

THE SULTAN'S GARDEN
THE BLOSSOMING OF OTTOMAN ART • DENNY & KRODY

THE SULTAN'S GARDEN



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THE BLOSSOMING OF OTTOMAN ART

Walter B. Denny and Sumru Belger Krody



The Textile Museum
Washington, D.C.

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The Sultan’s Garden: The Blossoming of Ottoman Art

By Walter B. Denny and Sumru Belger Krody

First published on the occasion of the exhibition ‘The Sultan’s Garden: The Blossoming of Ottoman Art’ at The Textile Museum, Washington, D.C., September 21, 2012 – March 10, 2013

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Frontispiece: Detail of Plate 29
Embroidered cover
Istanbul, mid- to late 17th century
Private Collection
222 × 131 cm (87¼ × 51½ inches)

Cover: Detail of Plate 4
Floral *serenk* fragment from a costume
Probably Istanbul, late 16th century
The Textile Museum 1.57
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1951
126.5 × 69 cm (49¼ × 27¼ inches)

The Textile Museum

Created and prized by cultures around the world for millennia, textiles are beautiful works of art that tell us stories about the people who made them. The Textile Museum expands public knowledge and appreciation—locally, nationally, and internationally—of the artistic merits and cultural importance of the world's textiles, through scholarship, exhibitions, and educational programs. As the foremost institution of its kind in the Western Hemisphere, The Textile Museum serves as a valuable resource for those who seek information on the textile arts and non-Western cultures.

The Textile Museum is a private non-profit institution, established in 1925 by collector and connoisseur George Hewitt Myers in Washington, D.C.'s historic Dupont-Kalorama neighborhood in two historic buildings—the founder's family home, designed in 1913 by John Russell Pope, and an adjacent building designed by Waddy Wood in 1908.

In 2014, The Textile Museum will move to The George Washington University's Foggy Bottom campus to become a cornerstone of the new George Washington University Museum. This unprecedented affiliation will allow The Textile Museum to expand its rich tradition of scholarship, education, and fostering cultural understanding. The downtown location offers increased accessibility and gallery space, while a conservation and collections resource center on GWU's Virginia Science and Technology Campus will enable the museum collection to continue to grow.

The Textile Museum's unparalleled collections include 19,000 textiles and carpets that date from 3,000 BCE to the present. The holdings of Oriental carpets and of pre-Columbian Peruvian, Islamic, and Late Antique textiles are among the finest in the world. The Museum also has significant holdings of the textiles of India, Southeast Asia, China, and Africa, as well as nineteenth- and twentieth-century textiles made by the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

Three to five thematic exhibitions are presented at The Textile Museum annually. These primarily showcase the permanent collections, but also include other textile arts drawn from a variety of public and private holdings.

Exhibitions are designed to both present textiles as art, and to place them in context by exploring the religious, social, historical, artistic,



fig. 1

economic, and ecological aspects of the cultures in which they were created. The Textile Museum strives to bring new scholarship to the field of textile studies with these exhibitions and related catalogs.

The Textile Museum serves as a place of learning for students from grade school to graduate school, as well as for the public at large. The 20,000-volume Arthur D. Jenkins Library offers artistic, cultural, historical, and technical information related to the textiles. Programs such as the annual Fall Symposium bring together academics and experts from across the world to address the importance of the textile arts. This work will continue to expand as the Museum moves to its new home and finds new ways to reach a larger audience.



fig. 2

Figure 1. The Textile Museum gardens. Photograph by Vincent Gallegos.

Figure 2. 'Colors of the Oasis', on view at The Textile Museum in 2010. Photograph by Kevin Allen.

Supporters

The Textile Museum wishes to thank the following supporters whose generosity made the realization of *The Sultan's Garden: The Blossoming of Ottoman Art* possible:



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Foreword

Tulips, carnations, hyacinths and rosebuds unequivocally symbolize Turkish art today. Together with pomegranates, honeysuckle and flowering fruit trees, these flowers formed a pictorial vocabulary integral to classical Turkish style. They bequeathed a long and beautiful artistic legacy in myriad art forms, including textiles. *The Sultan's Garden: The Blossoming of Ottoman Art* examines the sudden emergence of this floral style in the royal design workshop (*nakkashane*) in Istanbul in the mid-sixteenth century and its subsequent adoption and adaptation throughout the Ottoman Empire. Key to this emergence was the chief designer of the court, Kara Memi, who is considered to be the founder of this new naturalistic style.

Encouraged by Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, Kara Memi's new style seems to have been deliberately fostered as a distinctively Ottoman alternative to the 'international' style that had prevailed up to that time. The new repertoire of familiar and recognizable garden flowers was quick to appear in all the major mediums patronized by the court: manuscript illumination, ceramic and stone architectural decorations, ceramic wares, metal-ware, carpets, woven and embroidered silk textiles. Artists across the Ottoman Empire, as well as beyond its borders, embraced the style with their own interpretations.

The Sultan's Garden concentrates on the floral style in the realm of carpets and textiles, tracing it from its inception through its evolution over centuries. It is written on the occasion of the exhibition of the same name at The Textile Museum in Washington, DC from September 21, 2012 to March 10, 2013. Some sixty carpets, silks and embroideries will be on view, drawing primarily from The Textile Museum's own rich holdings, but also including pieces on loan from a select group of private collectors and other institutions. These textile artworks, of the highest importance and beauty, tell the story of the Ottoman floral style's birth and its adoption and adaptation across time and geographical areas.

The story of the Ottoman floral style has unexpected relevance in today's world. Its creation can be viewed as an early example of a phenomenon that is prevalent in commercial enterprise today: the concept of 'branding' an entity in order to achieve instant recognition and loyalty. This book seeks to demonstrate how the Ottomans found a pictorial voice to express their cultural identity, thus creating a brand

that would persist for centuries. The Ottoman brand suffuses even contemporary consciousness, for instance in the Turkish Ministry of Tourism use of the tulip in its current logo.

This publication comes at an important time in The Textile Museum's history as we prepare to move to a new home at The George Washington University, as a cornerstone of a new museum facility. *The Sultan's Garden* is a magnificent contribution to The Textile Museum's established tradition of scholarship, education and art. Like the Ottoman floral style that reached local, national and international audiences in a lasting legacy, The Textile Museum's affiliation with The George Washington University will result in wide-reaching influence in advancing textile art knowledge and appreciation.

Walter Denny and Sumru Krody brilliantly conceived *The Sultan's Garden*. Their creativity and collective dedication as collaborators, authors and co-curators brought the initial thematic concepts to this splendid completion. All associated with The Textile Museum are beneficiaries of their accomplishments; we are indebted to them both, and owe them tremendous thanks. In addition, Walter Denny, The Textile Museum's Charles Grant Ellis Research Associate, is the 2012 recipient of the George Hewitt Myers Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Textile Arts. With the Myers Award being widely recognized as the highest honor in the field of textile arts, the Museum is proud of its long association with Professor Denny.

The Textile Museum is grateful to the many individual benefactors who have generously enabled the realization of the publication, exhibition and related educational programming for *The Sultan's Garden*. We especially acknowledge The Coby Foundation, Ltd. and Art Mentor Foundation Lucerne for their meaningful contributions to this project. Thank you to all those whose support allowed *The Sultan's Garden* to blossom.

Bruce P. Baganz and Eliza Ward
The Textile Museum, 2012

Introduction

Ottoman art reflects the wealth, abundance, and influence of an Empire that spanned seven centuries and at its height, three continents. In these pages we reveal the story of a unique phenomenon in the history of Islamic art—the sudden emergence of a new naturalistic genre in Ottoman art known as the floral style. We chronicle how, in the middle of the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire branded itself through the establishment of a new aesthetic. We unravel the history of this floral style from its sudden appearance in the 1550s to its impact on Turkish art in later centuries. We also explore the means of its diffusion into the village and nomadic artistic traditions of Anatolia, and examine to what extent the visual vocabulary of the Ottoman floral style retained the symbolic and cultural connotations of its original ‘high’ court culture and of its environs.

Beginning in the mid-sixteenth century, stylized tulips, carnations, hyacinths, honeysuckle and roses began to appear in all artistic media produced by the Ottoman court and court-related manufactories. Whether present in architecture, or on ceramics, textiles and carpets, this design vocabulary was synonymous with the power and influence of the Sultan. Not only was the impact of this distinctive branding felt in the Ottoman world of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but the style has also had a lasting impact over the past four centuries on the later Ottoman Empire, modern Turkey, the broader Islamic world and Europe.

Incredibly, the first manifestations of this new style can be reliably attributed to a single artist working in the royal design workshop of Istanbul, Kara Memi. First as a staff artist, then as head of the group of Turkish-speaking artists known as the *Rumiyân*, and finally as chief court designer during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent (1520-1566), he is believed to have added to the established repertoire of Persian-influenced designs previously used in court art, and to have introduced a new design style inspired by forms found in nature. In these pages, we unveil the story of his influence and trace the impact of Ottoman floral style through the textile arts—some of the most luxurious and technically complex products of the Empire. These floral forms created a lasting visual vocabulary that is integral to classical Turkish art, and eventually became iconic symbols of the Ottoman

Empire. Thus, the floral style became a means by which Ottoman culture found a pictorial voice through which to express its identity, in the process creating a brand that would persist for centuries.

Today, the tulip continues to symbolize Turkey. In the early twenty-first century, there is widespread recognition of the Ottoman floral style; a tulip serves as the logo of the country’s Ministry of Tourism and of the city of Istanbul. It is virtually impossible to visit a Turkish city and not to encounter art and craft objects decorated with floral images, such as the modern cushion cover or *yastık* illustrated here (Figure 1), which is embroidered with designs reminiscent of its seventeenth-century precursors.

It is extremely difficult, within the confines of a single book, to discuss fully the fascinating and varied events that shaped the development and subsequent impact of the floral style that changed Ottoman art forever and defines Turkish art to this day. Here we have only given a glimpse of the complex picture of diverse political, cultural, and artistic influences and traditions that created an environment ripe for these masterpieces to spring forth. We hope that the fresh perspectives of this catalogue and exhibition will not only inspire new insights, but also bring about new starting points for future scholarship.

The book *The Sultan’s Garden*, as well as the eponymous exhibition at The Textile Museum, would not have been possible without the enthusiasm and support of many individuals, institutions, and foundations. Particular thanks are due to the lenders whose generous co-operation made this exhibition possible: Marilyn Denny, Gerard Paquin, Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf, and an anonymous private collection. In addition to sharing their collections, they offered valuable advice and insight about their textiles.

Other friends and colleagues have opened doors, shared their collections and helped in other ways, especially: Sheila Canby, Florica Zaharia, Janina Poskrobko, and the staff of the Antonio Ratti Center at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Zoe Perkins at the St Louis Art Museum; and Oya Bain of the Assembly of Turkish American Associations and Dr. Elizabeth Shelton of the American Friends of Turkey. All of those colleagues who read parts of the manuscript and

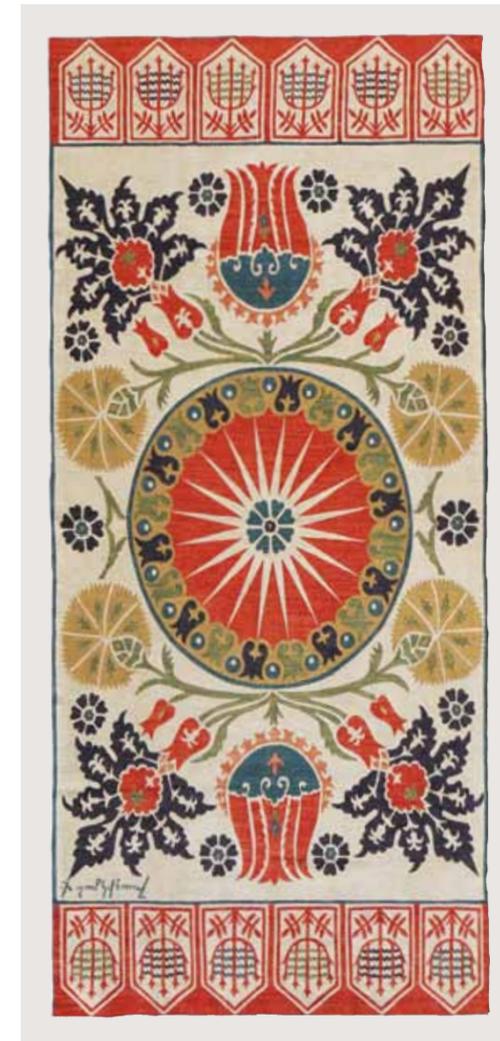


fig. 1

Figure 1. Embroidered *yastık* with a contemporary interpretation of 16th–17th century Ottoman floral designs. 21st century, private collection.

made useful comments and suggestions have our heartfelt thanks. Generous support from the Institute of Turkish Studies allowed us to purchase necessary research material for the Museum’s Arthur D. Jenkins Library.

We would also like to extend our thanks to the staff of the Embassy of Turkey, and especially to His Excellency the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey, Namık Tan and Mrs. Tan, who supported development and implementation of the exhibition and related programs.

We are grateful to the Board of Trustees and staff of The Textile Museum for their encouragement, support, collegiality, and their foresight in recognizing the need for a major exhibition and a substantial publication on the subject, and for committing the necessary resources to the project. From the earliest conception of this exhibition and book, we have received support and encouragement from Bruce P. Baganz, President of the Board of Trustees. We are indebted to him for understanding the importance of this research and for championing the book and exhibition. We are especially indebted to the Interim Director of The Textile Museum, W. Richard West, Jr. and the former Director, Maryclaire Ramsey, for their unceasing trust and support for the project.

Our gratitude too to our many colleagues at The Textile Museum. Development Manager Eliza Ward’s commitment to seeking and securing funding helped make *The Sultan’s Garden* a reality. We are also thankful to Ingrid Faulkerson, Development Manager, Special Events, Emily Johnson, Development Assistant, and Ana Kiss, Special Assistant to the Director, for assisting to secure necessary funds for these projects. Without the support of The Textile Museum’s Chief Financial/Administrative Officer, Douglas Maas, neither exhibition nor this book would have proceeded to its final stage. We were fortunate to have the unflagging assistance of Katy Uravitch, former Exhibition Co-ordinator of The Textile Museum, who juggled a multitude of exhibition and publication tasks with infinite energy and attention to detail. During the research, development, and implementation of the exhibition and the book, we were ably assisted by a succession of Eastern Hemisphere Curatorial Interns: Ashley Dimming, Jan Letowski, Zeynep Simavi, Natalie Jones, Rebecca McCormick, and Yve

The Authors

Colby, Katy Clune, Communications and Marketing Manager, and Claire Blaustein, Communications and Marketing Assistant, tirelessly spread excitement about the exhibition and the book, and helped in various other ways. For photography, and for the exhibition, the textiles were prepared, mounted, and physically installed by Maria Fusco and Angela Duckwell, Associate Conservators for the Collections at The Textile Museum’s Conservation Department, Anne Ennes, former Associate Conservator, and Esther Méthé, Chief Conservator/ Margaret Wing Dodge Chair of Conservation. The design and the preparation of the galleries for the exhibition were done with extraordinary care, patience, and good humor by Richard Timpson, Director of Facilities and Exhibition Production, Douglas Anderson, Exhibition Production and Maintenance Technician, and Frank Petty, Facilities Assistant. The graphics for the exhibition were developed with characteristic flair by Studio A and Charles Segal. Renée Comet’s photographs greatly contribute to making a long-term record of these beautiful textiles, as do Don Tuttle’s images of pieces on loan from the private collections.

Many people worked tirelessly to edit and produce the catalogue. We are especially indebted to Daniel Shaffer of Hali Publications in London for meeting the challenges presented by our project and creating a seamless whole; the accomplished eye of Misha Anikst who created the elegant design, and our sincere thanks also to Sebastian Ghandchi who brought his aesthetic sensibility to the book’s production and design, enhancing the final appearance of the publication.

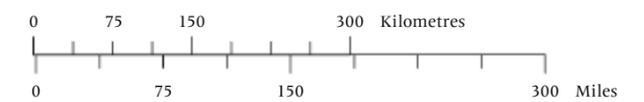
To all those who helped bring our project to its successful conclusion we extend our deepest gratitude.

Walter B. Denny	Sumru Belger Krody
Professor of Art History	Senior Curator,
University of Massachusetts	Eastern Hemisphere Collections
at Amherst	The Textile Museum

Walter B. Denny is Charles Grant Ellis Research Associate in Oriental Carpets at The Textile Museum and Professor of Art History at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Among his recent publications are *Ipek: Imperial Ottoman Silks and Velvets* (2001) in collaboration with Nurhan Atasoy, Louise Mackie and Hulya Tezcan, and *Iznik: The Artistry of Ottoman Ceramics* (2004). He is one of the contributors to the recent volume of *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (2011).

Sumru Belger Krody is Senior Curator of Eastern Hemisphere Collections at The Textile Museum. Among her recent publications are *Colors of the Oasis: Central Asian Ikats* (2010) in collaboration with Feza Çakmut, Mary M. Dusenbury, Kate Fitz Gibbon, Andrew Hale, Sayera Makhkamova, and Susan Meller; *Harpies, Mermaids, and Tulips: Embroidery of the Greek Islands and Epirus Region* (2006); and *Flowers of Silk and Gold: Four Centuries of Ottoman Embroidery* (2000).

Walter B. Denny and Sumru Belger Krody have previously collaborated on The Textile Museum exhibition ‘The Classical Tradition in Anatolian Carpets’ (2002) and its eponymous book.





The Discovery of the Ottoman Floral Style

During the past six decades something called ‘Ottoman court style’ has emerged both in art historical scholarship and in the popular imagination, given tangible form through publications and museum exhibitions, through tourism and its promotion, and through the rising popularity of Ottoman art on the international art market.

What many have termed the ‘classical’ Ottoman court style is characterized above all by a vocabulary of highly distinctive stylized yet easily recognizable garden flowers – in particular tulips, carnations, hyacinths, rosebuds, and honeysuckle – that are frequently depicted in virtually all artistic media produced in the Ottoman Empire after the middle of the sixteenth century.

The great pioneers of early scholarship in this field faced many challenges, not least the prior attribution of many of the greatest works of Ottoman Turkish art to other, non-Ottoman places, peoples and patrons. The first generation of Turkish art historians working under the Republic, including Celal Esad Arseven and Tahsin Öz, largely published their work in Turkey, with only a few books translated into French or English.¹

Outside Turkey, as late as the 1950s the majority of Ottoman Turkish ceramics produced at İznik were commonly misattributed to Rhodes, Damascus, Istanbul, and other locations. Turkish historical paintings and court designs were virtually unknown either at home or abroad, and scholarly assessments of Turkish architecture were sometimes prone to simplistic and invidious comparisons of the great mosques of Istanbul with the ancient Byzantine church of Hagia Sophia.

Today, after a half-century of extraordinary art historical discoveries, we have a much clearer idea of the development of the Ottoman court style in Istanbul, based on a wealth of firmly dateable works of art and extensive written documentation that has come to light in the vast Ottoman archives.

