmidt, *Kuntz und Kultur von Peru* (1929: 509). The most recently published one is in the Boston Museum and illustrated on plate 162 of *To Weave For the Sun*, 1992. The Boston example has 25 warped edges while this one has 37 warped edges.

Dimension: length 19" x width 9 3/4"

Condition: excellent color, fully intact

Provenance: Peru, Pachacamac, Lurin Valley, Central Coast, AD 700 - 1350



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Austria Auction Company Sale III

16 September
2014, 2pm

Location: Novomatic Forum, Friedrichstrasse 7,
1010 Vienna, Austria

Preview from 13 – 15 September, 10am to 8pm,
16 September, 10am to noon

Email: office@austriaauction.com

Tel: +43 664 3001256

Fax: +43 2236 315 316-14

◀ *Caucasian animal rug, published Schürmann
"Caucasian Rugs" 1969, plate 93 and Schürmann
"Bilderbuch für Teppichsammler" 1960, plate 38, 222 x
102cm, Caucasus dated by Schürmann 17th century*

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▲ *Antependium fragment,
Southwest Germany ca. 1350,
88 x 47cm*



▲ *Detail of Tekke main carpet,
Turkmenistan 18th century,
260 x 185cm*



▲ *Detail of Lesghi, published Schürmann "Caucasian
Rugs" 1969, plate 128, 279cm x 114cm
Caucasus dated by Schürmann 17th/18th century*

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Udo Langauer's Austria Auction Company announces its third auction on September 16th, 2014 at 2pm at the Novomatic Forum in central Vienna.

Among the 250 lots is a group of exceptional Caucasian and other rugs from the Prof. Dr. Günther Marschall collection, many purchased directly from Dr. Ulrich Schürmann in the 1950's and 1960's and published in "Caucasian Rugs" 1969 and other famous books Schürmann authored. The collection's highlight is the early small size Caucasian "Dragon/Phoenix" animal rug plate 93. These rugs have never been offered for sale since Marschall's purchase.

From various other owners come several important Turkmen carpets including the quintessential 'S' group main carpet plate 4 published in "Turkmen" 1980 Mackie and Thompson, and an exceptionally beautiful circa 1800 Yomut kepe gol main carpet.

Important classical rugs will be offered such as a Star Ushak, a rare small size medallion Ushak, a Double-niche Transylvanian rug, a Checkerboard Damascus carpet and a splendid large fragment of a Golden Age East Persian Safavid carpet.

Plus many other published collector rugs will be sold to the highest bidder including a unique Dragon Sumak, an early Kurdish medallion carpet, the heraldic medallion Lesghi rug plate 128 in Schürmann's "Caucasian Rugs", an amazingly beautiful large Goradis carpet fragment, a unique 18th century Tekke main carpet with a fantastic bridal procession pictorial scene, an early pure gold thread southwest German Antependium and others too numerous to mention here.

Preview will start on September 13th 2014 at 10am and continue until noon day of sale. If you are not already receiving a free catalog please email office@austriaauction.com to place your name on our subscriber list.



◀ *East Persian fragment, 360cm x 250cm, Persia early 17th century, Condition: fragment in one piece, good pile but few areas of low pile, few spots of old repair*



◀ *Detail of Salor main carpet, published "Turkmen" 1980, Mackie and Thompson, plate 4 358 x 274cm Turkmenistan 18th century*

NEXT AUCTION: 16 SEPTEMBER 2014, 2PM

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Lettering was designed to convey information. However, script found on a textile may have nothing specific to say, or might be telling us something we should not necessarily believe

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Colin Wilde

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Every so often a character emerges in the rug world whose ideas influence a generation. George Jevremovic is such a figure, with a life that embraces rug-making, auctions, outsider art and now Afghan Peace rugs

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The arrival of the 'Gothenburg Shroud' in Lima is the first stage in a painstaking process of repatriation for the Paracas textiles held in Sweden since the 1930s

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Simon Crosby

A gift of £100 enabled the author to begin collecting Turkmen rugs. Now he has donated a group of Ersari rugs to Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, including some of the oldest examples of truly nomadic carpets we know

68 Riddles within an exquisite enigma

James Reid

A Nazca feather 'apron' has the power to mesmerise and mystify in equal measure. Its combination of long and short feathers, its subtle colour harmonies and a range of possible functions all pose their own questions



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Parry Mead Murray, Khristaan D. Villela, & William Siegal

Highlights from the Bolivian Balandrán poncho collection of Giles W. Mead, former director of the LA County Natural History Museum

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Exhibition reviews

'Distant Neighbour, Close Memories: 600 years of Turkish-Polish Relations' at the Sakıp Sabancı Museum, Istanbul; 'Threads of Life: Japanese Indigo Patched Textiles' presented by Gordon Reece and Philippe Boudin at Somerset House in London; 'Oriental Rugs from the Gerard Paquin Collection' at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts; 'The Power of Images: The National Museum of Ethnology Collection' at the National Art Center, Tokyo; 'Wangden Style', an exhibition of Tibetan rugs arranged by Sam Coad in Bristol

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Book reviews

The first book in a planned series based on the textile collections of Karun Thakar - *Indian Textiles* by John Guy, Rosemary Crill & Karun Thakar - is reviewed by Sonia Ashmore. Titles Received includes a selection of more recent publications, among them *Arts & Crafts of the Islamic Lands: Principles, Materials, Practice* by Khaled Azzam, and *Patterns of Magnificence: Tradition and Reinvention in Greek Women's Costume* by Ioanna Papantoniou

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Market report

Daniel Shaffer and Penny Oakly re-examine the market history of Turkmen embroidered asmalyks, after recent renewed interest has resulted in record prices

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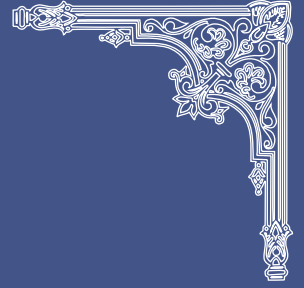
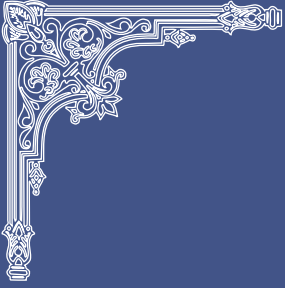
Auction price guide

Focusing mainly on Sotheby's New York's superb January 2014 sale of 'Carpets & Textiles from Distinguished Collections', Austria Auction Company's second outing in Vienna on 15 March 2014, and Christie's, Sotheby's and Bonhams Spring Islamic week rug and textile results; with selected Turkmen highlights from Rippon Boswell's May sale

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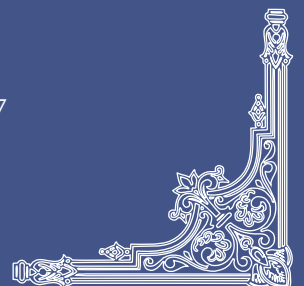
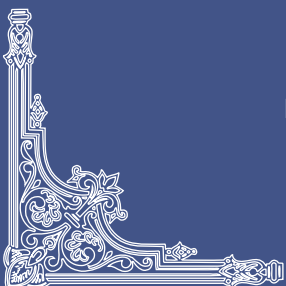
Last page

For ten days in mid-June, participants from around the world on the HALI tour enjoyed curated visits to some of the most important rugs and textiles in public and private holdings across England and Scotland



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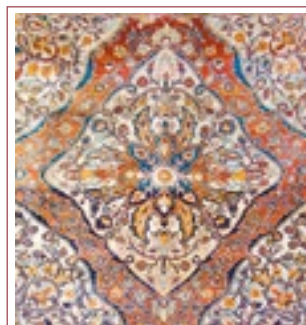
— 714 | RUGS & CARPETS, ETHNOGRAPHIC ART —

9th September 2014, 3 pm

Viewing: 6th–8th September 2014, 11 am – 6 pm and 9th September 2014, 9 am–12 am



Cal medallion rug with small Ibrik-motifs and a yellow ground cartouche border, West Anatolia, 18th/19th century



F.l.t.r (details): **Bergama rug**, West Anatolia, 1st half 19th century | **Seishour rug**, Caucasus, dated 1327 (=1909)
Pskent Suzani, Uzbekistan, 2nd half 19th century | **Heriz silk rug**, Northwest Persia, late 19th century

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so-called Wangden Drumze, monastic rug, Lhoka region, central Tibet
19th century or earlier, 132 x 70 cm

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Unlimited enthusiasm

The role of the art collector is sometimes underappreciated or misunderstood. To introduce an issue full of textiles from private collections, **Ben Evans** explains how the textile field offers collectors unique opportunities – and why the impact of these remarkable individuals is so significant

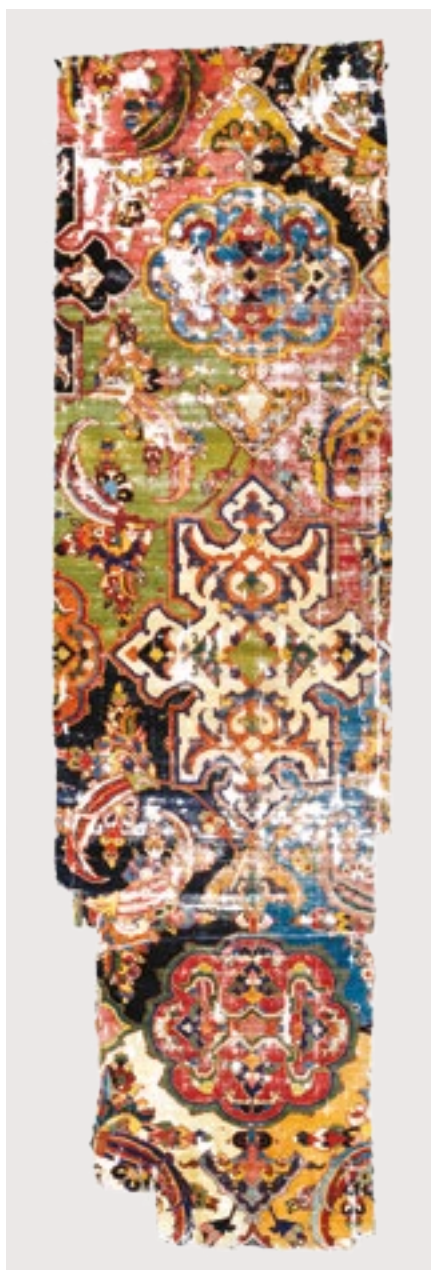
Private collectors feature strongly in this issue. Although this is not unusual in an edition of HALI, what is extraordinary is the volume and range of material. The collectors share a strong passion for textiles, and it is often tempting to draw parallels between them; but each individual approaches a particular chosen field of endeavour in a different way.

It seems to me that the most interesting aspect of collecting is each collector's individual narrative: how and why they started to collect, and how and why they buy what they do. This is particularly true in the fields of carpet and textile collecting, areas that provide collectors with unrestricted freedom to buy according to their own rules and taste.

To clarify, I should repeat a comment from the Padua-based collector Ignazio Vok. He explained that for him the pleasure of collecting kilims and textiles lay in his not knowing what he would buy next. He is unable to define the size or scope of his collecting field; every purchase is a surprise, adding to and developing his sense of connoisseurship.

If you buy cars, watches or the work of a particular artist or workshop, you probably know the parameters of your field of collecting. You know how many examples were made, so the challenge facing you and your fellow (or rival) collectors is to find the best examples.

But as Mr Vok made clear, the rug and textile collector doesn't know what the next purchase is likely to be. That doesn't mean the collector is not a specialist. Defining the limits of one's collection benefits the entire culture. It creates a virtuous circle: the willingness of collectors to share their very particular insights helps to build a powerful community of expertise. However, most important of all are the energy, inquisitiveness and enthusiasm of the private collector. Therein is found the engine that drives our field of interest, and on a larger scale



Compartment and sickle-leaf carpet fragment, Khorasan, east Iran. 0.78m x 2.74m (2'6" x 9'). Ex-Wher collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991.154

the art and antiques market, and in turn the work of many institutions.

In each collector's story outlined in this issue, the devotion and drive originates from a different source, manifests itself in a different way, and produces a different outcome. But via our pages they all allow us to share in the fruits of their labour, selecting remarkable material.

Simon Crosby's Turkmen collecting has helped the field of study considerably, through his books and the gift of some of his rugs to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Giles Mead's passion for collecting, specifically Aymara textiles, is beautifully evoked by his daughter

*Most important of all
are the energy and
inquisitiveness of the
private collector*

Parry Mead Murray. The ability of textiles to convey something of their history, whether cultural, personal or political, is an aspect focused on by Karun Thakar, whose collection of Indian textiles published by HALI in partnership with Prestel is reviewed in this issue. These individuals share their learning and thereby instil the textiles deeper meaning.

It is fitting to end with a mention of Marino Dall'Oglio, the collector *par excellence* in our field in the second half of the 20th century. Our article about the Wher collection touches only the surface of the scope, quality and range of his collection but should whet the appetites of readers for the forthcoming book about his collection published by Gallery Moshe Tabibnia. In my opinion it will reveal to all the importance of the collection and also secure a lasting legacy for little-known man.

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Aus den verborgenen Tälern des Zagros-Gebirges kommt dieser mystische GABBEH mit der figürlichen Darstellung der Elemelinde, welche an den beiden Enden des Mittelmedailions zu erkennen sind.

Ende 19. Jhdts.



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Chasuble (detail), Ottoman *çatma*, probably Bursa, late 16th/early 17th century. St Adalbert Church, Kokieli Pirczowski. Made from the left-hand half of a large velvet double panel with an implied border, with offset rows of *çintamani*, the central section of each with a trefoil outline. Silk and metal-wrapped thread, 1.04m x 0.66m (3' 5" x 2' 2"). St Adalbert Church, Kościelec Pińczowski

Contributors to this issue

Jill D'Alessandro has been Curator of Textile Arts at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco since 2012 and is currently the Director at Large at the Textile Society of America. She studied textile arts at the Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia and in 1998 received a scholarship to study in Korea.

Alberto Boralevi comes from a family of 20th-century rug and textile dealers in Vienna and Florence. During the fifteen years when he ran his own gallery, The Carpet Studio, he wrote several books on Oriental carpets. He is Head of the Academic Committee at the International Conference on Oriental Carpets and is a frequent lecturer and leader of study tours.

Kendra Weisbin has worked at the Allen Memorial Art Museum, The Brooklyn Museum, and more recently the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where she focused on creating publications for teachers and visitors. She was Guest Curator at the Springfield Art Museums for eighteen months, where she helped to reinstall the collections of Islamic art. She currently holds the position of Assistant Curator of Education at the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum.

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Hali, the Turkish word for carpet or rug, has survived unchanged for over 1,000 years. Its ancient Turkish, classical Persian and Ottoman forms are phonetically identical to the modern Turkish. In modern Persian, classical Persian and Ottoman Turkish script, hali is represented by the same Arabic letters. Its ultimate origin is uncertain; it might be Turkish, but could be Sogdian.

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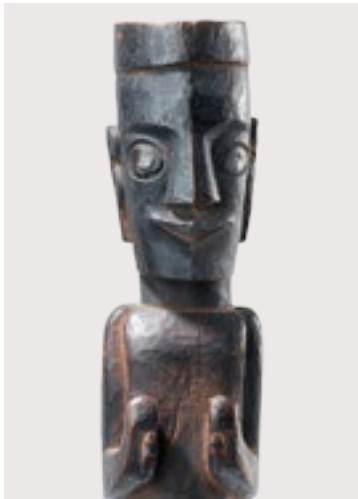


Sariköy fragment, circa 1800, 130 x 150-160 cm, Private collection T+A



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News, Comments & Letters



Tribal Art Fair Amsterdam 2014

In the cloisters of De Duif Church on the Prinsengracht, from 23–26 October 2014, twenty dealers from the Netherlands and abroad will show a broad range of vetted textiles, masks, sculpture and jewellery from Africa, Asia, Oceania, and South America. Dutch exhibitors will include Galerie Hoogenbosch from Gorredijk, Karavanserai from Maastricht, and, from Amsterdam, Astamangala, Frans Faber and Galerie Lemaire, whose Batak *pagar* figure from Sumatra is shown above. UK dealers Bryan Reeves (Tribal Gathering), Adam Prout, Ben Hunter and Stothert & Trice will also be participating.

Bamileke beadwork

David and Meghan Potter have gifted the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco an unusual Bamileke region beaded leopard pelt from the Cameroon Grasslands (right), which was acquired at Sotheby's in Paris in 2008. The Grasslands area of West Africa is renowned for artistic representations of human and animal figures in sculpted wood. The abstract motifs expressed in a tight beading technique on this two-dimensional object demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of fur markings and anatomical form. The pelt only has four paws and half the tail visible as actual leopard fur, the rest being covered in wax-resist indigo-dyed fabric, a royal cloth, which serves as the base for the beaded appliqué form.

The leopard is a common symbol of power and leadership in many African cultures, where it is perceived as the spirit animal of the *fon* (king). Royal thrones are often adorned with leopard regalia. Other beaded animal skins, including python, have been observed in ceremonial use in the region, and it is thought that European glass beads, historically used as currency, would have further emphasised the wearer's wealth and prestige.



Tapestries in Vilnius

The Franes Tapestry Archive in London is curating an exhibition of Renaissance Tapestries in a series of recently modernised state rooms at the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, Vilnius. Titled 'History Woven in Threads - Medieval and Renaissance Tapestry in Europe', the exhibition will run from 17 September to 14 December 2014. There will be a large number of museum-quality loans, including this early 16th century Tournai 'Proto Giant Leaf' panel (detail left), and a catalogue will be published in English and Lithuanian.

HALI Tours

After successful tours in Transylvania and the UK, HALI Tours will continue to grow internationally. In May 2015, HALI's expert guidance will take you to Portugal and Spain for a twelve-day tour of textile treasures, steeped in the region's royal, religious and cultural history. A number of new destinations will also soon be added, including a trip to Italy and Sicily in co-operation with Stefano Ionescu, and there are plans to visit Armenia. For more information or to offer your assistance in any related area, please contact halitours@hali.com

HALI.com

What is happening online

News & Events

*Gothenburg Paracas Textiles
Return to Peru*

The 'Shroud of Gothenburg' is one of four ancient Andean textiles that have just been returned to Lima from Sweden. They mark the start of the repatriation of eighty-nine 2,000-year-old textiles that have been 'owned' by the City of Gothenburg and managed by the National Museums of World Culture since the 1930s.

HALI In-Depth

In Memoriam Ian Bennett

The late Ian Bennett, HALI's former Chief Contributing Editor, was a complex and often troubled man of extraordinary talent, intellect, wit, and knowledge - of Oriental rugs and much, much more. Read a selection of his articles on HALI.com.

Auctions

Arts of India, including textiles, Christie's South Kensington, 12 June
CSK's summer Arts of India sale on 12 June 2014 included several Indian and southeast Asian textiles, including antique painted and block-printed cotton chintz palampores, embroideries, temple cloths and a range of Kashmiri, Persian and European shawls, as well as Indonesian batiks.

HALI Facebook & Twitter

The V&A's 17th-century Kerman Sanguszko carpet was bought in 1883 from the London trade for £308, on the recommendation of William Morris. It was one of the first Safavid carpets to enter the collection, a decade before the Ardabil.

Van Aelst's tapestry triumph

Pieter Coecke van Aelst was an influential artist with one of the largest workshops in Antwerp by the time of his death in 1646. 'Grand Design: Pieter Coecke van Aelst and Renaissance' opens on 8 October 2014 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the first monographic exhibition devoted to the Flemish master. Along with drawings, prints and woodcuts, nineteen epic tapestries will be shown. Many are on loan from royal and national collections in Europe, including *Pride* from a set of *The Seven Deadly Sins* from the Spanish Patrimonial Nacional (the detail below shows Xerxes), and have been cleaned and conserved for this event.



Parcour des Mondes

The tribal art fair 'Parcour des Mondes' returns to Paris, 9-14 September 2014. Tribal arts are annually explored here in all their forms and across all continents: the arts of Africa have the place of honour but the event also explores less well-known domains such as the Himalayas, Indonesia and India. Among more than sixty participating galleries, Thomas Murray is showing two 19th-century ancestral figures from Indonesia (right). Other exhibitors include Michael Evans, Jonathan Hope and Donald Ellis.

Strength and tranquillity: remembering Toni Hutmacher

Henri Daumas writes: I met Toni Hutmacher a good while after I had met his wife, Arlette Bollag, a lively woman with an infectious love for old kilims. Toni seemed a quiet man who didn't talk for the sake of talking. I quickly realised that behind this taciturn manner lay the secret of a rich and strong personality. In the course of shared journeys to Venice and Anatolia I got to know him and took great pleasure in discussing our mutual passions.



A professional architect, he was very avant-garde in his concepts. The spaces he created always felt amazingly good to live in, light and thoughtful on a perfect human scale. Both he and Arlette had travelled extensively from the late sixties on; for them, the language of form, colour and the composition of the kilims was a revelation. They shared this passion for forty years.

In the old days, when Toni and Arlette's company Nomadenschätze was exhibiting in a medieval mill near Zurich, the openings and celebrations were almost legendary: full of music, the smell of kebab cooking on the fire in their yurt outside and Toni dancing barefoot all night long. This spirit was still alive in their Russo house, albeit on a somewhat mellower scale. Toni would descend regularly from this belvedere and travel to the shop in Zurich. There he would open all the kilims and feast his eyes on their beauty, which never ceased to amaze and nourish him.

Toni moved through life slowly, with strength and tranquillity. His strength was reflected in his face, which had the noble aspect of a Roman emperor. It concealed an uncommon sensitivity and intuition, which enabled him to appreciate and assess the beauty of a kilim at first glance. He was like an immutable statue placed in front of the temple of kilims. Sleep, dear Toni, may your calm memory appease the sadness of our loss.





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HALI's guide

Our choice of the most important rug and textile events happening around the world during the next quarter



◀ **10th Sartirana Textile Show**

Sartirana Castle, Lomellina, Italy
10–14 September 2014
www.lapilasrl.it

Held in a picturesque 14th-century castle and the old rice mill, La Pila, Sartirana's tenth anniversary brings together an abundance of rug and textile exhibitors. Ulrike Montigel of Galerie Arabesque will be showing an 18th-century Italian embroidery (left), alongside Sadettin Ufuklar who will be showing a selection of Anatolian carpets. The ever popular Tea Time Textile Talks also return.



◀ **Ming: 50 years that changed China**

British Museum, London
18 September 2014–5 January 2015
www.britishmuseum.org

Rare loans of artefacts dating from 1400–1450 facilitate a major exhibition at the Sainsbury Exhibition Gallery. This pivotal period saw the creation of some of the finest objects ever made in China, at that time the only global superpower. Finds from three princely tombs in Sichuan, Shandong and Hubei will be on show along with court costumes, jewellery and furniture.

▼ **British Folk Art**

Tate Britain, London
Until 31 August 2014
www.tate.org.uk

An intricate pin cushion created by wounded soldiers during the Crimean War and a cockerel sculpted from mutton bones are among the eccentric and remarkable offerings here. An often overlooked genre is given high art status at Tate Britain in what is, surprisingly, the first major exhibition of such work. Creations by anonymous self-taught artists sit alongside those of more prominent individuals.



◀ **Austria Auction Company**

Novomatic Forum, Friedrichstr 7, Vienna
16 September 2014, 2pm
www.austriaauction.com

Udo Langauer has announced his third sale of Fine Antique and Oriental Rugs for the autumn. It will feature antique oriental carpets from the Marschall Collection, formed in the 1950–60s by renowned German architect Dr Günther Marschall. Examples include an East Persian carpet fragment (left) which originates from the early 17th century, and a Damascus checkerboard rug, circa 1600.



▶ **East of the Wallace Line: Art from Indonesia and New Guinea**

Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven
15 August 2014–1 February 2015
www.artgallery.yale.edu

Yale's exhibition investigates the cultural characteristics from its starting point the 'Wallace Line', an ecological delineation between the islands of Bali and Lombok. Over 120 works from the 17th to 19th centuries include large-scale sculptures and textiles alongside more personal objects such as this dancer's girdle (*sassang*), of ca. 1900 from Sulawesi, Indonesia.



► **From Ashgabat to Istanbul: Oriental Rugs from Canadian Collections**

Textile Museum of Canada, Toronto
 8 October – 19 April, 2015
www.textilemuseum.ca

This fragment from a 17th century northwest Persian carpet from the Marshall and Marilyn R Wolf collection is one of seventy rugs from thirty private and public Canadian collections that will be part of the TMC's biggest rug exhibit for some years. Timed to coincide with the opening of the Aga Khan's Islamic Art Museum in the city.



▼ **Silks of al-Andalus**

Institut du Monde Arabe, rue des Fosses Saint-Bernard, Paris
 18 June – 21 September 2014
www.imarabe.com

In the *Calendar of Cordoba* written in 961 AD, the physician Arib ibn Sa'ad credited the Syrians with introducing sericulture to the Iberian Peninsula. Plants for dyeing were imported from the East and, between the 12th and 16th centuries, delicate silks were created predominantly for the clothing and furniture of the Nasrid rulers and noblemen of al-Andalus.

◀ **Ages of Sarasa**

Fukuoka Art Museum, Japan
 11 October – 24 November 2014
www.fukuoka-art-museum.jp

Sarasa is the resist- and mordant-dyed cotton Indian trade cloth traded worldwide for over 1,000 years. These textiles had great influence on culture throughout the Edo period. This show traces the historic use of *sarasa* as protocol presentations to the Shogun and Samurai class by Europeans in the mid 16th century, through to antique pieces being enthusiastically sought for use in tea ceremonies.



► **San Francisco Antique Rug & Textile Show (ARTS)**

Motel Capri, 2015 Greenwich Street, San Francisco, California
 16–19 October 2014
www.artsrugshow.org

The sixth edition of ARTS returns as a leading venue for antique rugs and textiles from across the globe. Events include a Show & Tell where visitors bring in pieces for discussion, seminars for new collectors and guided tours of the show. Exhibitors include Hagop Manoyan (right), Michael Phillips, James Cohen and Owen Parry.




► **Cairo under Wraps**

Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), Toronto
 Until 25 January 2015
www.rom.on.ca

ROM marks its centenary and the imminent opening of the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto with an exhibition of Early Islamic textiles from the permanent collection. The eighty exhibits date from the 7th to the 12th centuries, half shown for the first time. Among them are tiraz textiles containing Islamic inscriptions and a linen tabby fragment decorated with woven silk and gold tapestry bands.





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Jain Mochi embroidery book cover; Gujarat, India, circa 1900

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Khotan 'Samarkand' rug (detail), 2.62 x 1.68m (8'7" x 5'6")

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A House of Wool
 From the World of Nomadic People

Photo by H. Böhrner

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10 September 6pm-10pm | 11 September 11am-8pm | 12 September 10am-8pm | 13 September 10am-10pm | 14 September 10am-7pm

Sartirana - Italy | www.lapilaeventi.it



Calendar · Summer 2014

Auctions

- Boston · 6 September 2014**
American Indian & Ethnographic Art, Skinner
- San Francisco · 8 September 2014**
Art & Artefacts of the Americas, Bonhams
- Stuttgart · 9 September 2014**
Rugs, Carpets, Ethnographic Art, Nagel
- London · 11 September 2014**
Asian Art, Bonhams, Knightsbridge
- Philadelphia · 13 September 2014**
Asian Arts · Freeman's, PA
- New York · 15 September 2014**
Asian Works of Art, Doyle
- Vienna · 16 September 2014**
Carpets, Textiles and Tapestries, Dorotheum
- Vienna · 16 September 2014**
Fine Antique Oriental Rugs III, Austria Auction Company
- New York · 17 September 2014**
Indian, Himalayan & Southeast Asian Art, Bonhams
- Zurich · 17-20 September 2014**
Fine Art and Antiques, Schuler
- Zurich · 18 September 2014**
Carpets, Koller
- Boston · 28 September 2014**
Oriental Rugs and Carpets, Skinner
- London · 7 October 2014**
Oriental Rugs & Carpets, Christie's King Street
- London · 8 October 2014**
Arts of the Islamic World, Sotheby's, New Bond Street
- London · 8 October 2014**
Arts of Imperial India, Sotheby's
- London · 9 October 2014**
Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds, Christie's King Street
- London · 10 October 2014**
Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds, Christie's South Kensington
- Oakland · 18 October 2014**
Antique Carpets & Textiles, Hazara Gallery, CA
- Los Angeles · 27 October 2014**
Fine Oriental Rugs and Carpets, Bonhams
- Wiesbaden · 29 November 2014**
Collector's Carpets, Rippon Boswell
- San Francisco · 8 December 2014**
Native American Art, Bonhams

Exhibitions

- Seattle · 19 July-7 December 2014**
Mughal Painting: Power and Piety, Seattle Art Museum
- Santa Fe · 25 July-26 August 2014**
Balandran Ponchos from the Giles Mead Collection, William Siegal Gallery, NM
- Moscow · Until 27 July 2014**
India: Jewels that Enchanted the World, State Museums of Moscow Kremlin
- New York · Until 27 July 2014**
Lost Kingdoms: Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Early Southeast Asia, 5th to 8th Century, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- Oxford · Until 27 July 2014**
Lure of the East: Selections from the Christopher Gandy Collection Ashmolean Museum
- Oxford · 1 August-12 October 2014**
The Eye of the Needle: English Embroideries from the Feller Collection, Ashmolean Museum
- New York · Until 3 August 2014**
Design Motifs in Byzantine Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- Boston · 9 August-30 November 2014**
Indian paintings and manuscripts illustrate the sacred world of the Jain religion, Museum of Fine Arts
- Dallas · 16 August-12 October 2014**
Saturated: Dye-Decorated Cloths from North and West Africa, Dallas Museum of Art
- Washington · Until 17 August**
Visions from the Forests: The Art of Liberia and Sierra Leone, African Art Museum
- Basel · 22 August 2014-22 May 2015**
From Patchwork to Enlightenment: The Buddhist Monk's Robe, Museum der Kulturen Basel, Switzerland
- Cologne · Until 24 August 2014**
Silk not sin: Ceremonial garments for the preparation of the holy mass, Museum Schnütgen
- Los Angeles · Until 25 August 2014**
Heaven and Earth: Art of Byzantium from Greek Collections, The Getty Villa
- Gainsville · Until 14 September 2014**
String of Pearls: Traditional Indian Painting, Harn Museum of Art, FL
- St Petersburg · Until 21 September 2014**
At the Russian Imperial Court. Costumes of the 18th-Early-20th Centuries & Servants of the Imperial Court: Livery Costume of the Late-19th-Early-20th Century, The Hermitage Museum
- Toronto · Until 21 September 2014**
The Eternity Code: Archaeology, Textiles and Preservation, Textile Museum of Canada, Ontario
- Wurzburg · 23 Sept.-8 November 2014**
'A House of Wool', From the World of Nomadic People, Galerie Kelim,
- Berlin · Until 5 October 2014**
Pride and Passion. Male Portraits and Images from the Mogul Era (1526-1858), Pergamonmuseum
- Los Angeles · Until 12 October 2014**
Princely Traditions and Colonial Pursuits in India, Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- San Francisco · Until 26 October 2014**
Enter the Mandala: Cosmic Centers and Mental Maps, Asian Art Museum
- New York · Until 26 October 2014**
The Pre-Raphaelite Legacy: British Art and Design, Metropolitan Museum
- Riggisberg · Until 9 November 2014**
Veil & Adornment: Medieval Textiles and the Cult of Relics, Abegg-Stiftung
- Phoenix · Until 16 November 2014**
Quiet Rage, Gentle Wail: Prints and Masks of Japanese Noh Theatre, Phoenix Art Museum, AZ
- Santa Ana · Until 16 November 2014**
Heavenly Horses: Two Thousand Years of Chinese and Japanese Equine Art, Bowers Museum, CA
- Lincoln · Until 29 November 2014**
Design Dynamics of Log Cabin quilts, International Quilt Study Center & Museum, University of Nebraska
- St Gallen · Until 30 December 2014**
Cherry Blossom & Edelweiss -The Exotic Matter, Textilmuseum
- Washington DC · Until 15 Feb 2015**
Cerámica de los Ancestros: Central America's Past Revealed, National Museum of the American Indian
- St Louis · Until 22 February 2015**
Facets of the Three Jewels: Tibetan Buddhist Art, St Louis Art Museum, MO

Fairs & Conferences

- Santa Fe · 15-17 August 2014**
Objects of Art Santa Fe, El Museo Cultural de Santa Fe, NM
- Santa Fe · 15-18 August 2014**
The Antique Indian & Ethnographic Art Show, Santa Fe Convention Center, NM
- New York · 7-9 September 2014**
New York International Carpet Show 2014, Metropolitan Pavilion
- New York · 7-10 September 2014**
The Rug Show @Javits, Javits Center
- Paris · 9-14 September 2014**
Parcours des Mondes, Saint-Germain-des Prés, various locations
- London · 10-13 September 2014**
Tribal Art London, The Mall Galleries
- Los Angeles · 10-14 September 2014**
New Directions: Examining the Past, Creating the Future, UCLA & LACMA
- Sartirana · 10-14 September 2014**
Sartirana Rug & Textile Show, Sartirana Castle, Italy
- Clermont-Ferrand · 13-21 Sep. 2014**
International Festival of Extraordinary Textiles, Musee Bargoin
- Vienna/Budapest · 15-21 Sept. 2014**
International Conference on Oriental Carpets (ICOC), Various locations
- London · 30 September-5 October 2014**
The Decorative Antiques & Textiles Fair, Battersea Park
- San Francisco · 16-19 October 2014**
Antique Rug & Textile Show (ARTS), Motel Caprit
- Milan · 18-26 October 2014**
28th Annual Antique Trade, Villa Castelbarco, Vaprio d'Adda
- Amsterdam · 23-26 October 2014**
Tribal Art Fair Amsterdam 2014, De Duif, Prinsengracht 756
- New York · 25-31 October 2014**
International Fine Art & Antique Dealers Show, Park Avenue Armory
- Glasgow · 29 October-1 November 2014**
33rd Annual Conference on Dyes in History & Archaeology, University of Glasgow
- London · 30 October-8 November 2014**
Asian Art in London, Various locations

Listings are based on the best available information at the time of going to press. Verification is recommended

Katagami stencil, Japan

Garrus carpet, Northwest Iran

Lettering was designed to convey information. However, script found on a textile may have nothing specific to say, or might be telling us something we should not necessarily believe. By Rachel Meek



1

1 *Katagami* stencil, Japan, 1790, cut mulberry paper. One of over 800 such stencils in the Brintons Archive. Stencil JS749, *Katagami* Stencil collection at the Brintons archive

Sometimes an inscription can have its own, intrinsic aesthetic appeal. If the meaning of the words is unintelligible to the person viewing them, that quality is enhanced. Unburdened of their message, the characters take on the attributes of purely decorative symbols.

The designer of a Japanese *katagami* stencil in the archive of British carpet manufacturer Brintons has used this quality to advantage. A line of six repeating Roman square capital letters feature in a banner dividing two areas of separate design motifs. The lower border could be seen, by the untrained eye, as faux Arabic or Persian.

Unburdened of their message, the characters take on the attributes of purely decorative symbols

Rug inscriptions can raise hopes of tying a rug to a time and place of manufacture, but one shouldn't believe everything that you read on a rug. The V&A's famous Ardabil carpet, for instance, carries the name of Maqsud of Kashan in its inscription, leading scholars to believe for many years that this revealed where the carpet was made rather than an indication of where the weaver was born.

The inscription in the cartouche

of this Garrus arabesque carpet was, by contrast, fully intended to be understood - if not by the Kurdish weavers themselves, then certainly by the commissioner of the work, whose name it includes.

In this instance the inscription has helped, and hindered, the identification of a number. In *Islamic Carpets* (1965), Joseph V. McMullan noted that various scholars in Europe and the United States had studied this carpet and



2

'have unanimously agreed that were it not for the inscription, they would not have hesitated to date it into the 17th century'. Later research into the carpet has revealed it to be even more modern than McMullan's scholars thought.

At some point in its history the legend has been interfered with to adjust how the date reads. Annette Ittig (HALI 4/2, 1981, p.125) presents data obtained using infra-red light; it suggests that a loop of black knots has been removed and replaced with cream wool. The erased section changes the reading of the second digit in the date from a number 3 to a 2, thus 'ageing' the carpet by a century, from AH 1309 (AD 1891-92) to AH 1209 (AD 1794).

2-3 Arabesque carpet, Garrus, northwest Persia, dated AH 1309 (AD 1891-2). The inscription reads: *Farmāyish-I Sarkār-I 'Alī Rizā Khān 'amal-I Garrūs, 1209*. (Ordered by His Excellency 'Alī Rizā Khān, Work of Garrūs, 1209). Another carpet of similar size, structure and design was known to be in a private collection in Wiltshire, England in 1981, bearing the same text inscription and the date 1295 (1878). Silk warp, cotton weft and wool pile, 1.42m x 4.36m (4' 8" x 5' 8"). Metropolitan Museum of art, New York, Gift of Joseph V. McMullan, 1970, 1970.302.6



3

Fading glory

The bazaars of Iran are not the hubs of commerce they once were, but they still must be seen, says Colin Wilde

For the past 3,000 years, bazaars have served as the principal marketplace in the civilisations of the Near East. At the centre of most towns and cities, they were the heartbeat of the economy, bursting with colour and local character, and architecturally stunning. However, in Iran they have become increasingly marginalised since the Islamic Revolution, especially where carpets are concerned. Dealers and producers have had to adapt to difficult economic conditions, learning to export or die.

Caught between furniture and fine art, dealers are not unnaturally moving closer to the money and opening smart galleries in rich neighbourhoods well away from pollution and congestion, particularly in the capital Tehran, where the carpet bazaar is increasingly irrelevant. As a result, the bazaars are generally not the best place to find good carpets, especially old pieces. But these ancient cradles of commerce must be visited, and there are still plenty of gems to be found.

Finding good carpets is increasingly about personal contacts and introductions, often through galleries, and especially through direct contact with dealers away from public thoroughfares. Another route is through a core of new producers making truly excellent artefacts.

Shiraz has a tiny carpet bazaar, despite its importance as the main collection centre and marketplace



1 Nakshe-Jahan Square in Esfahan, built by Shah Abbas

2 Shiraz traders on Karim Khan Zand Street

3 The Vakil carpet bazaar in Shiraz. Reza Zollanvari stands to the left





to remember. But tourists come to gaze on two of the most beautiful mosques in the Islamic world, Sheikh Lotfollah and Masjid-e-Shah, which locals resolutely refuse to call by its new name.

Several carpet shops are dotted about the square, but the bulk of Esfahan's huge carpet industry is concentrated deep inside the bazaar and spread over an enormous area that runs north-eastwards. Though I waded through piles of unsold Bakhtiari garden rugs and third-rate city carpets, there were a few good pieces, new and old - just reward for patience.

With America closed for business, carpet traders and producers have turned their attention eastwards to alternative markets in China and the Russia, and it shows. With customers on tighter budgets and less discerning, there has been a massive drop in production standards, as well as a loss of skills, not just here but everywhere in Iran. Being cut off from the West, the market is out of touch with current design trends and what is selling internationally.

Very fine medallion carpets are difficult to find, and are viewed by appointment only, well away from prying eyes in the bazaar. Just a handful of masters such as Dardashti, Haghiki, Serafian and Mahdaie are left, still producing traditional arabesque carpets in their workshops, mainly for Arab customers with deep pockets, or rich clients in the Far East.

3

for the tribal rugs of Fars Province. There are plenty of lovely new Afshar, Luri and Qashqa'i tribal pieces for sale.

The lack of banking or credit facilities makes payment for large ticket items such as rugs virtually impossible. Trading often takes place not in the bazaar, but just outside on Karim Khan Zand Street. Villagers bring in rugs in their pick-up trucks each morning and huddles of punters gather round to haggle and hammer out a price. There are great bargains to be had if you happen to be around at the time.

Kerman has lost nothing of its charm and beauty. Ancient ice houses and wind towers still grace

the skyline of this south Iranian desert city, and the women are more colourful in their choice of *chador* fabrics.

The city has a long tradition of producing high-quality floral carpets, together with embroidered tablecloths (*pateh*) and curtains (*pardeh*) made by Afshar tribal women. But, as in so many places, handicrafts have all but disappeared since the Islamic Revolution.

The Grand Bazaar was faithfully restored after a 2005 earthquake and is one of the nicest in Iran, with a lovely old *hammam* and traditional tea house. Graceful arcades surround Tohid Square, then lead off down alleyways into

several specialised market areas - though not for carpets. Just a handful of dealer-producers remain, scattered across the city.

In Kashan, after several hundred years, rug-making has disappeared entirely, along with the silk velvet and brocade production for which the city was famed. There is no trace of the textiles, apart from the brave attempt to resurrect brocade production at the Manouchehri House hotel (see HALI 179).

In Esfahan, power cuts have plagued the Grand Bazaar and the tourist arcades around Shah Abbas's fabulous Nakshe-Jahan Square for as long as anyone cares



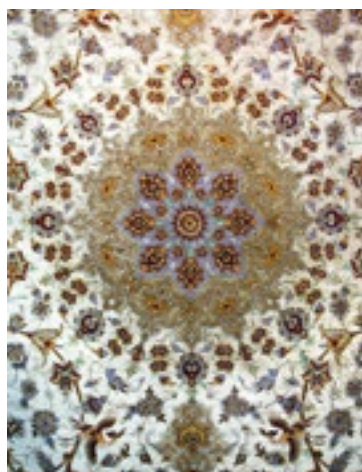
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4 The bazaar in Kerman



5

5 Textile trading in the Shiraz bazaar



6

6 Contemporary Esfahan carpet (detail)

7 An old caravanserai, where carpets were traditionally sold



7

'Quality has been sacrificed for volume in Esfahan and I worry about the future,' says Akbar Mahdaie. He is gloomy, despite having just finished a stunningly beautiful 5 metre x 7 metre wool and silk Safavid design carpet that took five years to weave.

The sacred shrine of Imam Reza in **Mashad** has been cleansed of its 400-year-old Grand Bazaar, then the main bazaar in Khosravi Street, and finally all the lovely carpet alleyways with their design and repair workshops. Every vestige of them has been swept clear to make way for further expansion of Iran's holiest shrine, which attracts more than 20 million pilgrims a year. Not surprisingly, they are the mainstay of the local economy.

It was clear I was not going to find my old Turkmen friends from whom I bought so many carpets in the past, nor any other tribal dealer. Eventually I was directed to

a small arcade, Saraye-Sayeed in Imam Reza Street, which opens in the mornings and supposedly for a few hours in the afternoon. I wandered the narrow corridors on its two floors in vain, trying to find anybody who was open and perhaps had something to show.

I left Mashad with mixed feelings. Visiting the Shrine of Imam Reza is truly an uplifting experience. I had seen the finest Safavid carpet in Iran earlier in the day and some of the most spectacular architecture in Islam. And yet my heart was heavy over the razing of the bazaars.

I wondered if the authorities were pursuing a similar policy to Saudi Arabia in the spiritual cleansing of its holiest places. In Mecca every historic building has been systematically obliterated. With so much of its heritage fast disappearing, it begs the question of what role, if any, conservation plays in Iran today.

Tehran carpet bazaar lies deep inside the capital's main bazaar in the centre of the city. Carpets are gathered from all over Iran and the greatest selection was always to be found here. But now the carpet bazaar is fast disappearing. In the past few months another slice has been lost to women's underwear, and more is destined to follow.

The minimalist flatweaves from the Mazanderan region published by Werner Weber in *Undiscovered Minimalism* were collected by Tehran dealer Ahmad Zamani. They weren't to be found in the Tehran bazaar, but were available to those in the know.

Bazaaris were among the greatest supporters of the Revolution, but they have been hit with huge tax bills that bear no relationship to the reality of profit and loss or turnover. Many have left and more are destined to follow.

Amirhossein Etemad was

previously based in Paris, where he specialised in tribal weavings, before returning to Tehran to open a contemporary art gallery in the Niavaran district. His passion for Persian weavings is undiminished, but he tells me his exhibitions of modern art are what sell.

Smart dealers have followed the money northwards into the rich neighbourhoods; or they are relocating into designer shopping malls that are springing up all over the north of the city. They are the new bazaars of Iran's capital.

The proposed HALI Tour of Iran in 2015 will visit the most interesting bazaars and see the very finest carpet production in the country. We will have unique access to museums and private collections, with lectures by leading academics, and take in archaeology, culture, and some of the most beautiful sights in Islam along the way – as well as spending a night under the stars with nomads

Kilim
the eastern Haouz plains
Morocco
255 x 180 cm / 8' 4" x 6'
1970/80



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Threads of hope

Every so often a character emerges in the rug world whose ideas influence a generation. George Jevremovic is such a figure, with a life that embraces rug-making, auctions, outsider art and now Afghan 'peace' rugs. Theodore Mast finds out where he is currently headed

In 1994 George Jevremovic – we all know him simply as George – converted a dormant train shed in northwest Philadelphia into a 60,000 square foot curio cabinet. It was full of folk, outsider, visionary and ethnic art, antiquities, furniture and alternative Americana; he called it Material Culture. Instead of ormolu or overpolished veneers there were vernacular objects from remote and unlikely places.

Oriental rugs, of course, were everywhere, partly because much of the upper floor was home to George's other business, the original return-to-tradition rug maker Woven Legends, which he sold a couple of years ago. It was equal parts antiques shop, folk art gallery and exotic furnishings store. A visit to Material Culture for whatever reason was always fun. And there were parties – bodacious soirées with plenty of food, open bars and live music, free and open to the public.

The passing recession has been particularly hard on the markets for art, antiques and collectibles. Everyone agreed that, when the recession ended, things would not return to business as usual. But there was no consensus as to what would emerge, other than it would probably involve the Internet.

The tight market strongly favoured buyers. George soon realised that in many instances it was more economical to buy via the Internet than travelling and shipping globally. The problem was

that everyone else was figuring this out as well. The nature of auctions had already evolved over the past twenty or so years, especially with the introduction and mercurial escalation of the buyer's premium. With the demise

sales to the legendary rug auctions in Istanbul's Grand Bazaar, and the big international houses in London and New York. Auctions probably never constituted a major part of his business, but he liked the action and was good at it, both as buyer and

Also, with the departure of Woven Legends, there was generous space for another exhibition gallery and live auction salesroom.

The inaugural sale for Material Culture Auctioneers, Inc., on 5 May 2012, was a glorious mixture of pieces offered with conservative estimates and no reserves. The addition of the Internet provided access to an international audience and more than 90 per cent of lots were sold. Sales have been held twice a month ever since.

Meanwhile, Material Culture, the store on Wissahickon Avenue, remains quirky as ever, with the addition of a bistro-style café in the front lobby. Yet to some it seemed strange that George, arguably the most influential rug producer of

To some it seemed strange that this influential rug producer was no longer involved with rug weaving

of small shops and galleries it could be said the market came to favour neither buyer nor seller, but rather the auction houses.

George has always been involved with auctions, from small country

seller, and he was a quick learner with an uncanny ability to thrive in chaos. It helped to have a pre-existing company with a loading dock plus employees experienced in shipping, receiving and cataloguing.





2



3

the last century, was no longer involved with rug weaving.

An idea began to emerge when a couple of people at HALI came up with the idea of doing Afghan 'peace' rugs; and in turn that idea was grasped by George and a handful of people involved in nascent Afghan rug projects through the work of AfghanMade Carpets - an initiative established by the Task Force for Business and Stability Operations of the US Department of Defense, who were entrusted with developing economic enterprise in war-ravaged regions. One of them was Bülent Özozan, who is Turkish and had worked with George, helping in 1990 to organise production of Folklife rugs, an offshoot of the famous Azeri productions in Turkey. The concept

of the Folklife rugs and the proposed Afghan peace rugs was fundamentally similar: to give weavers complete control of the loom, while requiring them to depict pleasant, memorable images of everyday life as the weavers knew or wished it.

Partnerships were formed; the AfghanPeace Rug Project had begun. Weavers in Bamiyan, Mazar-i-Sharif, Aqcha and numerous villages of varying ethnicities had for thirty years woven images of helicopters, tanks, bombs and the Kalashnikov variations. Now they were now being told to weave birds, flowers, wildlife and friendly neighbours. As with the weavers of the earlier Folklife rugs, the Afghans were at first reluctant, doubting their own abilities to create and compose

unfamiliar forms. But they were quick to embrace what George called 'sketching in wool'.

It will be interesting to see whether the 'peace' rugs become part of a new form of international post-modern folk art. The initial idea came from people from the West, who know that rug productions by nature follow market response.

The first thirty-five peace rugs from Bamiyan were exhibited at Material Culture's seasonal party. It was a fine party, the food the best it's ever been, and there was live music. The peace rugs were the talk of the party and were very well received. As usual, George showed up right on time - fifteen minutes ahead of everybody else.

1 The Material Culture auction room at the eponymous store in Wissahickon Avenue, Philadelphia

2 George Jevremovic in front of a gallery display of self-taught art

3 One of the rugs from the Afghan peace rugs made and exhibited by Jevremovic in 2013

JONATHAN HOPE



*Embroidery used in gift exchange rituals. Lampung, south Sumatra, 19th century. Silk, handspun cotton, natural dyes.
Dimensions 55 x 52 cms. The mandala like central form and the stylised birds echo the pre-Islamic Buddhist influenced culture of the region.*

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Stealing home

The arrival of the 'Gothenburg Shroud' in Lima is the first stage in a painstaking process of repatriation for an important group of ancient Paracas textiles.

Brian David looks at the surprising eagerness of Sweden's authorities to return these looted artefacts to Peru

The Museum of World Culture, Gothenburg, titled a 2008 exhibition of its Peruvian textiles 'A Stolen World' (HALI 166, pp.52-59). Moreover the exhibition went out of its way to explain that the wondrous Paracas textiles had been looted from graves, sold on the black market, and smuggled out of Peru at the instigation of the Swedish Consul.

A few months into the exhibition run, negotiations opened between the Peruvian Government and the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the return of the artefacts to Peru. In June this year (2014) the first batch arrived in Lima.

This apparent happy ending should not divert attention from the full story. In the first decades of the 20th century magnificent pre-Incan cloths began appearing in private collections. Realising they must be grave goods, Peruvian archaeologist Julio C. Tello hired a professional looter to track down the source.

On the desert peninsula of Paracas, on Peru's southern coast, Tello found a 2,000-year-old necropolis where 429 bodies had been wrapped in cloths made from alpaca or llama wool, hand-embroidered and coloured with a dazzling array of natural dyes. Because of the dry conditions, protected from light by burial, the textiles were in pristine condition. Tello sent them to museums in Lima for study and preservation.



When law and order collapsed, the Swedish Consul smuggled the textiles out of the country

However, following a military coup in 1930, law and order collapsed. Museums were looted. Amid this turmoil the Swedish Consul General smuggled the Paracas textiles out of the country - and the Gothenburg Museum put them on display in 1932.

That's right, on display. In other words, exposed to UV light. What might have become of them had they been left in lawless Lima is anybody's guess, in Sweden they were exposed to handling, moisture and variable temperature as well as light. They were stretched out and sewn on to backing fabric. By

1970 they were deemed to have suffered so much fibre damage that they could no longer be shown to the public.

In 2008 the decision was taken that they could withstand display if moved with utmost care. But when the 'Stolen World' show closed three years later, further deterioration was detected. By that time, it had already been agreed in principle that the textiles would return to their homeland. The considerable cost of conversation is therefore now the responsibility of Peru's museums. A cynic might ask if this was a consideration when

Paracas mantle, Peru, south coast, ca. 100 BC-AD 300.

Twenty-two different colours are used. 0.89 m x 1.80 m (2' 11" x 5' 11"). Världskultur-museet, Gothenburg, 1935.32.0118

the Gothenburg Museum chose such a provocative title for the 2008 exhibition and practically invited a claim from Peru.

That perhaps ignoble question apart, the moral debates within this story apply equally to the holdings of many other museums throughout the world. Perhaps this time it is simply appropriate to congratulate the Swedish and Peruvian authorities for having faced the issues in order to reach an amicable resolution. One can only hope that the next chapter in the history of the Paracas textiles will be a better one.

A Sardinian funeral rug

On first glance this colourful flatweave looks like a Persian kilim. But, as Alberto Boralevi reveals, it is in fact a rare Italian peasant rug, with a purpose that makes it central to important local rites

Tapinu 'e mortu, Orgosolo, northern Sardinia, late 18th century. 0.88m x 2.03m (2' 11" x 6' 8"). Warp: sheep's wool (S-spun); weft: sheep's wool, cotton; slit- and dovetail tapestry. Moshe Tabibnia Gallery, Milan

For its 10th anniversary, the 2014 Sartirana Textile Show (10–14 September) will feature a special loan exhibition of some forty rare antique Italian peasant rugs, bench covers, wall hangings and bedspreads, woven in various techniques, from Sardinia, Abruzzi, Calabria and other parts of southern Italy. Among the pieces on display will be this very unusual tapestry-woven funerary kilim, known as a *tapinu 'e mortu* (rug for the dead).

At first sight this kilim, which is woven in slit-tapestry with some dovetailing, could be an Oriental weaving, perhaps from Fars in southwestern Persia or from the Transcaucasus/Azerbaijan region. In fact it is the result of a totally different story, having been made in the village of Orgosolo in Barbagia County, northern Sardinia, once known as the 'village of murderers' owing to its high crime rate and reputation for banditry.

Tapinu 'e mortu are the rarest type of Sardinian peasant weaving, made until the mid-19th century on a traditional vertical loom. Family heirlooms, they were woven by village women to place beneath the dead body of an important man or woman during the funeral. Only

rich families could afford to own one of these funeral rugs.

Tapinu have now completely disappeared from use, and very few examples are known to survive, mostly in public collections. We know of eight in Sardinian museums and one in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, but it is likely that a handful of other *tapinu* are still jealously preserved in private hands on the island.

This particularly beautiful piece dates from the late 18th or early 19th century and is perfectly preserved. It is the only known *tapinu* that depicts a fantastic animal in the central panel instead of a simple geometric motif; it also includes a wealth of other small stylised two- and four-legged animals, small crosses, star medallions, and an arrowhead or trefoil border.

I found this *tapinu* in 1981 when it appeared in an Italian antiques magazine that had a special feature about kilims – some Persian, some Anatolian and some Caucasian, plus one labelled 'possibly Persian, but still being researched'. A few weeks before, by chance, I had come across an old pre-World War II catalogue for an exhibition of Sardinian Textiles that included two similar kilims described as 'Tapinu de Mortu' from Orgosolo.

I acquired the *tapinu 'e mortu* and later sold it to the famous Italian collector Dr Marino dall'Oglio, one of the very few people at that time who understood and appreciated Italian peasant weaving. Despite its original purpose, it is a joyful piece!





◀ It is difficult to identify what kind of animal is represented here; it has been suggested that it could be a rabbit or a hare, while others believe it is a stag with long pronged antlers. In other known examples we see simple geometric forms or, in at least one example in the Museo di Nuoro, two stylised *elebelinde*-like female figures wearing skirts. In many other respects that piece is particularly close to the example shown here.



▲ Both *tapinu 'e mortu* and a type of bed cover woven in the village of Oliena, known locally as a *fressada*, employed a combination of slit-and dovetail tapestry. Italian peasant weavings were mostly in a weft-brocading technique found in Sardinia, the Abruzzi, Sicily and elsewhere in southern Italy. Tapestry was only used in Nule and other villages in the northern part of Sardinia.