The late fifteenth-century court style under Sultan Mehmed II (r.1452–1480) and his successors Sultan Bayezid II (r.1480–1504) and Selim I (r.1504–1520), with its close ties to Timurid Herat, Türkmen Tabriz, and to a lesser extent to Mamluk Cairo, forms part of a widespread ‘international style’ of the period, in which *chinoiserie* elements such as stylized lotus palmettes on spiraling vines, together with the extensive use of split-leaf *rumi* arabesques and geometric

patterns, were employed from Khurasan and Central Asia to the Eastern Mediterranean. Careful research utilizing dated or dateable book-bindings, ceramic tile decorations, and workshop albums has established the parameters of this style and even given us the name of one of its chief practitioners, the Istanbul artist called Baba Nakkaş – ‘Father Designer.’²

During the decade after the accession of Süleyman I (r.1520–1566), the court design workshops in Istanbul were the scene of rapid stylistic change and new experiments in design. The most significant figure of this time was the émigré artist Shah Kulu, who arrived in the Empire from Tabriz in the 1520s. The style associated with this great artist, today termed the *saz* style after a mythical enchanted forest, or as the *hatayi* or *Cathayan* style because of its debt to Chinese inspiration, employed a repertoire of highly calligraphic sinuous leaves, elaborate imaginary floral palmettes, and often included Chinese fauna such as dragons, phoenixes, *qi’lin* (a mythical antelope with flames springing from its shoulders and haunches), and waterfowl.³ The rapid growth of the *nakkaşhane* or court design atelier during this period saw its eventual organization into two parts under the overall administration of Shah Kulu. One of these was known as the department of the *Rumiyân*, or those from Anatolia, and the other as the department of the *Acemân*, literally ‘of the Persians’ but apparently composed of artists from many different origins who were not Anatolian in heritage.⁴

Surviving registers with the names of artists and their salaries are a godsend to those who study this period of the development of Ottoman art. They were published in late Ottoman times by the scholar Ahmet Refik and later studied in more detail by Rifki Melûl Meriç.⁵ In them we see the emergence in the *Rumiyân* of a young artist who is eventually known by the nickname Kara Memi, dark-skinned Mehmed, who eventually became head of the *Rumiyân* and then, after the death or retirement of Shah Kulu, overall director of the *nakkaşhane*. The accomplishments of the *nakkaşhane* under Süleyman I between 1540 and 1566 established the basis of the Ottoman classical court style that was to flourish under Sultans Selim II (r.1566–1572), Murad III (r.1572–1595), Mehmed III (r.1595–1603), and their successors throughout the seventeenth century, and that was subject to periodic revivals in the subsequent centuries as well.⁶



fig. 1

As early as the 1960s some scholars speculated that this bipartite division of the design atelier may have reflected not only the origins or language of the artists themselves, but also a difference in the style practiced by the two departments. The discovery in the Istanbul University Library of an illuminated manuscript of the *Divan*, or collected poems of Sultan Süleyman I, who wrote poetry under the pen name Muhibbî, tends to confirm this early conjecture. The manuscript bears a colophon dated 1566, but its true importance lies in its illuminations of stylized tulips and carnations (Figure 1), which not only are an early dateable appearance of the Ottoman floral style, but also bear the signature of the artist who created them, Kara Memî.⁷

How do we explain this sudden appearance in the court design atelier of a new form of manuscript illumination and a new style of decoration consisting of easily recognizable garden flowers? The age-old fascination with flowers manifested in Turkish, specifically Ottoman, culture has long been noted by outsiders. The sixteenth-century European ambassador Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, one of the most appealingly modern and objective writers of his time, observed an abundance of flowers in eastern Thrace:

As we passed through these districts we were presented with large nosegays of flowers, the narcissus, the hyacinth, and the tulipan (as the Turks call this last).⁸

Later, he observes:

The Turks are passionately fond of flowers, and though somewhat parsimonious in other matters, they do not hesitate to give several aspres for a choice blossom.⁹

Visiting Turkey between 1709 and 1717 with her husband, the British Ambassador, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, one of the greatest English writers of her generation and a perceptive, balanced and intelligent observer of Ottoman life, wrote that in Ottoman society, flowers sent as gifts conveyed an entire lover's language of meaning. For example, the gift of a 'caremfil' (*karanfil*, that is a carnation, which in Lady Mary's time was called a clove in English), meant: "you are as slender as this clove." A rosebud conveyed the meaning: "I have long lov'd you and you have not known it." And the inclusion of a *pul* or jonquil in a bouquet carried the message: "have pity on my passion."¹⁰ She describes the interior of an Ottoman *konak* (mansion) in which the ceilings are decorated with paintings showing baskets of flowers.¹¹

Figure 1. Page from a manuscript of the *Divan* of Muhibbi, 1566, illuminations by Kara Memî; ink and opaque watercolors on sized paper, Istanbul University Library, T. 5467, folio 369b

Figure 2. Detail, portrait of Sultan Mehmed II Fatih, circa 1460, attributed to Sinan Bey; opaque watercolors and ink on sized paper, Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul, album Hazine 2153, folio 10A

Long before the emergence of the Ottoman floral style in the mid-sixteenth century, flowers and flower gardens were a deeply embedded feature of high Ottoman culture. A famous portrait of Sultan Mehmed II, conqueror of Constantinople, probably by the Ottoman court artist Sinan Bey in the later fifteenth century, shows the ruler seated and holding not a weapon or other symbol of sovereign might, but a single rose (Figure 2). In fact, some of the emblematic garden flowers long associated with the Ottomans appear to have been brought west during early migrations of Turkic peoples. The tulip, for instance, is native to Central Asia and was extensively hybridized in Ottoman times, as well as constituting an important commercial item traded to western European countries such as the United Provinces of the Netherlands.¹²

In her monumental work on Ottoman gardens, Dr. Nurhan Atasoy has documented the long fascination of Turkish artistic patrons with gardens, garden architecture, and the cultivation of flowers.¹³ Flowers appear in Ottoman literature as well, as symbols of the Beloved – *The*

Rose and the Nightingale – and as metaphors and symbols; for example, a red tulip may denote a red-turbaned *kızılbaş* Shi'ite from Iran.¹⁴ Under these historical circumstances, it is certainly no surprise that flowers emerged as major elements of Ottoman Turkish artistic style; in fact, one might even go so far as to wonder why the Ottoman floral style appeared in the visual arts as late as it did.

The approximate time of the emergence of the floral style in the middle of the sixteenth century has long been noted and its documentation was first established in some detail through the medium of ceramic tiles that adorn so many of the great, firmly dated Ottoman architectural monuments built or redecorated after 1550. Gradually the emergence of the new floral style was associated with Kara Memî, whose career is documented both in Ottoman records of court artists and by a few signed works. Some of these are intimately associated with the royal family, such as the aforementioned manuscript of the *Divan* of poems written by Süleyman I under his pen name Muhibbî.



fig. 2

The Emergence and Development of the Floral Style in Textiles

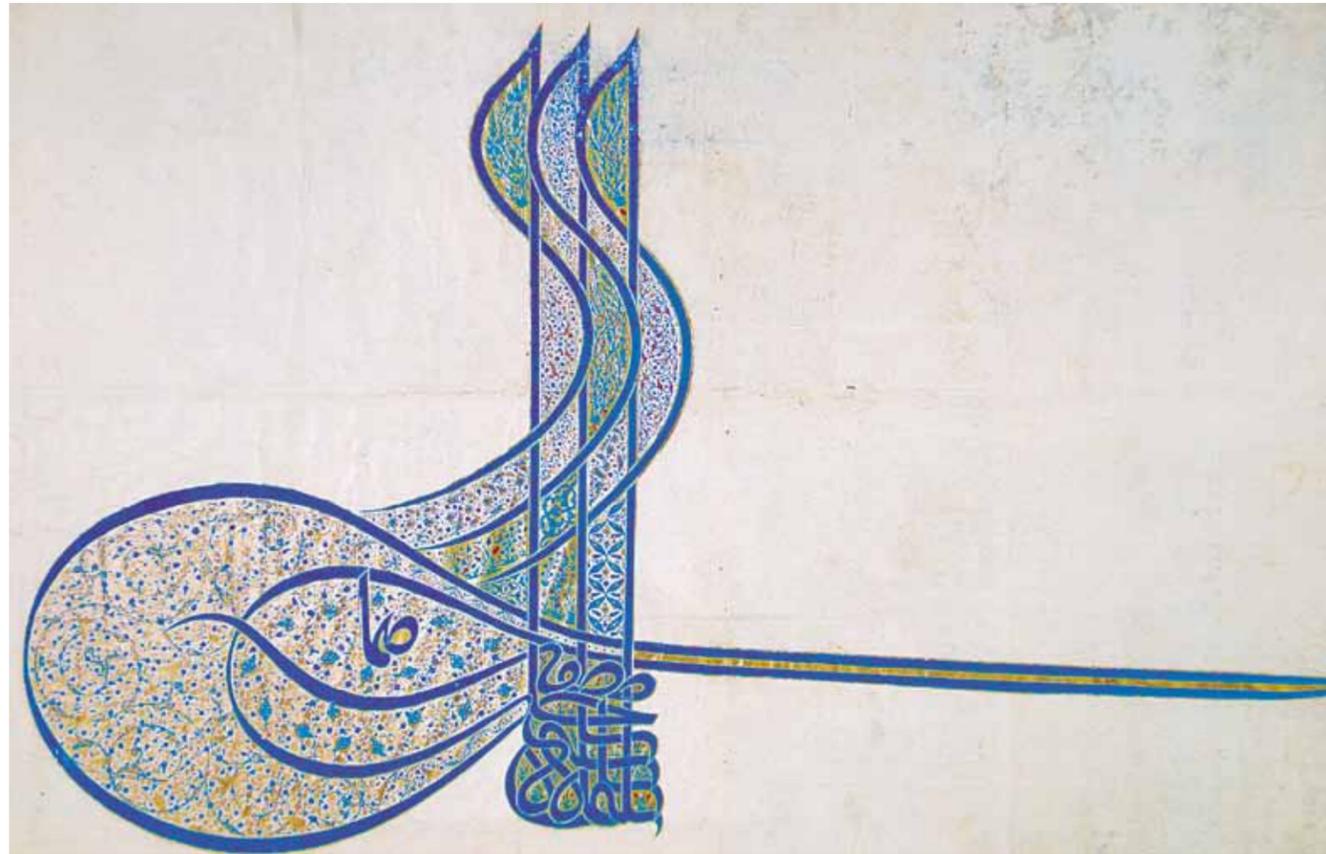


fig. 3

Kara Memi's career as illuminator reached its full maturity in decorations of a monumental *tuğra* (tughra) or stylized signature of Sultan Süleyman I created around 1566 (Figure 3). These calligraphic compositions were normally used as a kind of royal signature or seal at the top of scrolls containing royal edicts or correspondence, but this example, of gigantic size, was created for public display.¹⁵ In the interstices of the calligraphic elements we see a masterful and botanically accurate flower garden of tulips, carnations, hyacinths and rosebuds. Upon its initial appearance, the new floral style immediately gained popularity across a broad range of Ottoman artistic media, especially in the world-renowned İznik ceramics, for which artisans by the late 1550s had perfected a palette of brilliant colors, among them red and green, ideally suited to the depiction of flowers.¹⁶

Two major exhibitions demonstrated the emergence of a new understanding of how the Ottoman floral style diffused into many

different artistic media. One, drawing exclusively on Turkish museum collections, was entitled 'The Anatolian Civilizations'. Mounted in the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul in 1983 under the direction of Dr. Atasoy, the section devoted to the arts of the Ottoman world was the last of a tripartite chronological survey going back to prehistoric times. It brought to light from the storerooms of the great Turkish museums works of art in many different media that were hitherto unknown to the public and, in many cases, to scholars as well.¹⁷ The second exhibition, curated by Dr. Esin Atıl of the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington and entitled 'The Age of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent', was mounted in three venues in the United States in the years 1987–1988.¹⁸ It drew in important loans not only from museums in Turkey, but included masterpieces from the great North American and European collections as well.

Major encyclopedic surveys of different Ottoman artistic media, conducted over a period of several years by teams of scholars, have

Figure 3. *Tuğra* of Süleyman the Magnificent (and detail), circa 1555–1565, illuminated by Kara Memi; opaque water colors and ink on sized paper, Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul, EY 1400

Figure 4. *Portrait of a Lady*, circa 1460–65, by Antonio and Piero del Pollaiuolo; oil and tempera on panel, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 1614

further enhanced our understanding of the Ottoman floral style. Among these were two significant publication projects supported by a single Istanbul patron, the Türkiye Ekonomi Bankası; one on ceramics entitled *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*, the other on drawloom-woven textiles, *İpek: Imperial Ottoman Silks and Velvets*.¹⁹ Other publications shed light on the role of the floral style in manuscript illumination, embroidery, carpets, metalware, arms and armor, stone-carving, and the broad spectrum of architectural decoration. An exhibition entitled 'The Tulip: A Symbol of Two Cultures' was created with the collaboration of Turkish and Dutch institutions.²⁰ Graduate theses written for Turkish institutions of higher learning further explored both the floral style and its individual elements.

By the early twenty-first century there is widespread recognition of the Ottoman floral style; a tulip serves as the logo of the Turkish Ministry of Tourism and the city of Istanbul; Ottoman carnations, hyacinths and rosebuds are widely recognized artistic forms and, in the sincerest form of flattery, European artists and artisans have been borrowing Ottoman floral motifs for four and a half centuries.

What remains to be discussed, however, is an entire series of questions related both to the history of the floral style and the means and meaning of its diffusion. Why does it appear after 1550? Where does it come from? How did it diffuse into both village and nomadic artistic traditions of Anatolia, and why? To what extent does the visual vocabulary of the Ottoman floral style retain the symbolic and cultural connotations of its original 'high' court culture propagated by the *ehl-i hiref* – the salaried 'people of talent' who served the Ottoman court in Istanbul and its environs? And what is the process by which the court artistic traditions and styles of the Ottomans rapidly entered the arena of international commerce? Why did a style or artistic vocabulary that was known as being so distinctively Ottoman enter the material cultures of Hungary, Russia, Poland, Italy, Egypt, Syria, and then even England and France? To answer these questions we must first look back into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Fifteenth-century Textiles and Motifs

As long as there have been woven and embroidered fabrics, it is likely that floral motifs have been employed as decoration on such fabrics. In the history of art, there is no true parthenogenesis – everything comes from someplace. The eastern Mediterranean crucible out of which the Ottoman style emerged is replete with precursors of the Ottoman floral style.

Representations of woven fabrics in European paintings from the fourteenth century, collected and studied by Brigitte Klesse and recently by Lisa Monnas, abound in floral motifs, many of them directly derived from Chinese silks, which traveled westward over the so-called Silk Roads in the epoch of the *pax Mongolica*.²¹ The numerous representations of Italian velvets in Italian paintings, especially portraits of the fifteenth century, have recently been emphasized in a major exhibition of Italian portraiture shown in New York and Berlin.²² Looking carefully at the lavish fabrics that clothe these Renaissance

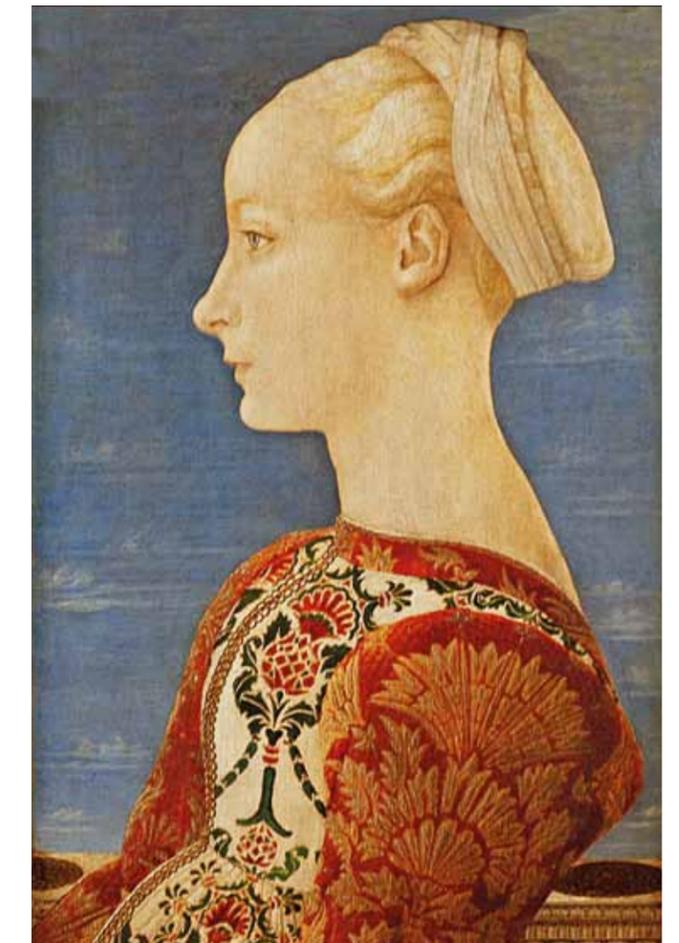


fig. 4

personalities, we can see calyx forms that vaguely resemble Ottoman tulips and fan-shaped decorated flowers that clearly anticipate Ottoman carnations (Figures 4 and 5).

The popular layouts of sixteenth-century Ottoman floral textiles, such as the ogival layout or the parallel wavy vine layout, are already in evidence in fifteenth-century Mamluk silks from Egypt and velvets from Italy.²³ Elements of what was to become the Ottoman floral vocabulary, and a few elements of floral syntax as well, were readily available to Ottoman artists as inspiration, but their impact did not occur until a favorable conjunction of environmental circumstances arose in the mid-sixteenth century.

The International Style

In Europe in the later fifteenth century, artists such as Giovanni Bellini and Hugo van der Goes often depicted aristocrats and angels clothed in Italian luxury silk velvets with floral designs, and Giovanni's brother Gentile Bellini visited the Ottoman court in Istanbul at the invitation of

the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II in order to paint the Sultan's portrait. At the same time that they were exposed to the artists and artistic products of the European West, the court artists of the Ottoman Empire shared the 'international style' with their counterparts in contemporary Islamic courts in Mamluk Cairo, Türkmen Tabriz, and Timurid Herat.²⁴

Flowers played an important role in the ornament employed by fifteenth-century Ottoman artists, but the vocabulary of forms was a traditional one derived from Chinese ornament. In general the arabesques of blossoms on vines appearing in fifteenth-century Ottoman art employed the characteristic form of the Chinese lotus, with its butterfly-like arrangement of petals.

Ottoman textiles firmly attributable to the fifteenth century are very few in number; a quilt from the Topkapı Palace storerooms composed of many small squares of *kemha* (lampas) fabric sewn together contains a number of floral patterned fragments, very small in scale, usually employing spiraling vines, and invariably with tiny lotus flowers as



fig. 5



fig. 6

part of the ornament (Figure 6). The same vocabulary is employed also in Ottoman manuscript illumination of the period.

Chinese-inspired lotus blossoms also appear in the so-called Baba Nakkaş style of vegetal ornament that appears in late fifteenth-century drawings preserved in Ottoman albums, in woodcarving from the later fifteenth century preserved in Istanbul and Amasya, and in early Ottoman blue-and-white ceramics, where lotus flowers are shown together with a peculiar kind of round-lobed leafy ornamental motif sometimes referred to as the 'oak leaf' motif.²⁵ Such motifs also appear in the field designs of early Uşak medallion carpets, but we know of only a single tattered fragment of late fifteenth-century Ottoman silk in the Baba Nakkaş style that has survived.²⁶ A masterful group of large ornamental drawings intended as cartoons for embroidered garment collars, preserved in a late fifteenth-century workshop album in the Topkapı Palace Museum, epitomizes the fluidity, energy, and three-dimensional presence of this style at its best (Figure 7).

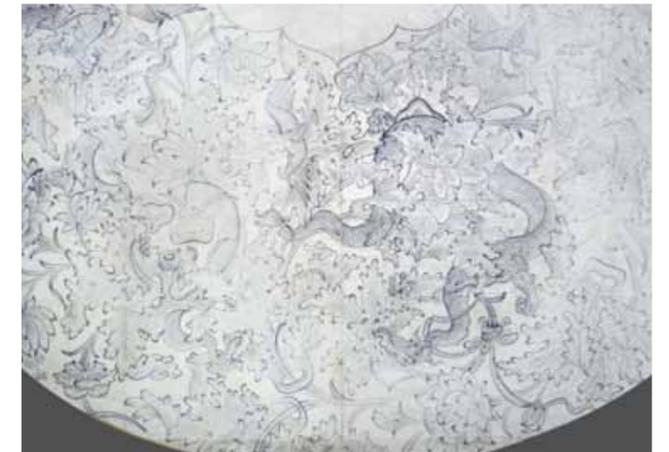


fig. 7

Figure 5. *A Young Lady of Fashion* by Paolo Uccello (1397-1475), oil on panel, circa 1460-70, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA

Figure 6. Detail, quilt cover pieced from squares of Ottoman silk *kemha* fabric, later 15th or early 16th century; Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul, 13/1091

Figure 7. Detail, design for an embroidered collar, ink on sized paper, probably Tabriz, late 15th century; Topkapı Palace Museum, album Hazine 2153, folio 162B

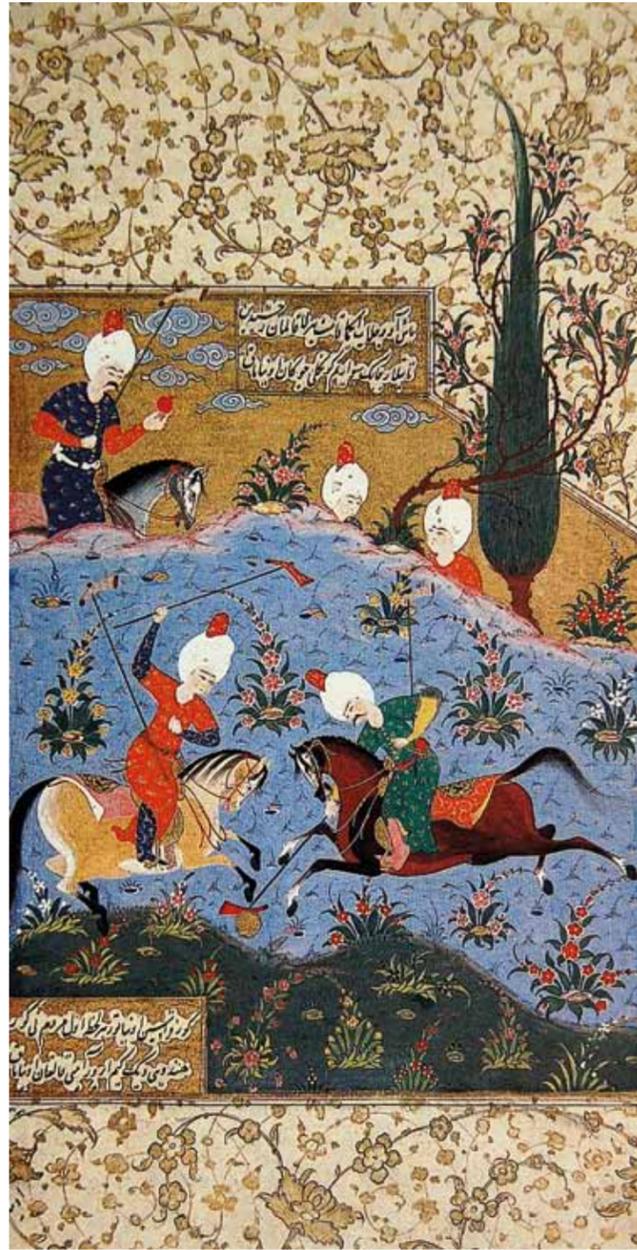


fig. 8

In the first half of the sixteenth century, we see the beginnings of a distinctive Ottoman style of miniature painting used as book illustration in Istanbul. In the 1530s, a manuscript of poems of the late fifteenth-century poet and statesman Mir Ali Shir Nevai was created in Istanbul, illustrated by an émigré artist from Tabriz, in the Türkmen style popular there around 1500.²⁷ All landscapes are illustrated with characteristic clumps of brightly colored flowers; these are largely generic and cannot be identified as particular species (Figure 8). At about the same time, in 1534, the Ottoman historian and artist Matrakçı Nasuh created an extraordinary account of the halting-places of Sultan Süleyman I's armies in his campaigns into the two Iraqs.²⁸ Here the Türkmen tradition of clumps of brightly colored generic flowers is continued, but in a number of the paintings hollyhocks are very clearly depicted (Figure 9).