▲ The traditional population of Sardinian textiles incorporates double-headed eagles, peacocks and other birds, griffins and dragons, as well as stylised human figures and floral motifs that bear an uncannily close resemblance to those seen on a wide range of oriental rugs and kilims. The particular design elements used here include small stylised animals, some with two legs, perhaps chickens or peacocks, while others are four-legged, and may represent stags, rabbits, dogs, sheep or goats. In addition there are star medallions, rosettes, small crosses, and an arrowhead or trefoil border.



◀ The red and yellow zig-zag bands in the field - usually vertical as here, but also seen as a horizontal chevron (with or without the central panel) - are the only common design feature shared by all known *tapinu 'e mortu*. The zig-zags symbolise water, with the meaning of purification. All the colours are naturally dyed. The red dyestuff used in Sardinian textiles is almost certainly madder, which is common on the island, while the yellow is probably derived from costly saffron, with the dark purple-red probably obtained from the residue of red wine-making. The white and the light blue are cotton.





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A Zand gold damascened dagger (*jambiyya*), Shiraz, Iran, circa 1770



*Suzani, Uzbekistan
19th century
240 x 178cm*



*Cal, Western Turkey
19th century
200 x 170cm*



*Kazak, Caucasus
18th century
213 x 153cm*



*Kum Kapi, Turkey
Dated and signed
190 x 116cm*



*Sa'uj Bulagh, Northeastern Iran
18th century
566 x 216cm*



*Star Ushak, Turkey,
17th century
245 x 140cm*



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*Kalamkari Ceremonial hanging collected in Toraja, Sulawesi, Coromandel coast (India), late 18th century, cotton, painted mordant and resist dyed
382 x 102cm*



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Bowlan Kilim, Damavand region, Persia, early 20th century, 225 x 140 cm.



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A flight of fancy

The radical new-look carpet gallery at the MAK, Vienna poses a challenge to the old Imperial order

The Carpet Hall at the Austrian Museum for Applied Arts (MAK) in Vienna has recently reopened to the public. An imaginative reinstatement now presents the permanent collection, including the world-famous Habsburg Imperial holdings of classical carpets, in an entirely new light. The radical display method may be shocking to some, but it allows many (though not all) of the most important pieces to be clearly seen.

The MAK's carpet collection is among the



Photo credit: Loïs Lammerhuber

three or four best-known and most important such museum collections worldwide. Its core is the classical carpets from the 16th and 17th centuries, the Golden Age of the great realms of the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals. However, in addition to pieces from the Islamic world, the MAK holds a group of high-quality 18th-century carpets from the Savonnerie manufactory in France.

For the museum's 150th anniversary, designer Michael Embacher has brought an

entirely new spatial concept to the carpet display, integrating an 'artistic intervention' by Turkish artist, Füsün Onur. Visualisation of the close geographic, stylistic and cultural connections between Europe, the Middle East and southwestern Asia from the 15th to 18th centuries is a central aspect of the Carpet Hall's curatorial redesign. Embacher juxtaposes carpets of differing origins, highlighting their plasticity and fragility by using thin steel cables to weave the

installation into a spectacular whole-room outer shell. Positioned slightly tilted at various heights, the individual rugs and fragments seem to float within the space.

The carpets are accompanied by a small selection of objects from the Ottoman and Safavid Empires as well as European pieces, some from the Arts and Crafts sphere. These interrelate with the carpets, serving to place them in a multilayered formal context and underline their historical authenticity. ❖



Chain of consequences

A gift of £100 enabled **Simon Crosby** to begin collecting Turkmen rugs. Now he has made a gift of his own, donating a group of Amu Darya-region rugs to the Ashmolean Museum. Included are some supreme examples, among the oldest we know, of truly nomadic carpets giving rare insights into the Turkmen past

¹ Ersari Turkmen carpet, mid 19th century. The floral palmette and arabesque field design derives from Persian urban culture, rendered with a typically Ersari accent, evident in the colour style and the details of the borders. This is the work of tribespeople long settled in the Amu Darya Valley, who have applied their weaving skills to producing carpets for commerce. 1.38 m x 2.70 m (4' 6" x 8' 10"). Ashmolean Museum, Oxford EA2014.10. Images courtesy the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford, and Simon Crosby. All caption comments by Dr Jon Thompson

My gift of a group of top-class Turkmen carpets to Oxford University's Ashmolean Museum was kindly facilitated by my friend of many years Dr Jon Thompson, well known to Turkmen enthusiasts. It is polite and customary to acknowledge one's mentors. There have been several, beginning with Dr Jon, whose most substantial period of help was mainly in the 1970s. I met him through my bookselling business, which specialised in books on oriental carpets. My interest in carpets had come about, like so much in life, quite by

which I later learned to call güls. Further on I bought two other gül-bearing rugs, one in Srinagar (thank you, Mr Khan), one in Bombay.

Back from India, I visited the Persian Carpet Galleries (a.k.a. Lefevre & Partners) in London and was astonished to see collectable rugs for the first time. Turkmen fever flared, as did auction fever. I had started my bookshop, and it was not long before Dr Thompson and Lesley and Robert Pinner became good customers and mentors - as did Peter Hoffmeister, with whom I did rug swaps. I thank all these people, and

I happily explored rug shops and bazaars and caught incurable Turkmen fever

chance. And it was that same chance that, step by step, led to my gift to the Ashmolean - a striking example of unforeseen consequences.

The chance event that triggered all this came on the eve of an overland journey to India: a gift of £100 from my then father-in-law, who suggested I buy a carpet on the journey. In his house I had admired a dark red rug featuring wonderful medallions. The way to India was through Afghanistan. Once there I had formed a clear idea of what I wanted - medallions. I happily explored rug shops and bazaars and well and truly caught incurable Turkmen fever.

My first rug, later stolen, was bought in Kandahar, which was not so wild in those days. The November nights were extremely cold and I slept under the rug for warmth. The seller told me it was very old; it wasn't, but it was certainly warm, and it had the necessary medallions

others too many to name, for their part in my learning about Turkmens, and for encouraging me to republish and update some scarce books on carpets (such as Bogolyubov 1973). Peter Hoffmeister was particularly influential because, like me, he had chosen to collect Turkmens entirely for their aesthetic value, utterly irrespective of condition (Hoffmeister 1980, pp.7ff). We spent hours mulling over aesthetics in the company of some spectacular wrecks we both owned (Hoffmeister 1980, pl.12)

One of these wrecks, an unillustrated fragment, is now in the Ashmolean. It is a fine example of a very old Ersari *güllü göl* main carpet with large medallions of an early type. These are variants of those found on the more common *güllü göl* carpets, one of which I exhibited at the first International Conference on Oriental Carpets in London in 1976. That one, with its

2 Ersari Turkmen carpet, 18th century or earlier - the best and probably the oldest of its type. It displays many archaic features in common with the earliest weavings of other Turkmen tribes, and illustrates the principle that the descent of the four main Turkmen tribes, the Salor, Saryk, Tekke and Ersari, from a common ancestor, is reflected in their weavings. The further back one goes in time the more features they have in common. A comparable example recently surfaced in the California rug trade, but may be the work of another tribe. 2.35 m x 2.80 m (7' 9" x 9' 2"). Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, EA2014.8

3 Ersari Turkmen carpet, 18th century or earlier. The oldest known example of its type, from the full nomadic period, before settlement. It has many archaic design features that relate it to the carpets of other Oghuz tribes. 1.92 m x 2.54 m (6' 4" x 8' 4"). Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, EA2014.4

4 Ersari Turkmen carpet, early 19th century. This carpet also dates from the time before settlement when nomadic women wove carpets exclusively for their own use. The repeating rows of primary and secondary göls in the field have a design common to all the tribes. Notable features include a lovely soft green, rare among the Turkmen, and a distinctive, well-executed border found only in older pieces. 2.25 m x 2.85 m (7' 5" x 9' 4"). Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, EA2014.5



2

spectacular colour, is now in the Hoffmeister collection (Thompson, 1983, p.37; Tsareva 2011, pl.107). It has straight-sided octagons and the more usually found border. The border on what I must now call the Ashmolean example points to a much earlier date. It is reminiscent of the borders of Salor main carpets. The octagons are unusually tall by comparison, and have outer edges that neatly accommodate the contents. Thompson (1980, fig. 34) thinks these lobed octagons are earlier than straight-sided ones.

There are several early carpets with such octagons; another complete one is part of this gift (2). It has three rows of seven less-tall göls. With the *kurbaghe* gül as its minor ornament, it is an outstanding example (see Rogers 1983, pp.12ff for the deep significance of octagons).

The *temirjin-göl* carpet with the same border is also very ancient (3). This design, including

the minor ornament, is usually found in Saryk main carpets, where the göls tend to be smaller. Dietrich Wegner (Jones & Boucher 1972, p.10) says the *temirjin* is an old tribal göl of the Ersari, which this example seems to confirm. There is more on the *temirjin* göl in Bogolyubov 1973, pl.26.

In the centre of the göls in the Ashmolean piece is what I believe to be a motif of great significance for the Turkmen. Valentina Moshkova rightly points to the possible religious significance of this motif (1970, figs.58/1 and 88/12). Portions of this X-shaped motif are variously called trefoil, cloverleaf and sometimes *kuchukisi* (Moshkova in Pinner & Franses 1980, p.18). These important motifs are widely used, notably in ensis (especially Tsareva 2011, pl.112) and also in the Salor main carpet göl, where a two-thirds version always springs from an angled point (the full version of this motif is seen



3



4

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as the göl centre in the carpet next described). Although ancient, this wonderful carpet is complete but worn and with old repairs. Early temirjin carpets made by the Ersari are very rare.

I find the wonderfully anecdotal writing of Hartley Clark (1922) hugely attractive. In that book I first saw a lattice carpet attributed by him to the Ersari (p.80). Later I was very happy to find one for myself (Thompson 1983, p.96 and Tsareva 2011, pl.111). It is quite large, too large for nomadic production. Even larger, and not in as good condition, is this Ashmolean example that I found later (5). It is much closer to Hartley Clark's. Both are early versions and have quite wonderful güls with archaic looks. The spacing on the Ashmolean example strikes me as more attractive. There is another, possibly later, lattice carpet in the Washington Textile Museum (Mackie & Thompson 1980, pl.92), and another was published by the late Hans Elmby (1996, no.38). I have not seen the one I am told is in the V&A in London. These are very rare objects.

Equally rare is the huge town-made carpet with botehs in lines (6). I first saw one of these, from the Ballard Collection, in Dimand & Mailey 1973, pl.193. Sadly, it was not well reproduced. It has the same design elements as

the present piece but is much shorter and without the wonderful kilim ends. Ersari carpets with botehs are often very beautiful.

There are a few Ersari carpets with what is known as the dragon and phoenix design. The Ashmolean example (not illustrated) is the oldest known to me. It has the bonus of a delicate octagon in mid field. A plainer version, another old one, can be seen in Reuben 1998, pl.34, with the oddity of the main border being repeated only at either end; it also has an unusual and truly delightful red boteh border on a dark ground. It is unlikely that the weavers had our interpretation of the design motif as being a dragon and phoenix struggle, but it does seem to be an archaic traditional design in keeping with the great age of this piece. While Turkmen weavers probably knew little of the origin and meaning of their design elements, it is astonishing to realise how compelled they must have felt, in a very tough environment, endlessly to repeat and pass on what had been inherited.

Why chival güls are used in main carpets is argued over. These stepped güls are more usually seen on smaller envelope-type bags. Ersari main carpets designed like this are very rare, and they are mostly early; I guess that this type disappeared



5

5 Ersari Turkmen carpet, 18th century or earlier - the most archaic and magnificent of the few known examples of this design. Its size indicates that it was woven for an urban home, perhaps as a special commission. The lattice design is rare, but not unknown among the Turkmen, and may ultimately derive

from silk textile patterns. The motif within the lattice has gül-like features, most notably in the four projecting clover-leaf forms, seen also in (2). It is not known to occur other than in this lattice format. 2.70 m x 5.05 m (8' 10" x 16' 7"). Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, EA2014.7



6

6 Ersari Turkmen carpet, mid 19th century. The format of longitudinal stripes decorated with rows of botehs facing alternately right and left was a popular design locally. Though the design has an urban flavour, it also reveals something of the tribal mentality in its arrangement of rectilinear motifs in endless repeat

format. It has a border in common with the unillustrated 'dragon and phoenix' rug in the Crosby gift, a shape suitable for furnishing a traditional Persian home, and was evidently woven for sale. 1.66 m x 4.80 m (5' 5" x 15' 9"). Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, EA2014.9



7

7 Middle Amu Darya Valley
Turkmen ensi (tent door rug)
probably Kizyl Ayak tribe, 19th
century. 0.98m x 1.72m (3'3" x 5'8").
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford,
EA2014.11

long ago. Turkmen aficionados know that there has been much speculation about the reasons for that disappearance. But what is without doubt is the great beauty of this complete carpet with its tall güls and fantastic colouring, typical of the very best of early Ersari work.

The design on a small (1) carpet is known as the Herati pattern. I have been to Herat on the Silk Route, and saw nothing like it there. Perhaps it is a carpet trade name - maybe Herat was a collecting point - or more likely the name refers to the other Herat in Iran. Whatever the answer, this carpet is fine without any label. The apparently vegetal design motif on seven levels is large and does not appear in its entirety. It is offset left and right so you can imagine the whole of it (see also Elmby 1996, no.41). The borders are narrow and happily understated, giving the field the prominence it deserves and

lifting it from the ordinary into which Herati pattern rugs often sink (Jones & Boucher 1972, p.15). A related example is far from ordinary: the very beautiful carpet in Grote-Hasenbalg at pl.99 (turn the picture to see it properly). Glorious.

A damaged little ensi, which turned up in Cairo in the 1970s, was an unexpected find (7). Probably there are others but I do not know of any. On the basis of size alone, there are two groups of Ersari ensis (examples of both can be seen in Tsareva 2011). This one belongs in the smaller group, which contains more early examples than the taller group. It is unusual on several counts.

It looks at first sight somewhat of a hybrid, although there are clear Ersari markers such as the general theme of mihrab-like motifs in the quarters sitting on the usual lines. These same motifs appear in a larger size lower down. If they echo mihrabs then they suggest a devotional purpose, as in the Ersari piece in Schürmann 1969 pl.47. That is not the case with these motifs used on a beautiful chival in Loges 1980, p.199, obviously an Ersari weaving. See also Elmby 1998, no. 51. The *dyrnak* güls in the central and lower panels are more Yomut in style than Ersari, as is the central unpointed pole. The white ground meander border at the top, repeated lower down, is more Tekke in style and is used in precisely the same way in two wonderful ensis in Tsareva 2011, pls.95 and 106. Those two are also seen in the unmissable ensi-feast in Eiland 2003, p.163ff. So what have we here? Enthusiasts for structural analysis (I am not one) will want to persuade the Ashmolean to let them harvest some material to enable this piece to be 'properly' labelled, which will not change its aesthetics or appeal one bit.

The last carpet in the gift, not illustrated here, is a noble wreck. Stolen from me in the 1990s, it came back cut up. I received two pieces - somewhere there is a third. Like the 'dragon and Phoenix' carpet described above, it has parallel bands running in the warp direction which display what look to western eyes like large insects contained in a light meander (Moshkova 1970, 53/9 and 63/5, may be later versions). This apparently insignificant motif should not be overlooked. It can also be seen on a Fostat fragment of the early 17th century (Lamm 1985, pl.39). The beautiful border is the same as in the botch carpet above. It has wonderful colouring typical of early Ersari pieces.

The gift of these precious rugs to the Ashmolean has made me very happy that in my lifetime I have seen such a good outcome to a long and passionate collecting habit. ❧

Riddles within an exquisite enigma

A Nazca feather ‘apron’ has the power to mesmerise and mystify in equal measure. Its intriguing combination of long and short feathers, its subtle colour harmonies and a range of possible functions all pose their own questions. **James Reid** looks for answers

Occasionally, one comes across a miniature textile that is a sheer gem. This is the case with this Nazca feather ‘apron’ embellished with thye feathers of coastal and tropical birds, and created almost 1,500 years ago – between about 600 and 800 AD. The immediate visual impact comes from large and small feathers originating in different regions, and the harmoniously coloured design. One’s fascination is enhanced by the mystery surrounding the purpose of such an unusual and striking piece.

It measures a mere 33 by 34 centimetres (13" x 13½"), and contains feathers only on the front of the piece. Since sleeves are also absent, it is probable that it was designed as a decorative miniature tunic, or apron. But what was its function? And, above all, what lends it its mesmerising charm, making it such a spectacular and enchanting example of the Nazca weaving from the south coast of Peru?

Several points merit specific investigation. The first resides in the contrast between the large, soberly toned umber feathers from the Peruvian Pacific coast, and the smaller lyrical cerulean blue, light cadmium yellow and orange-red feathers from tropical Amazonia. Pacific coast sources for larger white, umber and black feathers were the Muscovy duck, cormorant and carrion *gallinazos* buzzards, while the flamingo, from the south coast, provided delicate long pink feathers. Coastal albatrosses and eagles and condors from the high Andes have inappropriately long feathers for textile embellishment.

The major authority in the field, John P. O’Neill, contributed the admirable illustrated text on ‘Feather Identification’ for my book

Magic Feathers, Textile Art from Ancient Peru. He poses a trenchant question: why are the birds of the desert coast so under-represented in the featherwork of the ancient Peruvians? He also makes the critical observation that none of the prolific sources for small, vividly coloured feathers (like the scarlet, red-and-green and blue-and-yellow macaw species) was native to Peru west of the Andes, where most of the pieces were made. This is, he notes, ‘but one bit of good evidence of the massive trade in pet birds, or in skins and feathers, with people living east of the Andes’.

The second area of noteworthy significance lies in the subtle colour harmonies used to create the characteristic ‘stepped triangle’ design, presented here in a serial imagery format. Such a compositional motif is a logical reflection of the artist’s own environment. The ‘steps’ are probably related to the terraced hillsides employed on mountain slopes; these served both to control the downward flow of water, thereby preventing landslides, and to ensure that water would not be wasted on its course down to the arid, desert coast, where the seventeen river valleys desperately needed fresh water for agriculture.

The third and most intriguing aspect of this marvellous feather textile is its purpose. Was it functional, i.e. designed to be worn? Or perhaps it was created for a more sinister reason: as an altar offering, to accompany the sacrifice of a young child? Whatever its purpose, it is a glorious aesthetic wonder, an artistic creation that epitomises what the great Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier termed the ‘marvellous reality’ of Latin America, in the preface to his 1947 book *El Reino de Este Mundo*. ❖



1

1 Nazca miniature feather apron or tunic, Peru, south coast, ca. 600-800 AD. Cotton, feathers, 0.33 x 0.34m (1'1" x 1'1/2"). Private collection





VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT

‘Where’s Wher?’ The question has often been asked of the masterly collection formed by the late Marino Dall’Oglio, the predominant Italian collector of his generation. With the help of a small selection of the countless antique carpets and textiles associated with the Wher Collection during the past five decades, **Alberto Boralevi** pays tribute to a mentor and teacher, anticipating a book soon to be published by Moshe Tabibnia Gallery. With additional comment from HALI’s editors



2



3

1 (*Overleaf*) Mughal floral-lattice carpet (detail), probably Lahore, India, mid-17th century. Pashmina pile on a silk foundation, 2.74m x 2.75m (9'0" x 9'0"). Private collection

2 Salor Turkmen *kejebe* trapping, 18th century. 2.12m x 0.70m (7'0" x 2'4"). Gallery Moshe Tabibnia, Milan

3 North Rhine tapestry, Alsace, ca. 1425-50. All wool, 0.77m x 2.60m (2'6" x 8'6"). Private collection

(*Overleaf*) Mughal floral-lattice carpet

This splendid large pashmina-pile fragment is an outstanding example of one of the best-known types of Mughal Indian carpet, about which much has been written and around which some uncertainty still exists. Although most likely made in Lahore, carpets of this type are usually referred to as 'Jaipur', since they are associated with the palace at Amber, built by Rajah Jai Singh I (r.1622-1668), and completed by the mid-1630s. Colonel T. H. Hendley, writing in 1905, notes that old labels still adhering to several of the carpets identify them as 'Lahore *galim*'

(*Top*) Salor Turkmen *kejebe* panel

The large and spectacular *kejebe* hangings of the Salor are traditionally among the most desirable of all Turkmen weavings. Examples exist with two or three of the eight-pointed star medallions. Elena Tsareva, in her recent study of the Hoffmeister collection, calls the pattern *darvaza*, meaning gate or gates. The oldest examples appear to have fewer borders in the lower skirt panel, as here. For many years these trappings were thought to be used much like an *asmalyk*, but Tsareva suggests that these were tent panels used for special occasions



Alsace 'Fabulous Creatures' tapestry

Despite its secular subject, this 15th-century tapestry once hung in the Augustinian Monastery of Neustift in the Tyrol and was later owned by the well-known Viennese collector Dr Albert Figdor. Tapestries from the North Rhine region (Strasbourg and Basel) are rare, and those with red grounds even more so. Most now reside in museum collections. Woven entirely in wool on a narrow loom, with the warps perpendicular to the design, it still has original selvages on the top and bottom edges. The 'fantastic beasts' theme is not known on other examples

Marino Dall'Oglio's life has already been remembered in a recent article by Moshe Tabibnia (HALI 178, Winter 2013, p. 148). Here I want only to add some personal notes, remembering him as a real master, someone who taught me more than anybody else - not only in the elite field of the finest antique oriental carpets, but also in the wider world of trading.

Marino was a chemical engineer by profession and training, but for many years his main job was dealing with the Soviet Russians, selling them entire factories and industrial plants. This special training permitted him to engage in any kind of difficult or tricky deal and to win.

As a collector he was very active both in buying and selling. Someone once maliciously said that he was a more of hidden dealer than a real collector. The truth is that he was always willing to improve the Wher Collection (so called in order that he should not be directly involved as a named individual). It was almost entirely self-financed. I remember that he made a clear distinction between the pieces he bought for the collection and those he would resell in order to invest the proceeds in other exceptional finds.

He was an extraordinary carpet collector and a skilled mountaineer. He stood out in both these activities, always seeking to reach the summit. Interviewed by Luca Brancati for the 'Speciale Tappeti' supplement to the September 1999 edition of *Il Giornale dell'Arte* - the only interview he ever gave to an Italian magazine - he admitted

Someone once maliciously said that he was a more of hidden dealer than a real collector. The truth is that he was always willing to improve the Wher Collection

the parallel between collecting antique carpets and climbing all the Alpine peaks above the height of 4,000 metres: 'I dreamed of climbing the *Weisshorn* (4,505 metres)... once I reached the top I almost cried with emotion, but the next day I already had another goal. The same is true with carpets, we always look for something hard to reach.'

During some fifty years of collecting he assembled carpets of every provenance and period, always looking for the very best. His collection included classical Turkish and Persian carpets and textiles as well as early Caucasian, Mughal Indian and Chinese carpets and some exceptional Turkmen masterpieces, not forgetting Spanish and Portuguese carpets, Gothic and Colonial tapestries and Italian peasant rugs.

In the early 1980s I saw three rare Sardinian bench covers at an Antiques Show in Assisi. I liked them but could afford to buy only one. I didn't know Marino personally then but, a few months later, when I had the chance to visit him, I discovered that he had bought the other two. In the following years I was able to sell him few other important pieces of this group, including the rare *Tapinu de Mortu* featured in this issue.

Once I had a heated discussion with Marino. I don't remember the particular reason, but probably it was because he rejected something I was offering him, even though I insisted it was a real bargain. A few days later he sent me a letter with the following quotation, sometimes attributed to John Ruskin: 'There is hardly anything in the world that someone cannot make a little worse and sell a little cheaper, and the people who consider price alone are that person's lawful prey. It's unwise to pay too much, but it's worse to pay too little. When you pay too much, you lose a little money - that is all. When you pay too little, you sometimes lose everything, because the thing you bought was incapable of doing the thing it was bought to do. The common law of business balance prohibits paying a little and getting a lot - it can't be done. If you deal with the lowest bidder, it is well to add something for the risk you run, and if you do that you will have enough to pay for something better.'

That was his philosophy: for me it was a very good lesson.

4 Caucasian 'Portuguese' design carpet, ca. 1700. Wool pile on a wool foundation, 1.82m x 2.96m (5'12" x 9'8"). Private collection, Belgium

5 Khorasan 'Portuguese' design carpet, northeast Persia, first half 17th century. Wool pile with *jufti* knots on a cotton foundation. 2.30m x 5.50m (7'7" x 18'0"). Private collection, Italy



'Portuguese' design carpets

The so-called 'Portuguese' design may have originated in the first part of the 16th century (a precursor can be seen in the medallion of the Bardini-Williams Safavid 'Tree' carpet in Philadelphia). During the early 17th century, the scheme developed and it appears on carpets made in Esfahan in central Persia and further east in Mashad in Khorasan. It is these Khorasan examples, which have become known as the 'Portuguese' carpets, that employ the scheme to the greatest effect: the concentric fields extend across the entire central area, and in the corners a pictorial scene supposedly depicts 'Portuguese' sailors in galleons, and a drowning sailor reaching out of the water.

Much has been written about these carpets, which are made in the same technique (some asymmetric *jufti*-knotting) and materials as other classical period carpets from Khorasan. It is thought that they may have been special commissions exported to Europe through the port of Hormuz. But, while they can be assigned to a particular place of manufacture, there are no dated examples, so determining their age is largely guesswork. Owing to the 'Portuguese' iconography, at times they have been misattributed to Gujarat and Goa in India.

At least a dozen Khorasan 'Portuguese' carpets are known. Four of them, in Berlin, Vienna, Lyon, and the Benguiat-Harding (5), now in Italy, have a floral rendering of the pattern; four more, in Istanbul, Amsterdam, Washington and at Knole in Kent, are transitional between floral and geometric in drawing; and the final four, in New York, Lisbon, Istanbul and at Winterthur in Delaware, have a geometric rendering.

There are also six known surviving Caucasian carpets inspired by the Khorasan 'Portuguese' group. Of these, the Lord Balfour carpet (4), acquired by the Wher Collection through the London partnership of Vahan Gumuchdjian and Paul Nels and now in a French collection, is the best preserved. It has the wavy lines depicting sea in the corners, and the four palmettes that form the centre of the Khorasan carpets. We do not know whether it originally had a wider primary border beyond the narrow border that survives. The colours are vibrant yet soft. The Balfour carpet not only provides a highly important historical record but is also the most beautiful example known of this type.



Two-medallion Ushak carpet

If one had the choice to acquire just one large-medallion Ushak carpet, there is little doubt that this would be it. Now in the Kuwait National Museum, it has been exhibited on several occasions and often appeared in publications. It is not the oldest example of type, but it is certainly the most spectacular. No colour illustration can do justice to its beauty. The form of the two ovoid medallions and the large secondary medallions is simply perfection, the richness of colour unsurpassed.

Said once to have belonged to the Savoy royal family, this magnificent carpet found its way to the Wher Collection in the 1970s, from the great Turin art dealer Pietro Accorsi, via antique carpet specialist Dani Ghigo. It was first published in Jean Lefevre's monograph *Turkish Carpets from the 16th to 19th Century*, with a caption written by Jon Thompson. The book was based on carpets offered in Lefevre & Partners' specialist auction in London on 11 February 1977. Unsold on the day, the carpet was subsequently loaned to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, after which it was acquired in 1982 by Sheikh Nasser al-Sabah of Kuwait.

In 1986, Julian Raby wrote that 'it is often stated that the transformation in Ottoman carpet design occurred under Persian influence, following the battle of Chaldiran, when the Ottomans sacked Tabriz and abducted Safavid artists' ('Court and Export: part 2. The Uşak Carpets' in *Oriental Carpet & Textile Studies II: Carpets of the Mediterranean Countries 1400-1600*, pp.177-88). Raby goes on demonstrate that the earliest medallion-Ushak carpets may well have originated in the middle of the 15th century. The oldest surviving examples are believed to be those with Kufic borders (see Carlo Suriano, 'Oak Leaves and Arabesques: Ushak Large-Medallion Carpets with Pseudo-Kufic Borders', HALI 116, 2001, pp.106-15). The Kuwait carpet has a very specific border that can be found on Ushak carpets with a number of different field patterns (Christine Klose, 'The Turkish Forked-Leaf Border', HALI 123, 2002, pp.61-64), and also on a number of 'Damascus' carpets.

There is no question that the Turin-Wher-Kuwait two-medallion Ushak is one of the most beautiful examples of its type to survive. Both Suriano and Klose have argued plausibly for a date soon after 1500.





7

6 Ushak large-medallion carpet, west Anatolia, early 16th century. Wool pile on wool foundation, 3.30 m x 7.23 m (10' 10" x 23' 9"). Al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait National Museum, LNS 26R, acquired in 1982

7 Ushak star-variant carpet fragment, west Anatolia, 16th century, 1.75 m x 2.10 m (5' 9" x 6' 11"). Gallery Moshe Tabibnia, Milan

Ushak star-variant carpet fragment

As a connoisseur and scholar Marino Dall'Oglio understood the importance of fragments for carpet studies as well as their aesthetic value. After the very successful sale of the Bernheimer Family Collection at Christie's in London (in February 1996), he was very excited, foreseeing a dramatic improvement of the fragments market due to what he called 'the Bernheimer effect'.

This carpet belongs to a rare group of so-called star-variant Ushaks with one of two main ornaments: an eight-lobed medallion and an eight-pointed star. Most of the nine extant examples show a sole medallion - very few have the two motifs together and only two show the star as main ornament. The present fragment shows a complete star in the centre and quarter-medallions at the corners. A smaller piece of the

same carpet now in the V&A was bought from the antique dealer Giuseppe Salvadori in Florence in 1902 (HALI 6/4, 1984, p.368 fig. 16). The present fragment, with a complete star and four quarter medallions, at one time belonged to the Florentine restorer Roberto Faccioli. I tried to buy it; it was not then for sale. Later, a very ambitious young Iranian dealer saw it and, without knowing what it was, bought it. I was really upset, but then he asked me what he had bought. 'Well,' I answered, 'Not only can I tell what it is, but also who would like to have it.' So we made a deal and it was sold to Marino Dall'Oglio, who also owned a third piece of the carpet. I expected him to join his two fragments for a more complete reconstruction, but he kept the better and larger piece and sold the other, now the joy of another collector. *A.B.*



8

8 Italian *alluociolato* cut velvet panel with gold *bouclé* (detail), probably Milan, late 15th–early 16th century, 1.13 m x 0.29 m (3'9" x 11"). John Eskenazi Collection, courtesy Gallery Moshe Tabibnia, Milan

9 *Qilin* and Four Dogs daybed cover, Ningxia, northwest China, Qing dynasty, Kangxi period, second half 17th century. Wool pile on a cotton foundation, 1.42 m x 1.98 m (4'8" x 6'6"). Gallery Moshe Tabibnia, Milan

Milanese *alluociolato* velvet

Silk velvet enriched with gold and silver thread represented the height of luxury in the 15th and 16th century. This status was enhanced by the mercantile endeavours of great Italian city states such as Milan, Venice, Genoa and Florence, all of which had highly sophisticated silk weaving industries. The cost made sure that such cloth was available only to the wealthiest in Europe and the Levant. This velvet, with its rich red ground coloured by use of the insect dye kermes, has areas of added metal thread wefting and loops. The shimmering effect of candlelight light on these loops of gold thread gives the technique the name *alluociolato*, an allusion to the Italian for firefly (*lucciola*). Here it is used beside dense areas of metal covered looped pile, known as *bouclé*. The design creates small cartouche reserves that contain heavily feather-edged rosettes set at angles; together with the ribbon-like arabesques that make endless knots, these impart movement to a design that might otherwise look rather static. Recent research allows the attribution of this pattern to Milan, where silk velvet weaving was set up in the 15th century by the Visconti and Sforza dukes. Identical velvets are in the Castello Sforesca, Milan, the Metropolitan Museum, New York, and the Musée Historique des Tissus, Lyons (HALI 178, p.31)

Kangxi period Chinese daybed cover

Set against a soft rose-coloured background, the field pattern of this northwest Chinese carpet is composed of a central *qilin* flanked by flaming pearls, with a lion-dog and ball in each of the four corners. The *qilin*, sometimes known as the 'Chinese unicorn', is a chimera, a fabulous winged and hooved creature of good omen, and the symbol of longevity, grandeur, felicity, illustrious offspring and wise administration. The *fo*-dogs, or *bai*, were short-legged, short-headed dogs, precursors of the Pekinese breed and were held in great esteem; dogs, lions and mythological lion-dogs permeate Chinese art. The Buddhist lion is a defender of the law and a protector of sacred buildings: the stone lions in front of buildings are there as demon-scarers and often have a half-dog, half-lion appearance. The primary border of this daybed cover is composed of a swastika lattice in blue against a red background. This border and the outer wide grey-brown band are typical of carpets that were made during the Kangxi period.



10 'Transylvanian' prayer rug with calligraphic inscription panel, west Anatolia, early 17th century. Wool pile on a wool foundation., 1.10m x 1.63m (3'8" x 5'4"). Romain Zaleski Collection, Italy, courtesy Gallery Moshe Tabibnia, Milan

11 'Transylvanian' three-column rug, west Anatolia, 17th century. Wool pile on a wool foundation, 1.25m x 1.90m (4'1" x 6'3"). Private collection



10

An inscribed west Anatolian niche rug

This outstanding rug is one of ten known 'first-period Transylvanian' single-niche rugs, all very closely linked in composition and detail. All have the same star-and-cartouche main and reciprocal-trefoil minor borders. Most have the same inner and outer 'chain-link' guards. Nine have stylised arabesques in the spandrels. This rug, the finest and arguably the oldest of the ten, is the exception: it has the same 'bug' palmette motifs as a small cluster of white-ground rugs

attributed to Selendi, near Ushak. Otherwise, the main difference is the absence or presence of an extra panel above the spandrels and, when present, the nature of its decoration. Three have no extra panel. Of the other seven, three have a calligraphic inscription within a hexagonal cartouche, translated as 'Pray quickly before it is too late'; two have arabesques like those in the spandrels in hexagonal cartouches; and two have a cartouche containing tree-like forms.



11

'Transylvanian' three-column rug

This beautiful rug is one of a sub-group within the larger family of so-called 'Transylvanian' rugs from western Anatolia. Set apart by style and colour, it has a distinctive palette - brilliant red field, gleaming ivory spandrels and rich yellow borders - also seen on 19th-century Melas rugs. Elements of the design are similar to those seen on 18th- and 19th-century Kula and Gördes prayer rugs, but the most important link is with 16th century Cairene Ottoman

prayer rugs, which served as the inspiration for these and other types of 'Transylvanian' rugs. The drawing of the columns here is particularly beautiful. The design of their bases, in the form of implied octagons, closely relates them to the columns on the rugs of another 'Transylvanian' sub-group, which have conventionally been attributed to Ladik, but are now considered to have a more westerly origin and are almost certainly from the Ushak region. ❖



Cultural confluence

A new exhibition celebrates Thomas Weisel's gift of Native American art to San Francisco's Fine Arts Museums. As Jill D'Alessandro explains, the collection owes its beginnings to Weisel's interest in contemporary American painting - which itself was influenced by Native art

1 Navajo serape (detail), North America, New Mexico, ca. 1850. Characterised by bold design, the classic serape is celebrated for its vitality and artistic innovation. The visual impact of the network grid punctuated with dashes of indigo and set against a crimson ground is arresting. So coveted was the colour red, the weavers would ravel imported woollen broadcloths in order to access the red yarns for their own creations. The all-over composition does not have a single focal point but rather disperses the viewer's attention over the entire field in much the same way as Abstract Expressionist painting. Wool, weft-faced plain weave, interlocked tapestry weave, eccentric curved weft. 2.31 m x 1.58 m (7'7" x 5'2"). Promised gift of the Thomas W. Weisel Family to the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, L12.103.20

The exhibition 'Lines on the Horizon' at the De Young Museum in San Francisco celebrates the extraordinary gift of Native American art from the collection of Bay Area financier Thomas Weisel. The exhibition displays a cross-section of the over-200 objects gifted to the museums, including Mimbres bowls, a selection of Plains ledger drawings, historic pottery, and twelve premier examples of classic- and late-classic-period Navajo weavings.

On entering the gallery, visitors are at once taken by the sheer scale and vibrancy of the Navajo blankets. This selection constitutes the core of the twenty-five weavings that make up the Weisel collection. Among its other treasures

early New York school and the California figurative movement in addition to Native American art. His contemporary art collections include works by Joan Brown, Wayne Thiebaud, Arshile Gorky, and the largest private collection of works by Tony Berlant. Weisel discovered Navajo weaving through his connection with Berlant, starting in 1973.

Berlant began to collect Navajo blankets in 1969, while teaching painting at the University of California in Los Angeles, after discovering a chief's blanket of the second phase in the backroom of a Persian rug dealer. His initial thought was that it had been 'made by Mondrian in a previous life'. After seeing

On entering the gallery, visitors are at once taken by the sheer scale and vibrancy of the Navajo blankets

are two sand painting rugs woven by Gladys and Irene Manuelito, nieces of weaver and medicine man Hosteen Klah; a small group of Germantown weavings; and a Navajo woman's dress.

This collection was assembled with an informed eye and through a fortuitous collaboration. Weisel began collecting Navajo blankets in the 1970s on the advice of Tony Berlant, artist and well-recognised authority on Navajo weaving. Berlant's work with Mary Kahlenberg brought Navajo weaving to the forefront of artistic dialogue in the 1970s. Their books remain among the definitive texts on the subject.

It wasn't Native American art, however, that first connected Weisel and Berlant but rather Berlant's own artwork. Weisel, who has sat on the board of San Francisco Museum of Modern Art for thirty-two years, collects art from the

Berlant's growing blanket collection, New York artists Donald Judd and Frank Stella encouraged him to leave teaching and to subsidise his own art career by building blanket collections for artists in their circle. Donald Judd hosted Berlant and his blankets in New York.

In his foreword to *Collecting the Weaver's Art: the William Claflin Collection of Southwestern Textiles* (2003) Berlant explains: 'All I had to do was show the blankets. Regardless of their own personal approaches, artists immediately shared my intense visceral reaction to these weavings and the powerful abstract vision they conveyed.' He sold blankets to artists such as Jim Dine, Jasper Johns, Brice Marden, Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol, as well as to Judd and Stella. Warhol exclaimed, 'They are all so beautiful, I'll just take the six cheapest.'



2

2 Navajo Ute style chief's wearing blanket, North America, New Mexico, ca. 1830. This prized first-phase blanket was collected by George Horace Lorimer (1867–1937), editor-in-chief of the *Saturday Evening Post*, in the early 20th century. Skilfully woven with the finest materials, such blankets are characterised by the balanced placement of alternating bands of natural brown and cream with dyed indigo blue sheep's wool. Weisel sees these first phase blankets 'in relation to a painter such as Barnett Newman, very simple, just a few lines - this is like an amazing painting, but made by a woman weaving on a loom, outside.' Wool; weft-faced plain weave, dovetail and diagonal-join tapestry weave, eccentric curved weft, 1.32 m x 1.78 m (4' 4" x 5' 10"). Promised gift of the Thomas W. Weisel Family, L12.103.17

In their initial encounter, Frank Stella bought thirty-four. He later told Berlant that one day he had laid the weavings out across the floor of his studio one on top of another, all at different angles; and that it was this exercise that broke him free from Minimalism.

Berlant is quick to reference the impact of Native American art on the New York School in the 1930s and 40s. He cites the 1941 exhibition 'Indian Art of the United States' at the Museum of Modern Art as pivotal. Dedicating an entire gallery to classic blankets, the exhibition was one of the most provocative achievements in the early life of the already powerful MOMA. *New York Times* critic Edward Alden Jewell wrote that 'the American Indian is brought before us at his full stature... what results is an event of the very highest importance'.

Indeed, the exhibition had a profound effect on the avant-garde art in New York, particularly the Abstract Expressionists. Jackson Pollock, a frequent visitor, became fascinated by Navajo sand paintings, which he credits as freeing him from the traditional easel canvas format and leading him to work on the floor. The Formalists

saw the reductive quality of design and the emphasis of economy over complexity as being akin to their own aims.

For the group known as the Mythmakers - Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, Clifford Still and Adolph Gottlieb - it was the spiritual quality inherent in Native American art that made most impact. As Gottlieb explained in a 1941 radio broadcast, 'While modern art got its first impetus through discovering the forms of primitive art, we found its true significance lies not merely in the formal arrangements, but in the spiritual meaning underlying all archaic works.'

This heritage informed Weisel and Berlant's decisions when studying the Navajo weaving tradition. Asked about their strategy in selecting blankets, Berlant replied, 'We were simply looking for powerful works of art.' They sought pieces with impressive scale and intense energy. They saw them as energy fields.

This perception is, in fact, core to the Navajo's own beliefs regarding the importance of weaving. In his contribution to *Woven by the Grandmothers* (1996), Harry Walters, Navajo elder and Director of Diné College Museum, wrote:



3



4

3 Deer in a geometric landscape, Mimbres bowl, North America, New Mexico, ca. AD 1010–1130. Earthenware with pigment, diameter 27 cm (11"). Gift of the Thomas W. Weisel Family, 2013.76.68

4 Haida bear effigy, North America, Pacific northwest,



5

ca. 1870. Wood and paint, length 1.13 m (3' 8"). Gift of the Thomas W. Weisel Family, 2013.76.126

5 Zia Pueblo earthenware storage jar with polychrome decoration, North America, New Mexico, ca. 1880–1900. Height 47 cm (19"). Gift of the Thomas W. Weisel Family, 2013.76.38

New depth and scope: the Weisel gift

The Thomas W. Weisel Family Collection is an extraordinary grouping of native North American art that spans a thousand years of production. At its core are Southwestern ceramics from the 11th to the 20th centuries and masterworks of Navajo weaving from the 19th century.

In 2013, the Weisel family gave the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco 185 objects; an additional 21 textiles are promised gifts from the Weisel Family Foundation, due to enter the permanent collection in 2016. Combined, they will transform the Native American art collection of the de Young, giving it new depth and scope.

The Southwestern ceramics range from ancient Mimbres pieces to 20th-century works by recognised artists such as the Hopi-Tewa potter Nampeyo of Hano Pueblo. The gift also includes objects of Northwest Coast art and the first Plains ledger drawings to enter the collection.

The FAMSF thus have a new opportunity to present a comprehensive and innovative story of Native American art with a distinctly western focus, stretching from the Arctic Circle to the American Southwest. They can achieve this by building on major donations, such as gifts of Eskimo and Inuit art from the Thomas G. Fowler Collection in 2007 and ongoing gifts of 20th-century and contemporary Southwestern pottery from the collection of Paul and Barbara Weiss – as well as the de Young's charter collection of California baskets. The rich iconography of ancient Southwestern ceramics provides a chronological and intellectual link with other parts of the Americas collection, particularly Maya art from Alec and Gail Merriam and previous gifts from Lewis K. and Elizabeth M. Land and the Erle Loran Family Collection.

The Weisel gift includes a generous endowment to sponsor and support research of the de Young's permanent collection of Native American art, as well as programmes that allow the museum to share it meaningfully with the public. We anticipate that it will fund a variety of activities, including publications, extended research visits and lectures from scholars and contemporary Native American artists, and opportunities for students and emerging professionals. The collection and endowment will rejuvenate the presentation of Native American art at the de Young, providing local, national and international visitors with the opportunity to understand more completely the artworks' unique aesthetics and the cultural histories of the peoples who made them.

Matthew H. Robb, Curator of the Americas, FAMSF



6

Jackson Pollock became fascinated by Navajo sand paintings, which he credits as freeing him from the traditional easel canvas format



7

6 Navajo poncho serape, North America, New Mexico, ca. 1830. Weavers extracted geometric forms from the Mexican Saltillo serape, isolating and enlarging them according to traditional Navajo design principles. Wool, weft-faced plain weave, interlocked tapestry weave, 1.98 m x 1.30 m (6'6" x 4'3"). Promised gift of the Thomas W. Weisel Family, L12.103.16

7 Navajo serape, North America, New Mexico, ca. 1865-1875. From 1863-68 the Navajo were interned at an Indian Reservation in Fort Sumner. Separated from their herds, they wove with government-issued commercial aniline-dyed yarns. Wool, weft-faced plain weave, interlocked tapestry weave, 1.78 m x 1.26 m (5'10" x 4'2"). Promised gift of the Thomas W. Weisel Family, L12.103.13

8 Navajo Serape, North America, New Mexico, ca. 1860. Some elders associate zigzags with lightning, reminding the Navajo that the sun, *Jóhpnaa'éí*, gave the warrior twins lightning arrows of four different kinds with which to arm themselves. Wool, weft-faced plain weave, dovetail, interlocked, and vertical-join tapestry weave, eccentric curved weft, 1.37 m x .84 m (4'6" x 2'9"). Promised gift of the Thomas W. Weisel Family, L12.103.19

9 Navajo Serape, North America, New Mexico, ca. 1865. The poncho serape and the serape are the only textiles in the Navajo repertoire without a Pueblo origin. Wool, weft-faced plain weave, interlocked tapestry weave, eccentric curved weft, 1.79 m x 1.3 m (5'10½" x 4'3"). Promised gift of the Thomas W. Weisel Family, L12.103.2



8



9

'Navajo weaving is directly related to nature - dawn, day, twilight, and night, mountains, trees, animals, and insects; earth, air, water. All of these are holy elements, and they are all present in Navajo weaving. These elements have power, and when we depict them in a weaving, they have the same power.'

Contemporary Navajo weavers study classic period blankets as a source of inspiration and empowerment. Navajo weaver D. Y. Begay, after seeing 'Lines on the Horizon', remarked on the incredible scale, creativity, and innovation of the works. 'I dreamed of them last night,' she told me.

For the Navajo weaver, the concept of *hózhó* describes a dynamic of order, beauty, balance and harmony within a cosmos that is constantly in motion. No two Navajo blankets are alike; each woman uses her own self-expression to manifest these universal ideals. A Navajo weaver's prayer summons this power: 'With me there is beauty, in me there is beauty, from me beauty radiates.'

According to Navajo tradition, forces outside of the weavers guide them in the creation of their designs. Scholars generally concur that

Navajo women learned to weave from the Pueblo Indians in the late 17th century when the Pueblo, seeking refuge from the Spanish occupation, came to reside with the Navajo; however, the Navajo believe that weaving began in a lower world when spider man and spider woman introduced the holy people to the loom and the patterns it makes.

To Tony Berlant, this belief in the supernatural is what separates the Navajo blanket from many other weaving traditions. It is this shamanistic experience that the Abstract Expressionists were also seeking. Jackson Pollock stated, 'The modern artist... is working and expressing an inner world - in other words - expressing the energy, the motion, and other inner forces.' With a trained eye, Thomas Weisel observed these same forces in Navajo blankets and built a refined collection of works of outstanding beauty by the master weavers of the classic period.

'Lines on the Horizon: Native American Art from the Weisel Family Collection' is at the de Young Museum in Golden Gate Park, 3 May-4 January 2015 ❖



A new vision

A new gallery for a venerable local collection of Islamic Art has just opened in Springfield, Massachusetts. As guest curator **Kendra Weisbin** relates, reinstalling the Smith collection of traditional oriental carpets and other objects has required facing up to the challenges of modern museum practices

¹ Turkmen *kapunuk* (tent door surround), probably Saryk tribe, Central Asia, early 19th century. A *kapunuk* is a door surround used to decorate the entrance of Turkmen tents, although as Louise Mackie and Jon Thompson point out in their 1980 exhibition publication for the Washington Textile Museum (*Turkmen: Tribal Carpets and Traditions*), they may have also served as camel decorations during wedding processions. But whether hung at the entrance to a family's tent or used to decorate a bridal camel, the *kapunuk* would have been an important demonstration of the skill of the woman who wove it. This example has survived in excellent condition, retaining its bottom tassels as well as the plaited band and ropes across the top used to affix it to the tent structure or camel. Wool warp and weft, wool and silk pile; symmetric knot, 0.73 m x 0.83 m (2' 5" x 2' 9"). George Walter Vincent Smith Collection, 31.23.118

² Iznik dish, Turkey, late 16th or early 17th century. Stonepaste; polychrome painted under transparent glaze; Michele and Donald D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts, 2013.Co2

The G.W.V. Smith Art Museum opened in 1896 in Springfield, Massachusetts, the first institution in what would become the city's Museum Quadrangle. Springfield was then a thriving industrial metropolis that prided itself on its investment in art and culture. Today, like many former industrial hubs, the city is faced by new financial constraints. But despite these challenges, the haven of arts established by Springfield residents George Walter Vincent Smith (1832-1923) and his wife Belle Townsley Smith (1845-1928) still thrives.

The Smiths were avid art collectors. In 1889 they promised their considerable collection to the city with the caveat that an art museum be built to hold it. The deed made clear their wish that the gift would continue to be exhibited as they had arranged it after their deaths. Another requirement was that the collection be kept separate from others. Of course, at the time, no other fine arts museum existed on the Quadrangle to commingle with the Smith holdings.

Despite the museum's interest in respecting the Smith's wishes, contemporary considerations regarding classification and cultural context have made it necessary to display their Islamic art together with the Islamic collection of the Donald D'Amour Museum of Fine Art. The bulk of the carpets, arms and armour, lacquer works and other objects now on view come from the Smiths' original collection, while the 'arts of the book' are largely from the D'Amour holdings.

The task of marrying a current, art-focused installation with a 19th-century building fell to myself, to curator Julia Courtney, to GWVS director Heather Haskell, and to Walter Denny, who had, years earlier, drawn up a prospective thematic plan for the new gallery. The essential



² 19th-century architecture of the cruciform room would not be changed; thus wall colour, text, case layout and design, all had to conform to the existing gallery. We hoped to pay homage to the Smith collection's turn-of-the-century origin, while eschewing cabinet-of-curiosity style display. The adjoining gallery's coffered arches and ornate wood cases made it all the more important that the new gallery should not appear incongruous. This was accomplished through the retention of picture moulding, hardwood floors and skylights, and the display of objects in simple cases and frames that were neither assertively modern nor obviously Victorian. The simple design allows the art to remain the focal point, but also adds subtle contextualising details like an arched entryway, and a new colour for the walls, which is a deeper version of the greenish blue found in many of the paintings and carpets on view.

In addition to their carpets and textiles, the Smiths also bought ceramics, bidriware vessels, coco-de-mer *kashkuls* (beggars' bowls), and a



3

3 East Anatolian prayer kilim, 19th century. Wool warp and weft; slit-tapestry weave, 1.02m x 1.87m (3' 4" x 6' 2"). Smith Collection, 31.23.67



4

4 East-central Anatolian yastık or cushion cover, probably Zara, Sivas region, 19th century. Wool warp, weft, and pile; symmetric knot, 0.60m x 1.11m (2' 0" x 3' 8"). Smith Collection, 31.23.56

5 Tekke Turkmen main carpet, Central Asia, early 19th century. Wool warp, weft, and pile; asymmetric knot, 1.96m x 3.25m (6' 5" x 10' 8"). Smith Collection, 31.23.131

profusion of arms and armour. They were also enthusiastic about Qajar lacquer, acquiring many *qalam* (pen cases), including fine examples in the *gul-o-bulbul* (rose and nightingale) style.

As is always the case when re-examining a collection leading up to a reinstallation, we also found unrecorded objects buried deep in storage. The most exciting of these were two Iznik dishes; one displays a radial floral design, the other features red roses, pin-wheeling saz leaves, and a somewhat unusual repetition of the central design on the rim (2).

The Smiths' collecting also extended to costumes, lace and needlework, including a substantial number of 18th- or 19th-century Ottoman embroideries. These feature flowers, cypress trees, gardens and pavilions - all favoured designs in the Ottoman embroiderer's repertoire.

While the classic carnations and tulips of the

Ottoman floral style are found on some examples, others display bright flowers in a fantastical, rather than botanical, manner. The full blooms feature *ton-sur-ton* pink petals and bi-colour leaves, a possible nod to western modelling. Flowers of this type seem to have been among the most popular designs during the late 18th and 19th centuries in Turkey. A 1914 Springfield newspaper article attributes the actual collecting of the embroideries exclusively to Belle Smith; whether this is true or a flight of (gendered) fancy is anyone's guess, though it is clear she did play an active role in the couple's collecting.

The Smiths made some early collecting trips to England and Italy, but the bulk of their carpet collection came from local sources. Invoices show that they patronised S.A. Keuleyan, a Boston carpet dealer, as well as the Springfield firm of Bedros H. Markarian. Their carpets are

geographically diverse in origin, ranging from commercial city weaving of Iran to Anatolian village carpets and the work of the Turkmen of Central Asia. With few exceptions they date to the 19th century, and all are relatively small. In her discussion of 'Early Rug Collectors of New England' Julia Bailey points out that, with few exceptions, the Smiths bought their carpets new (*Through the Collector's Eye: Oriental Rugs from New England Private Collections*, 1991). Whether it was an aesthetic preference or stemmed from financial considerations, they consistently acquired carpets that had probably been made within a decade or two of their purchase.

The rugs are too numerous and diverse to acknowledge properly in a few pages. Seventy-five of them were published in a 1970s catalogue by Joseph V. McMullan and Donald O. Reichert (*The George Walter Vincent and Belle Townsley Smith Collection of Islamic Rugs*), but several standouts warrant further review.

The entrance to the gallery is framed by four prayer rugs from Turkey, Iran and the Caucasus. Their function as uniquely Islamic objects make them an appropriate introduction, while their geographic diversity highlights the far reaches of Islam and the incredible regional variation of the art created within its cultural sphere.

One of the most visually magnificent is an east Anatolian prayer kilim (3). As with most Anatolian village rugs its colours are vibrant; a deep red arch is surrounded by a beautifully abrashed green, and framed by orange and blue borders. The design is abstract and dramatic, featuring a flowering-tree in its central arch, which, in the context of a prayer rug, could be called a tree of life. The designs incorporate highly stylised 19th-century remnants of the Ottoman court's floral style. The central stalk of the tree sprouts eight multicoloured carnations, their trademark serrated edges simplified into little squares through stylisation as well as the constraints of the slit-tapestry technique. The outermost border features a zigzagging yellow line on a faded (or, more accurately, rubbed off) indigo background, probably a rudimentary scrolling vine. Two-pronged tulips, an abstract and geometric vestige of the Ottoman court tulip, blossom from this meandering vine. In this one rug, one can see a village woman's own distinct artistic style and skilled craftsmanship, yet it also reflects the transmission of motifs from court to village, and their subsequent abstraction and simplification.

The widespread influence and longevity of the Ottoman floral design is found throughout



5

Tekke Turkmen main carpet

In addition to numerous bags, tent bands, and other tent accoutrements, the Turkmen tribes of Central Asia wove floor carpets to provide warmth, comfort and decoration to the tent interior. These large carpets are known as main carpets because they comprised the principal floor covering of a Turkmen tent. The Smith carpet features forty classic Tekke primary göls arranged in four long columns in the field. The göls - roughly octagonal-shaped motifs with two red quadrants and two white

ones - identify the carpet as a product of the Tekke tribe. A superb example of Turkmen craftsmanship, the Smith carpet has tight and meticulous knotting rivalling that of Iranian city carpets. Aside from some minor compression of the bottom two rows of göls, the motifs are admirably uniform, and the spacing of the primary and secondary motifs is harmonious. The carpet also retains its flatwoven (kilim) ends, which feature the blue stripes on red ground typical of Tekke carpets.



6

Lesghi sumakh rug

The field of this late 19th-century sumakh rug has four 'Lesghi' medallions on an orange-red ground, a design usually attributed to the Kuba region of the Caucasus. The weaver favoured a relatively restrained, rather than crowded,

main field, also featuring cross designs, geometric floral motifs, and stylised quadrupeds. The field is bordered by two-pronged motifs, which are probably derived from floral prototypes.

the works in the gallery's small selection of Ottoman art - from the long, forked tulips on a late Ottoman embroidery, to the motifs on a small *yastık* (cushion cover). In the Ottoman court tradition, a *yastık* is almost always a luxurious panel of red silk with gold or silver-wrapped threads in a cut and voided velvet technique, featuring designs derived from the court workshops. Yet *yastıks* were also produced and used in villages all over the Ottoman Empire, woven from wool in knotted pile and featuring local, rather than court, designs.