By the end of the first half of the sixteenth century, the Ottoman court artistic establishment was in a period of rapid change and stylistic experimentation. Artists from Iran, Egypt, and Europe joined the *Rumiyan* artists of Anatolia in Istanbul; new experiments in ceramics, in the ornamentation of court weaponry, and other art forms of this period show a time of swift changes and trend towards using multiple styles side-by-side. For textiles, the major production up to this time was from Bursa, where traditional motifs and layouts, such as the popular and talismanic *çintemani*, dominated production.²⁹ Some Bursa silks of this period closely paraphrased Italian originals, and the resourceful Italians themselves were creating velvet fabrics utilizing designs they felt would appeal to the Ottoman taste.³⁰

Artistically the situation was complex, even anarchic. Looking at the art of the *nakkaşhane* in these years, we see one distinctively Ottoman strain – the *saz* ornament of curving leaves, rosettes, lotuses, and Chinese fauna associated with Shah Kulu – enjoying a sort of primacy amid a veritable casserole of artistic styles and genres.

Figure 8. Floral landscape in the Türkmen style, from a manuscript of the *Divan* of Mir Ali Shir Nevai, circa 1530, ink and watercolors on sized paper; Topkapı Palace Museum, Revan 804, folio 89B

Figure 9. Details, floral landscape from the *Beyan-e Menazil-e Sefer-e Irakeyn* by Matrakçı Nasuh, circa 1534, painted by Matrakçı Nasuh; ink and opaque watercolors on sized paper, Istanbul University Library, T. 5964, folio 9A



fig. 9

Rüstem Paşa and the Development of the New Ottoman Brand

At this crucial moment, the pivotal figure of Rüstem Paşa steps into our narrative. A Croatian by birth, inducted into the Ottoman military bureaucracy as a young child, Rüstem methodically worked his way through the meritocracy to a position of immense power, marrying Mihrimah, favorite daughter of Sultan Süleyman I and his adored wife Hürrem Sultan, in 1539. Rüstem first served as *sadrızam* or grand *vezir* from 1544 to 1553, then, after a two-year hiatus, reassumed the position from 1555 until his death in 1561.³¹ His efficient taxation policies and control of spending built up the wealth of the Ottoman state to an unprecedented degree.

Historical sources have not been kind to Rüstem; his involvement with the Hürrem Sultan court faction, which favored the succession of her son Selim to the throne, led to his being blamed for the execution for sedition in 1553 of the popular and able soldier-prince Mustafa, Süleyman's son by another wife, and prompted his temporary retirement from politics. Other sources criticize him for his enormous personal wealth, as well as his alleged stinginess. Busbecq found him to be an unattractive personality and both a wily and venal negotiator, susceptible to bribery.³²

Rüstem's role in artistic policy of the Ottoman Empire appears to have far exceeded that of any other Ottoman statesman until the early eighteenth century. His own artistic preferences may be inferred from the decorations of his own mosque in Istanbul, probably not quite finished at the time of its patron's death in 1561. Here we can see, on walls that are for the first time in Ottoman history completely covered with polychrome İznik tiles, an enormous variety of repeating patterns, constituting a cross-section of Ottoman art in the mid-sixteenth century. The entire spectrum is included, old-fashioned and cutting-edge styles side by side.³³ However, Rüstem's own marked preference for the new floral style and its chief artistic proponent, Kara Memi, is made abundantly clear by the placement of the most successful designs in the most prominent parts of the mosque. In a radical departure from previous practice, the large decorative tile panels to either side of the doorway of the mosque include large blue-ground visions of paradise designed by Kara Memi. These panels



fig. 10

Figure 10. Blue-ground tile panel from İznik, circa 1561, by Kara Memi; polychrome underglaze painting on slip-covered stone-paste tiles, Mosque of Rüstem Paşa, Istanbul; Photo after Seherr-Thoss, *Design and Color in Islamic Architecture*, Washington 1968, p.283.

Figure 11. Ottoman carved and gilded marble clothes-press with tulips, rosebuds, and central rosette, circa 1575; Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul, 31/1232



fig. 11

The Floral Style through the Era of Tulips

After a century-long period of military, economic and political decline that ended with the conclusion of the Peace of Karlowitz in 1699 and its consequent major territorial losses for the Ottoman Empire in central and eastern Europe, the eighteenth century began in Istanbul with what historians call the *Lâle Devri* or the 'Era of Tulips'. This was a new cultural flowering under the patronage of the court of Sultan Ahmed III (r.1703–1730) and his *sadrızam* and son-in-law Nevşehirli Damad İbrahim Paşa.³⁸

incorporated on a large and dramatic scale what was then the newly emergent floral vocabulary (Figure 10).

Rüstem Paşa had an equally significant role to play in the area of Ottoman artistic output, especially of textiles and ceramics, through acts of patronage and regulation that served two functions. First, by restricting and regulating the import of Italian silks, and thus the outflow from the Ottoman realm of precious metals to pay for imported luxury fabrics, he improved the Ottoman balance of payments while at the same time giving new life to a native textile industry that had long been established in Bursa but which now increasingly began to flourish in Istanbul.³⁴ Second, by curtailing the artistic influence of Italy in the realm of textiles, as well as by encouraging the development of the İznik ceramic industry through massive commissions for the tile decoration of state-sponsored mosques and palaces, Rüstem Paşa helped to establish what in effect became the new Ottoman brand: the floral vocabulary pioneered and developed by his favorite artist, Kara Memi.

The Floral Style in Other Media

The new style rapidly came to dominate many different spheres of Ottoman artistic production. The development of a colorful palette of ceramic decoration in the underglaze technique helped to popularize the floral style both in decorations for royal buildings and in tablewares sold in the bazaar, which diffused the new style widely. The development of the *kemha* (lampas) production in Istanbul saw the creation of an industry whose products were ideally suited to the new floral style. Unlike Bursa velvet production, *kemha* weavers could program a very wide range of colors into highly detailed textile designs. Like ceramics, these textiles were not only available in the marketplace, but created a sensation among consumers both in the Ottoman Empire and in eastern Mediterranean markets, from Italy to Russia, and from Iran to Egypt.³⁵

The finest court embroideries of this period, surviving in only a very tiny handful of examples, are covered with tulips and carnations.³⁶ Carpets designed by court designers in Istanbul, at first woven in Egypt and later in or near Istanbul, immediately adopted the new floral vocabulary, which had by 1600 gradually become the dominant feature

The Diffusion of the Floral Style in Anatolia and the Empire

Art historians sometimes mistakenly allude to this period as one characterized by the powerful influence of European art and culture, especially that of France, on Ottoman artistic life. In fact the situation was considerably more complex. In many of its aspects the *Lâle Devri* saw a self-conscious attempt to return to the glorious days of Ottoman culture in the reigns of Sultan Süleyman I and his two successors. As the name implies, the *Lâle Devri* was a time when the role of flowers in Ottoman culture and society flourished, as attested by foreign visitors such as Mary Wortley Montagu. Royal patronage of the arts once again was used as a significant aspect of governance and the projection of royal power. This period saw the revival of Ottoman ceramic tile making, textile weaving and other art forms that had symbolized the Empire at its greatest cultural strength in the later sixteenth century. The cultivation of tulips and other garden flowers, and the appearance of flowers in almost every medium in Ottoman art, once again emphasized the floral style as the ultimate Ottoman brand.

As provincial centers within the Empire grew in economic importance, sub-styles in various media, such as the embroideries of Ottoman Crete, Rhodes, and Epirus, exemplified what we might term mini-revivals of the classical floral style of Kara Memi's time.³⁹ The arts of domestic needlework and the role of embroidery as an important aspect of the socialization of young middle-class urban girls and women appear to have increased at this time, both as a result of the growing importance of embroidery as a social custom and of the availability in the marketplace at reasonable cost of the basic materials of embroidery: hoops and frames, cotton or linen woven fabric, silk thread dyed in a great variety of colors, and of course needles, thimbles, and the other accoutrements of domestic embroidery. Curiously, it is also in the eighteenth century that we first see depictions of women creating embroidery in a domestic context in Ottoman miniature painting.⁴⁰

Established and deeply embedded in the high court, middle-class, and popular cultures of the Ottoman Empire, flowers have continued as a powerful element of Ottoman and Turkish visual culture and social custom until the present day. It is not difficult to imagine why the attractive floral style and floral imagery should have been popular with the court officials and urban Ottoman merchant classes. They

always had close political and economic ties to the court and the monarchy, and their members appreciated flowers and even cultivated them themselves. It is perhaps more difficult to comprehend how the floral style could have become so popular in the highly conservative traditions of Ottoman subjects, both Muslim and Christian, who lived in tiny villages and nomadic encampments in remote parts of the Empire. After all, these parts of Ottoman society, far from the capital city, consisted of individuals who in many cases probably never saw many of the actual flowers of the classical style, and they had no experience of flower gardens in their tiny villages or nomadic encampments.

Vertical versus Horizontal Diffusion

As a court-centered phenomenon with specific dynastic associations, developed as a self-conscious means of establishing both an Ottoman culture and an Ottoman brand, the floral style had a profound impact on the broader spectrum of Ottoman artistic production beyond the court sphere in two different ways. Spreading horizontally, the style was adopted in various provincial artistic centers that produced commercial versions of court-inspired luxury goods for an expanding commercial market both within and beyond the Empire.

The floral style carried connotations of tradition, court patronage, luxury, and high taste into the provincial ceramic manufactories of Diyarbakır and Damascus, as those cities filled the marketplace void caused by the precipitate decline of İznik as a ceramic-producing center.⁴¹ As Epirus and Chios became centers for commercial embroidery and silk-weaving respectively, they also adopted the brand of the floral style, whose prestige in the marketplace helped to sell luxury goods in both domestic and international markets.⁴² As the rug-weaving ateliers of Cairo lost their support from the court in Istanbul, they turned to commercial production of carpets in so-called court designs, in which the floral vocabulary was paramount.⁴³

In the realm of textiles, scholarship has revealed the amazing richness of artistic invention that arose from this horizontal diffusion. The famous large and large-scale white-ground embroideries that employ the vocabulary of the sixteenth-century Ottoman floral style, which have survived in large numbers and which have been extensively studied and exhibited, may have been produced commercially in the area of northwest Greece and southern Albania that historically bore the name Epirus, and its Ottoman provincial capital, Ioannina.⁴⁴ The artists of the Aegean Islands also developed a local tradition of embroidery that drew heavily on the floral style; indeed both commercial and domestic embroidery traditions throughout the Empire, as practiced both by Muslim and non-Muslim peoples, continue to show the impact of the sixteenth century floral style to the present day. Over time domestic embroideries reflecting myriad local styles evolved from the original court prototypes.

The second form of diffusion of the floral style was in essence vertical – that is, the floral style not only spread around the Empire horizontally (geographically) in the luxury goods markets that catered to the moneyed classes, but it also moved vertically through layers of social and economic stratification. It penetrated eventually to the traditional, long-established, and highly varied local artistic traditions of villages and nomadic encampments, where carpets and textiles woven of wool were the primary genres of artistic expression.

In this respect, the art of carpet weaving is unique in the spectrum of world arts: no other technically-based medium in human history exhibits such a degree of artistic creativity and patronage across the entire hierarchical spectrum of social and economic class, from the highest strata of Istanbul royalty and court nobility to the humblest Anatolian village hearth or nomadic encampment.

The four levels of carpet weaving discussed by Kurt Erdmann and Jon Thompson – court weaving, commercial weaving, village weaving, and nomadic weaving – share both a technique and a history.⁴⁵ Carpet weaving may well originally have arisen in a nomadic context at a time long before we have any surviving examples, but from early on rugs, in both the knotted-pile and the slit tapestry-weave techniques, were created for a variety of practical purposes across the entire social spectrum, with patronage ranging from the lavish royal gift to the humble artifact designed to be used in the tent in which it was woven.

If we can grasp the concept of how an art form deeply embedded in a nomadic way of life, using a repertoire of designs powerfully influenced by the geometric nature of the weaving medium itself, might have been subsequently transformed into a court artistic tradition – the result of the so-called 'carpet design revolution' of the fifteenth century – then it is only logical that we should be able to grasp the opposite: the diffusion of court designs into the weaving traditions of rural villages and nomadic encampments.⁴⁶

The record of the floral style in village and nomadic weaving in Anatolia is well established. The products of certain weaving centers – most notably the village carpets and kilims today attributed to the market town of Karapınar in Konya Province – adopted the floral vocabulary with enthusiasm and enormous artistic creativity. In

surviving examples we can trace a stylistic trajectory of several centuries of floral designs in the ‘Kara Memi’ rugs from central Anatolia.⁴⁷

Many of the small prayer carpets we ascribe to Lâdik in Konya Province use a literal adaptation of a sixteenth-century Ottoman carpet border of tulips, hyacinths, carnations, and *saz* leaves, together with complex floral palmettes, that appears in some of the most famous sixteenth-century court prayer rugs. Stylized tulips, carnations, hyacinths, and honeysuckle permeate the pile carpet weaving of Milâs, Megri, and Mucur, of Kırşehir, Sivas, and Cappadocia.⁴⁸

The small pile-woven *yastiks* (bolster or cushion covers) woven over the centuries in many centers across Anatolia demonstrate an amazing variety of sources, from the adaptations of nomadic tribal symbolism found in the geometric designs of the ‘Holbein’ and ‘Memling’ carpets, to adaptations of floral designs that originally took form in Bursa silk velvet cushion covers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁴⁹

The impact of the floral style on Anatolian village carpet weaving, amply illustrated through the examples chosen for inclusion here, is found from the Aegean to the Iranian border, from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. Existing side-by-side with earlier weaving traditions originating in the nomadic past, they demonstrate the extraordinary variety and richness of traditional carpet art in Anatolia.

The wide dissemination of the floral style throughout the Ottoman Empire, and its adoption into the arts of diverse peoples and sub-cultures within the far-flung Ottoman Empire, is a testament both to the power and meaning of the floral vocabulary in a political context, and of its enduring aesthetic appeal.

Anatolianist versus Ottomanist Views

What might be seen as a cultural and aesthetic blessing – the spread of an emblematic style across work of art created throughout the entire fabric of society – has also at times turned into a kind of art historical curse that rises from two conflicting views of how artistic styles, techniques, motifs, and genres developed in Anatolia in the past.

The more conventional view looks at art history as a sequential series of periods, styles, and societies, each with a distinctive set of visual preferences and economic dynamics. It is certainly in this

conceptual sphere that historians of Ottoman art have conducted the majority of their business and continue to do so. The second and more heterodox of these views might conveniently be summarized as an ‘Anatolianist’ perspective that posits a continuity of artistic traditions associated with Anatolia for millennia, going back well before the arrival of the Turkic tribes in the aftermath of the Battle of Manzikert in 1071.

A political motivation for this latter perspective developed in the Anatolianist politics of the early days of the Turkish Republic. In an effort to underline the importance of the Anatolian homeland, the names Hittite Bank and Sümer Bank were given to institutions founded for the purpose of economic development. In subsequent decades the public monuments of Ankara, the Republic’s capital, self-consciously evoked the styles and traditions of the ancient Near Eastern civilizations that had flourished in Anatolia many millennia ago, especially the Hittites. At the same time, the brilliant Turkish art historian and painter, Professor Celal Esad Arseven, sought to establish an Anatolian artistic continuity from prehistory to the present.

Arseven’s ideas, set out in his seminal study *Les Arts décoratifs turcs* (originally written in his fluent French in order to maximize their influence), have had a profound impact on subsequent art historical thinking. It was Arseven who gave modern historians of Ottoman art such basic art historical terms as *çintemani* – a Sanskrit word meaning ‘auspicious jewel’ that refers to the popular Ottoman motif of three ‘pearls’ and a pair of wavy ‘flames’ – as well as other bedrock concepts and vocabulary that are universally used by today’s scholars of Ottoman and Anatolian art. It was Arseven who first mapped out the Ottoman floral repertoire, showing in line drawings the various artistic incarnations of tulips, carnations, rosebuds, and hyacinths.⁵⁰

But Arseven went several steps further, using monochrome photographs and line drawings to posit ties between more recent Anatolian artistic designs and the age-old ancient Near Eastern traditions that predated the Classical Hellenic and Roman traditions of Anatolia.⁵¹ Visually appealing, persuasively argued, and providing powerful evidence for cultural continuity, especially in the realm of geometric and floral ornament, Arseven’s pioneering work influenced

several generations of Turkish academics, but it remained largely unknown outside of Turkey.

And the world of academic scholarship, disdaining study of what it regarded as inferior anthropological or folk art traditions, largely concentrated on the study of art and architecture produced under the patronage of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century Seljuk rulers of Anatolia, the rulers of the small Anatolian *beylik* principalities of the late thirteenth through the mid-fifteenth centuries, and of course the Ottoman courts, from the fourteenth century onward. The conventions of academic study, utilizing the traditional academic methods of divisions of disciplines, compartmentalized the history of art in Anatolia into historical periods: Ancient Near East, Helleno-Roman, Medieval/Byzantine/Armenian, and Turkish/Muslim.

A dramatic change in perspective on Anatolian art – what one might almost view as the second life of Arseven’s ideas – began to emerge in Turkey and the West in the 1970s, as a result of the impact of the art market and the world of collecting on the study of art history. This phenomenon, however difficult it may be for some art historians to accept, has long been a spur to new directions in art history and criticism: dealers and collectors often show a greater spirit of innovative thinking than art historians and critics. Such was certainly the case with the growing worldwide enthusiasm for collecting village and nomadic carpets that began in the 1960s and blossomed in the last quarter of the twentieth century – and above all with the ‘discovery’ by dealers and collectors of Anatolian kilims – the slit-tapestry-woven rugs of Asia Minor.

The first exhibitions, books, and catalogues to popularize Anatolian kilims drew their motivation, and ultimately their strength and influence, from the undeniable fact that the greatest of these weavings, with their powerful, mostly abstract geometric designs and brilliant colors, were extremely compelling visually; only those with a heart of stone or the visual equivalent of tone-deafness could fail to be moved and fascinated by their power and beauty. The first kilim shows and studies concentrated on matters of provenance – one group was ascribed to south-central Anatolia, others to the Konya region, the eastern highlands, the north-central area, and so on.

Unlike the majority of early pile carpets in mosques – which had been removed, first by the depredations of dealers and then by the governments of the late Ottoman Empire and the early Republic, to be brought together, often without adequate documentation, in museum collections – evidence for regional provenance was provided by the large number of kilims that had remained in the mosques to which they had originally been given as a pious endowment or *vakıf*. This was useful in determining the source of what otherwise would have been regarded as artistic orphans without apparent roots or lineage.⁵²

So far, so good, but the marketplace wanted more than beauty and provenance from Anatolian kilims. It wanted at a minimum an iconographic tradition and a vocabulary of imagery equal to that of pile-woven carpets, an intellectual underpinning that would improve the artistic status of kilims and quite possibly justify the increasingly high prices that were being charged for them.

As a result, some of those who sold and bought Anatolian kilims turned to the Arseven perspective in an effort to establish a lineage for kilims even older, richer, and more historically embedded than that of pile-woven carpets. Like Pooh-Bah, the Japanese aristocrat in Gilbert and Sullivan’s *Mikado*, kilims began to claim a ‘pre-Adamite’ artistic pedigree stretching back into the dim recesses of prehistory. Forms that had vaguely totemic flavors were interpreted as stylized forms of the divine, most often as figures of prehistoric female deities.

Thus kilims themselves, with their evocative, abstracted and minimalized approach to design, provided a sort of Rorschach ink-blot stimulus to the imaginations of those seeking to give the art form art historical lineage and respectability.⁵³ Of course some kilim designs may plausibly have very deep historical roots, but due to the lack of any kind of collateral evidence, we are in all probability never going to be completely sure of their lineage without making vast numbers of shaky assumptions. This inconvenient truth, however, has not served to deter wishful thinking. New Age approaches to art, less-than-rigorous feminist perspectives on art history, and fertile imaginations, or the substitution of flights of fantasy for common sense.

Fanning the flames, the British archaeologist James Mellaart, one of the discoverers of the important central Anatolian Neolithic site of



fig. 12

Çatal Höyük, published a series of drawings based on 'lost' photographs that he claimed represented now-vanished wall decorations from the site. In many respects these bore astonishing resemblances to what had hitherto been regarded as relatively recent kilim designs, some of them thought to be of Ottoman origin.⁵⁴ Received at first with considerable excitement,⁵⁵ Mellaart's drawings were eventually denounced as blatant forgeries. With their fall from grace much of the woven fabric of 'mother goddess scholarship' began to unravel.⁵⁶ To nobody's great surprise, unpleasant exchanges at international conferences and polemical writing ensued; Mellaart and the mother goddess largely faded from the scene, except for a few diehard proponents in Europe and the United States.