The collection includes three such wool *yastıks*, probably all made in the 19th century and used in urban or village homes. The example in the new gallery was probably woven in Zara, a town in Sivas Province (4). Woven vertically, the panel would have been rotated horizontally to form the decorative face of a pillow. The horizontal stripes are filled with stylised floral motifs, and the central, wider, yellow stripe contains a zigzagging red vine from which small blue and red carnations sprout. These are remarkably detailed, almost naturalistic in style next to the more general forms of the other flowers. Carnations are a hallmark of the Ottoman floral style, and their appearance here is a testament to the influence of court designs across the Empire and the widespread and long-lasting popularity of the floral style.

The Smith carpets encompass a wide range of weaving techniques. Unlike knotted-pile rugs or slit-tapestry kilims, sumakhs use supplementary weft-wrapping, in which the weaver wraps the pattern wefts forward over two warps and back under one warp to create designs. A particularly lovely example (5) can be dated to the late 19th century with some certainty owing to the presence of the synthetic dye fuchsine, now faded. The rest of the wool is naturally dyed and the colours remain rich and pleasing.

Sumakh weaving was also practised at a very high level by many of the tribal and nomadic groups of the Islamic world. The Smiths owned two beautiful Shabsavan bag faces in sumakh technique, made by Turkic Muslims who lived in the Caspian Sea region of northern Iran and present-day Azerbaijan; these will rotate on display. The panel shown here would originally have formed one side of a *khörjin* (7), the basic double bags of many nomadic groups, which could be draped over the back of a pack animal. Its bright colours are slightly faded on the front, but still appear richly saturated in the tufts of yarn visible on the back.

For many, however, the true highlights of the



7

6 Lesghi sumakh rug, Caucasus, late 19th century. Wool warp and wefts; countered sumakh, over 2 back 1, 1.07m x 1.98m (3'6" x 6'6"). Smith Collection 31.23.96



8

7 Shahsavan sumakh khorjin face, northwest Persia or Azerbaijan, 19th century. Wool warp and weft; additional weft-wrapping, 0.78m x 0.56m (2'6" x 1'11"). Smith Collection, 31.23.103

8 Tekke (?) Turkmen khalyk or camel trapping, Central Asia, 19th century. Wool warp, weft, and pile; asymmetric knot, 0.73m x 0.83m (2'5" x 2'7"). Smith Collection 31.23.130

Smith collection are the Central Asian Turkmen weavings, with examples from most of the better-known tribes, including the Tekke, Saryk, Yomut, Ersari and Tekke. Among the most notable of the Tekke pieces is one of the largest carpets in the collection - an early 19th-century main carpet (5).

Among the few Saryk pieces bought by the Smiths is a door surround or *kapunuk* (1), one of two in the collection, the other being Tekke work (31.23.142). The design of spiralling leaves growing from an undulating vine is a common one in the door surrounds of several Turkmen tribes, though this is a particularly lovely example. Mackie and Thompson (*Turkmen*, 1980) noted that the clear relationship between the leaves and the scrolling vine might indicate an early date for this piece (in later *kapunuks* with a similar design the leaves become separate motifs). Like a Yomut tent band in the collection (31.23.110), this example integrates a small amount of magenta-coloured silk into its pile.

One of the rarest Turkmen weavings collected by the Smiths is the khalyk illustrated here (8). Khalyks are believed to have adorned Turkmen bridal litters during wedding processions. This example is remarkable for its condition, with its hanging strips and delicate tassels almost completely intact. One of the most subtle aspects of this trapping is the multicoloured chevron pattern that appears across the long

tassels. This khalyk, the only one in the Smith collection, displays the motif commonly called a 'kochak cross', which Robert Pinner and Michael Franses ("Turkoman Studies I: Aspects of the Weaving and Decorative Arts of Central Asia", 1980) associate specifically with Tekke khalyks. It was previously attributed by the museum to the Yomut, and then by Joseph McMullan to the Salor or Tekke. However, the presence of the kochak motif, along with asymmetric (open right) knotting, suggests it was woven by a Tekke woman.

The Smith collection of Islamic art, and of carpets in particular, offers a wealth of diverse examples and exciting possibilities for further study. The new gallery of Islamic art at the George Walter Vincent Smith Museum is currently displaying nineteen weavings from this collection of 146 carpets. With regular rotations, even more examples from this remarkable collection will be on view, and the museum looks forward to the new opportunities for public interest and scholarly research occasioned by the reintroduction of the Smiths' carpets to the public eye.

Special thanks to Walter Denny for his feedback on the first draft of this article, and his continued guidance and mentorship. Many thanks also to Julia Courtney for the insights of her institutional knowledge and assistance in locating archival sources. ❖





AYMARA STYLE

During the 1970s, Giles W. Mead, then director of the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum, collected an exemplary group of twenty Balandrán ponchos from Bolivia. It is soon to be offered at the William Siegal Gallery in New Mexico. Highlights from the collection are presented here, accompanied by edited extracts from the forthcoming exhibition catalogue. The words are by the late Dr Mead's daughter, **Parry Mead Murray**, by **Khristaan D. Villela**, and by **William Siegal**

1 (Preceding page) Quechua Balandrán-style poncho (detail), Iru Tambo region, Tapacari province, Cochabamba department, Bolivia, 17th–18th century. Warp-faced alpaca wool plain weave with stripes of complementary warp weave and a woven fringe, the red field composed of nine bands of stripes (*listados*), and supplementary designs. 1.52 m x 1.96 m (5' 0" x 6' 5"). Giles W. Mead collection at William Siegal Gallery, Santa Fe

2, 3 Jesuit Balandrán-style poncho, Quechua or Aymara culture, Bolivia, 17th–18th century. The white cotton field is assembled from six separate strips, each of five bands, with Spanish baroque designs that are perhaps interpretations of the indigenous *pallay tipa laphi* (picked zigzag with leaf) design, an undulating floral pattern that is itself probably an adaptation of a Spanish design. Warp-faced cotton plain weave with complementary warp-faced weave and woven fringe. 1.57 m x 2.03 m (5' 2" x 6' 8"). Giles W. Mead collection at William Siegal Gallery, Santa Fe



2

The Balandrán-style ponchos in the Mead Collection were first made in the highlands of Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina during the Spanish colonial period. They present a fascinating example of the adaptation of a pre-Columbian garment and weaving technology for life in the post-Columbian world. It is likely, though not certain, that they were adapted from ponchos made by the Araucanian Indians of northern Chile.

The Jesuits played a key role in this phenomenon. They arrived in Bolivia, known then as Alto Peru, in 1572, establishing churches in the highlands around Lake Titicaca, and in La Paz, Potosí and La Plata. They also founded schools and factories so that their communities could be self-supporting. Forced labour was always part of the equation: the Europeans continued and adapted the pre-Columbian *mit'a* system, a tribute paid in labour, that might entail building roads and bridges, farming or weaving. They exploited the labour of the Quechua and Aymara Indians in their villages and also built *obrajes*, or textile mills, in mission towns where rivers provided hydraulic power.

Although the Jesuits were expelled in 1767, the *obraje* system continued and the *obrajes* in Oruro and Cochabamba were the most important in Bolivia. The first post-Columbian ponchos were made in Jesuit *obrajes* using European treadle looms. They were assembled from six 10"-wide strips of cotton cloth, with an aperture left for the head. As *obraje* products, ponchos were intended for *mestizo*, or mixed-race, consumers. However, the native peoples of the southern Andes soon adopted the poncho, and today the garment is considered a national symbol in Bolivia, as well as Argentina. In Bolivia, they became so popular that native weavers began to make them outside the *obraje* system. Balandrán ponchos were one of the most important new varieties of colonial clothing.





Meeting Dr Mead

My first meeting with Giles Mead, at the Los Angeles Gift Show in January 1976, changed my life for ever. He was immediately captivated – not only by the textiles I showed him, but also by the idea of an entirely new field of study that was barely known to the museums of the eastern world. Within a few months, he had become the biggest collector and most passionate patron of an as yet relatively undiscovered field of study: the weavings of the Aymara people of Bolivia and southern Peru.

Giles was interested not only in the scholarly aspects of Aymara textiles; he was a collector to his core. From the moment he saw and began touching these weavings, he needed to put together his own collection. I had never encountered anyone so sure of himself, or so confident of his eye. Giles had been collecting North American Indian material for years, and immediately recognised the superior spinning and weaving in these South American textiles.

Throughout our years of working together, Giles was nothing but the dream partner. His word was his bond, and his vision, sophistication, and insights into the worlds of collecting and museums provided constant inspiration.

William Siegal



4

*Every poncho was an heirloom, carefully stored
and passed down through the generations*

Balandrán ponchos are named after a type of cape, sometimes with a hood, worn indoors by priests and scholars from the Middle Ages until relatively recently. These garments are usually sleeveless and fasten only at the neck. Balandrán ponchos are also not tailored, were worn for warmth, and largely cover the body. They offer excellent protection against inclement weather. But perhaps the most significant connection between the garments is that people of status wore them, whether priests or village headmen. They communicated high status and identity, just as cloth did in the Andes in Inca times. Even their scale, averaging 200 by 150–175 cm, is much larger than the standard poncho or the smaller ponchito worn throughout the Andes.

The finest Balandrán ponchos were created using alpaca fibre dyed with an extensive inventory of natural colours. Synthetic dyes were not introduced into Aymara textiles until the mid-19th century. Rather than having cotton warps, Balandrán ponchos use alpaca wool for the entire garment. And rather than being assembled from six strips of cloth sewn lengthwise, as the Jesuit *obraje* ponchos were,



5

4 Jesuit Balandrán -style poncho (detail), Quechua or Aymara culture, Bolivia, 17th-18th century. Warp-faced alpaca wool plain weave with complementary warp-faced weave and woven fringe, the purple field with six bands of design composed of the *pallay tipa laphi* (picked zigzag with leaf) design in the green and orange areas; the central blue areas are Spanish baroque designs. 1.60 m x 1.88 m (5' 3" x 6' 2"). Giles W. Mead collection at William Siegal Gallery, Santa Fe

5 Alpaca grazing near Achiri in the Bolivian *altiplano*, circa 1976

Parry Mead Murray (daughter)

In the icy winter of 1966 I was a fifth-grade schoolgirl in Cambridge, Massachusetts. My father was on a ship somewhere off the coasts of Chile and Peru, researching the physical and biological properties of the Humboldt Current. I yearned to be with him. When eventually he came home he gently dropped a soft Peruvian poncho into my hands. To cap off my fifth-grade year, he presented a slide show to the middle-school student body, beaming panoramic views of a green Machu Picchu on the auditorium wall. As I stared up at the steep green slopes, I quietly added Peru to my wish list of places to visit someday.

In 1970, my father became the director of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History. Privately, he had been a collector for much of his life. His collections ranged from classical art and gemstones to Native American basketry, pottery, and textiles. While in Los Angeles, his associations with such friends as Billy Siegal, Bruce Takami and others ushered in a whole new era of collecting, as Bolivian textiles began arriving on the doorstep. Acquisitions gravitated towards increasingly specific categories of interest, such as that of the large ponchos featured in this show and catalogue.

Following my marriage, in 1976, my father treated my husband, me and a few friends to a six-week trip throughout Peru and Bolivia. From the weavers' hands and their skilled use of every imaginable type of loom, textiles revealed themselves at every turn as integral parts of daily life. Our appreciation for the lives and history of Andean culture - notably that of the Aymara, whose textiles we were beginning to especially admire - deepened and broadened. Stepping out at dawn from our hotel atop the mist-shrouded mountains of Machu Picchu, I watched my father as he walked out ahead of me, realising I'd reached the place he'd planted in my soul so many years ago, in an elementary-school auditorium.

My father died in February, 2003. Apart from an exhibition I curated at the Napa Valley Museum in 2001, a private showing or two, and a few textiles displayed at home, the collection has sat in darkness. The time has arrived for it to be appreciated by a wider audience and, possibly, for part of it to return home.

First and foremost, these Aymara ponchos speak to the people of *altiplano* Bolivia - how they lived, survived, identified themselves, marked events - and they continue to educate the rest of us, enriching our lives. Their combination of form and function, tied to their own high aesthetics, is unrivalled in most of, if not all, the world. Second, they represent memories and connections between people and their environment and between people themselves, past or present. They bring us together now in spirit. I won't pretend to define, or know, all the realms in which the ponchos offer perspective. May you enjoy them. To my father, who took me along for the chase, thank you. This show is for you.



6, 7 Quechua Balandrán-style poncho, Bolívar region, Arque province, Cochabamba department, Bolivia, 17th–18th century. The blue field with five bands (*listados*), and extensive supplementary design elements called *sillus* (fingernail), and a fringed border using pre-Columbian designs. Warp-faced alpaca plain weave with stripes of complementary warp weave, separate central panel, separate woven border and woven fringe. 1.63m x 2.18m (5' 4" x 7' 2"). Giles W. Mead Collection at William Siegal Gallery, Santa Fe



7

they are made of two pieces of loom-width cloth. Unlike the tapestry weaves of the most famous Inca cloth, the *qombi*, Balandrán ponchos are all warp-faced. The most characteristic pattern features multiple vertical stripes highlighted with complementary warp-faced weaves of various pre-Columbian-influenced designs.

Men's clothing at the time of the Conquest consisted of garments in both tapestry and warp-faced techniques, using cotton as well as camelid wool, especially alpaca. Items included the *unku*, or tunic (*ccahua* in Aymara) and the *llacota*, or mantle. The tunic differs from the Balandrán poncho in scale and construction. Tunics had sewn arm openings, ponchos are open on the sides. And at the time of the Conquest, tunics were most often knee-length, and considerably smaller than the large ponchos.

The rise of the poncho as a key item of men's clothing during the later colonial period is almost certainly linked to the suppression of the tunic in the aftermath of the Túpac Amaru Rebellion (1780–1782), which was crushed with much bloodshed on all sides. The colonial authorities forbade the native elites to wear *unkus* and *llacotas*, which gradually disappeared. But the Quechua and Aymara nobility did not disappear after the rebellion, and they still used cloth to mark their status. It is possible that many high-ranking men adopted the Balandrán poncho as a kind of latter-day tunic.

Among the tens of thousands of handwoven Andean textiles made during the Spanish colonial period and into the 19th century, the Balandrán ponchos in the Mead Collection represent a high point of native weaving. Every poncho was an heirloom, carefully stored and passed down through the generations. They were worn only on special occasions. But it is clear that none was worn often: they have no significant restoration, and their colours remain undimmed by exposure to light.

Khristann D. Villela ❖

The Giles W. Mead Collection will be shown at the William Siegal Gallery in the Railyard Arts District of Santa Fe, New Mexico, from 25 July to 26 August, 2014



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bakhnoug,
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An Ura-Turbe Suzani
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Exhibitions



1

DISTANT NEIGHBOUR, CLOSE MEMORIES: 600 YEARS OF TURKISH-POLISH RELATIONS

Sakıp Sabancı Museum, Istanbul
7 March–15 June 2014
Reviewed by Penny Oakley

As Turkey celebrated her 600-year friendship with Poland – dated from their first recorded treaty in 1414 – Istanbul’s Sakıp Sabancı Museum held an exhibition of Ottoman works of art drawn from both Polish and Turkish collections. Also included were Polish imitations. The exhibits fell roughly into three categories: clerical; military; court and diplomatic.

The Church often adapted Ottoman textiles to suit liturgical roles, and the most splendid vestment was a cope of Bursa velvet with hood and orphreys of Polish embroidery. Its ogival carnation design seems to be unique, with sprays of stems each bearing a trio of *çintamani* balls, rather than the more predictable flowers (1).

Staring at a long vitrine with its procession of thirteen chasubles felt a bit like holy window-shopping at an ecclesiastical outfitter. One chasuble was fashioned from a matching pair of *yastıks* (cushion covers) in the costly gold and silver fabric called *seraser*, with sprays of roses or peonies (2). The *yastık* format is recognisable from the lappet end-borders. Another chasuble was cut from a purple *çatma* velvet double panel, with an



2

implied border laid over offset rows of huge silver and gilt *çintamani*. Taken from the left half of the original, so that the guard-stripe lay over the left shoulder, the effect was mildly eccentric (cover). A third had orphreys cleverly pieced from a rare type of *yastık* with inscribed cartouches (cat. No. 52).

The Ottoman style became so popular in Poland that even the uniforms were the same. So alike were both armies at Vienna that the Polish King John III's men had to wear sashes made of straw (presumably a freely available material) to make their identity clear. Trade with Poland was welcomed, particularly as she paid for her purchases with silver coin – the bullion so vital to the Ottoman exchequer. The demand for Ottoman goods became so great that Poland eventually imported Ottoman craftsmen to set up their own ateliers and train the local artisans, just as the Ottomans had once brought Persian artists to Istanbul.

A Polish rug (3) shows that carpet weaving was another Ottoman import. Like its pair in the National Museum in Cracow, it bears the trophied, impaled arms of two noble Polish families linked by marriage, Potocki and Mniszech, with the insignia of the Grand Crown Hetman, a political title assigned to military commanders. The design is more occidental baroque than oriental, and is related to the Sarre Polish rug (Erdmann, *Seven Hundred Years of Oriental Carpets*, p. 216, pl. 281), which has similar minor borders, and also to a pair in Cracow.

Even the best of friends fall out sometimes. The exhibition's martial content inevitably involved the

1683 Siege of Vienna and the rout of the Ottoman forces. It was one of history's more significant battles, denting the image of Ottoman invincibility, and marking the start of the Ottoman decline. Unusually, the Poles fought with the Habsburg armies against the Turks. Duty-bound to support the Holy Roman Emperor, they were also piqued by Ottoman incursions into 'their' western Ukraine (Muscovy held sway over the eastern part, so nothing much has changed).

The hero of the hour was King John III Sobieski of Poland, commander-in-chief of the European forces, who took home 400 wagon-loads of booty, including palatial tents. Visitors to the exhibition saw only one small tent, from Wawel Castle, flanked by caparisoned warhorses. All the panoply of war was there: ornate saddles and covers, bridles, stirrups, swords, bows and arrows, helmets, chain mail, embroidered boots, shields, cymbals, drums, and even examples of the tug, the Ottoman horse-tail standard. The combined effect gave one some idea of the grandeur and visual impact of a major battle.

Otherwise, the exhibition covered the court and diplomatic aspect largely through images and documents recording incidents and activities involving the two states, and splendid diplomatic gifts that demonstrated the mutual respect between the sovereigns. The illustrated catalogue has a series of useful essays, some better translated than others. Well worth reading is Antoine Galland's evocative eyewitness account of Murad IV's ceremonial departure on campaign against the Poles, in 1672.



3

1 Cope, Ottoman *çatma*, silk and metal-wrapped thread, Turkey, probably Bursa, 17th century; embroidered hood and orphreys, Poland, second half 17th century. 1.26 m x 2.75 m (4' 2" x 9' 0"). Carmelite church, Piasek, Cracow

2 Chasuble, Ottoman *seraser* (silk, silver and gilt thread), 17th century. 0.92 m x 0.70 m (3' 0" x 2' 4"). Formerly in Turobin parish church, Archdiocesan Museum of the 200th Anniversary, Lublin, MAL 16A/05.

3 Carpet with the trophied and impaled arms of Mniszech and Potocki and the insignia of the Grand Crown Hetman, Poland, first half 18th century. Wool pile, flax warp and weft, 2.09 m x 1.42 m (7' 10" x 4' 8"). National Museum, Warsaw, MNW, inv. No. SZT 592

THREADS OF LIFE JAPANESE INDIGO PATCHED TEXTILES

*Presented by Gordon Reece and Philippe Boudin (Mingei Art Gallery)
Somerset House, London,
2–26 April 2014
Reviewed by Joss and Jayne Graham*

This superlative show was the latest exhibition devoted to *boro* (literally ‘patched’) textiles from Japan. The collection of over sixty pieces was assembled over five years of travelling to Japan and had at its core the collection of Moritasan (HALI 149, p.139), the legendary Japanese textile dealer.

The excellent catalogue opens with a question: ‘Can art transcend function?’ Andy Christian in his introduction explains *boro* in terms of its origin in Japan and its subsequent artistic appeal: scraps of cloth, from the discarded work clothes of generations, found their way to the poorer, intensely cold regions of northern Japan. There they were pieced together to make futon covers and also garments or comfort and protection against the harsh winters. Utility was the primary function, but the arrangement of layers, the placement of colour and the intricacy of stitching all suggest that the maker was consciously involved in creating designs of beauty as well as practicality.

But what is the viewer really seeing? Looking at the individual pieces in the exhibition, we were inclined to associate them with abstract visual imagery, for example the depths of the ocean (3), a cityscape at dusk (2), maps or landscapes from the air.



1



2

Fortunately the exhibition did not give titles to the pieces, leaving the viewer to see them for what they are.

We see layer upon layer of patches of indigo-dyed cotton or hemp. An occasional patch of brown adds a sense of spontaneous design with sudden contrast (1); a range of woven checks or stripes blends in with plainer fragments and calms the piece into a harmonious pattern. The white stitching which outlines and criss-crosses the textile holds the patches and layers together and also becomes an integral part of the design.

How do we interpret each piece as a work of art? Hanging in a beautiful gallery space at Somerset House, the pieces in this exhibition invited the viewer to see beyond the humble origins of *boro* and to elevate the works from peasant textiles of necessity to 21st-century artworks with the prestige and prices to match. Each piece had been meticulously cleaned, stitched down and framed in rectangles, hung and lit to high-end gallery standards. The frayed and tattered edges, the worn and torn and threadbare textures of the former bed covers were tamed and framed to become 'pictures'. We were asked to extend our vision from the commonplace and recognise the artistic power and emotional impact of the collection. We could not view the exhibition without the understanding of where *boro* comes from and how it has become established first in the commercial textile world and subsequently in the art world as 'abstract art'.

Perhaps the most potent attraction of these pieces is the lure of blue, which draws the viewer into its depths and variations and plays upon the senses like a symphony.



3

Indigo, a natural dye, used in this context for everyday clothing and coverings in Japan, is a universal colour; its application in the making of textiles crosses

value is predicated on the beauty of the spontaneous arrangement of design elements. The process of decay and wear in the textile is part of the aesthetic. Why else are

Perhaps the most potent attraction is the lure of blue, which plays on the senses like a symphony

boundaries of country, culture and time. The enduring association with nature and the power and mystery of blue is with us in daily life as well as in myth and legend.

These textiles reach out to a contemporary audience educated in recognising art not only in the processes of creation but also in the life and death of materials. The

patched and faded jeans a fashion statement? From a pure textile point of view, original colour and perfect condition are often regarded as the ideal; here the history, usage and reconstructed elements are the prime attraction. The inside of the futon, showing the process of making, is exhibited more often than the outside, as

1 *Boro*, 20th century, hand-spun cotton, 1.35 m x 1.91 m (4' 5" x 6' 3")

2 *Boro*, 20th century, hand-spun cotton, 1.21 m x 1.70 m (3' 11" x 5' 6")

3 *Boro* (detail), 20th century, handspun cotton, 0.65 m x 1.65 m (2' 1" x 5' 4")

only one side can be seen when it is hung on a wall. Where both back and front have merit, the choice in presentation is difficult.

The catalogue sold several hundred copies and was highly acclaimed. Many illustrations show different aspects of the same piece, viewed horizontally and vertically, front and back, in full and in detail, allowing the patterns to be 'read' in different ways.

The organisers received many compliments from the fashion, textile and art worlds. Altogether the exhibition was an outstanding success, attracting more than 6,500 visitors and enjoying sales of one third of the collection.

www.mingei-arts-gallery.com
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1



2



3

A WORLDWIDE TALE OF TWO CITIES

The Power of Images: The National Museum of Ethnology Collection
The National Art Center
 19 February to 9 June
 7-22-2 Roppongi, Minato, Tokyo
 Reviewed by George Hegarty

The Japanese tend to be curious about other cultures and travel in groups to visit the world. It is no wonder that crowds of open-minded art lovers have been attracted to The National Art Center, Tokyo to see 'The Power of Images', with its 600 ethnographic objects being presented as art.

Since its founding, the Osaka-based National Museum of Ethnology (known to the Japanese as Minpaku) has organised its exhibitions on the principle that all cultures and art are equal in value. The exhibition now showing in Tokyo includes a good number of masterpieces (especially certain wooden figures and masks) and numerous objects with early collection history (1860-1907), but also newer items, some made for the trade.

Much of the art, in a wide variety of materials, is related to religion. Ethnographic objects originating from every inhabited continent are intermixed; objects from 'Primal'

religions are placed side by side with examples from Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam.

The 600 objects, which fit a variety of aesthetic tastes and interests, were chosen from Minpaku's inventory of 340,000 artefacts. A respectable quantity of textiles and related materials from around the world is included: a variety of costumes, shawls, scrolls on cloth, tapestry, rattan items, a yarn painting, textiles as components of tribal art, animal hide items, rope, an extremely large bamboo basket that looks like a satellite antenna, feather headdresses, a fishing net, and flags of cotton.

It is noteworthy that there are no examples from Minpaku's collection of 274 oriental rugs (from Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey, and the Caucasian area), but there is a 335cm high wall-hanging from a mosque in Egypt, embroidered with Arabic script. There are also such

items as seven Islamic amulets from Egypt and a container for script from the Qur'an from Morocco.

Signs and labels throughout the show are in both Japanese and English. On entering, the visitor is confronted by a huge wall of masks from around the world. Looking out, they make the attendees feel gazed at rather than the reverse.

The exhibition is an attempt to evaluate the power of images. It is arranged in nine categories:

- 'Prologue: The Experience of the Gaze.' This refers to the huge wall of masks that look out at museum-goers as they enter.
- 'Images of the Invisible: Portraying Humans, Portraying Gods.' Objects that represent invisible gods created to control these powers and their relationship with man.
- 'Images of the Invisible: Portraying Time.' Objects that depict historical narratives to



Six hundred ethnographic objects originating from every inhabited continent are intermixed

pass on to future generations, like a Tlingit ceremonial robe.

- ‘Dynamics of the Images: The Power of Light, The Power of Colours.’ Objects that create visual effects through colour and light, such as a feathered headdress from Brazil.
- ‘Dynamics of the Images: Links to the Heavens.’ Objects that link people with higher realms, like the large mosque wall-hanging from Egypt with its message in Arabic script stating that everyone is welcome.
- ‘Playing with Images.’ Objects created for ceremonies or enjoyment, such as a Kuba women’s overskirt from the Democratic Republic of Congo or Cuna blouses from Panama.
- ‘The Translation of Images: Hybrid Images.’ Objects created out of exchange with distant cultures, for example Fante *asafo* company flags from Ghana or batik cloth from Indonesia with Japanese motifs.
- ‘The Translation of Images: Consuming Images.’ Objects that are closely connected to changes in communication, distribution and lifestyle, like silk screen prints with traditional designs made by Pacific Northwest Coast artists in Canada.
- ‘Epilogue: Found Images.’ Objects with functional purposes in one culture that may become art objects in a museum, for instance a long nylon fishing

net from India or a massive rattan fish trap from Thailand.

Best of all, the exhibition comes with an excellent 272-page bilingual (Japanese and English) hardback book, consisting of numerous essays, many full-page colour photos, and a catalogue of the objects exhibited, with small photos and commentary. It is a bargain at ¥2,480 (about US\$25). At present the book is available only at the exhibition; however, it will presumably be sold online via Minpaku’s (Japanese only) online bookshop.

‘The Power of Images: The National Museum Ethnology Collection’ is an extravagant, thought provoking, theory-orientated exhibition that is proving attractive to a broad audience from school children to intellectuals. It returns to Osaka from 11 September to 9 December 2014.