In the midst of this controversy, the common kilim motif known as *eli belinde* enters the stage (Figure 12). The term in modern Turkish means '(her) hand(s) on (her) waist (or hips)'. Apparently originating among kilim weavers themselves, *eli belinde* is a term of convenience used to describe a motif that clearly represents a stylized Ottoman carnation; apparently the weavers who coined the term, and who for

Figure 12. Detail, carnation motif from a 19th-century kilim, sometimes referred to as *eli belinde*; private collection

Figure 13. Detail, panel from a velvet cover with staggered rows of stylized carnations, Bursa, circa 1600, 86.5 x 62.5 cm (34 1/8 x 24 3/8 in.), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of Mrs. J.D. Cameron Bradley, 42.369



fig. 13



fig. 14

whatever reason were accustomed to weaving the motif upside down, imagined it as a depiction of a woman in a voluminous full skirt with her hands on her hips.⁵⁷

The emergence of this village weaver's term of convenience at the same time as the emergence of feminist art history and the proliferation of various mother goddess theories was unfortunate. The evolution of the original design of staggered rows of curvilinear carnations – one of the most popular to be found in widely-disseminated Bursa velvets and Istanbul *kemha* fabrics of the later sixteenth century – into the progressively more stylized motifs seen in kilim design, is amply documented in small increments of change in a series of surviving objects (Figures 13, 14, 15). There is not the slightest plausible evidence in the ample surviving art historical record that the motif has any relationship whatsoever beyond simple coincidence to prehistoric representations of a deity, female or male.

There is a certain irony in the fact that various Anatolianist theories about the pre-historic roots of kilim designs began to emerge in print around the same time that early kilims in court-related designs first

Figure 14. Detail of an Ottoman kilim with staggered rows of stylized carnations, 17th century; Vakıflar Carpet Museum, Istanbul, K.H.4

Figure 15. Detail of an Anatolian kilim fragment with rows of stylized carnations, 18th or 19th century; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Caroline and H. McCoy Jones Collection, T88.93.1



fig. 15

began to come to the attention of scholars. The kilims with S-spun wool found in the Great Mosque of Divriği in 1975 constitute the largest single group of these, with other examples coming to light in various museums such as the Bayerisches Armeemuseum in Ingolstadt.⁵⁸ A very attractive early floral carpet from central Anatolia in Philadelphia that probably reflects a kilim design, published by Charles Grant Ellis in his *Oriental Carpets in the Philadelphia Museum of Art*, exemplifies yet another group of early works in the floral tradition whose designs, though progressive stages of evolution, exerted a profound influence on later geometric flat-woven rugs of Anatolia (Figure 16).⁵⁹

In what I had originally intended to be my first, last, and only article on the subject of Turkish carpets, published in the *Textile Museum Journal* in December 1973, I wrote that it was important: "...to distinguish between speculative ascriptions of meaning, based on a



fig. 16

similarity, however vague, between a form appearing in an Anatolian village rug and a much older fine-art form, and the ascription of meaning based on a firm knowledge of the intermediate vectors by which a form and its meaning traveled through space and time.⁶⁰ Many years later, Jon Thompson, in a talk given at The Textile Museum, repeated the same basic idea in a far more succinct and memorable form: "in art, a resemblance does not always mean a relationship."⁶¹

Thus, when we encounter works of recent Anatolian textile art whose designs appear to be influenced by or adapted from ancient works of art, such as stone reliefs, found in the immediate environment of an Anatolian village weaver's place of work, what do we make of the relationship to be found in the resemblance? Weavers adopt or adapt new designs from things they see; that is what the artistic process is all about. But when this results in a modern or near-modern Anatolian weaving that reflects a work of stone sculpture several thousand years old, it does not necessarily mean that there is a several-thousand-year tradition of historical weaving behind the modern work embedded either in the village, or in the tribe or group to which the weaver belongs.⁶²

The upshot of this discussion is fairly simple: while it is plausible that certain motifs found in later Anatolian kilims may have derived over time from very early prototypes in weaving or other media created in Anatolia, the proof of this, consisting of a chain of historical relationships linking most Anatolian kilim motifs to the prehistoric past is, with a few significant exceptions, lacking and unlikely to emerge in future. On the other hand, when a clear sequence of stylistic evolution can be abundantly documented in an historical series of examples from the Ottoman floral style in the sixteenth century down through kilims woven as late as the later nineteenth century, then simple logic indicates that the form represents a flower, and not a full-skirted prehistoric goddess with her hands on her hips. To paraphrase words sometimes attributed to Sigmund Freud, sometimes a carnation is just a carnation. And in the far more venerable words of William of Occam (1285–1349), which the authors of this book quoted in their 2002 catalog *The Classical Tradition in Anatolian Carpets*, "What can be done with fewer assumptions is done in vain with more."⁶³

Figure 16. Detail of floral carpet probably derived from a kilim design, attributable to Karapınar, with tulips, carnations, hyacinths, *çintemani* and cartouches, probably 18th century; Philadelphia Museum of Art, 73-2-1, The John D. McIlhenny Collection; Photograph by Gerard Paquin

Exports to Europe in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

One of the many important developments in the study of Ottoman art in the past quarter-century is the realization of the extent to which Ottoman works of art were exported to eastern, central and western Europe in the 'classical age' of the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries. The documentary evidence is overwhelming, attesting to the movement of carpets, ceramics, silks, metalwares, and eventually, after the military tide turned, of war booty such as weapons, tents, banners, and horse trappings. The evidence of works of art themselves is equally impressive, ranging from the hundreds of Ottoman carpets still found in the churches of Transylvania, where they had been donated as votive gifts, to the myriads of Orthodox and Catholic ecclesiastical vestments crafted from Ottoman silk fabrics still preserved in European cathedral treasuries and museums.⁶⁴

The transmission of artistic ideas through such works of art left an impact on European artistic production as well. Tudor embroideries from England with Ottoman carnations, fifteenth-century Spanish carpets, seventeenth-century French Savonnerie and eighteenth-century English Axminster carpets in Ottoman designs, as well as seventeenth-century Padua majolica ceramics imitating İznik originals, are all part of a European artistic fascination with, and inspiration by, Ottoman works of art over many centuries.⁶⁵

European works of art that imitated Islamic prototypes were produced for a variety of motivations. The imitations and paraphrases of Ottoman carpets woven in Spain in the fourteenth through the seventeenth centuries were created to satisfy a strong local demand for carpets with Turkish designs. Certain Italian velvet fabrics utilizing Ottoman designs were probably created in what their producers believed to be the Ottoman style and taste, abundantly decorated with stylized tulips and carnations, specifically either to be sold in the Ottoman Empire or to be used as diplomatic gifts from Italian commercial interests to Ottoman court officials.

In the textile realm, of all the diverse impacts of the Ottoman floral style on Early Modern Europe, nothing can compare to the presence of Ottoman artistic forms in Russian textile art of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Growing from its core in the ducal and then

royal realm of Muscovy, the Russian Empire's pretenses to high culture and great political power were reflected in the splendid secular and ecclesiastical buildings of the Moscow Kremlin and in the lavish ceremonies that marked royal Russian rites of passage such as baptisms, marriages, coronations, and funerals.

But Russia itself had no draw-loom; the complex technology of silk weaving, together with the equally complex technology of preparing and dyeing silk for weaving, was not present in the early days of Imperial Russia. The result was an unprecedented reliance by the Romanov court in Moscow on the luxury fabrics of its frequent wartime adversary and equally frequent trading partner, the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁶

The collections of royal and religious costumes kept in the vast storerooms of the Moscow Armory Museum are a testament to this unlikely artistic and economic partnership. In the *Uspenskii Sobor*, the Cathedral of the Dormition in the Kremlin where the Tsars were crowned, the coronation throne of Ivan the Terrible (crowned in 1546) is completely lined with Ottoman silk fabrics. The huge canopy displayed at the same monarch's coronation is composed of many bolts of Ottoman silk sewn together. Today it is a part of the Armory Museum collection and remains the single largest item crafted of early Ottoman silk to have survived into modern times.⁶⁷

Included in the Russian collections are not only myriad examples of Ottoman textiles in designs and formats known from other collections around the world, but an unprecedentedly large group of Ottoman textiles in two characteristic Ottoman techniques – *seraser* (known to art historians by the French term *taqueté*) and *kemha* (French: *lampas*) – with specifically Orthodox iconography.⁶⁸ In these textiles, representations of the Virgin and Child, of Christ enthroned, or of six-winged seraphim or cherubim, are often combined with the emblematic Ottoman flowers so popular at the time (Figure 17).

It is amazing that the splendor of Imperial Muscovy depended to such a great degree on luxury items crafted from textiles of Ottoman manufacture. Other examples include numerous Bibles bound in Ottoman velvet, saddles and other horse ornaments made with velvet, and even a pair of silk hunting gloves.⁶⁹ Even more interesting from the art historian's point of view is the impact of the Ottoman floral style in



fig. 17

Figure 17. Detail, *sakkos* of Metropolitan Dionysius made from Ottoman *kemha* fabric with stylized flowers and figure of the Virgin Mary enthroned with the Christ Child, before 1583; Kremlin Armory Museum, Moscow, TK 2766

Figure 18. Detail, embroidered yoke of a *sakkos* or dalmatic of Metropolitan Joseph, circa 1642–1652; Kremlin Armory Museum, Moscow, TK 2208

the embroidery art of Russia itself, countless examples of which are also housed in the great Russian collections.

Although the technology of the draw-loom was unknown in early modern Russia – thus contributing to Russia’s reliance on and taste for Ottoman silks in imperial and ecclesiastical garments – the arts of embroidery had a long history of development. When Ottoman silk fabrics were tailored into dalmatics, copes, sashes, altar-cloths, reliquary-covers, and other items destined for ceremonial use in Moscow, they were also provided with embroidered borders, yokes, shoulder-pieces, cuffs, collars, and other ornament crafted in Moscow. This heavy embroidery of silk and metallic thread on black, red or purple silk velvet, heavily embellished with pearls, often included inscriptions that today make the various Russian collections the holders of the largest number of dateable Ottoman textiles in the world.⁷⁰ The style of these locally-produced embroidered elements is often not Russian, but instead is completely Ottoman – many of these Ottoman style embroidered elements incorporate the same stylized flowers seen in the Ottoman silks themselves, a remarkable example of how imported artistic goods spawned a local artistic style designed specifically to match up appropriately with imported silk fabrics (Figure 18).

Nineteenth-century European Historicism

In the controversy-filled aftermath of the publication in 1978 of Edward Said’s landmark book *Orientalism*, which curiously had nothing to say about the phenomenon of Orientalist art, the phenomenon that art historians call Orientalism has come under a great deal of scrutiny.⁷¹ As the record of the impact of Ottoman floral designs on the European artistic tradition plainly demonstrates, Orientalism – the use by

European artists of subject matter, artistic motifs, and even stylistic elements that reflect or purport to reflect the art and culture of the Islamic world – is a phenomenon that vastly pre-dates the nineteenth century and the heyday of the European colonialist enterprise. Indeed, in the realm of textiles, the phenomenon has a history in Europe of almost a thousand years.

In nineteenth-century Europe, however, there did emerge a new approach to the art of the Islamic world, which developed in part out of elements of the broader Orientalist culture, and in part as a reaction to the impact of industrialization on what Europeans of the time referred to alternatively as applied arts, *arts décoratifs*, or *angewandte Kunst*. Far from being a denigration of Islamic culture, the exploration by later nineteenth-century European artists of the techniques and designs employed in Islamic ceramics, glass, metalwork, textiles, woodcarving, and arts of the book was born of an admiration for the technical virtuosity, artistic beauty, and ultimately for the commercial viability of Islamic technique and design.

Their exploration was fueled in part by the popularity of original Islamic works of art among collectors and by the stellar representation of such works in the collections of newly founded museums of applied arts in London, Hamburg, Berlin, Budapest, Vienna, and Paris. It is no surprise, therefore, that Ottoman flowers appear in European Orientalist glassware, ceramics, and textiles. Mariano Fortuny, the Spanish-born couturier and textile designer, was perhaps the best-known European designer to be inspired by Ottoman textiles and dress, and velvet fabrics designed by him often closely follow Ottoman prototypes.⁷² There is also a good deal of Ottoman inspiration to be seen in the textiles, wallpaper, and ceramics produced by the Arts and Crafts Movement in Great Britain under the artistic leadership of William Morris and his associates. Inclusion of Ottoman motifs occurred in many different places throughout Europe, and was an important element in the overall history of textile design that flourished in the nineteenth century and continues down to the present day.



fig. 18

From the earliest days of its planning, the express purpose of this book and exhibition has been twofold – to show, in a series of important and beautiful works of art, the origins, development, and the full range of impact of the Ottoman floral style on Ottoman textile arts from 1550 onward and to explore the diffusion of the floral style through the different levels of artistic production in Ottoman society and throughout the far-flung Ottoman Empire and into the cultures of its neighbors.

The fortunate conjunction of an atmosphere of experimentation, a court atelier composed of artists from many different cultures and artistic traditions, and a cultural and economic policy that militated in the direction of a distinctive Ottoman ‘brand,’ gave rise after 1550 in Istanbul to the emergence of the new floral style, in which one artist in particular, known to posterity as Kara Memi, took a leading role.

The role of the *nakkashane* as a generator of designs on paper that then fueled commercial artistic activity in many different media in the Ottoman Empire, led to the rapid diffusion of the new floral style. From the realm of manuscript illumination it rapidly spread to the areas of ceramics, silk velvet and lampas fabrics, court carpets, and other media. Initially all were produced on commission from the court and eventually as a part of commercial enterprises whose markets were domestic, within the Ottoman Empire, but also extended far beyond the border of the empire. The artistic vocabulary from these seventeenth- and eighteenth-century commercial goods permeated deep into the traditional arts of Anatolia, especially in the realm of textiles, where the floral style had a profound impact on the pile and flat-woven rugs of Anatolian nomads and villagers, and the local domestic embroidery traditions of towns and cities throughout the Ottoman Empire.

The meanings of the visual vocabulary of flowers – that is, the identification of forms both with specific flowers and with the culture of garden flowers that characterized the higher levels of Ottoman society – remained strong for the first century and a half. Eventually, through the process of artistic diffusion and artistic stylization, some floral forms may in some cases have lost their original meanings, both in the eyes of the artists who used them in their creative work, and for

those who purchased and used the finished artistic products. This is a common occurrence in the history of art and it reflects not a degenerative process, as some art historians used to characterize it, but an expression of the originality and creativity of the artistic process itself, as art moves to new social or cultural milieux, media, or geographical areas.

The popularity of the emblematic Ottoman floral style beyond the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire reflects a phenomenon of easy receptivity to artistic ideas over cultural boundaries that largely prevailed in the history of art at least until the emergence of national identities in the nineteenth century. While a few canny individuals, such as Rüstem Paşa, may have recognized the subtle link between political power and the applied arts as early as the sixteenth century, Turkish textiles and the Ottoman floral style were popular abroad largely on their artistic merits.

These works of art were colorful, powerful in visual impact, attractive to look at, adaptable to a variety of cultural preferences, and above all, available for a high but affordable price, in considerable quantities in the marketplace. But if the floral style served as a substantial element in the attractiveness and wide commercial diffusion in Europe of Ottoman artistic products in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it was also a manifestation of a phenomenon that had a long history: the appeal of luxury goods from the East to European consumers whose own economies lacked either the technology, the artistic traditions, or the access to materials to produce such goods themselves.

In forming conceptions of cultural archetypes, our contemporary consciousness is molded by a host of forces: our understanding of history, our cultural prejudices, propaganda and advertising, academic and scholarly discoveries revealed through publication, and in the case of art, the visual material we are able to see and study in art museums through exhibitions and catalogues such as the present one. Many institutions are wrestling with the subject of how to showcase Ottoman art in their permanent galleries. Two points of view are argued; one stresses the role of the Ottomans as military conquerors and envisages the visual primacy of armor and weaponry in the display of Ottoman art; the other argues that the primacy, influence, and widespread dissemination of the court style and the floral designs that dominate so many of the Ottoman arts should form the main focus.⁷³

The dominance of this second point of view in many final gallery designs seen today coincidentally confirms a judgment that Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq made back in the sixteenth century. In the matter of arms and armor, he says, the Turkish soldiers that he observed were dressed in a disparate mishmash of odds and ends of metal armor, and used a wide variety of weapons, making a rather poor visual impression on sophisticated European observers; these consummate warriors were oddly enough little concerned with the appearance of their armor or the elegance of their weaponry.⁷⁴

On the other hand, describing a royal Ottoman ceremony attended by myriads of court dignitaries clad in Ottoman silk court costume, Busbecq, the most sophisticated of sixteenth-century European observers wrote:

*Now come with me and cast your eye over the immense crowd of turbaned heads, wrapped in countless folds of the whitest silk, and bright raiment of every kind and hue, and everywhere the brilliance of gold, silver, purple, silk and satin. A detailed description would be a lengthy task, and no mere words could give an adequate idea of the novelty of the sight. A more beautiful spectacle was never presented to my gaze.*⁷⁵

Whatever military power may bring any empire in its pomp, a broader view of human accomplishment reminds us that the historical memory of any political entity will ultimately reside to a huge extent in its visual arts; the difference between the legacy of Athens and that of Sparta

precisely illustrates this principle. In the same way, the floral style that appeared in the second half of the sixteenth century remains perhaps the most memorable, influential, and attractive memory that we have of the mighty empire of the Ottoman Sultans, who once ruled over three continents. Fragile, perishable, and ephemeral though they may have been, the flowers of their gardens live on in indestructible beauty in the colorful and evocative ceramics, carpets, kilims, brocaded silks, velvets, and needlework of the Ottoman artistic tradition.

Notes

- 1 Arseven n.d.; Öz 1951; Öz n.d. Arseven is the subject of an important recent biography, see Kickingereeder 2009.
- 2 Atasoy and Raby 1989.
- 3 See Denny 1983.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 Meriç 1953; Refik n.d.
- 6 These developments are eloquently described in Atıl 1987 (see also note 18 below). Kara Memi's signed illuminations in the Divan of Muhibbi are described in *Divan-i Muhibbi*, published in facsimile in 2005 under the auspices of Ereğli Demir ve Çelik Fabrikası in Istanbul. On Ottoman manuscript illuminations see also Özen 2003.
- 7 Atıl 1987; *Divan-i Muhibbi* 1566 (2005); Özen 2003.
- 8 Busbecq 1633 (1968), p.24.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p.25.
- 10 Montagu 1717-1718 (2009), letter written on March 16, 1718.
- 11 *Ibid.*, letter written on April 18, 1718.
- 12 Roding 1993; Pavord 1999.
- 13 Atasoy 2002.
- 14 See Gibb 1901; see also quotations from Gibb's translations in Denny 2004, pp.190-195.
- 15 On this and other *tuğras*, see Sertoğlu 1975; Umur 1980.
- 16 Denny 2004.
- 17 *The Anatolian Civilizations* 1983, the Islamic portion of the exhibition appeared in Volume III.
- 18 Atıl 1987.
- 19 Atasoy and Raby 1994; Atasoy, *et al.* 2001.
- 20 See Roding 1993 and also note 12 above.
- 21 See Klesse 1967; Komaroff and Carboni 2002; Monnas 2009.
- 22 'Renaissance Faces: Masterpieces of Italian Portraiture', Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, 25 August-November 2011 and 'The Renaissance Portrait from Donatello to Bellini', The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 21 December 2011-18 March 18, 2012.
- 23 Mackie 1984.
- 24 The evolution of style in Ottoman ornament is discussed in Raby and Tanındı 1993; further discussion of the early Ottoman court style is to be found in Necipoğlu 1989.

- 25 Atasoy and Raby 1994; Grube 1961, pp.153-175.
- 26 Atasoy, *et al.* 2001, pp. 118-119, pl.68 and for discussion about the style, *ibid.*, pp.227-230.
- 27 Stchoukine 1966.
- 28 See Matrakçı Nasuh 1534-35 (1976); Denny 1970.
- 29 Denny 1973; see also Atasoy *et al.* 2001, pp.264-267 on *çintemani* design.
- 30 *Ibid.*, pp.182-190.
- 31 On the patronage of Rüstem Paşa, *ibid.*, pp.171-172; see also Necipoğlu 1990.
- 32 Busbecq 1633 (1927), p.193.
- 33 Denny 1977; Denny 2004.
- 34 Of Rüstem Paşa's patronage, see Atasoy *et al.* 2001, pp.171-172.
- 35 On trade of silk fabrics to Russian, *ibid.*, pp.180-181.
- 36 Of Ottoman court embroideries of this type, see Ellis and Wearden 2001, p.52, pls.24 and 25; Krody 2000, p.105, cat.no.9.
- 37 Denny 1978; Denny 1986.
- 38 On the *Lâle Devri*, see Refik n.d.; on the patronage of Nevşehirli Damad İbrahim Paşa, see Denny 1996; on revivalism in the *Lâle Devri*, see Denny 1990.
- 39 Krody 2006; Taylor 1998.
- 40 A manuscript of Nevzade Atai's *Khamseh* (1721) in the Walters Art Museum depicts women working outdoors with large embroidery frames; see Renda 1981.
- 41 Raby 1978.
- 42 Atasoy, *et al.* 2001; pp.172-175; Krody 2006.
- 43 The first major study was by Ernst Kühnel and Louisa Bellinger (1957).
- 44 For discussion of Epirus embroidery, see Krody 2006, pp.90-109.
- 45 Erdmann 1977; Thompson 1983.
- 46 For so-called carpet design revolution, see Erdmann 1976, pp.31-33, and Denny and Krody 2002, pp.35-39.
- 47 On 'Kara Memi' rugs *ibid.*, pl.42, and an important recent article by Oakley in *HALI* (Autumn 2011). See also Ölçer and Denny 1999, especially pls.75, 76 and 101 and their accompanying text.
- 48 Stylized Ottoman flowers are seen in carpets from Lâdik (Ölçer and Denny 1999, pls.130-133); Milâs (*ibid.*, pls.108-108), Demirci (*ibid.*, pl.117), southwest Anatolia (*ibid.*, pls.119-122), and the Kırşehir region (*ibid.*, pl.126). And as carpets from these areas traveled through commerce, they were in turn copied by weavers of other regional traditions as well; the traditional 'Ladik' border

derived directly from the famous Ottoman prayer rugs with a tulip flanked by two leaves, rosettes, and small carnations (in all examples from Lâdik cited above), became widespread throughout Anatolia.