1 Fante *asafo* company flag, Ghana, 1940s. National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan.

Photos courtesy the National Museum of Ethnology

2 Kuba woman’s overskirt, Democratic Republic of the Congo, collected in 1983. National Museum of Ethnology

3 On entering, the exhibition visitor is confronted by a huge wall of masks from around the world. They include textiles and woven examples. Looking out, they make the attendees feel gazed at rather than the reverse.

4 Tobi Island wooden *hatohobei* figure, Palau, Micronesia, collected ca.1915. National Museum of Ethnology

-Galerie Azadi-



*Bakhtiari Carpet, Central Persia, circa 1900, 210 x 140cm. Perfect condition
Warp: cotton, Weft: cotton (blue), Pile: wool, Asymmetric knot open to the left.
Ivory medallion and Shah Ashrafi design, red-ground main border with different alternating palmettes*

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Wangden Style: Early Tibetan Rugs
Sam Coad, 21 Gloucester Street,
Clifton, Bristol, UK
6–13 June 2014
Reviewed by Joss and Jayne Graham

Sam Coad's interest in so-called 'Wangdens' developed only recently, yet he has acquired a significant group of early weavings from a collection formed over many years in Tibet. His exhibition consisted of thirteen early monastic *khagangma* meditation squares and three important monastery runner fragments. His keen eye and long experience helped to select the most beautiful and significant examples of a mysterious and fascinating group.

This was the first exhibition presented in Coad's recently renovated living space/studio in a mews coach house in Clifton. It has excellent light and sympathetic spaces for examining textiles.

Wangden *drumze* is the Tibetan term given to the warp-faced back, single-level knotted rugs (*drumze*) woven for monastic use in the high plateau of Central Tibet. They were first found being made in the Upper Wangden Valley in Tsang Province in the 1980s and have retained this nomenclature, but it is now evident that the tradition was widespread throughout Central Tibet.

The type dates back to at least the golden age of the Tibetan Empire in the 7th to 9th century, but it probably goes back as far as the Bactrian world of the 3rd century, perhaps even earlier. In his catalogue, Coad illustrates a scroll painting found by Aurel Stein at Dunhuang, ca. AD 800, showing two monks sitting on Wangden-style square mats with shaggy edges.

Structural analysis reveals that the knotting technique of pre-Islamic rugs along the Silk Route is



1

often identical to that found in Wangden rugs, which are woven predominantly in wool, but also with goat and soft yak hair thread in the thick wefts, and goat hair and *dzeepa* (hard yak hair) in the warp. With high pile surrounded by a thick, shaggy fringe, they appear to be an adaptation to the Tibetan climate and religion, where they were used in monasteries, both Buddhist and Bon, as sitting rugs to insulate monks and keep them warm during meditation and lengthy rituals. The very long runners were laid along rows of benches and the square versions were used to cover the elevated thrones of abbots.

The designs are simple, geometric and symbolic. The squared grid is one of the most common and fascinating,

resembling the square outline of a mandala. They convey a sense of power rather than performing a decorative function. Many incorporate the double *dorje* or crossed *vajra* design in the centre. Others portray medallions based on swastikas and Chinese fretwork dragons, the endless knot motif and patterns akin to ancient mosaic floors. The various schematic interpretations of the Greek key pattern are testament to this Hellenistic ancestry. Thomas Wild has secured a carbon date for one piece, AD 1460–1650 (95.4 per cent probability).

The colours are strong and pure and relate to the colour traditions of Tibetan culture, hence the restricted yellow and red palette used for *Gelugpa* or 'yellow hat' school of Buddhism. The lustrous



2

1 Wangden monastery runner fragment, Tibet, 18th century or earlier. 1.74 m x 0.90 m (5' 8" x 2' 11"), symmetric knot tied around three warps. Joss Graham, London

2 *Khagangma* meditation square, 18th century or earlier. 0.87 m x 0.99 m (2' 10" x 3' 2"), symmetric knot tied around three warps in the field and five warps in the blue edges. Sam Coad, Bristol

sheen and patina of the deep pile combine with the clarity of colour to intensify the design to a graphic statement of great power.

This exhibition owes a great deal to the help of Rupert Smith, who has a long relationship with the surviving weavers of Wangden, and to the help of Thomas Wild who has championed these rugs in the world of scholars and dealers. Sam Coad has now brought them a wider public through this exhibition and through the portal of rugrabbit.com

The catalogue is descriptive and detailed for every piece, giving knot counts, yarn analysis, dimensions and weave structures. The introduction by Coad and the preface, and the comprehensive essay by Thomas Wild (HALI 161, p.66), complete the story so far.

Exhibitions

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

*Oriental Rugs from the
Gerard Paquin Collection
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Until November 2014*

For this exhibition, Lauren Whitley, curator in the Department of Textiles and Fashion Arts at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, first suggested that Gerard Paquin choose six rugs that represented his collection. 'Picking six wasn't easy,' Paquin recalled. 'I collect Islamic rugs and textiles of a fairly broad range, both in time and geography. We were limited by size - some were too large or small for the available space - and condition. Some older rugs were fragmentary or damaged. Finally we agreed on ten pieces of appropriate sizes.'

The exhibition focuses on rugs made in nomadic and village environments from West Anatolia to Persia and Central Asia, and includes six bag faces. Reflecting Paquin's predilection for brilliant colour, fine wool, and artful design, the rugs complement the MFA's neoclassical rotunda where they are displayed. Individually they can be viewed as superb examples of woven art, but the installation also allows the viewer to compare the pieces and consider how differences of culture and tradition influenced their weavers.

The five knotted-pile rugs exhibit a breadth of design possibilities. The colourful iconography of a large Khamseh rug, for example, contrasts with the simple, stately pattern and colour scheme of a Tekke Turkmen main carpet (3). The Khamseh reflects the weaver's immediate environment: there are seemingly spontaneous images of people and birds, and the Iranian political symbol of lion and sun. On the other hand, the Tekke's repeating göls are a traditional form passed from one generation to the next.

Three pile-woven bags provide more such contrast: an Ersari



Photo: Don Tuttle

1



Photo: Don Tuttle

2

Turkmen torba displays a design adapted from prestigious Uzbek silk ikat; a Persian tribal mafrash panel has a lively, colourful rendition of the 'Herati' border, itself adapted from classical rug design; and a Shahsavan bag borrows its repeating diamond pattern from Shahsavan flatweaves.

The three flat-woven bags in the exhibition all have rectilinear designs. The colourful field motifs of a Karabagh salt bag (2) are highlighted by a white cotton background. A Shahsavan bag face features an octagon within a square and stylised dragon in the corners (1). An elegantly spare Karabagh bag has a diagonally striped field that seems to float within a framing border (HALI 99, cover). These imaginative bags demonstrate that any limitations imposed by the techniques of flat weaving do not deter a fine weaver.

The two Anatolian prayer rugs suggest they were intended for different clientele. A finely knotted Melas rug, typical in design and probably made to appeal to an external market, has a dynamic curvilinear drawing and a wide range of sophisticated colours. In contrast, a robust Sivas rug boasts exuberant colours and design reflecting its intended village use.

On 25 April 2014 the MFA hosted a New England Rug Society meeting at which Gerard Paquin walked through the exhibition discussing the pieces on view. He reflected on the aesthetics of each one – its colours, dyes and wool quality. And he pondered each design – its influences, weaving constraints and choice of symbols. He didn't discuss structure, size or age; rather he shared with NERS members his sense of wonder about the weaver's



3 skill and how her work reflects art, culture, history and religion.

This wonderful collection has been assembled over some thirty-five years. Pieces can be seen as examples of great weaving or, through Paquin's eyes, as testimony to the talented women who wove them and the strength of the culture in which they lived and worked.

Ann Nicholas

1 Shahsavan sumakh saddle-bag face, Moghan-Savalan region, early 19th century. Wool, 0.51 x 0.49m (1'8" x 1'7"). See Wertime, *Sumak Bags of Northwest Persia and Transcaucasia*, 1998, pl.84

2 Karabagh sumakh salt-bag face, southwest Caucasus, late 19th century. Wool and

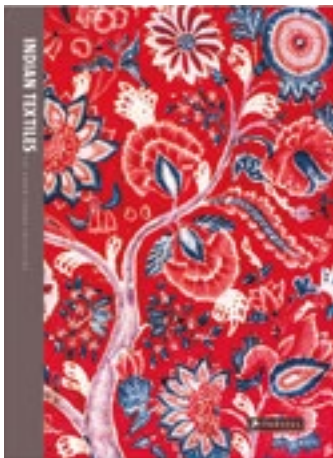
cotton, 0.38 x 0.53m (1'3" x 1'9"). See Wertime 1998, pl. 117

3 Tekke Turkmen main carpet fragment, western Turkestan, 18th or 19th century. Wool, 1.58 x 2.06m (5'2" x 6'9"). See Dodds, Eiland, et al., *Oriental Rugs from Atlantic Collections*, 1996, pl.184

Books



1



INDIAN TEXTILES: THE KARUN THAKAR COLLECTION

By John Guy, Rosemary Crill &
Karun Thakar
Prestel, Munich-Berlin-London-
New York, 2014
224pp, 136 colour plates, additional
colour and detail illustrations,
bibliography
ISBN 9783791349312
Hardbound, \$60.00/£40.00
Reviewed by Sonia Ashmore

Scholars and admirers of Indian textiles are indebted not only to museums but also to private individuals – those collectors who have accumulated and conserved superb collections of cloth from the subcontinent and made them

available to a wider audience in one form or another. Examples are the Calico Museum in Ahmedabad and the TAPI Collection (Textiles and Art of the People of India).

Another debt is to improvements in digital photography and colour printing. These now allow us to see textiles on the printed page or websites more clearly than with the naked eye; we can see the weave of the cloth and individual embroidery stitches in close-up images. This catalogue of Karun Thakar's private collection of Indian textiles is a product of these developments.

Although the collection is not on public display, Thakar has lent and donated some important pieces to the V&A in London and to other museums. The high production values of the book permit close-up scrutiny of some of the superb

objects in his care. His broader collections can be seen on his website, www.karuncollection.com

Thakar's epiphany came in the late 1980s. On a trip to northwest Pakistan he came by chance across two embroidered wedding dresses from the Swat Valley, shown in the book. His collection, as featured here, is not a comprehensive survey of the textiles of India. Rather it reflects Thakar's personal taste and focuses on specific types: early trade cloths, painted, printed, dyed, embroidered and appliquéd; temple hangings from the 14th century (a dyed and block-printed cotton from Gujarat found in Sulawesi); chintzes, including an 18th-century Armenian hanging made on the Coromandel Coast representing a *Madonna and Child*; Kashmir shawls; Punjabi baghs, or wedding shawls; tie-dyed shawls from Gujarat and



Rajasthan; folk textiles from north and west India, Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh, including Banjara embroideries; gold and silver thread brocades from Hyderabad, Varanasi and Gujarat; and costumes from the Swat Valley.

Embroideries made by village women in northwest India are the best represented textiles in the collection, and are apparently the textiles most sought after by modern collectors. They include pieces such as phulkaris and baghs, and Punjabi wedding shawls, both types in heavy cottons distinctively embroidered with floss silks.

Two essays place the collection in context. One, by John Guy of the MMA, New York, is on the early history of Indian textiles; the other, taking the story from the Mughal period to the present, is by Rosemary Crill of the V&A in London. Each

group of textiles also has a brief introduction: as one might expect, excellent, scholarly overviews.

Guy emphasises the important ancient textile trade between India and Southeast Asia, the first documented trade route for Indian textiles being overland to China ca. AD 159–161. Demand from these markets, ‘including the Malay and Siamese regions’ affected the types and designs of Indian textiles as much as the better-documented Western (and Japanese) demand from the 17th century onwards. Guy stresses that the highly skilled weavers, dyers and printers in the subcontinent were quick to respond to all new markets. They produced textiles ranging from ceremonial printed cotton cloths for Indonesia imitating the silk patola of Gujarat, to chintzes for western consumers.

As Rosemary Crill points out in

her essay, more objects inevitably survive from the Mughal period onwards than from earlier periods. More ample pictorial evidence, such as miniature paintings, illustrates their use. She describes the varied uses of textiles within India, the importance of princely patronage and, after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, an increase in regional cultural identities, expressed in textiles.

Local demand and locally differentiated skills and techniques survived both the huge trade from Europe following the surge of interest in Indian textiles, and its subsequent decline. However, she says that all hand-produced textiles ‘are in severe decline today’; superb examples such as those displayed in this book are thus even more desirable for collectors.

1 Ceremonial hanging (detail), south India, Coromandel Coast or Tamil Nadu, ca. 1700. On loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum between 2004 and 2010, this unique temple cloth shows scenes that mix myths and historical stories from the Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic traditions. Each division is marked by a short inscription in Tamil. Mordant and resist-dyed, block-printed cotton. 8.32mx 1.02m (27' 4" x 3' 4"). Karun Thakar Collection



Suzani, late 19th century, 0.92 x 1.45 m

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These are among the books submitted to HALI in recent months. Some may be reviewed in future issues

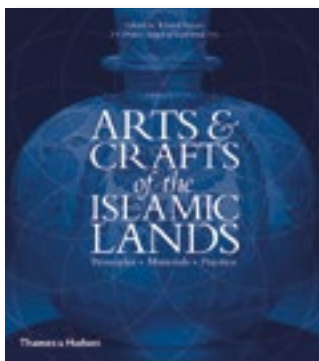


▲ **A Prince's Eye: Imperial Mughal Paintings from a Princely Collection: Art from the Indian Courts**

J.P. Losty. Francesca Galloway, UK, 2013, 166 pages, colour illustrations, 9780956914736, softbound, £25

Calico Painting and Printing in the East Indies in the XVII and XVIII centuries

G. P. Baker. Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmedabad, 2013, 116 pages, 37 colour plates, CD. Smaller facsimile of the 1921 original V&A folio edition, 9788186980491, hardbound, Rs 6000



▲ **Arts & Crafts of the Islamic Lands: Principles, Materials, Practice**

Khaled Azzam. Thames & Hudson, UK, 2013, 288 pages, over 1,000 illustrations in colour and black & white, 9780500517024, hardbound, £29.95

▼ **Antinoé, à la vie, à la mode: Visions d'élégance dans les solitudes**

Maximilien Durand, Florence Calament, Collectif. Fage Editions, Lyon, 2013, French, 438 pages, colour illustrations, 978-2849753118, softbound, €45.00



Gesammelte Schönheit / Collected Beauty: Teppiche und Kelims aus Anatolien /Rugs and Kilims from Anatolia

Martin Posth, Burgula Olschewski, Darah E. Allen. Martin Posth, Berlin, 2014, English and German, 223 pages, colour illustrations, 978-3000445262, hardbound €45.00

Made in Oceania: Tapa - Kunst und Lebenswelten /Tapa - Art and Social Landscapes

Oliver Lueb, Peter Mesenhöller. Nünnerich-Asmus Verlag, Germany, 2013, German & English, 250 pages, 96 colour illustrations, 978-3943904260, softbound, €29.90

The Fascination of Persia: The Persian-European Dialogue in Seventeenth-Century Art & Contemporary Art of Teheran

Axel Langer, Scheidegger & Spiess, Rietberg Museum, Zurich, 2013, 320 pages, 302 colour and 10 b/w illustrations, 978-3-85881-739-6, softbound, €52.00



▲ **Indian Textiles**

John Gillow, Nicholas Barnard. Thames & Hudson, UK, 2014, 224 pages, 450 colour and 25 b/w illustrations, 9780500291184, softbound, £19.95

Patterns of Magnificence: Tradition and Reinvention in Greek Women's Costume

Ioanna Papantoniou. Peak Publishing for the Hellenic Centre, London, Athens, 2014, Greek and English, 248 pages, colour illustrations, 9780952551836, softbound, £25.00
See HALI 179, p.117

▼ **Interwoven Globe: The Worldwide Textile Trade, 1500-1800**

Amelia Peck, Amy Bogansky, et.al. Thames & Hudson, UK, 2013, 360 pages, 360 colour illustrations, 9780500517161, hardbound, £39.95
See HALI 176, pp.70-81



Persian Treasures in Erevan

Armen Tokatlian. Snoeck Publishers, Belgium, 2013, 160 pages, colour illustrations, 978-94-6161-128-4, hardbound, €35.00

Bergama Heybe ve Torba: Traditionelle Taschen der Yürüken Nordwest-Anatoliens / Traditional bags of the Yürüks in Northwest Anatolia

Elisabeth Steiner, Doris Pinkwart, Eberhard Ammermann, Ingrid Kruger, Anne Ammermann, Steiner, Elisabeth, Germany, 2014, English, German & Turkish, 387 pages, colour illustrations, hardbound, 9783-00-044619-1, Hardbound, £72.15

▼ **The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination**

Sarah Stewart. I.B. Tauris, UK, 2013, 272 pages, colour illustrations, 978-1780768090, softbound, £45.00



Portraits and Caftans of the Ottoman Sultans

Nurhan Atasoy. Assouline Publishing, New York, 2013, English, 127 pages, colour illustrations, 9781614281054, hardbound, \$125.00

Mantai: City by the sea

John Carswell, Siran Deraniyagala, Alan Graham. Linden Soft Verlag, Germany, 2013, 552 pages, colour illustrations, 978-3929290394, hardbound, £56.00

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Tekke animal tree engsi, early 19th century, 164 x 118 cm

Recognition and reconsideration

Recent sales of Turkmen embroidered asmalyks have yielded record prices, prompting Daniel Shaffer and Penny Oakley to survey the auction market history of these rare and beautiful artefacts

In New York on 31 January 2014, Lot 60 – the first of three Turkmen pentagonal embroidered asmalyks consigned by the veteran Singapore collector Ben Fernandes to Sotheby's sale of 'Carpets and Textiles from Distinguished Collections' – was bought by a Middle Eastern museum for \$68,250. It broke its own auction record price for one of these elite wedding camel trappings, set at Rippon Boswell in Wiesbaden in 2009 (see HALI 160, p.130).

The sale showed that leading buyers, institutional and private, are recognising this genre of often very beautiful Central Asian tribal embroidery. It also marked the high point of a cascade of such asmalyks on to the auction market in the past few months. There were three at SNY on 31 January: Lot 60 and the two following, which made \$37,500 and \$40,625 respectively. Two more had been sold at RB on 30 November 2013, Lots 69 (\$12,615) and 122 (\$26,550); and another, quite unusual, example sold at Austria Auction Company in Vienna on 15 March 2014 (Lot 166, \$16,970).

This sudden wealth of material prompted a review of our records of sales of these embroideries. They feature distinctive designs of ascending 'plants', ranging from near realistic to highly abstract, often accompanied by charming pictorial elements: wedding caravans, horses, camels and other animals, even people. They are conventionally attributed to the Tekke, without much evidence beyond the tribe's presence in the Merv area when the



1

Russian collector S.M. Dudin visited the oasis; however, at least two have been labelled Salor in the literature.

Since Michael Franses introduced the two-dozen pieces then known to the world in *Turkoman Studies I* (1980), they have been infrequent visitors to the public market (the present crop were the first for five years). And when they do appear, it is quite often the same pieces, and at prices which, while reflecting inflation, are much more akin to what turned out to be excessively modest expectations at SNY, where they sold for between four and six times their higher estimates.

Our review gave rise to a flurry of reclassification and regrouping, as well as raising some speculative questions about design sources. (What is it about Turkmen rugs and

textiles that excites the splitters?) Within the most basic division by format – all known embroidered asmalyks are either four-sided or, much more commonly, five-sided – we can identify up to thirteen 'types' by variations of design, style, material and technique.

Types 1-3 are all rectangular in format. Type 1 is the Robert Pinner Collection rectangular asmalyk (1), horseless, with five naturalistically rendered plants, sold at RB in May 2004 for \$27,115 (HALI 136, pp.118-19).

Type 2 comprises five examples in which the drawing has moved away from the naturalism of Type 1, becoming more stylised, so it is perhaps slightly later. One lovely embroidery with two horses and a bride and groom (2) was unsold at SLO in April 1981 against a £2,500-

1 Turkmen embroidered asmalyk, probably 18th century. Woollen ground, worked in silk with woollen details in *keşdi* (*keshte*) and flowers in *basma* (laid) stitch. Beautifully drawn, the second and third main plants have graceful stems and leaves that resemble poppies. The fluidity of the drawing suggests that this is one of the earliest embroidered asmalyks. The quality of drawing and the use of *basma*, much favoured for *suzanis*, suggests it was professionally made. 1.36 m x 0.74 m (4'6" x 2'5"). Rippon Boswell, Wiesbaden, 15 May 2004, Lot 1. Estimate €8,500, sold for €22,800 (\$27,115)



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5

£4,000 estimate. It reappeared in the same rooms the next October, fetching £4,180. Then, in April 1995, with damaged embroidery restored, it made \$11,500 (HALI 81, p.121) at SNY. Most recently, in November 2008, it was sold again at Nagel in Stuttgart, for what remains the record price for a rectangular embroidery of \$34,540 (HALI 158, p.136), ahead of the almost certainly earlier Pinner piece.

Type 3, another singleton, shows three horses, six smaller animals, and birds, in a similar box-like format to Type 2. With silk and wool embroidery, in *tambour* (chain stitch) and *basma* on a wool ground, it sold at Phillips in London in April 2000 for \$7,920 (HALI 111, p.134).

Types 4–13 are all of the much more common pentagonal variety. Type 4 is represented by the new world record holder at SNY (3), with its multiple horses, camels, dogs, people, much waving of guns, and boldly executed flowers worked in wool on a wool ground. The three

examples of Type 5 are very similar but lack horses; they include the first two embroidered *asmalyks* in our auction data (4), a pair sold at Sotheby's in January 1979 (Lots 51 and 54) for hammer prices of £2,400 and £2,000 respectively, the difference explained by condition.

The six examples of Types 6–9 are also closely related by design to Type 4, but with more stylised flowers and different combinations of animals, birds and humans. One *asmalyk* with two horses and a bird, worked in wool with silk details on a woollen ground (5), was sold for a then-record price of \$28,440 at RB in May 2008 (HALI 157, p.149), and appeared again in the recent SNY sale (Lot 62, \$40,625).

*It is extremely difficult to date these
asmalyks, because we have to rely
largely on educated guesswork*

Type 10 embroideries, of which there are at least eight, are also stylistically akin to Type 4, but lack horses or humans. They include one of the pieces sold at RB in November 2013 (6), which has wool embroidery with details in 'ruby-red silk' (Lot 122, \$26,550). Type 11

comprises three or more examples with markedly shaped tops, as if in imitation of seven-sided piled *asmalyks*, including a pair in the Dudin Collection, St Petersburg. (7).

The sole example of Type 12, sold for \$16,970 in AAC's 15 March 2014 sale (8), may be the work of a small tribal subgroup. Worked mainly in wool on a wool ground, it has the standard five plants and similar individual flowers. The style, however, is

different: spacious, naive and rather charming, with a lighter touch. It seems to be later in date, but the wool ground might indicate the opposite.

Finally we come to Type 13, at least sixteen strong, including pairs. Among them is the first embroidered *asmalyk* to appear in the literature, in the *Ciba Review* in 1941, where Alfred Leix attributed it to the Salor. This type also includes the less costly of the two embroideries offered in Rippon Boswell's most recent sale (Lot 69), which fetched \$12,615.

Comparison of these Turkmen embroideries increasingly suggests that many were made using cartoons or patterns. These could perhaps be bought in towns, or from pedlars who hawked them around the camps or, probably more likely, the embroideries themselves were produced in urban ateliers. Perhaps a selection of each design element was offered, as with Uzbek *suzani* makers and Ottoman embroiderers. Also, it seems that those with wool grounds might be earlier, when life



6



8



7



9

2 Turkmen embroidered asmalyk, 18th/19th century. 1.42m x 0.83m (4' 8" x 2' 9"). Nagel, Stuttgart, 4 November 2008, Lot 3207. Estimate €20,000, sold for €26,600 (\$34,540), the highest price on record for a rectangular embroidered asmalyk

3 Turkmen embroidered asmalyk, 18th/19th century. 1.45m x 0.69m (4' 9" x 2' 3"). Sotheby's New York, 31 January 2014, Lot 60. Estimate \$8,000-\$12,000, sold for \$68,750, a new world record price at auction for an embroidered asmalyk

4 Turkmen embroidered asmalyk, (one of a pair), 18th/19th century. 1.25m x 0.75m (4' 1" x 2' 6"). Sotheby's London, 10 January 1979, Lot 51. Sold for £2,400

5 Turkmen embroidered asmalyk, 18th/19th century. 1.37m x 0.69m (4' 6" x 2' 3"). Sotheby's New York, 31 January 2014, Lot 62. Estimate \$5,000-\$7,000, sold for \$40,625

6 Turkmen embroidered asmalyk, 18th/19th century. 1.42m x 0.70m (4' 8" x 2' 4"). Rippon Boswell, Wiesbaden, 30 November 2013, Lot 122. Estimate €13,800, sold for €19,520 (\$26,550)

7 Turkmen embroidered asmalyk, (one of a pair), 18th/19th century. 1.48m x 0.71m (4' 10" x 2' 3"). Collected in Merv in 1902 for the Russian Ethnographic Museum by Samuil Martynovich Dudin. REM, St Petersburg, No.26-7/1

8 Turkmen embroidered asmalyk, early 19th century. 1.41m x 0.70m (4' 8" x 2' 4"). Austria Auction Company, Vienna, 15 March 2014, Lot 66. Estimate €7,000-€9,000, sold for €12,200 (\$16,970)

9 Turkmen embroidered asmalyk, 18th/19th century. 1.37m x 0.66m (4' 6" x 2' 3"). Sotheby's New York, 31 January 2014, Lot 61. Estimate \$7,000-\$10,000, sold for \$37,500

was more rural and tribal - in other words pre-Russian. As with suzanis, it is extremely difficult to date these asmalyks, because we have to rely largely on educated guesswork.

The best, probably earlier, Type 1, was perhaps professional urban work, as possibly were others with the *basma* stitch; those with more *keşdi* could have been imitated in a tribal situation. Use of tambourwork (Type 3), also suggests a connection with suzani embroiderers. Or perhaps *keşdi* and tambourwork (quicker to do) were available for a budget job. The choice of plain or patterned flatwoven wool surround may or may not indicate different origins - possibly it reflects no more than taste or budget considerations. The same is true of tassels or fringes.

Our review also suggests to us that the designs of embroidered asmalyks may originally be derived directly from the end panels of Kashmir shawls, which typically have rows of plants. Why they are always five plants on asmalyks is

another question. The Pinner embroidery⁽¹⁾ is most likely to be the oldest example. It can be dated with some confidence to the 18th century, particularly as the plant style corresponds to those of Kashmir shawls of the period.

The likely influence of shawl designs on suzanis has already been discussed (HALI 176, pp. 85 and 86). If Type 1, with its row of plants, was derived from the shawl-end, then so perhaps were the other types' designs, as too the knotted pile examples with plants or 'trees' in various degrees of stylisation. Might not the embroidered asmalyks have influenced the piled examples? Some Tekke and Yomut piled artefacts have stylised versions of Mughal poppies. Inspiration might also come from other Mughal depictions of flowers. It seems more likely that the floral motifs were copied from Mughal artefacts, given the similarities of the motifs, rather than from nature.



INDIAN TEXTILES

THE KARUN THAKAR COLLECTION

John Guy · Rosemary Crill · Karun Thakar

This dazzling array of Indian textiles from one of the world's most important and eclectic private collections contains many images never before published. A treasure trove of Indian textiles, this book ranges from 14th century trade cloths to Indian folk textiles and costumes. An avid collector since his childhood days, Karun Thakar discusses the roots of his passion in an essay, telling how he became interested in textiles and explaining what he looks for when buying a piece. Additional essays by world-renowned experts offer historical and cultural perspectives on various types of textiles, their production and their use. Gorgeous illustrations of Kashmiri shawls, embroidered temple hangings, silk brocade and wedding costumes reflect the intricate beauty of each piece and the expert handicraft that has been practiced for centuries. Anyone interested in textiles, Indian and Asian art, interior design, or cultural history will find inspiration in this beautiful volume.

Indian Textiles. The Karun Thakar Collection

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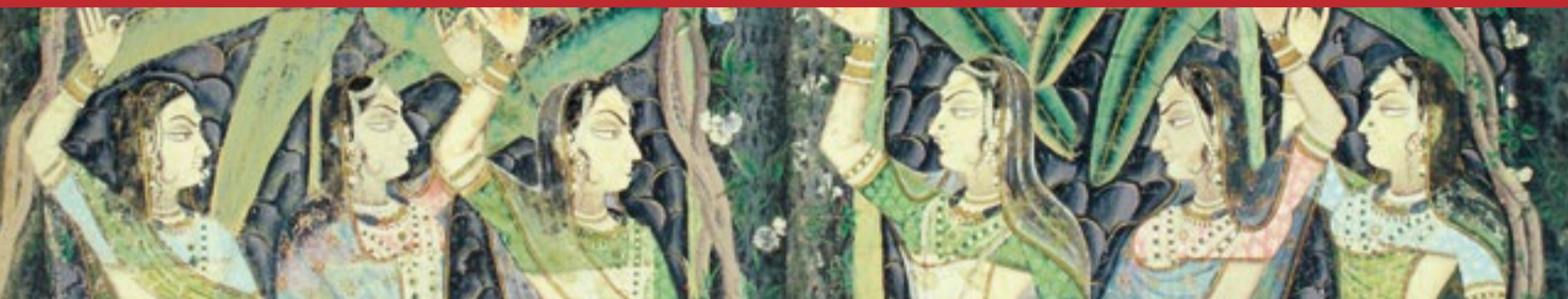
John Guy, Rosemary Crill, Karun Thakar

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Turkey & East Mediterranean

The Baillet-Latour Mamluk carpet

Early 16th century
2.40 m × 2.58 m (7' 10" × 8' 6")
Christie's London, 8 April 2014, Lot 20
Est: £250,000–£350,000
Sold: £782,500 (\$1,297,840)



Christie's well-attended King Street sale of 'Oriental Rugs and Carpets' in London on Tuesday 8 April 2014 was a triumph for consignors and, a rare thing these days, a pleasure to attend. With lively bidding in the room, on the phones, in the book and online, more than three-quarters of the 145 lots sold. Many were well above usually sensible estimates, yielding a total not far short of £4 million, proving that the combination of good quality, good provenance and good cataloguing is hard to beat. Of course, it helps to open with a consignment of such superb quality as the collection of the late Peter Lehmann-Bärenklau (Lots 1–26). Much of it had been carefully acquired between the 1950s and 1980s from some of Europe's leading rug dealers, including Ulrich Schürmann, the Herrmanns and Galerie Sailer. The collection included the early 16th-century Baillet-Latour Mamluk carpet (above), as expected top lot on the day at more than double its high estimate; the Dirksen Cairene carpet (Lot 22), also 16th century and with added Bernheimer provenance, was second highest at £482,500/\$799,020. Another ex-Bernheimer piece, Lot 13, a 17th-century west Anatolian coupled-column prayer rug, surely a strong candidate for best of type, was a bargain at £116,500/\$192,925. Lot 22, a 'Damascus' compartment or 'chessboard' carpet, was bought by 'a European Institution' for £80,500/\$133,310. The Mamluk, the Cairene and the prayer rug each set a new world record at auction for their respective types.

The Bernheimer coupled-column prayer rug

17th century
1.08 m × 1.55 m (3' 7" × 5' 1")
Christie's London, 8 April 2014, Lot 13
Est: £60,000–£80,000
Sold: £116,500 (\$193,225)



From the estate of Peter Lehmann-Bärenklau, this beautiful Turkish prayer rug, with wonderful colour and in superb condition, was the jewel among the twenty Anatolian prayer rugs illustrated in Otto Bernheimer's *Alte Teppiche des 16 bis 18 Jahrhunderts* (Munich 1952, plate 52). Lehmann-Bärenklau assembled his collection from the late 1950s through the 1980s and bought this rug from Ulrich Schürmann. The comparison cited by Christie's, No. 201 in Stefano Ionescu's *Antique Ottoman Rugs in Transylvania*, is indeed closely related, but being more than 20 cm longer, has quite a different look. Two almost identical rugs can be

seen in pl. 10 in *Antique Oriental Carpets from Austrian Collections* (1986), dated to the late 17th century, and the cover piece (and pl. II) of *Prayer Rugs* (Textile Museum, 1974) also published in Yohe & Jones, *Turkish Rugs* (1968) and Gantzhorn, *The Christian Oriental Carpet*, pl. 679. Other related examples with identical borders include a fragment published by Peter Bausback in HALI 177, p. 5; Boralevi, *Oriental Geometries*, 1999, pl. 81; and Tabibnia, *Tappeti Classici*, pp. 55 & 57. Closely similar examples with variant borders of rounded cartouches include HALI 160, p. 37 (in Bistrita); McMullan, *Islamic Carpets*, pl. 90; and Lefevre, 27 April 1979, Lot 21, sold for £14,500.

Central Anatolian village rug

18th century
1.37 m × 1.85 m (4' 6" × 6' 1")
Austria Auction Company, Vienna
15 March 2014, Lot 148
Est: €7,000–€9,000, Sold: €9,760 (\$13,550)



This colourful central Anatolian rug was published in Martin Volkmann, *Old Eastern Carpets II* (Munich 1985, pl. 21) attributed to western Anatolia, Ushak area, where a comparison to pl. 15 in Emil Schmutzler's *Anatolische Teppiche in Siebenbürgen* (Leipzig 1933) is proposed. It was previously offered at Nagel in Stuttgart on 4 November 2008, Lot 30, dated to the 17th century and sold for €21,280 (\$27,630). Reviewed in HALI 158 (pp. 133/4), it was considered 'real bargain' compared to the 'sums made by the ex-Alexander rugs at Christie's in London on 10 April 2008'. Comparable examples have been inconsistently attributed: A similar rug with an identical border was published as a mid 18th-century Bergama in Adil Besim's *Türkische Teppiche* (1978). A similar rug with a variant border in the Mucurlu Mosque in Afyon was published as an 18th-century Balikesir (northwest Anatolian) in The Ministry of Culture's *Turkish Handwoven Carpets*, no. 0278. A later version with a border similar to the above was advertised by Lerch of Munich in HALI 92, pp. 54/5, as west Anatolian, 17th/18th century, and was later sold as Konya, circa 1800 at Nagel, 15 May 2006, Lot 32 for €2,800.

Turkey & East Mediterranean

Konya runner (detail)

Late 18th century
1.10 m x 3.40 m (3'7" x 11'2")
Christie's London, 8 April 2014, Lot 7
Est: £18,000–£24,000
Sold: £22,500 (\$37,375)



This yellow-ground Konya long rug with three cruciform medallions is from the Lehmann-Barenklau collection. It was published in an advertisement for Galerie Sailer of Salzburg in HALI 41 (1988, p.59), dated to circa 1800. It is similar to a somewhat older fragment in the Kirchheim collection *Orient Stars* (1993, pl.139, published in *Weltkunst*, 22 November 1987, p.3426, No.8, in Friedrich Spuhler's article on yellow-ground Konya carpets). In the *Orient Stars* caption Spuhler wrote 'with this carpet we return to the clear distinctive design which is the outstanding characteristic of yellow-ground Konya carpets'. A similar fragmented example is published as pl.39 in Ayan Gülgönen's *Konya Cappadocia Carpets* (Istanbul 1997), and a complete carpet dated mid 19th century was sold for DM14,000 at RB on 20 May 2000, Lot 79. A four-medallion rug is published in Daniele Sevi's *Tappeti Anatolici del XIX secolo* (Milan 1984); another Sailer three-medallion rug was unsold at SNY on 1 October 1998, Lot 14 against a \$15,000–\$20,000 estimate, and Langauer offered a three-medallion rug for €4,500 on cloudband.com in September 2004. All the above-cited examples have the Z-motif borders of the present rug.

The Volkmann Bergama rug

Late 17th or early 18th century
1.63 m x 2.18 m (5'4" x 7'2")
Christie's London, 8 April 2014, Lot 12
Est: £20,000–£30,000
Sold: £40,000 (\$66,340)



Once the pride and joy of the late Martin Volkmann of Munich, this Lehmann-Barenklau northwest Anatolian rug is almost identical to an example published in Joseph V. McMullan's *Islamic Carpets* (New York 1965, p.114 = *Turkish Handwoven Carpets*, No. 0116) but the present rug is arguably more beautiful owing to its more open border. It was published as pl.21 in Spuhler, König & Volkmann's 1978 Munich ICOC exhibition catalogue *Old Eastern Carpets* (Munich 1978). Other rugs in this elite group have been variously attributed to Bergama and Konya. Two recent comments in Auction Price Guide address this issue; see HALI 148, p.111, a review of Lot 97 at Rippon Boswell on 10 May 2006 (sold for \$47,410), in which all known examples are listed; and HALI 168, p.136, a review of CLO, 5 April 2011, Lot 217 (sold for \$36,300). Other comments on rugs in this group include; HALI 135, p.105 = SNY, 1 April 2004, Lot 62 (\$30,000); HALI 105, p.139 = SNY, 7 April 1999, Lot 35 (\$21,850); and HALI 66, p.150 = SNY, 17 September 1992, Lot 84 (\$16,500).

Bergama rug

Early 19th century
1.54 m x 2.00 m (5'1" x 6'7")
Skinner Boston, 22 March 2014, Lot 101
Est: \$6,000–\$8,000
Sold: \$15,990

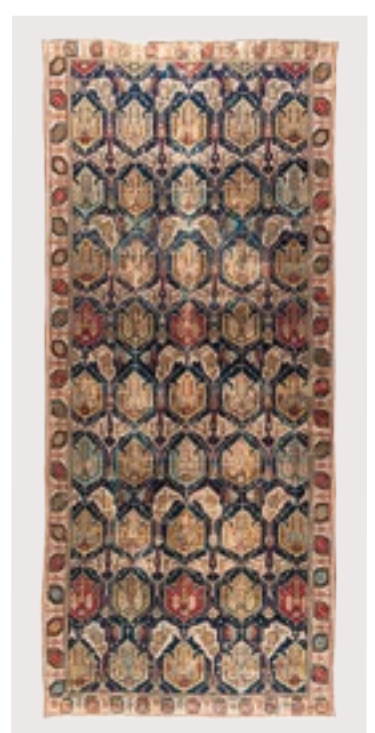


The re-entrant feature in this west Anatolian rug is merely a suggestion rather than an overt statement of two opposing niches in comparable examples. Aside from this deviation, it has all the design features of this group, referred to as 'Bellini double re-entrants' in Sotheby's catalogues. Two early publications of these rugs are plate 18 in Grote-Hasenbalg's *Der Orientteppich*, Vol.II (1922) dated late 18th century, and p.252, figure 948 in Orendi's *Das Gesamtwissen über Antike und Neue Teppich des Orients* (1930) dated circa 1780. Herrmann published a closely comparable example in SOT.II, No. 4 (1979 retail price DM34,000) = HALI 66, p.62/3, Eskenazi advertisement. An example sold at SNY on 30 May 1987, Lot 138 for \$8,800 (= SNY 14, September 2001 Lot 4, \$16,800), and another at SLO on 21 April 1999, Lot 68, dated early 18th century, for £12,650 (HALI 105, p.139) = SNY, 14 February 2006, Lot 412, \$14,400. Related examples with a variant hooked lattice border include Herrmann, SOT X, pl.15; RB, 18 November 2006, Lot 144, €9,000 = HALI 126, p.61, Krikor Markarian advertisement = Phillips, London, 16 October 2001, Lot 121; HALI 68, p.33, Ursula Mayer advertisement, and SNY, 19, May 2011, Lot 39, estimate \$6,000–\$8,000, unsold.

Caucasus

Caucasian shield carpet

17th/18th century
Leclere Marseilles
27 March 2014, Lot 7
Est: €25,000–€35,000
Sold: €31,450 (\$43,715)



In 'Caucasian Shield Carpets' (HALI 1/1, pp.4–22), Pinner & Franses cite the Ballard carpet (MMA p.268, fig.230) as the largest in the group, with five shields in each of ten horizontal rows. The present carpet has five shields in each of nine rows. They suggest that the serrated-leaf border derives from the 'Leningrad' [sic] carpet at the Hermitage (fig. 2) describing it as 'diagonal palmettes on the vine alternating with an intricate diagonal flower shape'. The border of the present rug is a simpler version of the same. For identical borders see the fragments in the Kestner Museum, Hanover (figs. 3 & 4); Berlin/Dahlem (fig. 5) = Spuhler, *Oriental Carpets*, Berlin, p.246, pl.106; HALI 163, p.78, No.5 = Wawel Royal Castle, Cracow; SNY, 7 April 1992, Lot 35, \$44,000 = HALI 63, p.133; HALI 67 p.134. The more typical shield carpet border, the curled leaf of Tekke bird asmylyks, aroused the authors' initial interest in this group of Caucasian carpets. A strong price for a carpet of historical interest, but in very worn condition.

South Caucasian runner (detail)

18th century

1.16m x 4.21m (3'10" x 13'10")

Christie's London, 8 April 2014, Lot 71

Est: £45,000–£55,000

Sold: £47,500 (\$78,780)



In HALI 62 (p.92, fig.18), Raoul Tschebull published a white-ground Caucasian long rug related to this Burns collection piece with this partial description: 'Possibly 18th century or earlier. Such archaic-looking village rugs have been attributed to Karabagh and Kuba... they have the same interconnected design unit with palmette forms as Bijov design weavings...' That rug was available from Alan Marcuson (HALI 2/1, p.74, 'Rugs on the Market'), published by Eskenazi in *Il Tappeto Orientale dal XV al XVIII Secolo* (pl.20), and is now in Kuwait (Spuhler 2012, No.32, Karabagh, 18th century). Other closely related pieces include Herrmann, *SOT III*, pl.50 (Kuba, ca. 1700)

= Volkmann, *Old Eastern Carpets II* (back cover & pl.58) = *Orient Stars*, p.61; a fragment at RB on 20 May 2000, Lot 105, sold for DM12,000; SLO, 20, April 1983, Lot 123, unsold; a fragment in the Jon Thompson sale at SNY on 16 December 1993, Lot 75, sold for \$9,200 (HALI 73, p.132). The present rug last appeared at CNY on 22 January 2009, Lot 43, selling for just \$9,900 (HALI 56, p.173). At the time we commented that 'it was not in very good condition, one reason for its quite modest price,' a reference to its very heavily corroded brown ground, clearly visible in the CNY illustration, especially in the middle and bottom sections of the rug, but since repiled.

South Caucasian long rug

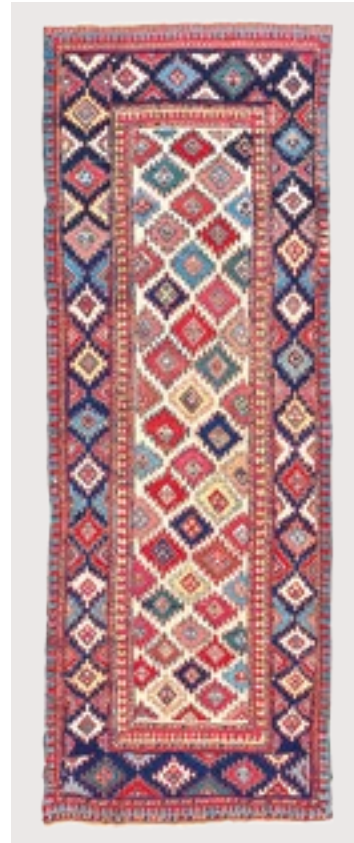
First half 19th century

1.08m x 3.12m (3'7" x 10'3")

Christie's London, 8 April 2014, Lot 66

Est: £7,000–£10,000

Sold: £7,500 (\$12,440)



In black and white this rug would look repetitively boring, but in the flesh the weaver's judicious juxtaposition of colours makes it lively and lovely. CLO's thorough research found a virtual twin advertised by Edward Gulesserian in HALI 39, p.58, and Schürmann has a related piece in *Caucasian Rugs*, pl.8, pp.70/1. Both suggest that this type is the forerunner of the usual Borjalu Kazaks, but a case could be made for Talish based on design and dimensions. Patrick Pouler posted a related blue-ground Talish fragment on rugrabbit.com in March 2014, and *Carpets from Canadian Collections II* has a blue-field Talish with an identical border belonging to Ross Winter (pl.32). Peter Willborg notes the 'highly unusual size', of a rug with a similar field in *Textile Treasures from Five Centuries*, pl.20, roughly twice as long as wide, typical for Talish rugs.

Karagashli rug

19th century

0.91m x 1.25m (3'0" x 4'1")

Christie's London, 8 April 2014, Lot 86

Est: £3,000–£4,000

Sold: £18,750 (\$31,100)



A comprehensive review in HALI 165, p.119, of a Karagashli rug sold by the Munich auctioneers Neumeister on 19 May 2010 (Lot 46) details the various Karagashli design types. This example features one of the more typical, a vertical repeat pattern of lozenges similar to those on a dark blue-ground three-lozenge example priced at DM31,750 in Eberhart Herrmann's *Seltene Orienteppiche III* (1980, pl.41). Towards the end of the 19th century and in the early 20th century many similar rugs were made, but in most of those later pieces the lozenges are squarish, the field is a darker midnight blue, and there are extra guard borders. The present rug with its four well-drawn lozenges and a light, uncluttered sky-blue field compares favourably with what is considered 'best of type', a three-lozenge rug in Ulrich Schürmann's *Caucasian Rugs*, pl.108, dated to circa 1800. A similar price for this design type was the \$30,420 paid for Lot 1445 at Northeast Auctions, Portsmouth, NH, on 24 February 2008, a variant with two columns of three lozenges and an 'eagle's beak' border, previously published in Herrmann's *SOT IV*, pl.22.

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Caucasus

Konagend rug

First half 19th century
0.97m x 1.24m (3'2" x 4'1")
Austria Auction Company, Vienna
15 March 2014, Lot 94
Est: €3,000–€4,000, Sold: €5,490 (\$7,620)



Among Caucasian rug designs the Konagend pattern is one of the most complex and intricate and is usually executed with blueprint-like precision. However, in this instance the drawing is funkier and the elements enlarged. As Udo Langauer's catalogue points out, a rare purple dye is used in the field. The closest comparable example, virtually identical in palette and similar in size is illustrated in the 'ICOC Down Under' exhibition catalogue *Pathways Through Paradise* (Sydney 2004, p.41), dated to circa 1860. A comparable atypical rendering of the Konagend pattern is employed in a fragment published in HALI 132, p.42, described as a Konagend prototype, 18th century. Another unusual variation appears on a rug offered at Sotheby's in London on 28 September 2005, Lot 1, inexplicably attributed to Perpedil. Also see Freemans, Philadelphia, 22 May 2013, Lot 846, a Konagend prayer rug (HALI 177, p.128), and another prayer rug at Rippon Boswell on 29 November 2008, Lot 186 (HALI 158, p.135). For one of the most unusual variants of the pattern see Kurt Erdmann, *Oriental Rugs* (1976) fig.109, Shirvan, dated 1890.

Shirvan rug

Dated 1240 AH (AD 1824)
1.08m x 1.56m (3'7" x 5'1")
Nagel Stuttgart, 25 March 2014, Lot 1
Est: €1,500
Sold: €27,930 (\$38,510)



The linked diamond configuration is one of the most common patterns in Caucasian rugs, but in this instance the diamonds are almost obscured within a dense, maze-like latticed field, to our knowledge unique in the repertoire of Caucasian designs, all surrounded by a yellow border of complementary design. Jean Lefevre published this rug in black and white in a short article titled 'Unidentified Caucasian Rugs' (HALI 2/3, Autumn 1979, p.218). His only comment was 'Figure 3 shows a most attractive rug with a lattice design dated 1240=AD 1824. Everyone who saw it agreed it was a Caucasian rug but could say no more'. In fact he did say more when he published it again in *Caucasian Rugs* (1977, p.43), describing it as a 'door rug with lattice design'. Based on decorative features and structural characteristics, he proposed connections to Ersari ensis and early rugs of Anatolia. The rug was sold in Lefevre's sale of 20 May 1977 for £2,200.

Daghestan runner

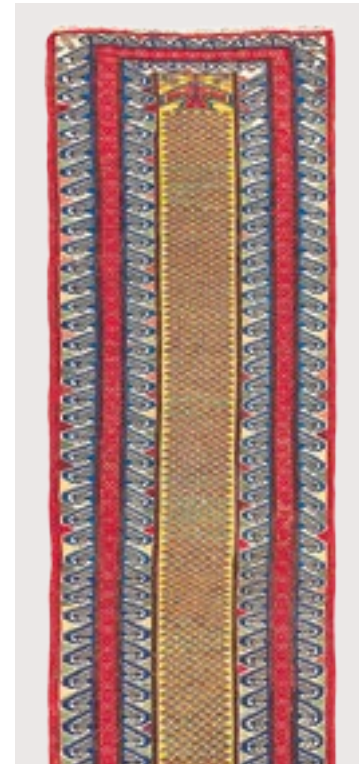
Late 18th century
0.96m x 2.58m (3'2" x 8'6")
Christie's London, 8 April 2014, Lot 19
Est: £18,000–£24,000
Sold: £47,500 (\$78,780)



Eberhart Herrmann and his mother Margarete published this striking and unusual long rug in their inaugural exhibition catalogue, *Von Lotto bis Tekke* (Munich 1978, pl.31), in which they attributed it to Daghestan, 18th century. An equally beautiful rug with a plain red field and a very similar ivory ground cartouche border was sold for \$49,300 to a leading Italian dealer at Rippon Boswell on 18 November 2006, Lot 51 (HALI 150, p.130). It could be argued that its border, being rather more open, is more successfully executed than that of the present rug. A late 19th-century blue-ground rug with a very similar border was sold at Sotheby's in New York on 14 December 2006, Lot 210, for \$4,680, having previously sold at Skinner's on 15 September 2001, Lot 3, for just \$1,610.

Zeikhur sumakh runner (detail)

19th century
0.83m x 3.09m (2'9" x 10'2")
Christie's London, 8 April 2014, Lot 18
Est: £5,000–£7,000
Sold: £10,625 (\$17,620)



A Lehmann-Barenklau collection rug, this long sumakh runner was exhibited at the 1978 Munich ICOC and published in Spuhler, König & Volkmann's *Old Eastern Carpets* (pl.70), with the 'arrow-head' niche at the top, and the caption suggesting its unlikely intended use as a prayer rug. Lefevre published a related sumakh with a yellow floral field and identical borders in *Caucasian Carpets*, pl.59, which sold for \$1,400 on 20 May 1977. A comparable example with a densely patterned floral field published in Raymond Benardout's *Caucasian Rugs*, p.30, was sold at RB on 29 May 2010, Lot 89, for \$5,660 (HALI 165, p.123). A somewhat related green ground sumakh with a diagonal floral pattern sold for \$37,485 at CLO's Halevim sale on 14 February 2001, Lot 84 (HALI 116, p.158), having sold two years earlier in the same rooms for \$14,000 (22 April 1999, Lot 5); and one with a very similar dotted field and a Kufic border sold for \$16,000 in CLO's Bernheimer sale on 14 February 1996, Lot 17.

Persia

Khorasan carpet fragment

17th century

0.92m x 2.22m (3'0" x 7'3")

Sotheby's London, 9 April 2014, Lot 229

Est: \$6,000-\$8,000

Sold: \$37,500



This very beautiful field fragment of an early Khorasan carpet, previously unknown, appears to be from the same carpet as another slightly larger fragmented piece formerly at Wilmslow Hall (sold at Cheffins, Cambridge, 3 June 2009, Lot 934) and now with a leading dealer in Milan. The Wilmslow Hall carpet is an assemblage of about a dozen smaller sections, including the border, and its field lacks sufficient continuity to reconstruct the entire design. In tandem, the two pieces give us a better idea of what the complete carpet must have looked like. The field is dominated by enormous floral palmettes, in the fashion of a vase carpet, but with a more rectilinear organisation and without a regular lattice underpinning. Palmettes in five distinct forms explode in concentric colour areas from the inside out. The colour palette is varied (14 shades in all) and

exuberant. The vertically orientated, angular palmettes are typical early Khorasan and probably derive from Chinese peony forms via 15th-century Tabriz carpets. The remaining palmettes all look as if they were taken directly from the early 17th-century Kerman vase carpet repertoire. The Sotheby's fragment (shown upside down in the auction catalogue) is from the right side of the carpet and includes a little more than one full vertical repeat of the pattern. The left side would have been the mirror image of the right side, and on both edges the palmettes are halved. Down the centre of the field was an additional column of vertical palmettes, of which only a slight remnant is preserved in the Wilmslow Hall piece. The main border design is a meandering vine, with thickened diagonals, connecting small palmettes, each of which sprouts a pair of split-leaf blossoms from the opposite end (a pattern familiar from the earliest Caucasian dragon carpets), with reciprocal trefoil minor borders. The complete carpet was about eight feet wide and at least 16 feet long. The field layout, but not the border, is nearly identical to that of an even larger carpet in Vienna (T 8377/1922 KB, see Angela Volker, *Die orientalische Knüpfteppiche im MAK*, 2001, pp.248/9, pl.87. Throughout the field are slender vines bearing small blossoms and leaves plus repeated pairs of large sickle leaves. Quartets of vertically and horizontally orientated palmettes are joined by rectilinear arrangements of heavier vines (remnants of the lattice stems of earlier vase carpets), alternately lozenges with a five-lobed rosette overlaid on the centre of each side (a form ubiquitous in Harshang carpets, for which this carpet is an intriguing antecedent) and spokes radiating from a central rosette. Flanking the vertical angular palmettes are asymmetric cloudbands, which are extremely rare on classical Khorasan carpets.

Safavid figural silk velvet fragment

Early 17th century

0.27m x 0.28m (0'11" x 0'11")

Bonhams London, 8 April 2014, Lot 60

Est: £25,000-£35,000

Sold: £57,500 (\$97,695)



Once upon a time, this strangely moving velvet found its way to Tibet, together with its three siblings. Maybe they were once a single length, or came as a coat, a robe of honour; some old seam lines are apparent on this piece. Bonhams implies that it might have been a diplomatic gift from Shah 'Abbas himself 'to a European counterpart'. So how did it get to Tibet? From this mountain fastness, the four pieces made their way to London, via the late Lisbet Holmes, a dealer noted for significant finds in the Indian region. Once here, they were sold by Spink & Son, now also long gone. The first published piece, a detail showing one lady, was in their house magazine, *Octagon* (XXIV/3, October 1987, p.21). A two-lady example was acquired by the David Collection, Copenhagen in 1988 (Folsach, *Islamic Art*, 1990, No. 407; Folsach & Bernstead, *Woven Treasures, Textiles from the World of Islam*, 1993, No. 34. By far the largest example, four joined fragments, with four figures (three complete persons and a top half, above, and a bottom half below) came up at Christie's in London

(5 October 2010, Lot 748). Despite superb close-up details in the catalogue, it went unsold. Was the £800,000-£1,200,000 estimate a trifle optimistic? But Sotheby's had sold a spectacular figural Safavid velvet in Doha the year before for \$3,442,550 (HALI 160, p.129), so why not? SLO had also sold another figural type for £793,500/\$1,334,740 (14 October 1998, Lot 37; HALI 102, pp.119 & 125). This Bonhams lot was exhibited in 2011 by Francesca Galloway (*Islamic Courtly Textiles and Trade Goods 14th-19th Century*, No.5; HALI 168, p.107, No.4). Each design unit is a vignette of a mother and child by a lofty cypress (sometimes a reference to the cemetery) growing through a pomegranate tree (a symbol of fertility). Each lady is rather stout, but with an earthy grace. As with other Persian velvets, some of the charm is in the detail. Here we see long earrings, a shaped pendant on a chain, and a double choker of large beads. The tiny traces of silver lamella are scarcely visible, but a chemical analysis can be found in Folsach & Bernstead, p.113.