- 49 On *yastıks*, see for example Morehouse 1996; see also Denny and Krody 2002, pls.30-33. Numerous silk examples are illustrated in Atasoy *et al.* 2001, pp.132-135, pls.94-87 and pp.320-321, figs.356-370. See also Denny and Krody 2002 for further discussion of 'painter' carpets. Several hundred early carpets are known for the sake of convenience by the names of European painters who preserved images of their designs and colors. These carpets are usually dated to the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, contemporary with the paintings. Holbein, Bellini, Crivelli, Lotto, Ghirlandaio, and Memling are among the European artists who inadvertently lent their names to early Anatolian weavings.
- 50 Arseven n.d.
- 51 *Ibid.*, pp.16-39.
- 52 Two influential pioneering works were a survey volume by Yanni Petsopoulos (1979) and an exhibition catalog by David Black and Clive Loveless (1977).
- 53 The most important collection of early Anatolian kilims is in the Vakıflar Museum in Istanbul; see Balpınar 1982.
- 54 Mellaart, Hirsch, and Balpınar 1989; the Mellaart thesis was taken up again by Cathryn Cootner, see Cootner 1990.
- 55 For other Mellaart drawings, see the article by Mellaart in Frauenknecht 1984.
- 56 Interestingly, after much grumbling in print and execration off the printed page, the *coup de grace* for Mellaart appeared not in *HALLI*, the leading publication on Oriental carpets, but in the less well-known and now defunct *Oriental Rug Review*, in three articles, one by Murray L. Eiland Jr., and two by Marla Mallett (1992/3).
- 57 See Denny 1979.
- 58 The first appearance of the early curvilinear kilims in print was an article by Yetkin (1971) in which she described a fragment of a large and important kilim that she had located in the Great Mosque of Divriği. Most of the remainder of that kilim was discovered in Divriği by Charles Grant Ellis and Walter B. Denny in 1975 (Balpınar 1982, pl.112, pp.178-179). The following year Balpınar also found seven other early curvilinear interlocking kilims with S-spun wool in Divriği (*Ibid.*, pp.278-290, pls.112-118). Another early kilim appeared in the Bayerisches Armeemuseum in Ingolstadt (cat.no.A 1855) in 1979 (see Kretschmar *et al.* 1979, pl.1).

- 59 Ellis 1988, pp.108-109, cat.no.36.
- 60 Denny 1974.
- 61 Jon Thompson delivered his presentation 'Some Thoughts on the Fifteenth Century' at the The Textile Museum Fall Symposium, 'New Directions in Persian Carpet Studies', Washington DC, 21 October 2006.
- 62 The resemblance between Phrygian stone reliefs found in the neighborhood of certain Turkish villages and the brocaded flat-weaves woven in those villages, discussed by Balpınar in Mellaart *et al.* 1989, certainly suggests a relationship between the two, but it is probably from the use of the reliefs as inspiration by more recent weavers, rather than indicating an artistic continuum dating from the time of the reliefs themselves.
- 63 Denny and Krody 2002, p.15.
- 64 Atasoy *et al.* 2001.
- 65 See Hagedorn 1998.
- 66 Atasoy *et al.* 2001; much of the information on the Moscow collections was acquired with the generous collaboration of Inna Vishnevskia, Curator of Textiles at the Moscow Armory Museum.
- 67 *Ibid.*, p.180, fig.34.
- 68 *Ibid.*, pp.100-103, pls.51-56.
- 69 It was a great revelation for the team of scholars who surveyed the Moscow collections for the major study on Ottoman silk textiles, *İpek* (Atasoy *et al.* 2001), to encounter so many of them there.
- 70 *Ibid.*
- 71 Said 1978. He had little to say about the arts but others took up the cudgels from what they imagined to be his point of view; a perhaps more sensible perspective is offered by MacKenzie 1995.
- 72 For illustrations of some of Fortuny's Ottoman-inspired designs, see the exhibition catalogue *Die Hochschule für Angewandte Kunst in Wien zeigt Mariano Fortuny* (1985).
- 73 The best example of such a discussion took place some years ago at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Discussions were held about what should be the major theme in the Museum's new Koç Family Galleries designated for the Ottoman Empire. Eventually the court style and floral designs became the main focus of the gallery designs seen today.
- 74 Busbecq 1633 (1968), pp.113-114.
- 75 *Ibid.*, p.61.

01

Section of an embroidered cover

Istanbul
16th or early 17th century
The Textile Museum 1.22
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers
231 × 78.7 cm (90¼ × 30¾ inches)

Published references
Krody 2011, p.60, fig.1.
Krody 2000, p.105, cat.no.9.
Mackie 1996, p.90, fig.70.
Atıl 1987, p.204, fig.136.
Trilling 1983, p.20, fig.2.
Atıl 1980, p.333, pl.62 (detail), p.364, fig.218,
color plate 62 (detail).
Mackie and Rowe 1976, p.52 and pl.2 (detail),
cat.no.10.
Markrich 1976, p.26, fig.37, color plate 1.
Mackie 1973, cat.no.10, pl.2 color plate 2.

Material: linen, silk
Structure: balanced plain-weave,
embroidery, double running stitch
Warp: linen, 1Z-spun, 32/CM, white (undyed)
Weft: linen, 1Z-spun, 29/CM, white (undyed)
Embroidery thread: silk, Z2S, 13 colors: black,
red, white, off-white (ivory), yellow, blue,
green, light green, 3 shades of light brown,
dark brown, pink
Edge finish: not visible, ribbon applied on the
back
End finish: not visible, ribbon applied on the
back
Notes: drawn pattern in ink on the back of the
fabric
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

This cover defies any attempt to describe the delicacy of its ground fabric and embroidery thread, the extraordinary execution of its stitches, the skill of its embroiderer, and the exquisite rendition of its design.

The pattern, composed of two intertwining stems, green and reddish-brown, is unique. The green stem, which supports alternating carnations and tulips, undulates across the surface in one direction. The reddish-brown stem is more sinuous and crosses into the neighboring design unit, creating movement in the opposite direction. A variety of small polychrome buds and blossoms decorate this stem, but its most visually prominent element is the tricolored serrated leaf with its bent back tip.

In the border, crescents hold tulips and carnations in alternating order. Placement of the design in the two surviving corners indicates the hand of a skilled designer at work; both are beautifully drawn to help the design turn without any awkward change or break.

The two major characters of the floral style, the tulip and the carnation, are the key motifs in this composition, supported by several others—rosebuds, flowers with six petals, and palmettes. The carnation, usually shown in profile, is always recognizable with its fan-like head. The Ottoman standard for a tulip required that the flower be almond shaped, of medium size with a long stem and extremely long, sharply pointed and deeply serrated petals of gorgeous coloring.

Although we may never know whether the designer and the embroiderer were the same person, one fact is very clear: everything about this embroidery indicates that it must have been made by a very skilled embroiderer for a very exalted patron, perhaps an official at the court of Süleyman the Magnificent, his successor, Selim II, or a member of the Sultan's family.





02

Two İznik ceramic dishes

Dish with a design of *saz* leaves
and red carnations

İznik, ca. 1600
Metropolitan Museum of Art 66.4.14
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1966
Diameter: approx. 28 cm (10 inches)

Dish with a design of blue tulips
and red honeysuckle

İznik, ca. 1600
Metropolitan Museum of Art 02.5.53
Gift of William B. Osgood Field, 1902
Diameter: 22.9 cm (9 inches)

Stonepaste covered with white slip,
polychrome underglaze-painted

With the development by the late 1560s of a full spectrum of colors, including a brilliant underglaze red and a vivid green in addition to blue, turquoise, and a black line, the ceramic ateliers of İznik embarked on a half-century of production of polychrome wares, in which floral designs predominated, on a huge scale. Widely exported to Europe, the popular and colorful İznik wares—plates, jugs, bottles, mugs, bowls, and vases—carried the repertoire of classical Ottoman flowers around the world. Among literally thousands of surviving pieces, no two are exactly alike, suggesting that the designers worked freehand in an atmosphere where individual creativity was highly valued.

By the second quarter of the seventeenth century, the combined effects of silicosis, lead poisoning, malaria, disastrous fires, and a governmental purchasing policy that forced ateliers to produce architectural tile decoration at a loss, brought about the demise of the İznik manufactories. By the time the noted Ottoman traveler Evliya visited İznik in the second half of the seventeenth century, it had become virtually a ghost town.



03

Fragment of a floral court carpet

Probably Cairo, Egypt
Second half of the 16th century
The Textile Museum R16.4.6
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1952
102 × 44 cm (40¼ × 17¼ inches)

Published references

Krody 2004, p.95.
Ellis 1962, p.36, fig.1.
Kühnel and Bellinger 1957, pls. 28, 29.

Material: wool

Structure: knotted pile, asymmetric knot.
warps on two levels, 2 weft passes between
rows of knots, knot count: 70H × 50V/dm
(19H × 13V/in)

Warp: wool, 4S-spun yarns Z-plied, yellow

Weft: wool, 3S-spun, 2S-spun yarns, red

Pile: wool, 3S-spun, 4S-spun yarns, 9 colors:
dark red, medium blue, light blue, green,
light green, white (off-white), yellow,
brownish orange, dark green

Edges: stripped

Ends: stripped

Analysis by Walter B. Denny and Sumru
Belger Krody

The German poet Eduard Morike wrote these highly appropriate lines in the late nineteenth century:

*Auch kleine Dinge können uns entzücken;
auch kleine Dinge können teuer sein....*

Small things too can sweeten (our lives);
small things too can be of great value...

In an age when the great Gilded Age patrons of New York were collecting huge Persian carpets to furnish their Park Avenue mansions, George Hewitt Myers was finding exquisite beauty in small treasures such as this fragment of a carpet woven in Cairo to the order of the Ottoman court using designs sent to Cairo from the *nakkashane* in the capital, Istanbul. Myers had an eye for the beautiful, but also an uncanny and prescient sense of the historically significant, which makes the carpet collection of The Textile Museum pre-eminent in scholarly importance among all public collections, even though it lacks some of the spectacular show-pieces one can see in New York, London, Istanbul or Doha.

Within a few years of the invention of the new garden flower style in the mid-sixteenth century, Kara Memi's flowers had appeared first in tile decoration, then in the silk velvets of Bursa and the brilliant *kemha* fabrics of Istanbul, and shortly afterwards in the designs sent to Cairo for the weaving of Ottoman court carpets, of which this tiny fragment, in exquisite pile condition, is a notable survivor. Rosebuds with three long sepals, multicolored tulips, hyacinths, and a plethora of other flowers appear on the rich red lac-dyed field. By contrast, the main border has a traditional design of lotus blossoms and curved *saz* leaves, but the guard stripes on either side are filled with tiny white hyacinths. The small cartouche medallion contains a traditional split-leaf arabesque known as *rumi*, popular in Ottoman art for centuries before Kara Memi's flowers came to life. Each sub-style is contained in its own sphere, be it a cartouche, a narrow border stripe, or some other carefully defined space in the layout of the carpet.

Woven entirely of S-spun wool, Cairene carpets first appeared in the sixteenth century in extremely well woven and exquisitely detailed examples such as this fragment. In later and more difficult times in the seventeenth century, the Cairene weavers, bereft of commissions from the court in Istanbul, turned to commercial weaving and export to Europe to sustain themselves, keeping the traditional Ottoman designs but often leaving behind the very high quality materials, dyeing, and weaving that we see in this small example.





04

Fragment of a floral *serenk* from a costume

Probably Istanbul
Late 16th century
The Textile Museum 1.57
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1951
126.5 × 69 cm (49½ × 27¼ inches)

Provenance: Charles Dikran Kelekian

Published references

Trilling 2003, p.52, fig.30.
Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.214, fig.100 (detail).
Gürsu 1988, p.124, fig.121.
Petsopoulos 1982, p.127, pl.121.
Atıl 1980, p.351, fig.203.
Denny 1973, p.58, fig.4.
Mackie 1973, p.62, cat.no.20.
Lévy, *La Collection Kelekian* n.d., pl.42 (right).

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: lampas, combination of 4/1 satin and 1/3 twill (Z direction)
Warp (foundation/satin): silk, 1 (untwisted), red
Warp (binding/twill): silk, 21 (untwisted) yarns Z-twisted, white
Weft (foundation/satin): silk, 31-untwisted, white
Weft (pattern/twill): silk, 2-4Z-twisted, 4 colors: green (2Z-twisted), light yellow (4Z-twisted), blue (3Z-twisted)
Weft (pattern/twill): silver-wrapped S-direction around white silk (discontinuous) paired with white silk (continuous)
Edges: selvedge, satin weave, white
Ends: stripped
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

¹ Inv.17307; Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.114, figs.100 and 101; *Tkanina turecka* 1983, cat.no.85, p.48 and pl.83.

One of the greatest masterpieces in The Textile Museum, this fragment of the back of a garment was cut from a loom width of a rare type of Ottoman *kemha* known as *serenk*. Unlike the other Ottoman *kemha* textiles in this exhibition, which incorporate gilt silver-wrapped metallic thread in their designs, this textile has golden yellow and white silk where gold and silver metallic thread would otherwise have been used. Probably employed as a substitute for *kemha* at times when the Ottoman government was seeking to reduce the use of precious metals in textile production, *serenk* fabrics often surpass their more expensive *kemha* siblings in quality of design and brilliance of color, especially after the passage of time has tarnished areas of *kemha* woven with silk wrapped in thin strips of silver and silver-gilt foil.

In this *serenk* fabric, the familiar Ottoman layout using vertically oriented medallions in staggered rows inside a white ogival lattice is employed with great success. The lattice, decorated with small clumps of yellow berry-like forms, defines ogival compartments with red satin weave grounds in which complex pear-shaped medallions packed with tulips, carnations, rosettes, and rosebuds are flanked at the top by pairs of rosebuds and at the bottom by pairs of tulips. Unlike the severe and sometimes constrained use of flowers in textiles of the third quarter of the sixteenth century, this example shows the qualities of color, ebullience and imagination in Ottoman art that emerged in the last quarter of the century during the reign of Murad III. Strong yellows and greens feature in the best Ottoman *serenk*, and here the process of making a virtue out of necessity produced an outstanding result.

This design was evidently sufficiently prized at the time of its creation that the same loom program was used to produce an identically-designed textile with different colors, a striking pattern on a white satin ground, today preserved in the National Museum, Warsaw.¹





05

Loom-width of *kemha* with small-scale floral decoration

Probably Istanbul
Last quarter of 16th century
The Textile Museum 1.72
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1952
162 × 66 cm (63¾ × 26 inches)

Provenance: Charles Dikran Kelekian

Published references
Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.87, pl.40 (detail) and p.329.
Lévy, *La Collection Kelekian* n.d., pl.50 (left).

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: lampas, combination of 4/1 satin and 1/3 twill (Z direction)
Warp (foundation/satin): silk, 2 untwisted yarns S-twisted, medium blue
Warp (binding/twill): silk, 1Z-twisted, white
Weft (foundation/satin): silk, 2I (untwisted), medium blue
Weft (pattern/twill): silk, 3Z-twisted or 4Z-twisted, 3 colors: yellow-green, red paired with light red, white
Weft (pattern/twill): gilt metal wrapped S-direction around yellow silk (continuous) paired with yellow silk (continuous)
Edges: selvedge on one, satin weave, white
Ends: stripped
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

¹ Folsach & Bernsted 1993, pp.110-11, no.30.

This very attractive patterned silk, with a small-scale design of tulips, carnations, hyacinths, rosebuds, and other stylized flowers, executed in red, gold, and white on a sky-blue background, is arranged in a layout that is both vertically and horizontally coherent. Vertically, the design is formed of parallel undulating stems from which various flowers spring; at the same time, the largest floral elements form horizontal bands across the width of the fabric.

The relatively small scale of this textile is somewhat unusual for the second half of the sixteenth century, as is the four-fold repeat of the basic design across the width of the fabric. The contrast of golden flowers and blue background is not merely one of color but, due to the structure of lampas weave, one of texture as well; the motifs are executed in twill weave, with diagonal lines of texture, while the blue background is satin weave, shiny but without woven texture. A similar textile is in the David Collection, Copenhagen.¹





06

Loom-width fragment of a velvet cover

Bursa
Late 16th to early 17th century
The Textile Museum 1.55
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1951
174 × 66 cm (68½ × 26 inches)

Published references
Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.309, fig.320 detail.
Atıl 1987, p.218, fig.151.
Denny 1973, p.63, fig.18.
Mackie 1973, p.58, cat.no.16.

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread,
cotton
Structure: brocaded velvet, 4/1 satin
foundation with 1/4 twill order (S direction)
for discontinuous supplementary weft
Warp (main): silk, 15-twisted, white
Warp (pile): silk, 15-twisted, red
Weft (before pile): cotton, 1Z-spun, white
Weft (after pile): cotton, 1Z-spun, white
Weft (front of pair): cotton, 1Z-spun, white
Weft (back of pair): silk, 1 (untwisted), white
Weft (supplementary): gilt metal wrapped
S-direction around off-white silk
(discontinuous)
Edges: selvedge, satin weave, white
Ends: cut
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

Of the countless surviving early velvets woven in Bursa, few if any can match this fragmentary cover in fluency of execution and power of design. Its smaller dimension is an entire loom-width; original selvages can be seen on both long sides.

The incorporation of a border that turns a corner in the design suggests it was woven as a cover for a *sofa* or seating platform in an Ottoman domestic interior, while its technical and artistic qualities point towards a later sixteenth-century date.

The field design is based on ogival layout velvets, but the large scale and inclusion of a border only allows for half of each central ogival medallion to be completed; the lateral medallions (at the bottom of the textile, just above the border) are likewise seen only as halves. The half-medallions contain pendants at either end; the central ones are decorated with tulips alternating with carnations, while the lateral ones are decorated with large rosebuds and small ragged-edge palmettes. The striking border contains ogival cartouches ornamented with small tulips and carnations arranged around a central quatrefoil; the use of silver-wrapped white silk in the voided (pileless) areas is both sparing and highly effective.





07

Loom-width section of a velvet cover

Bursa
Second half of 16th century
Collection of Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf
176 × 65 cm (70½ × 25½ inches)

Published references
Mackie 1973, p.58, cat.no.16.
Atıl 1987, p.218, fig.151.
Denny 1973, p.63, fig.18.
Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.309, fig.320 (detail).

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: brocaded velvet, 4/1 satin with every third warp binding wefts in 1/4 twill order (S direction) for discontinuous weft
Warp (main): silk, 1 (untwisted), white
Warp (pile): silk, 1 (untwisted), red and blue
Weft (before pile): cotton, 1Z-spun, white
Weft (after pile): cotton, 1Z-spun, white
Weft (front of pair): cotton, 1Z-spun, white
Weft (back of pair): silk, 1 (untwisted), white
Weft (supplementary): gilt metal wrapped S-direction around light yellow silk and silver metal wrapped S direction around white silk twisted 3S
Edges: selvedge, satin weave, black
Ends: cut
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

1 Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.181, fig.35.

Velvets incorporating a layout of staggered rows of carnation blossoms were produced in Bursa from the later sixteenth century—the period to which this splendid example belongs—well into the eighteenth, and possibly even later. Here the design of beautifully drawn seven-petaled carnations in staggered rows incorporates a thin ‘frame’ stripe, indicating that this piece was intended to be the right-hand section of a larger cover that was probably square and three loom-widths wide.

Particularly noteworthy is the way in which two other characteristic Ottoman floral forms were incorporated in to the design. In alternate horizontal rows of carnations, the tulip-shaped calyxes of the blossoms are adorned with small rosebuds and small three-blossomed sprays of hyacinths.

Bursa velvets were intended for use as furnishing fabrics. After 1550 they were very rarely incorporated into Ottoman costume, but as they were exported in large quantities to Central and Eastern Europe during the same period, they were used in countless ecclesiastical vestments. Today carnation velvets are found incorporated into copes, dalmatics, chasubles, and altar-cloths preserved in the museums of Romania, Hungary, Poland, and especially Russia, where fragments were also used in articles as diverse as military saddles and the bindings of bibles.¹ Complete surviving velvet covers in their original form are relatively rarely found in museums.



Loom width of blue-ground *kemha*

Istanbul
17th century
The Textile Museum 3.301
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1951
137.5 × 65.5 cm (54¼ × 26¼ inches)

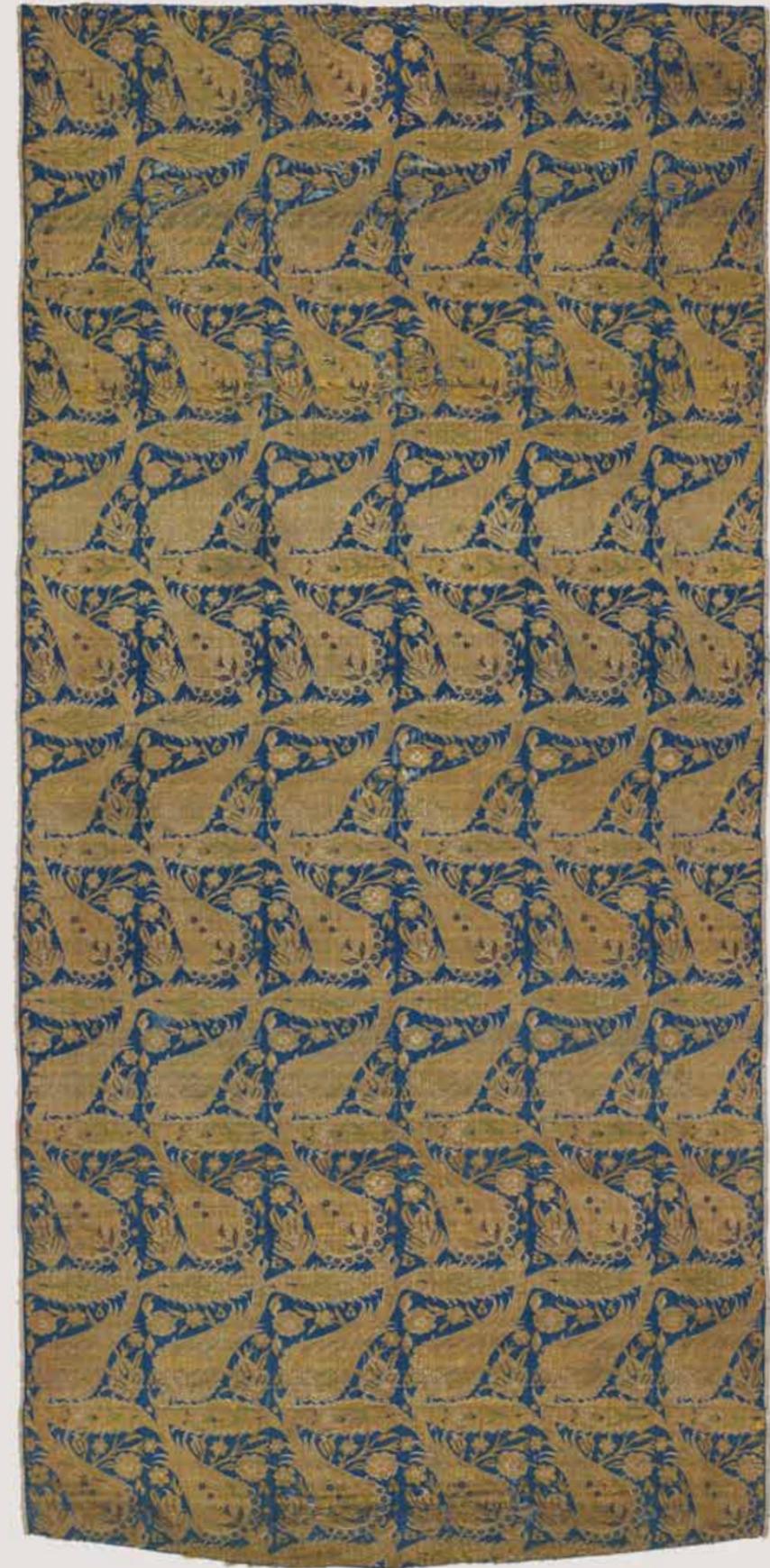
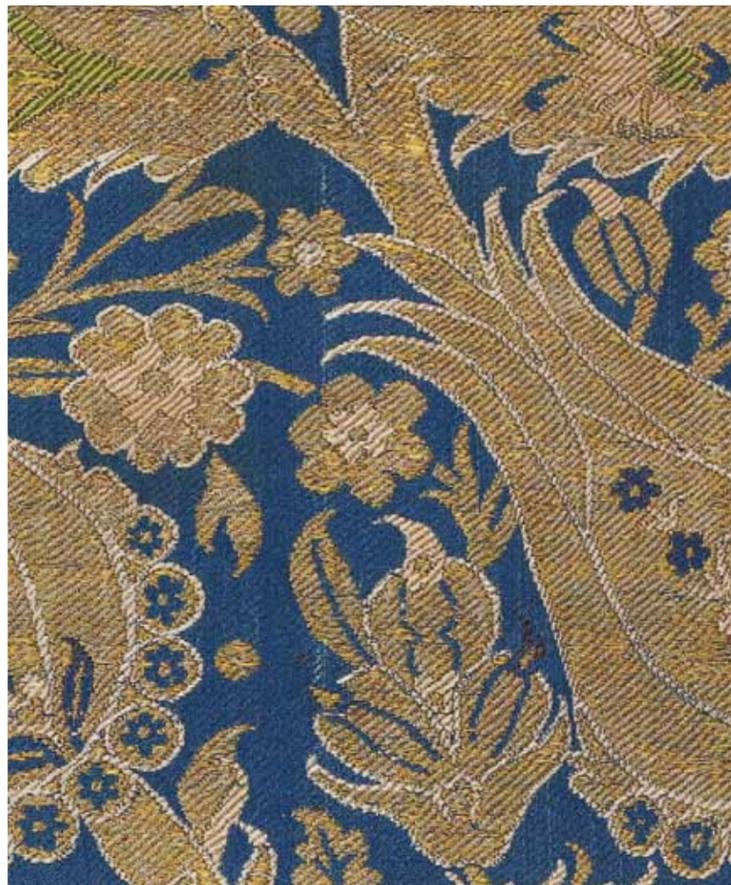
Provenance: Charles Dikran Kelekian

Published references
Gürsu 1988, p.135, fig.148.
Mackie 1973, pl.22.
Lévy, *La Collection Kelekian* n.d., pl.50 (right).

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: lampas, combination of 4/1 satin and 1/3 twill (Z direction)
Warp (foundation/satin): silk, 2 untwisted yarns S-twisted, blue
Warp (binding/twill): silk, 2 untwisted yarns Z-twisted, light red
Weft (foundation/satin): silk, 2Z-twisted, light blue
Weft (pattern/twill): silk, 3Z-twisted, 3 colors: green, white
Weft (pattern/twill): gilt metal wrapped S-direction around yellow silk (continuous) paired with and yellow silk (continuous)
Edges: selvedge, satin weave, white
Ends: stripped
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

The tendency for later Ottoman *kemha* fabrics to exhibit a smaller scale in their designs is manifested in this blue-ground example, in which the wavy-vine layout is repeated an almost unprecedented six times across the loom-width. Novel aspects of the design include having all of the leaves form horizontal bands, while the large tulips form the usual zigzag pattern at forty-five degrees to the left and the right. The result is an unusual, almost foursquare, compartmentalization of the layout. The vine motif itself, in marked contrast to the design seen on Plate 10, is virtually invisible. The limited palette, devoid of red, is another characteristic found in a number of examples of seventeenth-century Ottoman *kemha* weavings, as is the vertical compression of the design that results in slightly squashed circular rosettes and asymmetrical tulip blossoms depicted on the diagonal.

The familiar floral motifs of small carnations and rosebuds decorate alternate horizontal leaves, again a common artistic device that in effect combines the Ottoman *saz* style with the floral style in a felicitous marriage of artistic ideas.



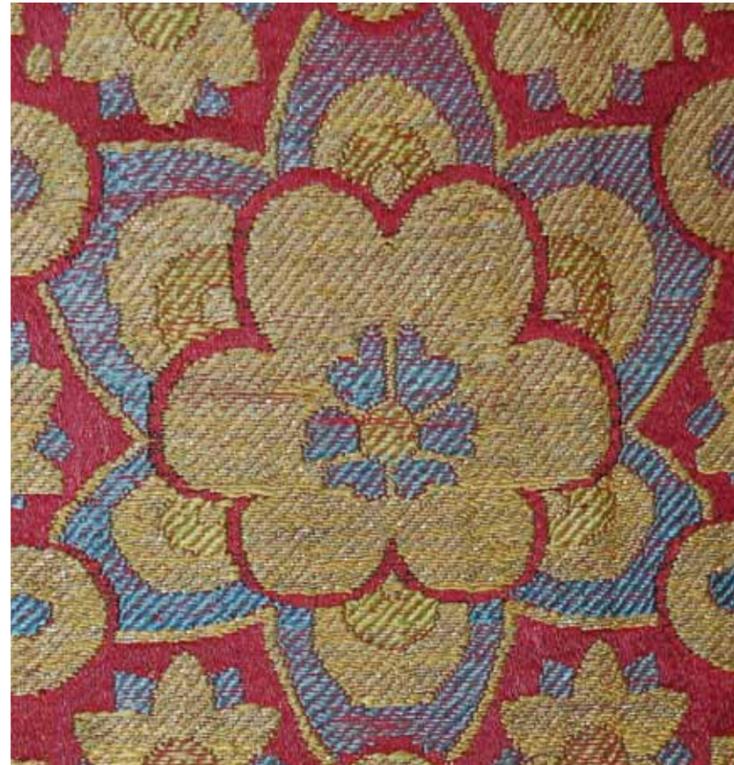
Fragment of yellow-ground *kemha*

Istanbul
 Second half 16th century
 The Textile Museum 1.47
 Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1947
 91 × 64 cm (35¼ × 25¼ inches)

Published references
 Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.204, fig.90Aii.
 Denny 1973, p.62, fig.15.

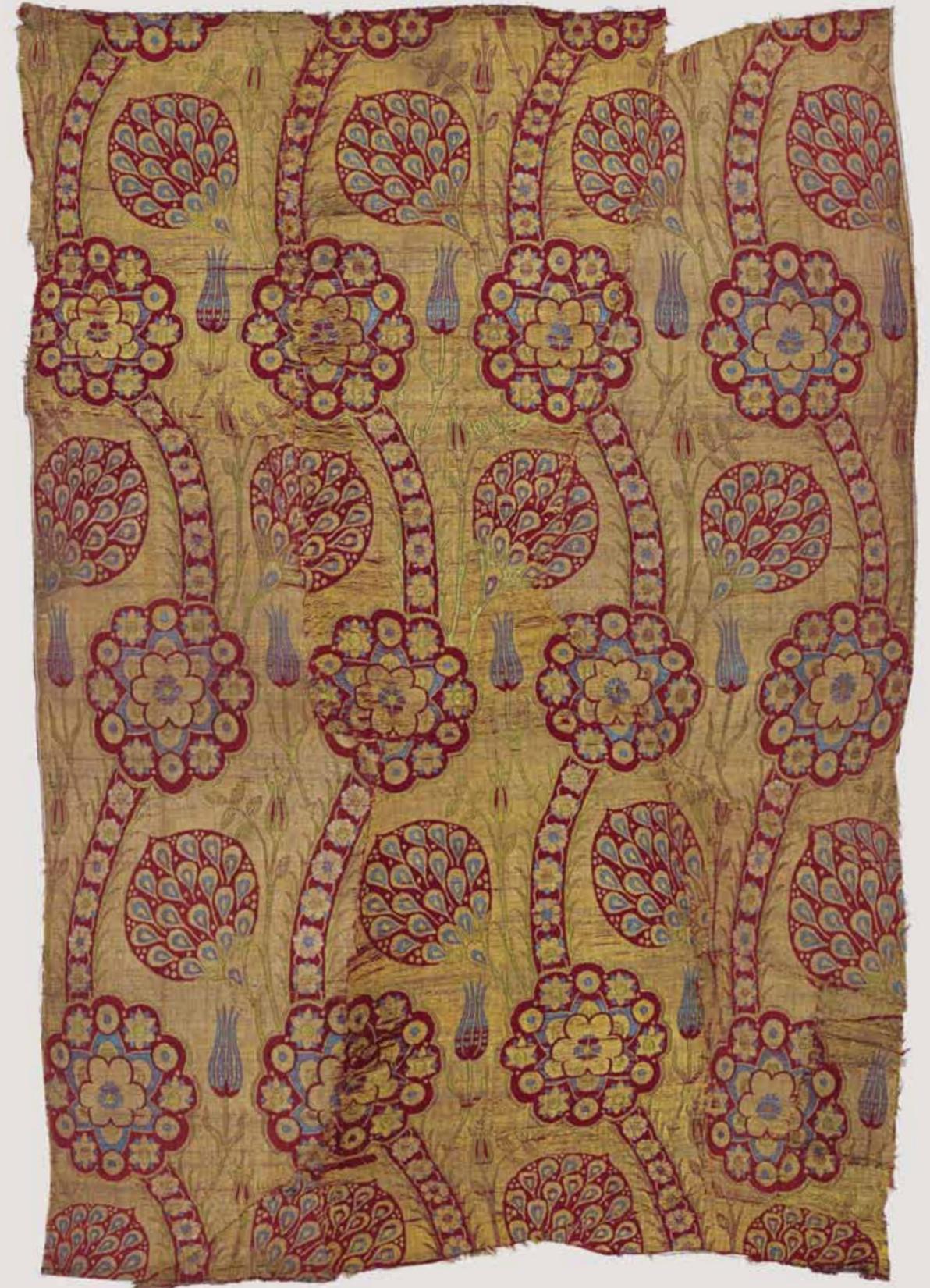
Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
 Structure: lampas, combination of 4/1 satin
 and 1/3 twill (Z direction)
 Warp (foundation/satin): silk, 2 untwisted
 yarns Z-twisted, red
 Warp (binding/twill): silk, 2 untwisted yarns
 Z-twisted, light red
 Weft (foundation/satin): silk, 31 (untwisted),
 red (orange-red)
 Weft (pattern/twill): silk, 1 (untwisted), 3
 colors: white, medium blue, green
 Weft (pattern/twill): gilt metal wrapped
 S-direction around yellow silk
 (discontinuous) paired with and covering
 yellow silk (continuous)
 Edges: selvedge, satin weave, white
 Ends: cut
 Construction: assembled from 13 fragments
 Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

- 1 Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.262, fig.185 for the
 Metropolitan Museum of Art fragment
 (inv.52.20.15).
 2 Atasoy *et al.* 2001, pp.218-219, especially
 fig.109.



One of the more interesting phenomena we observe in sixteenth-century Ottoman silk weaving is the relationship between the designs of *seraser* and *kemha* fabrics made in Istanbul. The *seraser* designers appear to have marched to a different drummer, and such cloth-of-gold and cloth-of-silver textiles often show designs of striking originality and even eccentricity. One of the best examples of this is the well-known kaftan with a large peacock-feather design whose pieces are shared between The Textile Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.¹

On occasion, the *kemha* weavers set out deliberately to imitate *seraser* fabrics—an example in the Moscow Armory Museum is among the first of such textiles.² This yellow-ground Textile Museum silk *kemha* fragment with a wavy-vine layout and ornaments of rosettes, tulips, and peacock feathers appears to be another example of such a 'faux-*seraser*' fabric, woven to imitate the more costly cloth-of-gold. The artistic result is largely successful: what is normally the artistic 'background' of *kemha* textiles, the red satin weave, is almost entirely engulfed by the 'motif' aspects, executed in twill weave. A very slight elongation or 'stretching' of the design is observable, especially when we look at the twelve-lobed rosettes and the diagonal peacock-feather motifs.





10

Fragment of red-ground *kemha*

Istanbul
Third quarter 16th century
The Textile Museum 1.68B
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1952
62.5 × 67.5 cm (24½ × 26½ inches)

Provenance: Charles Dikran Kelekian

Published references:

Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.90, pl.43.
Brend 1991, pp.24, 51.
Gürsu 1988, p.97, p.98, fig.86.
Trilling 1983, p.21, fig.3.
Petsopoulos 1982, p.127, pl.121.
Denny 1973, pp.55-66, p.62, fig.15.
Mackie 1973, p.196, fig.137.
Lévy, *La Collection Kelekian* n.d., pl.37 (top).

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: lampas, combination of 4/1 satin and 1/3 twill (Z direction)
Warp (foundation/satin): silk, 2 untwisted yarns S-twisted, red
Warp (binding/twill): silk, 2 untwisted yarns Z-twisted, white
Weft (foundation/satin): silk, 31 (untwisted), white
Weft (pattern/twill): silk, 4 Z-twisted, 5 colors: red, yellow-green, medium blue, purple, white
Weft (pattern/twill): gilt metal wrapped S-direction around yellow silk (discontinuous) paired with off-white silk (continuous)
Edges: selvedge, satin weave, white
Ends: stripped
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

- 1 Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.89, pl.42 and p.289, fig.242.
- 2 Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.86, pl.39 and p.284, fig.245.
- 3 Bilgi 2007, pp.24-25.



Among the finest and most imaginative of all Ottoman *kemha* fabrics are those executed with an overall layout of parallel ascending wavy vines from which spring floral blossoms and leaves. Perhaps the best-known of these are an often-published red-ground *kemha* silk in the Metropolitan Museum of Art,¹ a lesser-known stunning fragmentary blue-ground example of incredible intricacy in the Abegg-Stiftung in Riggisberg,² and two well-known fragmentary and pieced red-ground examples in The Textile Museum, of which this tailored fragment, obviously a survival of a ceremonial garment, is included in the present book.

The thick gold vines form the basis of the layout. They are adorned with plump textured three-petaled tulips pointing horizontally to the right, simple four-petaled tulips pointing to the left, small bipartite wavy green leaves recalling *çintemani* stripes, and two different kinds of large leaves, one bearing stylized Ottoman flowers in the 'new' floral style, and the other bearing complex palmettes of the older *hatayi* style.

Once again we see in this extraordinary *kemha* design a combination of powerful large-scale layout with delicate small-scale floral ornamentation, together with a combination of the best attributes of the *saz* style and the floral style that shows each to maximum advantage.

A *kemha* fragment, probably from the same length of fabric, is in the Sadberk Hanım Museum, Istanbul.³



11

Loom-width *yastık* (bolster cover)

Probably Istanbul
Second half of the 16th century
The Textile Museum 1.65
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1951
106 × 67 cm (41¾ × 26¼ inches)

Published references
Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.260, fig.181 (detail).
Gürsu 1988, p.116, fig.117.
Atıl 1987, p.223, pl.156.
Mackie 1973, p.54, cat.no.12.

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: *Seraser* (taqueté) (complementary weft-faced plain-weave with inner warps)
Warp (inner): silk, 2Z-twisted yarns S-plied, off-white
Warp (binding): silk, 1 (untwisted), off-white
Weft (complementary): silk, 1 (untwisted), green
Weft (complementary): silver metal wrapped S-direction around white silk (discontinuous) paired with off-white silk (continuous)
Weft (complementary): gilt metal wrapped S-direction around yellow silk (discontinuous) paired with orange silk thread (continuous)
Edges: selvedge, 2 cords
Ends: stripped
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

The traditional arrangement of an Ottoman living room, whether in the public (*selamlık*) area of a house where visitors could be received, or in the private (*harem*) part of a dwelling, was a series of sitting or reclining platforms (*sofa*) around the periphery. These were furnished with mattress-like cushions, usually covered with velvet or embroidered fabric in an upper-class home, and with bolsters (*yastık*) that, propped against the wall, formed the back to the seating against which an individual could lean in comfort. From the evidence of surviving examples, the production of matched sets of covers and bolsters by Bursa velvet-weavers was common practice from at least as early as the mid-sixteenth century, probably earlier. It continued in Bursa, nearby Bilecik, and much later in the Istanbul suburb of Üsküdar, well into the nineteenth century, when European-style chairs and settees began to replace traditional seating in Ottoman palaces and the private homes of the wealthy.

Three major techniques were used by Turkish silk weavers in the sixteenth century: *kadife* or cut-pile velvet, often with voided areas brocaded with metallic thread, in that case called *çatma*; *kemha* or textiles woven in lampas structure, with colorful motifs, usually in twill weave, on a satin weave background; and *seraser* woven in an ancient complex weaving technique incorporating plain weave interlacing termed *taqueté*, which in Ottoman Turkey was used for cloth of gold or silver. This fragmentary *yastık* or bolster cover is a *seraser*.

Differences in technique/medium in Ottoman textiles resulted in the different organization of weaving ateliers, even different craft guilds, and thus differences in training of artists themselves. Practically this meant that in Ottoman times specialists in different weaving techniques developed different styles. Velvet weavers originally conceptualized their style in part from Italian prototypes, large in scale, simple in detail, and often using either an ogival vine lattice format, or stacked or staggered rows of small medallions, carnation flowers, or *çintemani* amulet forms. *Kemha* weavers hewed most closely to the style of the *nakkashane*, and their technique allowed for a wide variety of colors and minutely detailed designs. By contrast, as mentioned above, *seraser* designers and weavers often marched to a different drummer, and some *seraser* fabrics astonish us with their originality and even their eccentricity.

This *seraser* cushion cover is, however, quite traditional; its design borrows a large-scale central ogival medallion with rosette-type flowers, including examples with 'spiraling' petals, from Bursa velvet weavers, and shows the familiar shield-shaped motifs at the 'flaps' or lappets originally at each end of the piece. Pairs of emblematic carnation blossoms once ornamented the spandrels at each end. A bolt of *seraser* might contain as many as eight or more identical bolster covers, which were then made into sets to furnish the sofas or cushioned platforms of traditional Turkish domestic interiors. In later Ottoman times embroidered sets of furniture covers replaced the woven examples of earlier times. Sets of covers made from expensive *seraser* fabrics such as this would have been affordable only by the wealthiest elements of Ottoman society.



12

Horse cover

Istanbul
Second half 16th to early 17th century
The Textile Museum 1.38
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1931
85 × 53.5 cm (33½ × 21 inches)

Published references

Atıl 1987, p. 221, fig. 153.
Denny 1973, p. 66, fig. 22.
Mackie 1973, p. 55, cat. no. 13.