Central Asia

The Holms Hepburn Safavid carpet
17th century
2.16m x 2.48m (7'1" x 8'2")
Lyon & Turnbull, Edinburgh
25 June 2014, Lot 866
Est: £10,000-£15,000, Sold: £79,250 (\$134,555)



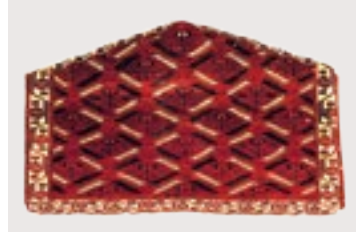
The Holms Hepburn Coronation carpet is a red-ground 'in and out palmette' design Safavid period weaving of the 17th century, perhaps Esfahan, but with an untypical, but not unknown, cartouche border design, reconfigured into a squarish fragment. Nothing too unusual in that - but before reaching its present owner, St Mungo's Cathedral in Glasgow in 1971, via the well known London firm of Duveen Brothers and two Scottish private collectors, John Augustus Holms (1866-1938) and Charles A. Hepburn (1891-1971), it was loaned for use at the coronations in Westminster Abbey of King Edward VII in 1902, and his son, King George V in 1911, as well as the marriage of Princess Mary in 1922. Proof for this use can be found on leather labels sewn to the back. In fact three Safavid carpets were loaned to the Abbey by Duveen for the event, including this one, which sat beneath the throne on which Edward VII was crowned. Of the other two, one, much larger, with a 'Paradise Park' design, which covered the steps to the dais, is now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, a gift of John Paul Getty in 1949 (HALI 162, 2009, pp.46-49). The other, a Khorasan carpet which covered the dais, was most recently sold from the Yves Mikaeloff collection by Christie's in London in 1997 for \$180,630 (HALI 96, p.141). The history of the Holms Hepburn carpet was discussed by Thomas Farnham in HALI 164, pp.48/9.

Eurasian flatweave fragment (detail)
Possibly 5th-4th century BC
0.43m x 0.23m (1'5" x 0'9")
Netherhampton Salerooms, Salisbury
5 March 2014, Lot 1753
Est: £5,000-£8,000, Sold: £5,750 (\$9,580)



The late Ian Bennett's swansong as a carpet cataloguer at Netherhampton Auctions was this enigmatic but evidently very old fragment of Asian woollen flatweave, with 'animal-style' iconography akin to that associated with early Steppe art. He saw it just before his untimely death at Christmas 2013 and was very excited about it, believing that it could be from the Pazyryk period (5th-4th century BC) and area (the Altai). However, in the view of one Russian expert on the Pazyryk finds, 'neither the colouring, nor the "horses (?)" iconography look Saka. Also the manner of weaving is quite different from what we know about Pazyryk, or Tarim Basin, or Hsuing-nu textiles. The only feature which seems to fit the Saka tradition is the thread structure, although in a complicated item like this there should be some complex plying (2-3 colours plied together of mixed fibres), and there is none evident from the photograph.'

Tekke Turkmen 'animal-tree' asmalyk
First half 19th century
1.50m x 0.86m (4'11" x 2'10")
Sotheby's New York
31 January 2014, Lot 82
Est: \$40,000-\$60,000, Sold: \$100,000

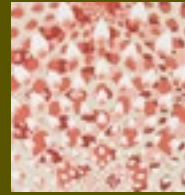


Exhibited at the city's Ethnographic Museum during the Hamburg ICOC in 1993 (Andrews et al., *Wie Blumen in der Wüste*, No.28), this Tekke 'animal-tree' asmalyk later made its way, as so many choice Turkmen pieces once did, to the Ben Fernandes Collection in Singapore. The elegance with which the borders are drawn is very attractive, spaciouly rendered and fully articulated. It is thought the design depicts a time-honoured theme of animals (or birds, in other cases) on either side of a tree. The presence of trees is usually associated with ancestor worship, an appropriate theme as a wedding trapping as the newly wedded couple will contribute to the lineage. The present lot has much in common with the superb example from the Robert Pinner collection, which sold to a leading German collector at Rippon Boswell in May 2004 for \$142,700 (HALI 136, p.115). The present lot included, just six pile asmalyks of this rare and desirable design type have come to auction since 1990, beginning at Skinner in Bolton (10 June 1990, \$44,000, HALI 52, p.183), followed by Sotheby's, London (16 October 1996, \$38,155, HALI 90, p.126), then Christie's London (1 May 2003, \$24,850, HALI 130, p.121). Most recent of all is the Bailey animal-tree asmalyk, which was sold at RB on May 31, 2014 for \$99,665. Auction appearances aside, the entire known corpus of these rare trappings probably amounts to no more than a baker's dozen.

Tekke Turkmen 'bird' asmalyk
Circa 1800
1.37m x 0.9m (4'6" x 2'11")
Christie's London, 8 April 2014, Lot 90
Est: £20,000-£30,000
Sold: £56,250 (\$93,300)



Powered by its forty-two right-facing birds, this asmalyk from the collection of the late Charles Damiano (only the fifth example of type to appear at auction since 1988) flew to the Near East immediately after the sale. It is the most densely-patterned of the known pieces in which the number of birds ranges from a low of twelve in each of the two asmalyks pictured by Robert Pinner and Michael Franses in *Turkoman Studies I*, 1980, figs.214 & 215 (Russian Ethnographic Museum, St Petersburg) to the present high of forty-two. It is one of nine pieces known in which all the birds face right; in a further seven the birds face left, and in four the birds face in alternate directions (the rarest category). Despite the density of its population, this is a well-drawn piece, comparable, as the catalogue points out, to the much-published asmalyk in the Museum of Oriental Art in Moscow (Moshkova, p.172, fig 61) which holds thirty birds facing right. Bird asmalyks are considered extremely desirable by the cognoscenti. While it is not the best of type, they are so rare that, based on historic prices, one would have thought this one might have far exceeded the rather reasonable estimate. Perhaps the somewhat dull red/brown ground colour counted against it. The best Tekke material always has a deep red in contrast to this slightly lacklustre, yet extremely old and rare, example.



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Central Asia

Salor Turkmen trapping (detail)

Circa 1800
0.81 m x 2.11 m (2' 8" x 6' 11")
Sotheby's New York
31 January 2014, Lot 78
Est: \$40,000–\$60,000, Sold: \$93,750



Consigned from the Ben Fernandes collection in Singapore, this Salor trapping, then in the collection of Dr Jon Thompson, was sold at SNY in December 1993 for \$51,750. Considered the zenith of Turkmen weaving, these large *darvaza gül kejebe* trappings reflect an old weaving tradition long pre-dating this lot. Both colour and condition are exactly what one would expect to see in such a weaving. The codification of patterning seen in these Salor artefacts apparently belies the notion of a truly nomadic production. The usual structure with a depressed warp suggests an urban or sedentary origin, but this has never presented an issue in the minds of the most experienced connoisseurs of the art form. The price, while strong, could have easily been more at another time in another place. Fourteen years ago, the appearance of sixteen examples at auction was tabulated in Robert Pinner's review of a trapping sold at Günther in Dresden on 4 March 2000 for \$48,000 (HALI 110, p.153). To those sixteen we can now add a further eight, including the most expensive ever, sold at Rippon Boswell in November 2011 for \$187,470 (HALI 171, p.126, where Pinner's listing is updated). The previous auction record was the \$148,000 paid at SNY in January 1990 for the two-gül trapping once in the Coury collection (Ulrich Schürmann, *Central-Asian Rugs*, pl.6; HALI 31, p.84; HALI 50, p.169).

Tekke Turkmen khalyk

First half 19th century
0.7 m x 0.4 m (2' 4" x 1' 4")
Rippon Boswell Wiesbaden
31 May 2014, Lot 127
Est: €10,000, Sold: €30,500 (\$41,527)

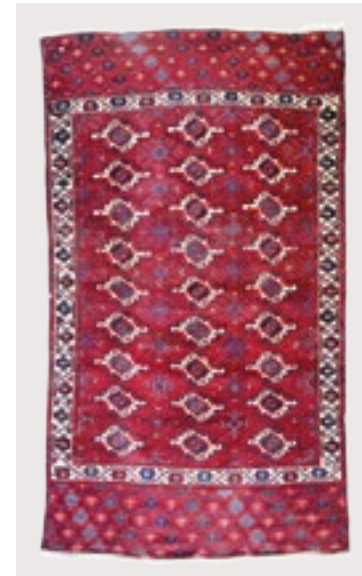


The 'curled leaf' motif on a white ground is the rarest of the designs found on Turkmen khalyks (thought to be decorative trappings for the breast of the camel that carries the *kejebe* or bridal litter in the Turkmen wedding procession). This example was consigned for sale by George Bailey, a former consultant to the carpet department at Christie's in New York and a veteran collector of choice Turkmen pieces. While not mentioned in Rippon Boswell's catalogue, a very closely comparable khalyk was published in John Eskenazi's *L'Arte del Tappeto Orientale*, 1983, p.365, pl.265, attributed to the Tekke. By 1990 it was in the John M. Douglass & Sue N. Peters collection, published as pl.84 in the second volume of their book *The Lost Language*, and also in the San Francisco ICOC exhibition catalogue *Oriental Rugs from Pacific Collections* (p.133, pl.111), after having undergone some restoration and acquired tassels. It was one of 163 pieces reported stolen in August 2004. Douglass attributed their khalyk to the Salor, based on its 'depressed warps and Senna knots'. The drawing of the Bailey khalyk, which was bought by an American collector, is more adventurous than the symmetrical pattern of the Douglass piece, and the

triangular central flap is unusually small. We should mention two other white-ground curled-leaf khalyks, but they are not really in the same league – Rippon Boswell, 11 May 1996, Lot 59, sold for \$10,710, from the collection of the late Thomas Kalman (HALI 88, p.145) described as 'not one of the success stories; the curled-leaf pattern is too cramped and boxy...' (also published by the late Hans Elmby, in his *Antique Turkmen Carpets IV*, 1998, No. 3); and, very similar to the preceding, Sotheby's, London, 12 October 1999, Lot 12. Unsurprisingly, given its rarity, the Bailey khalyk set a new auction record by a wide margin, the previous recorded high being \$21,155 for a khalyk with the uncommon 'cup' motif, at Rippon Boswell on 19 May 2007, Lot 109 (HALI 152, p.126), the review ending with the comment 'The price is totally justified and will be thought cheap in the future.' That khalyk is now with the German specialist collector Peter Hoffmeister (Elena Tsareva, *Turkmen Carpets, the Hoffmeister Collection*, pl.36), and is one of twelve known khalyks with the 'cup' motif.

Yomut Turkmen main carpet

Circa 1800
1.59 m x 2.79 m (5' 3" x 9' 2")
Austria Auction Company, Vienna
15 March 2014, Lot 124
Est: €50–€70,000, Sold: €54,900 (\$76,210)



Truly beautiful examples of Turkmen main carpets are few and far between, and this one is undervalued at the price paid. A rug of this design type would impress the uninitiated, and real connoisseurs of the art will recognise the good value in such a rug. The large primary göls are extremely well drawn, full and tall with perfectly symmetric diamonds in the centres. The secondary gül or medallion is delicate and rare while the border is a classic understated composition that perfectly complements the field. The element pattern is rare and colourful. What is there not to like about this rug? Absolutely nothing. For a masterpiece of Turkmen weaving in good condition and extremely pretty, the pricing will seem very reasonable as time goes on.

Central Asia

The Bernheimer Beshir Turkmen prayer rug

19th century
0.91 m x 1.29 m (3' 0" x 4' 3")
Christie's London, 8 April 2014, Lot 8
Est: £5,000–£7,000, Sold: £15,000 (\$24,870)



It is unprecedented as far we know to have so many important Beshir prayer rugs offered in two successive sales by the same auction house – three (lots 72–74) at Christie's in London on 8 October 2013, two of which were reviewed in HALI 178, p.136, and five more (the present rug and Lots 9, 10, 11 and 88) in this sale. The present rug, like the best examples of this genre in both sales, was bought by a Middle Eastern museum. It is unique and quite famous from its publications in Otto Bernheimer's *Alte Teppiche des 16–18 Jahrhunderts* (1959), pl.14; Schürmann's *Orientteppiche* (1965), p.72 and *Central-Asian Rugs* (1969) pl.46; and Spuhler, König & Volkmann's *Old Eastern Carpets* (1978) p.216/7. The design of undulating bands within the central panel is repeated in the spandrels. This unusual feature is related to a rug published in Ralph Kaffel's article 'Beshir Prayer Rugs' in HALI 151, p.77, fig.5. That one sold at Rippon Boswell on 10 November 1990 for \$32,9120 (HALI 55, p.166), when the price was considered 'a bargain in the present fevered atmosphere of enormous prices for special Turkoman weavings'. The catalogue caption cites the 'unusual small lobed head' of the present rug.

Bukhara saf fragment

Second half 19th century
2.09 m x 1.47 m (6' 10" x 4' 10")
Rippon Boswell Wiesbaden
31 May 2014, Lot 96
Est: €65,000, Sold: €122,000 (\$166,110)



While there are a few single-row Middle Amu Darya region ('Beshir') safs, this is a very different creature. At least three more substantial fragments from the same carpet are known, two of them (joined) in the Magaki Attari Mosque Museum, Bukhara (Moshkova/O'Bannon, *Carpets of the People of Central Asia*, 1996, cover and fig.129), and a third published in Bausback's 75th anniversary catalogue (2000, p.192). According to O'Bannon, quoting the curator of the MAM, the Bukhara section comes from a carpet ordered in 1874 by Emir Muzaffar (r.1860–1885) for the city's Bala Hauz Mosque. Said to have measured a highly improbable 36 x 18 metres, it was woven in Bukhara city by eighteen Turkmen (Ersari?) from Charjui and two Uzbeks from nearby Shakhkrikhan, and took a year to complete. Then, in the 1920s, after the Bolshevik Revolution, it was cut into pieces by 'the populace' and dispersed. RB's fragment appears to come from the upper register of niches seen on the MAM section, while Bausback's is from the lower register. There are also at least two more sections of a very similar but not identical saf, which in all likelihood pre-dates the MAM, Bausback and RB fragments. Among other differences, on the older

fragments the mihrab outlines have a saw-tooth 'fringe' absent from the Bukharan pieces, the individual niches are separated by a Persianate vine-meander border rather than a simple chevron pattern, and the vertical chevrons point down rather than up. The first of these fragments was sold at SLO in April 1998 for \$94,355 (HALI 99, pp.127–28). Its ground is very worn and is 'white' only by courtesy. It also looks substantially older than the Bukharan fragments, and has design features in common with the Dudin white-ground prayer rug in the Russian Ethnographic Museum (HALI 27, 1985, p.14). The second was pieced together from three quite possibly once contiguous fragments, but each having lived a very different life since the carpet was dismembered. It fetched \$27,730 at Christie's in London in October 2002 (HALI 126, p.135). Though judgements are inevitably affected by condition, it seems likely that the design of the Bukhara carpet copied that of an older saf. The discovery of remnants of a second large saf, very similar to that from the Bukhara mosque, adds weight to the idea that, rather than having been designed for a particular building, both are examples of a traditional mosque furnishing.

Beshir Turkmen prayer rug

Mid-19th century
1.10 m x 1.83 m (3' 7" x 6' 0")
Christie's London, 8 April 2014, Lot 88
Est: £5,000–£7,000, Sold: £10,000 (\$16,585)



These days, when provenance is deemed to be of paramount importance in auction sales, it is odd that Christie's missed the very important prior provenance of the present rug from the Charles Damiano collection. One of the best examples in its group, it was first published in colour facing page 114 in Major Hartley Clarke's classic *Bokhara, Turkoman and Afghan Rugs* (London 1922). Major Clarke estimated the rug's age as 'about 150 years old', which translates to around 1770, overdating the rug by about seventy-five years. Clarke describes it as 'a true Bokhara prayer rug... and, as will be seen, is not one that would be classified as Bokhara by the general public or by dealers, rather it would probably be called a Beshir'. The rug is included in Ralph Kaffel's online addendum to his 'Beshir Prayer Rugs' article in HALI 151 as Type D, 3:24. Christie's catalogue lists a rug in Eberhart Herrmann's *Von Ushak bis Yarkand*, pl.97, as comparable, which was previously advertised by Joseph Fell of Chicago on p.26 of the first issue of HALI in 1978 (addendum No.3:34).

India

Ura Tube suzani

Mid-19th century
1.68 m x 2.09 m (5'6" x 6'10")
Austria Auction Company, Vienna
15 March 2014, Lot 197
Est: €10-€12,000, Sold: €12,200 (\$16,935)



There seems to be no other known Ura Tube suzani with this field design. It is covered with a lattice of cusped leaves, each section enclosing a different spray of flowers, seed pods, berries or tiny birds. Some flowers are realistic, like the irises, others are exotic inventions of the local imagination and design lexicon. The main border has a graceful in-and-out repeat of large semicircular flowers, each within a circle of leaves and linked by a curved stem. Scattered between them are different exotic fruit and flowers, including irises, which appear on embroideries from several areas. However, the circular and semicircular, raspberry-red flowers with serrated petals and the encircling leaves are characteristic of the suzanis attributed to Ura Tube, in the east of the region. The long, pointed seed pods, some with colourful stripes or zig-zags, are more typical of Shahrissyabz-region suzani attributed to the Lakai. The floral sprays and the cusped grid in the field recall the lattice and flowering shrub carpets of Mughal India. Another Ura Tube suzani, with details linking it to this one, is in Herrmann's *SOT IV* (1982, No.96), where its similarity to a Mughal fragment in the MMA is noted (Dimand & Mailey, 1973, fig.137). The Museum fur Volkerkunde, Berlin, has a Rickmers Collection Ura Tube suzani with a related border design and similar flowers, seed pods and berries, but the field is different (Kalter & Pavaloi, 1995, fig.546).

Mughal carpet fragment (detail)

Circa 1650
1.52 m x 0.51 m (5'0" x 1'8")
Bonhams London
8 April 2014, Lot 216
Est: £35-£40,000, Sold: £40,000 (\$67,960)



These two small damaged fragments from the lower right hand corner of a 'Jaipur-type' Mughal floral carpet sold for an extraordinary price. Realistically, what are such remnants worth? An object's value is always determined by what someone is willing to pay; so, expensive as these two small pieces seem, the price must be accepted as representative of today's booming salerooms in a few select categories. For the moment, anything well drawn, finely woven, and 17th-century north Indian Mughal seems to be what wealthy collectors most want. The last comparable example with the same type of design and structure was another small corner fragment, sold at CLO on 24 April 2012 for \$5,635 (HALI 172, p.121). Bonhams described its fragments as parts of a 'shaped carpet'. That is possible, but both shaped and rectangular Mughal 'Jaipur-type' floral carpets of the second half of the 17th century are known to display identical designs and structures. This example, with its multi-stranded white cotton warps, 1st and 3rd buff to pink cotton wefts, middle red silk weft, wool pile and average knot count, is perhaps the missing lower-right-hand corner of the large, damaged and heavily reconstructed Lady Baillie 'shaped' carpet (now rectangular with its shaped parts cut off) sold by SLO, 20 September 2006, Lot 40, for \$257,660 (HALI 149, p.105). That large amalgam was a bargain compared to the CLO shaped fragment or the present lot, possibly all fragments of the same rug!

Xinjiang & Tibet

Khotan carpet

18th-19th century
1.78 m x 3.76 m (5'10" x 12'4")
Henry's Mutterstadt
1 June 2014, Lot 5
Est: €15,000, Sold: €61,000 (\$82,950)



Catalogued as Yarkand, this is probably a Khotan rug. Most dealers, auctioneers and collectors like to call all Tarim Basin carpets with three large disc medallions 'Yarkand', perhaps because it sounds better and more expensive. In fact, good carpets of both types are beautiful and important. The main differences are: the border colour - Khotan red and yellow, Yarkand red and light green; the disc medallions - Khotan square with round corners, Yarkand perfect circles; the field - Khotans may have one or more other small motifs, Yarkands only have three medallions; the corners - Khotan weavers did not attempt a perfect horizontal to vertical transition, Yarkand carpets always have a perfect border corner solution; finally, Khotan carpets have wefts which are either brownish wool or natural coloured cotton, whereas the wefts of Yarkand carpets are of light blue cotton and there is notable warp depression. So while Yarkand and Khotan carpets look very much alike to the casual observer and are approximately the same size, there are distinct differences.

Tibetan tiger rug

Early 20th century
1.05 m x 1.65 m (3'5" x 5'5")
Sotheby's London
5 March 2014, Lot 41
Est: £2,000-£3,000, Sold: £13,750 (\$23,375)



SLO's '1000 Ways of Seeing: The Private Collection of the late Stanley J. Seeger', held over two days in early March 2014, offered a thousand widely varying items from all areas of the applied arts and decorative arts. Self-evidently the work of an imaginative and voracious accumulator, the collection of many rugs and textiles ranged from a worn, reduced and patch-worked classical Esfahan fragment (Lot 35, \$16,990) via a C.F.A. Voysey Donegal 'Donnemara' carpet (Lot 576, \$73,150) and a large open-field purple silk 'Lakai' suzani (Lot 66, \$45,980), to sixteen assorted Tibetan rugs and mats, of which this 'flayed-skin' tiger rug was the most expensive. It set what looks like a new record for a Tibetan tiger rug at auction, though there are so few in our files that one cannot make too much of that. A few weeks later, in April 2014, \$22,805, just short of the new record, was paid for an abstract tiger rug from the Lehmann-Barenklau Collection at CLO.

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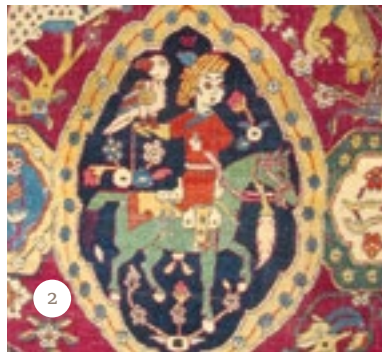
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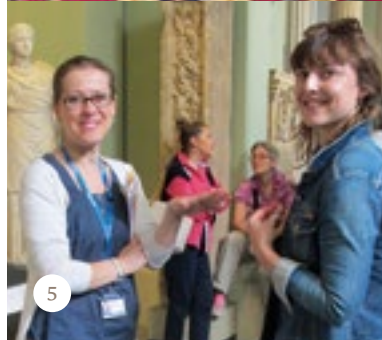
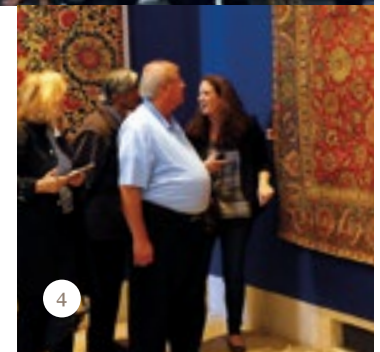
For ten days in mid June, participants from around the world enjoyed curated visits to public and private collections in England and Scotland. Important rugs and textiles, unexpected sunshine and verdant gardens, all made for a quintessentially British affair

1 A day at the Clothworkers' Centre at Blythe House at Olympia, west London looking at a selection from the Victoria & Albert Museum's vast antique textile and carpet collection. Participants from Japan, Australia, USA, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, France and Azerbaijan lined up along the length of a little-known 'Sanguszko' carpet from the V&A newly accessible stores



2 Cartouche detail from a late-16th-century Safavid Persian 'Sanguszko' carpet, Boughton

3 Hakan Karar and Steven Cohen examine a Mughal pashmina pile fragment, V&A



5 Dr Francesca Leoni, Yusef Jameel Curator of Islamic Art at Oxford's Ashmolean Museum with HALI's Rachel Meek

6 Roger Vlitos, curator of the Faringdon Collection, guides the tour around the Four Seasons Garden at Buscot Park in Oxfordshire



7 The pink sandstone of Drumlanrig Castle in the Scottish Borders

8 Angela Rutherford and Gisela Schneider with Dr Julia Nicholson of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford

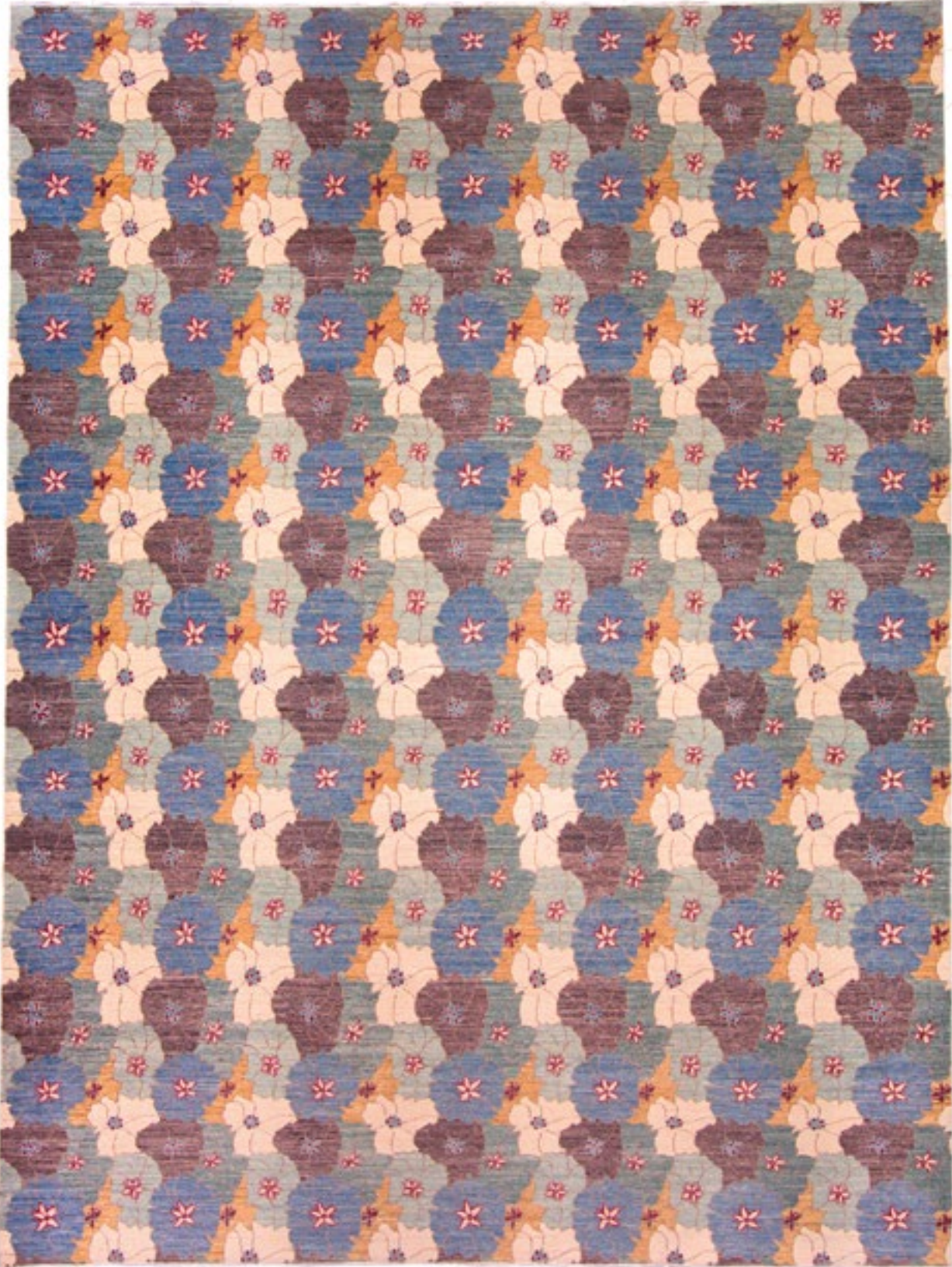


9 Elena Tsareva at Boughton House, Northamptonshire



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