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread

Structure: dovetailed tapestry weave

Warp: silk, 2S-twisted yarns Z-plied, light yellow

Weft: silk, 2S-twisted yarns Z-plied, 4 colors:

red, medium blue, black, green

Weft: gilt metal wrapped S-direction around yellow silk

Weft: silver metal wrapped S-direction around white silk

Edges: stripped

Ends: stripped

Construction: assembled from 6 fragments

Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

1 On the so-called *kejebe* form, see Mackie and Thompson 1980, pp.78-79, cat.no.14, width 238 cm., thought to have been made for use on a camel rather than a horse. Other examples may be seen in Tsareva 2011, pp.32-33, cat.no.9, and Schürmann 1969, p.82, pl.6.

2 Benaki Museum, Inv.3809. See Öz 1951, pl.XCIV; and Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.255, fig.166.

3 MAK, inv.T9128, 9129, and 9130, all apparently unpublished.

4 See Atasoy *et al.* 2001, pp.26-27.

This remarkable silk tapestry-woven fragment constitutes about two-thirds of what was almost certainly a horse cover. Its original layout consisted of a 'field' with a large central compound floral palmette flanked by two large leaves decorated with hyacinth sprays, smaller compound palmettes with cockade leaves in the upper corners, and corner-pieces in both lower corners. On the 'bottom' and both side ends (as illustrated) was a border of palmettes with red lotuses on a lobed white ground joined by a meandering vine, with blue lotuses in the interstices. This large border was surrounded by a red-ground guard stripe decorated with eight-pointed stars.

The remarkable similarity of this sixteenth-century Ottoman work to a group of early surviving Türkmen horse trappings dubbed *kejebe*,¹ which have a similar border on one long and two short sides, may provide a clue to the object's use; it was probably deployed behind the saddle as a decorative trapping. A well-known Ottoman velvet example in the Benaki Museum, Athens exhibits the same layout.² More recently, a group of three complete examples in the same weave and style as the Textile Museum example has appeared in the Museum für angewandte Kunst in Vienna.³ All three Vienna examples have fringes around the three sides decorated with a border, and two of them have preserved a simple tapestry-woven extension at the 'top' that probably extended under the saddle. A few Ottoman historical miniatures appear to depict such covers; among them a miniature from a depiction of the triumphal procession of Sultan Mehmed III through the Hippodrome in Istanbul following the conquest of Eger in Hungary in the early seventeenth century.⁴

Of course it is the technique that is of special interest in these unusual and rare trappings. The horizontal colored wefts that form the design, packed down over the concealed warps, exhibit the same fundamental weaving technique employed in the flat-woven rugs of Ottoman times that we call kilims, with one exception; instead of leaving slits where two colors meet along a vertical line, the weavers interlocked wefts of two different colors over a shared warp. The result is a fabric of astonishing richness and detail that in effect overcomes the inherent difficulties of the medium. Rarely encountered in Ottoman court weaving, it appears to have been used almost exclusively in trappings such as this one.



13

Velvet *yastık* face

Bursa
17th century
The Textile Museum 1.54
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1951
108.5 × 65 cm (42¼ × 25½ inches)

Provenance: Charles Dikran Kelekian

Published references:
Atıl 1980, p.357, fig.207.
Denny 1973, p.64, fig.20.
Mackie 1973, p.59, cat.no.17.
Mackie and Rowe 1976, p.22, fig.13.
Falke 1936, fig.537.
Lévy, *La Collection Kelekian* n.d., pl.94 (right).

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread, cotton
Structure: brocaded velvet, 4/1 satin with every third warp binding wefts in 1/4 twill order (S direction) with discontinuous weft bound in twill
Warp (main): silk, 15-twisted, white
Warp (pile): silk, Z-twisted, red
Weft (before pile): cotton, 1Z-spun, white
Weft (after pile): cotton, 1Z-spun, white
Weft (front of pair): cotton, 1Z-spun, white
Weft (back of pair): silk, 1 (twisted), white
Weft (supplementary) gilt metal wrapped
S-direction around off-white silk
Edges: selvedge, satin weave, white and red
Ends: stripped
Construction: lined in later period
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

1 The traditional use of *yastıks* in Ottoman interiors is best seen in drawings and paintings executed in Istanbul in the early 18th century by the Swiss painter Jean-Etienne Liotard. See the new edition of Boppe 1989, pp.76, 79 and 81. Miniatures from a well-known series of Ottoman Sultans' portraits, now dispersed among different collections, clearly show such *yastıks* with their characteristic lappet ends. See Binney 1979, nos.40a and b, p.68.

2 See Morehouse, 1996.

3 See Geijer 1951, cat.no.69 (a gift from a North African potentate to the King of Sweden in 1731); also *Tkanina turecka* 1983, cat.no.100; Atasoy *et al.* 2001, pp.250-252, entries 67, 68, and 74, and pp.320-321, figs.356-370; Kremlin Armory Museum, Moscow, a cope, TK2216, apparently unpublished.

The artistic challenge to the textile designer implicit in *yastıks* is to reconcile the traditional orientation of Bursa velvets, many of which (Plates 7, 20, 22) have a definable top and bottom determined by the verticality of the bolt of cloth on the loom in relation to the weaver, and the fact that *yastıks* are displayed horizontally in the home.¹ A further challenge is to create original and compelling designs in the relatively small space that a traditional bolster cover allows. Examples such as this meet the artistic challenge beautifully and effectively. The designer employed a circular medallion in the center, and four silver seven-petaled carnations in the corners. Pairs of serrated leaves to either side of the medallion are decorated with hyacinth sprays and punctuated by a small carnation between each pair; both long ends of the cover show an elongated form thought to be an artichoke (*enginar*) or possibly a pomegranate (*nar*), flanked by a pair of serrated leaves decorated with rosebuds. The flaps or 'lappets' at each end are decorated with six traditional shield-shaped compartments each containing a six-petaled carnation.

Such velvet *yastıks* were highly popular in the Ottoman Empire, where they were often imitated or served as inspiration for small carpets—pile-woven bolster covers made in villages (Plates 46, 47), giving rise to one of the most highly-prized genres of Turkish village weaving.² Ottoman velvet *yastıks* were also exported to North Africa and to Europe, where some of them found their way into chasubles and other church vestments.³





14

Loom-width of ogival-layout *kemha*

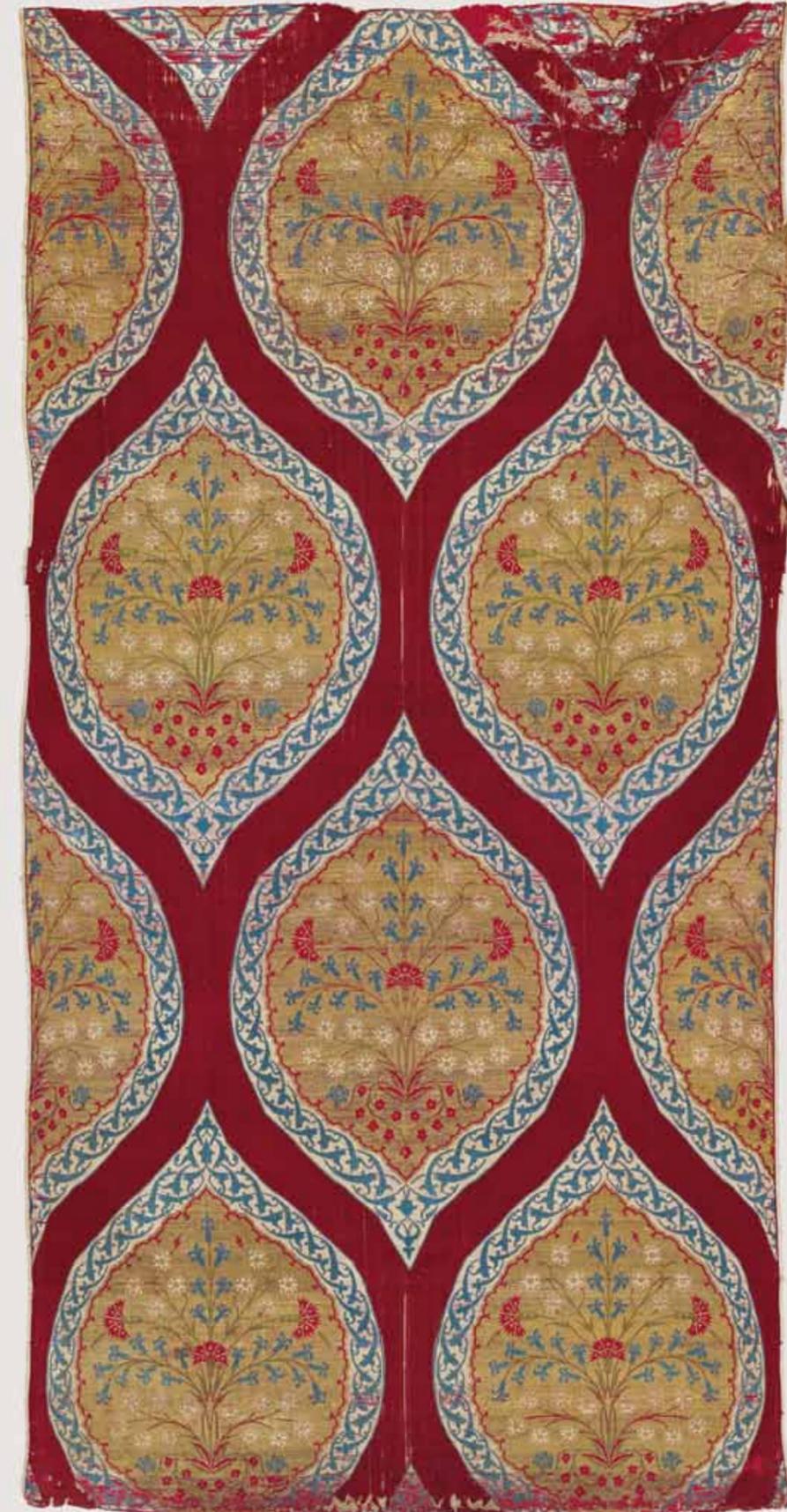
Bursa or Istanbul
 Third quarter 16th century
 The Textile Museum 1.50
 Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1951
 125 × 64 cm (49¼ × 24¾ inches)

Provenance: Charles Dikran Kelekian

Published references
 Atasoy *et al* 2001, p.272, fig.209 (detail).
 Gürsu 1988, p.69, fig.36.
 Denny 1973, p.58, fig.6.
 Mackie 1973, p.49, cat.no.7 exhibit #7.
 Lévy, *La Collection Kelekian* n.d., pl.36 (left).

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
 Structure: lampas, combination of 4/1 satin and 1/3 twill (Z direction)
 Warp (foundation/satin): silk, 2 untwisted yarns S-twisted, red
 Warp (binding/twill): silk, 2 untwisted yarns Z-twisted, light red
 Weft (foundation/satin): silk, 31 (untwisted), white
 Weft (pattern/twill): silk, 3Z-twisted, 3 colors: white, medium blue, yellow-green,
 Weft (pattern/twill): gilt metal wrapped S-direction around yellow silk (discontinuous) paired with and covering yellow silk (continuous)
 Edges: selvedge, satin weave, white and red
 Ends: stripped
 Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

Although the ogival layout is certainly the most common to be employed by Istanbul *kemha* designers in the later sixteenth century, few surviving *kemha* can match the elegance and simplicity of this example, in which the original defining vine has been entirely eliminated, and the ogival floral medallions simply ‘float’ on the red satin weave ground. Each medallion is framed with a fluently executed border of light-blue *rumi* split-leaf arabesques on a white ground. The symmetrical spray of flowers in the center, set off on a gold ground of silver-wrapped yellow silk twill weave, incorporates red carnations, blue hyacinths, and small six-petaled star-like white blossoms, part of an Ornithogalum species that is native to areas surrounding the Mediterranean Sea and known as ‘star of Bethlehem’ in English and *Akyıldız* in Turkish. The result is a textile that combines the power of large-scale ornamentation, seen in the medallions themselves, and the delicacy of the beautifully executed floral sprays. Incorporated into a court costume, this fabric would have made a strong impact at a distance, which would have been reinforced by an impression of ornate and detailed richness as the viewer came closer.



15

Bohça (wrapping cloth)

Istanbul
Late 16th or early 17th century
Private Collection
117 × 104 cm (46 × 40¾ inches)

Material: linen, silk
Structure: balanced plain weave, embroidery,
5/1 running stitch in diagonal alignment
Warp: linen, 1Z-spun, 16/cm, off-white
(undyed)
Weft: linen, 1Z-spun, 17/cm, off-white
(undyed)
Embroidery thread: silk, 2Z-twisted yarns
S-plyed, 7 colors: red, green, blue, brown
(mostly corroded), yellow, off-white
Edge finish: selvedge
End finish: folded and hemmed
Construction: assembled from 2 loom-width
panels
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

The decorative elements of embroidered textiles from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century favor infinitely repeating patterns with a defined direction, clear and distinctly drawn design elements, precisely rendered motifs, and a small number of bold colors. This aesthetic preference closely resembles the aesthetics of woven silk fabrics from the same period. This embroidered *bohça* shows ogival medallions organized in diagonal alignment on a white ground. Each medallion is outlined with blue or green borders in alternating bands, filled with the fashionable new floral style imagery and topped with almond-shaped tulip finials.

The principles of design arrangement followed in this embroidered *bohça* relate very closely to the woven silk textile in Plate 14. Both share one very interesting characteristic; there is no visible lattice to fill the space between the ogival medallions, contrary to the usual textile design practice of adding a visible lattice in order to create a foreground and a background in the composition, thus lending movement to the design. This feature lends austerity and restraint to the design.



16

Loom-width of ogival-layout *kemha*

Probably Istanbul
Second half 16th century
The Textile Museum 1.56
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1951
108.5 × 58.5 cm (42¼ × 23 inches)

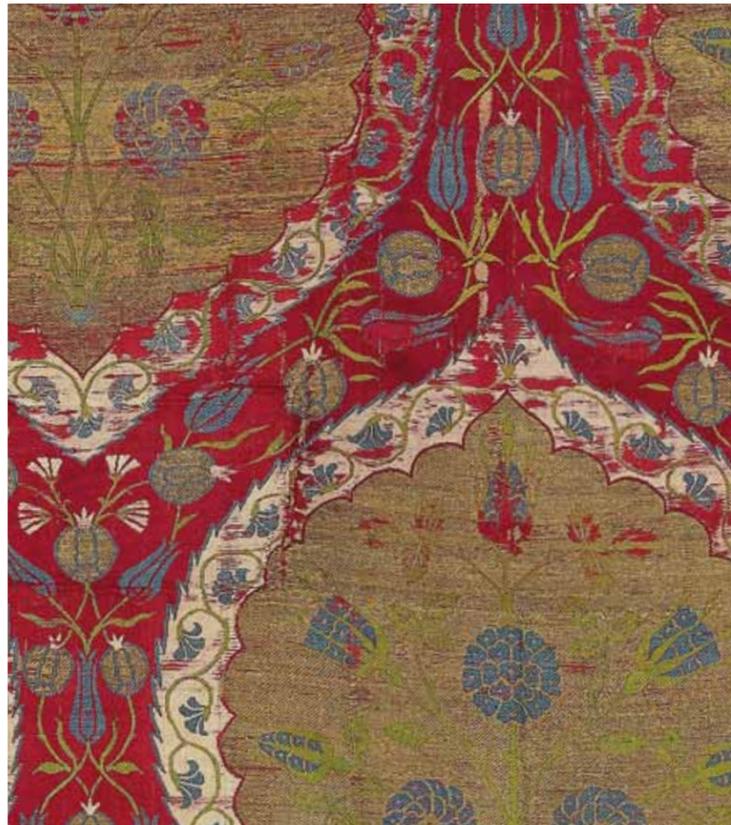
Provenance: Charles Dikran Kelekian

Published references
Gürsu 1988, p.71, fig.43.
Mackie 1973, p.48, cat.no.6.
Lévy, *La Collection Kelekian* n.d., pl.43
(right detail).

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: lampas, combination of 4/1 satin
and 1/3 twill (Z direction)
Warp (foundation/satin): silk, 2 untwisted
yarns S-twisted, red
Warp (binding/twill): silk, 2 untwisted yarns
Z-twisted, light red
Weft (foundation/satin): silk, 31 (untwisted),
off-white and light red
Weft (pattern/twill): silk, 3Z-twisted, 3 colors:
blue, green, white
Weft (pattern/twill): gilt metal wrapped very
tightly in S-direction around yellow silk
(discontinuous) paired with and covering
yellow silk (continuous)
Edges: stripped
Ends: cut
Construction: assembled from 18 fragments
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

The ogival layout was the one most frequently employed by Istanbul *kemha* weavers. It allowed for fairly large basic units (the staggered rows of ogival medallions) that made a striking impression from a distance in the great public court ceremonies, while at the same time allowing for a delicacy of detail and a subtlety of design that was highly prized by Ottoman artists and their patrons alike. This fragment of *kemha*, probably originally part of a garment, is a good case in point.

The defining 'frame' of the ogival medallions appears on the red satin ground simply as a thin vine bearing small blue tulips and gold pomegranates. The medallions, in effect, float on the red background, and are given emphasis by the use of a white border in which tiny four-petaled blossoms are depicted, as if from a stencil. The same stencil-like separation of floral elements is seen in the blue blossoms that decorate the gold-ground interiors of each medallion. Here the major floral elements are roses and rosebuds, accompanied by small leaves that are easily identifiable botanically as those from rose bushes. In designs such as this, the layout dominates the floral motifs; in other examples, such as the *serenk* (Plate 4), the blossom motifs in contrast may be seen to dominate the ogival layout.



17

Block-printed textile fragment

Cairo, Egypt or Istanbul, Turkey
Second half 16th century
The Textile Museum 73.711
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1954
23.5 × 17 cm (9¼ × 6½ inches)

Material: linen
Structure: balanced plain-weave, block printed (Turk. *yazma*), dyed gray, reverse is less saturated with dye than the front of foundation fabric
Warp: linen, 1S-spun, 11/cm, off-white (undyed)
Weft: linen, 1Z-spun, 11/cm, off-white (undyed)
Edges: selvedge
Ends: stripped
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

¹ Dye analyses of the textiles in the Newberry Collection in Oxford revealed no trace of alizarine, morindone, or indigotin. On the other hand, tannin was found, which must have produced the gray seen on these fragments: see Barnes 1997, p.61. We would like to thank Mattiebelle Gittinger for her help identifying the printing technique.

² Barnes 1997, p.133, cat.no.452.

This block-printed textile has a delicate and very finely drawn floral style design in gray on cream linen foundation fabric. It is one of two rare surviving fragments of Ottoman block-printed textiles that date to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in The Textile Museum's collection. Both fragments were acquired by George Hewitt Myers from a dealer who sold him Indian block-printed textiles found in Fustat, Egypt. Based on their very distinctive non-Indian designs, as well as the material and structure of the yarns used to weave the foundation fabric, they are readily assigned to the Ottoman Empire.

The typical Ottoman tripartite tulips and hyacinths, as well as the sinuous branches that carry them, are drawn with very sharp edges, not easy to achieve in a block-printing medium. The blocks used for the printing were especially small, some no larger than a single tulip or hyacinth bloom. There also might have been hand drawing for certain details such as the flower stems. This exquisite textile was designed and executed very carefully, suggesting that it may have been done as a special order.

In terms of yarns, this textile contains linen yarns spun in both S and Z directions, unlike Indian Z-spun cotton. The shade of gray used for the design was probably produced by printing an iron-based substance on to the surface and then immersing the cloth in a bath of liquid containing tannin, rather than by using a resist and immersion method. The reverse face of the fabric shows little to no dye saturation.¹

A similar block-printed textile is in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.²



18

Fragment of a block-printed cotton *yastık*

Cairo, Egypt or Istanbul, Turkey
Later 16th century
The Textile Museum 73.710
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1954
43 × 14 cm (16¾ × 5½ inches)

Material: cotton
Structure: balanced plain-weave, block-printed (Turk. *yazma*), dyed gray
Warp: cotton, 1Z-spun, 12/cm, off-white (undyed)
Weft: cotton, 1Z-spun, 14/cm, off-white (undyed)
Edges: selvedge
Ends: stripped
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

¹ Barnes 1997, pp.130-135, cat.nos.441, 442, 443 and 461.

Two small fragments in The Textile Museum of plain-weave fabric, block-printed with black designs, constitute almost the sole remaining Ottoman examples of this technique that can be convincingly dated to the sixteenth century. The field design of this fragment consists of complex *çintemani* motifs, in which each of the three circles is decorated with even smaller *çintemani*. The remains of the lappets seen at one end indicate that this fragment was probably used as a cushion cover. The border consists of rosebuds, rosettes, carnations, and small serrated leaves on curling vines.

The three blocks that were used to print the design can be clearly differentiated: one was for the lappets, another was for the three-balls (*çintemani*) motif that probably covered the field, and the third was used for the border. The design of the printing block used for the border shows two carnations and two rosebuds accompanied by serrated leaves swirling around a central rosette. There are four other fragments in the Newberry Collection in the Ashmolean Museum with the same spiraling design;¹ all are from borders of block-printed textiles similar to the Textile Museum example, which is the largest and contains more of the overall design—the lappet, the center field, and the border, thus allowing us to see how different artistic styles were in use concurrently in Ottoman textile arts. As we have already said, this new floral style enjoyed “...a sort of primacy amid a veritable casserole of styles and genres.”



19

Fragment of a green-ground *kemha*

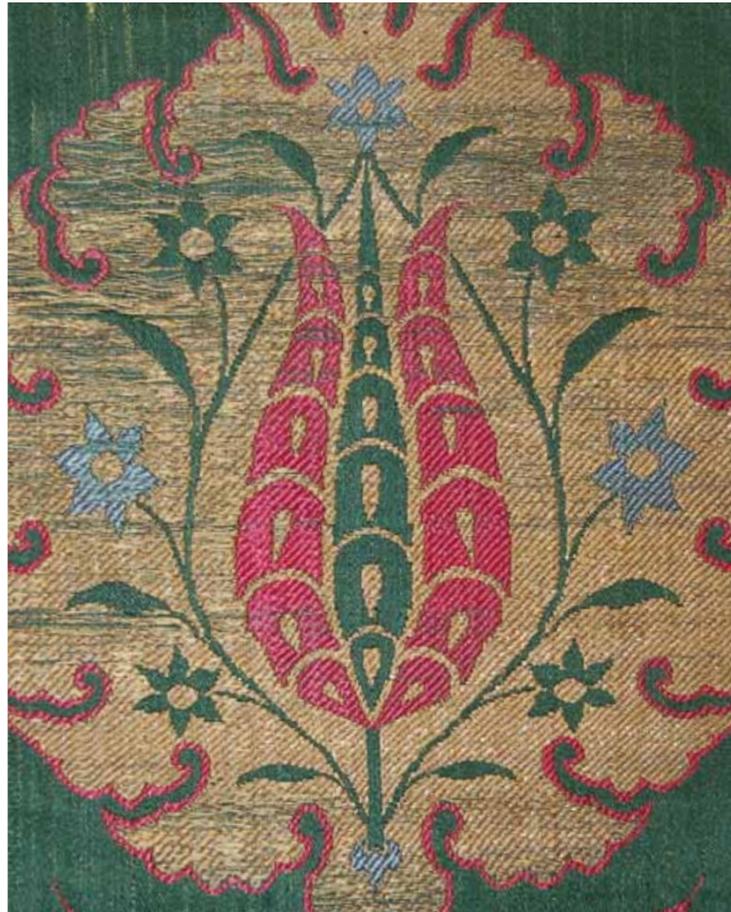
Istanbul
First half 17th century
The Textile Museum 1994.27.3
Gift of Neutrogena Corporation
67.8 × 29 cm (26½ × 11½ inches)

Probably from the same fabric length as Bilgi 2007, pp.36-37.

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: lampas, combination of 4/1 satin and 1/3 twill (Z direction)
Warp (foundation/satin): silk, 1Z-twisted, green
Warp (binding/twill): silk, 1Z-twisted, medium red and light red
Weft (foundation/satin): silk, 1 (untwisted), light green
Weft (pattern/twill): silk, 1 (untwisted), blue, red, white
Weft (pattern/twill): gilt metal wrapped S-direction around yellow silk (discontinuous) paired with and covering yellow silk (continuous)
Edges: selvedge, satin weave, white and green
Ends: stripped
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

This small fragment from a well-known bolt of mid sixteenth-century Ottoman *kemha*, now divided up among several collections, represents one of the earliest impacts of the floral style on Istanbul *kemha* weaving. The tulips, with their three segmented petals, are placed within small deeply-serrated gold (silver-wrapped yellow silk) medallions, themselves crowned by finials that both recall Ottoman carnation petals, and more importantly, show a striking parallel with Italian silk velvet design, as manifested in the Berlin portrait by Pollaiuolo (fig.4).

This resemblance demonstrates the important relationship between Italian and Ottoman design up to the time of Rüstem Paşa's decision to develop a more distinctive Ottoman 'brand;' it also underlines the impact of the very influential Italian velvet-weaving tradition on the early development of Ottoman floral *kemha* designs in mid-century Istanbul. The scale-like textured pattern of the thick ogival vines is also clearly influenced by contemporary Italian velvet design.



20

Loom-width length of velvet with ogival layout and floral design

Probably Istanbul
Circa 1550-1560
The Textile Museum 83.10
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1951
101 × 62 cm (39½ × 24½ inches)

Provenance: Charles Dikran Kelekian

Published reference
Lévy, *La Collection Kelekian* n.d., pl.91 (left).

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: brocaded velvet, 4/1 satin
foundation with 1/4 twill order
(S-direction) for discontinuous
supplementary weft.

Warp (main): silk, 1 (untwisted), white
Warp (pile): silk, 1Z-twisted, red
Weft (before pile): silk, 1S-twisted, light
yellow

Weft (after pile): silk, 1S-twisted, light yellow
Weft (front of pair): silk, 1S-twisted, light
yellow

Weft (back of pair): silk, 1 (untwisted), light
yellow (occasionally 2 or 3 S-spun silk
threads bundled to create a thicker weft
yarn)

Weft (supplementary): gilt metal wrapped
S-direction around yellow silk
(discontinuous)

Edges: selvedge, satin weave, white

Ends: stripped

Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

1 Atasoy *et al.* 2001, pp.182-190 for the
discussion of Italianate velvets and
pp.300-303, figs.291-306 for images of
Italianate velvets.

2 Eiland, Jr., and Pinner 1999, especially the
contributions by John Mills and Michael
Franses.

Ottoman velvets with this type of simple but elegant design in a double-ogival layout are sometimes termed 'Italianate' due to their design resemblance to Italian velvets from the first half of the sixteenth century. Louise Mackie has determined that artistic distinctions between certain Ottoman and Italian velvets are often blurred, but that the technical characteristics of the pattern of binding wefts in the voided areas helps us to establish a firm attribution to one or other center of production.¹

This example consists of a major ogival grid with very wide (formerly) silver vines bearing minor decorative elements, on top of which is superimposed a minor ogival grid of narrow vines that bears the major design elements; central large five-petaled tulips contained in medallions with trefoil edges, and carnations within six-petaled rosettes on either side of the loom width.

The striking discovery, also first set out by Mackie, that the vast majority of velvet kaftans in the Topkapı Palace collections incorporate fabrics that are of foreign—mostly Italian—manufacture, underlines two important aspects of Turkish velvets such as this. First, that they were apparently mainly regarded in Turkey as furnishing fabrics, suitable for curtains, bolsters, couch covers, and the like, rather than for ceremonial court costume. The second is what we might call the 'mystique of the imported', typical of high fashion everywhere since time immemorial. As a result, when we see Ottoman velvets used in garments, the garments themselves are likely to have been tailored in Europe, for secular or religious purposes, from foreign (Ottoman) and hence more prestigious fabrics according to European taste and sensibilities.

As we have seen, however, the mystique of imported, foreign, exotic and probably expensive silks in both European and Ottoman cultures was balanced by a countervailing tendency to prefer local styles to foreign ones. In the Ottoman case, the stylistic prejudice for foreign goods seems to have strongly favored Italian imports before about 1560, but balanced by an apparent lack of interest in Safavid and later in Mughal products. Such matters of taste probably explain in part why some gifts of foreign carpet and textiles to the Ottoman sultans were stored away in the Topkapı Palace and never used for any purpose.²



Loom-width of ogival-layout *kemha* with carnations

Bursa
17th century
The Textile Museum 1.73B
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1952
82 × 67 cm (32½ × 26¼ inches)

Provenance: Charles Dikran Kelekian

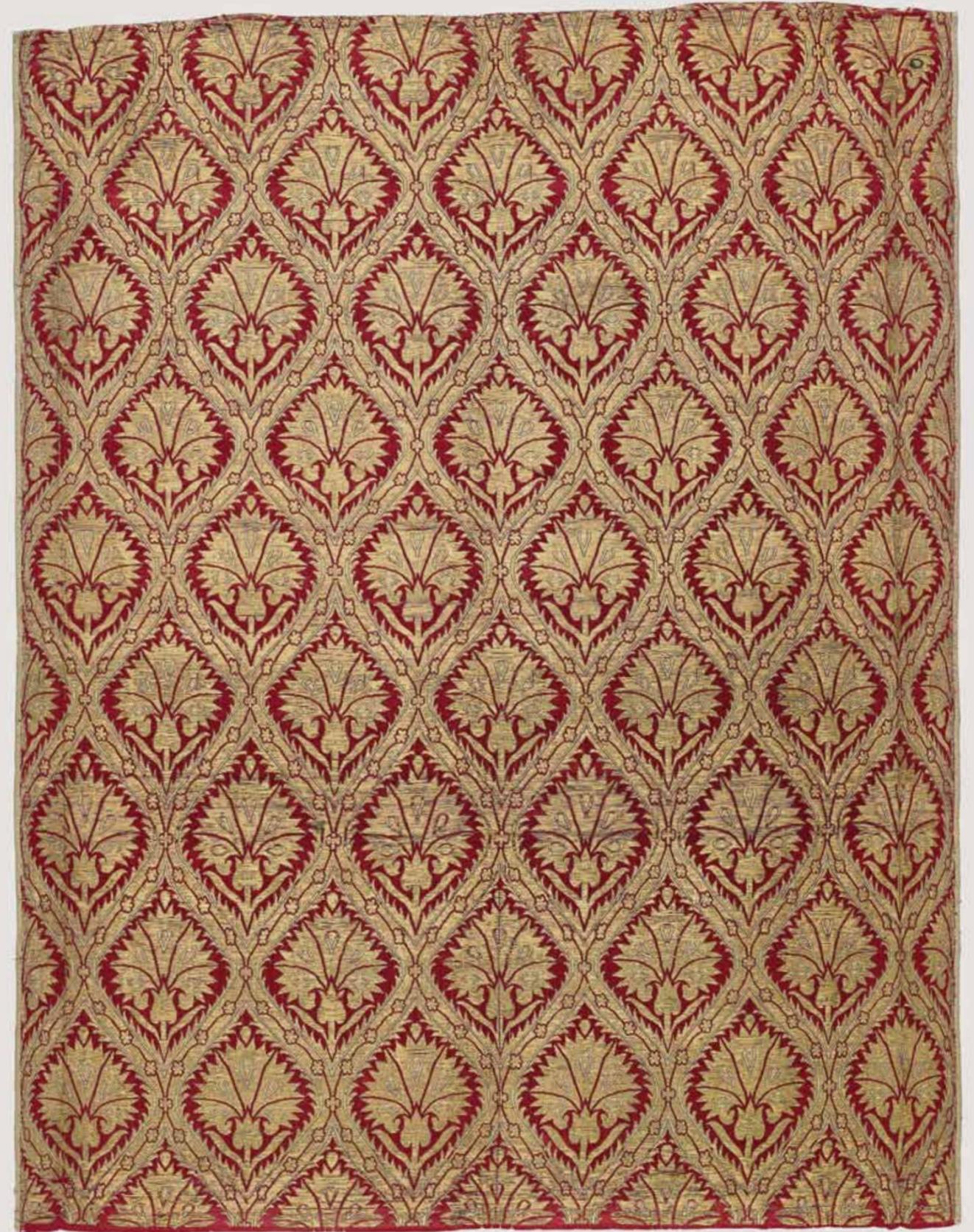
Published reference
Lévy, *La Collection Kelekian* n.d., pl.47 (right).

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: lampas, combination of 4/1 satin and 1/3 twill (Z direction)
Warp (foundation/satin): silk, 21-twisted yarns S-plied, red
Warp (binding/twill): silk, 1 (untwisted), white
Weft (foundation/satin): silk, 2Z-twisted, light red
Weft (pattern/twill): silk, 4Z-twisted, 1 color: white
Weft (pattern/twill): gilt metal wrapped Z-direction around yellow silk (continuous) paired with and covering yellow silk (continuous)
Edges: selvedge, satin weave, white
Ends: stripped
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

A feature that characterizes many later Ottoman woven textiles, both *kemha* and *kadife* (velvet), is the gradual diminution in the size and scale of the decoration. This may be seen as an economic response to hard times, because a smaller repeating pattern requires a far simpler and easier process of loom set-up, and also makes tailoring much less problematic where different forms meet along a seam. It also probably reflects a fundamental change in Ottoman taste.

This seventeenth-century *kemha* fabric, with large amounts of silver-gilt thread brocading and a relatively small area of red satin weave ground, is typical of later Ottoman floral textiles, made when the long-distance impact of huge forms commonly used for the simply-tailored, loose-fitting sixteenth century ceremonial garments was no longer so highly prized, and certain costumes, especially women's, underwent fashion changes in favor of more highly tailored, closely-fitting garments. The smaller scale of design seen here would have been more appropriate for tailored garments that did not have the large areas of uncut loom-width silk commonly found in the greatest sixteenth-century kaftans preserved in the Topkapı Palace. The significant exception to this rule was *seraser* fabric of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, still popular for court costume, where if anything the forms of decoration became even larger, although the fabric itself in later kaftans exhibits a serious decline in quality and a far more sparing use of metallic thread.

The carnations seen here have five petals; each blossom has a tulip-like calyx and thin wavy leaves at the base, and the flowers are closely crowded inside the wide lattice. Although the textile is lavish in its use of silk thread wrapped with silver foil, the overall fluidity of curvilinear forms and fineness of draftsmanship are a clear step back from the finest textiles of the preceding century.



22

Loom-width velvet with carnations

Bursa
Late 16th to early 17th century
The Textile Museum 1.52
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1951
125 × 64 cm (49¼ × 26¼ inches)

Published references
Mackie 1973, p.57, cat.no.15.
Weibel 1944, pl.168.

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread,
cotton

Structure: brocaded velvet, 4/1 satin
foundation with 1/4 twill order
(S-direction) for discontinuous
supplementary weft

Warp (main): silk, 1 (untwisted), white

Warp (pile): silk, 1S-twisted, red and
blue-green

Weft (before pile): cotton, 1Z-spun, white

Weft (after pile): cotton, 1Z-spun, white

Weft (front of pair): cotton, 1Z-spun, white

Weft (back of pair): silk, 1 (untwisted), white

Weft (brocaded): yellow gilt metal wrapped

S-direction around yellow silk

(discontinuous); silver gilt-wrapped

S-direction around white silk

Edges: selvedge, satin weave, blue and light
green

Ends: stripped

Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

¹ Textile fragments with a similar design are
published in *Oriental Islamic Art: Collection
of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation* 1963,
pl.91, attributed to Bursa, 16th century; and
Wace 1934, p.169, a very similar example
attributed to the early 17th century.



In contrast to the velvet cover in Plate 7, in which the carnations in staggered rows are in turn decorated with smaller versions of other stylized blossoms, this loom-width fragment of a bolt of velvet betrays no specific use, and its seven-petaled flowers, portrayed with great delicacy, show a much simpler form and occupy almost round spaces.

There appears in classical Ottoman art in almost all media what might be described either as an aversion or even a prohibition against re-use of forms. İznik ceramic vessels are virtually never duplicated; even when a stencil is re-used the details are almost always extensively modified. Matched sets of velvet *yastık* cushion covers do occasionally appear, and a very few beautiful and well-known *kemha* patterns were occasionally produced in varying colorways. However, what is really striking is the truly amazing variety within the basic carnation layout. From examination of many surviving examples it seems that no two bolts of the literally dozens, if not hundreds, of bolts of carnation design Bursa velvet that were produced, were made from exactly the same design.¹



Square Ottoman-design carpet

Probably Cairo, Egypt
 First half of the 17th century
 The Textile Museum R16.4.1
 Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1924
 194 × 188 cm (76½ × 74 inches)

Published references

Ellis 1981, p.67, fig.2.
 Atıl 1980, p.318, fig.185.
 Kühnel and Bellinger 1957, pl.24, 25.

Material: wool

Structure: knotted pile, asymmetrical knot,
 warps in two levels, 2 weft passes between
 rows of knots, knot count: 46H × 46V/dm
 (12H × 12V/in)

Warp: wool, 3 or 4S-spun yarns Z-plied,
 off-white (undyed)

Weft: wool, 3S-spun, yellow

Pile: wool, 2S-spun, 7 colors: red, green, blue,
 white (off-white or dirty white), yellow,
 light green, light blue

Edges: stripped

Ends: stripped

Analysis by Walter B. Denny and Sumru
 Belger Krody

Early carpets were rarely woven in square formats; the one exception was in Mamluk Cairo, where a number of square format carpets, the ancestors of this one in technique if not design, were woven in the early sixteenth century. The shape may have been popular in Europe; we know that some Cairene carpets were woven in a cruciform shape to fit on square European tables, with flaps hanging down on each side.

In this carpet, we see that the traditional segregation of artistic styles is beginning to diminish. The classical Ottoman arabesques of curved *saz* leaves and complex lotus palmettes and rosettes fill the red-ground field and the main red-ground border, with not a single stylized garden blossom to be seen. By contrast, the central green-ground medallion and the quarter-medallions in the corners show 'Kara Memi' tulips arranged, eight to a whole medallion, like spokes on a wheel, alternating with tiny lotus palmettes each with two cockade leaves.

The technical standards of this impressive carpet are still high. Although worn, it shows the traditional rich palette of red, yellow, two blues, two greens, and undyed white common to Cairene carpets of the time, and has comfortably and competently achieved one of the most difficult tasks a carpet weaver can encounter, the creation of a convincing round medallion. The curved *saz* leaves of the field likewise still possess the energy and fluency of the best examples from the preceding century. One might wonder, however, whether the adaptation of the stylized garden flowers, originally portrayed in book illumination, İznik ceramics, and Ottoman *kemha* fabrics in brilliant primary hues, has been entirely successful in the sophisticated but restricted palette of Cairene carpet weaving.





24

Fragment of a floral *saff* mosque carpet

Uşak district, West Anatolia
Probably early 17th century
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1927
189.5 × 83 cm (74½ × 32¼ inches)

Published references

Ellis 1970, p. 16, fig. 22.
Mackie 1973, p. 82, cat. no. 40.

Material: wool

Structure: knotted pile, symmetrical knot,
warps in two levels, 2 weft passes between
rows of knots, knot count: 33H × 46V/dm
(9H × 12V/in)

Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plied, off-white
(undyed)

Weft: wool, 1Z-spun, red, 2 passes

Pile: wool, 2Z-spun, 7 colors: off-white
(ivory), light brown (tan), dark brown, red,
dark blue, blue, green

Edges: stripped

Ends: stripped

Analysis by Walter B. Denny and Sumru
Belger Krody

(Not presented in the exhibition)

The weaving on commission of *saff* or 'row' carpets was a major source of income for Uşak commercial manufactories during the great age of Ottoman mosque building in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The largest imperial mosques might have thousands of square yards of floor to cover, and the cost of weaving a set of carpets to serve this purpose was a substantial part of the budget for a new building, in much the same way as sets of tapestries formed an essential (although now mostly vanished) part of the decoration of French Gothic cathedrals.

There is a long history of *saff* weaving in Anatolia; custom decreed that worshippers line up in parallel ranks facing the *qibla* or Mecca-oriented wall of a mosque during the five daily prayers. There is evidence from the very earliest Islamic times that woven mats or flat-woven carpets with a design of *mihrab*-like niches in rows were used to facilitate an orderly disposition of worshippers in the architectural space. Indeed, it is possible that such *saff* carpets and mats may have constituted the prototypes for the now more familiar *seccade* carpets that we call prayer rugs.

This well-known fragment shows portions of three compartments designed to orient three worshippers; each compartment consisted of a dark-blue ground with a characteristic flowering 'Kara Memi' tree with white blossoms. Each compartment has a small ogival central medallion with a medium-blue ground on which we see sprays of tulips (with red and white petals) and red fan-shaped carnations; the surrounding frame, of overlapping sinuous *saz* leaves, is borrowed directly from an Ottoman *kemha* design prototype. The dark yellow spandrels of each notional arch are filled with tulips, carnations, rosebuds, and the occasional tiny blue hyacinth, and a hanging lamp, the symbol of God's Divine Light, is depicted between each pair of spandrels.

Saffs were woven 'sideways'—that is, the warps run horizontally across the depicted niches, rather than vertically, as in individual *seccade* or prayer rugs. The relative crudeness of the floral forms seen here is probably not a result of the process of stylization over time, but rather an unavoidable by-product of the coarseness of the weave in these carpets, where each repeating unit had to be the size of a standard *saff* compartment to hold one worshipper, but the designer dictated a complex floral pattern. A finer weave would have greatly increased the overall cost of the acres of carpets required to furnish a very large mosque, so the inevitable consequence of a coarser weave was the often clumsy details common in such carpets.



25

Kilim fragment

Cairo, Egypt
Probably early 18th century
Collection of Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf
54.5 × 105 cm (21½ × 41½ inches)

Material: wool
Structure: dovetailed tapestry weave
Warp: wool, 1S-spun, white
Weft: wool, 1S-spun, 8 colors: light pink, dark pink, medium pink, dark blue, green, yellow, light brown, white
Edges: selvedge on sewn on border, other side cut
Ends: stripped
Analysis by Walter B. Denny and Sumru Belger Krody

- 1 Balpınar 1982.
- 2 Atasoy 2000.

This well-known fragment of a much larger floral kilim is itself composed of two pieces; while the border was not originally joined to the field, a similar border was continuous with the field when the kilim was in its original state.

While later Anatolian kilims showing the impact of the sixteenth-century floral style have survived in abundance, it was only comparatively recently that demonstrably early examples came to light, many of them discovered in the Great Mosque of Divriği in 1973.¹ Most of those could be safely dated from the late sixteenth century through the seventeenth century. All exhibited the employment of an interlocking technique around a shared warp, eliminating the slits that usually occur in tapestry-weaving when two colors abut along a vertical line. Most fascinating of all, the early examples of floral kilims that have survived all employ S-spun wool in their construction, strongly suggesting that they originate in Egypt.

In retrospect, this revelation should not have been a surprise. Ottoman 'court' carpets (Plates 3 and 23) have long been assigned to Egypt; many of the famous Ottoman tents made in appliqué technique² may well have been made in Cairo, where a strong tradition of working in this technique survives down to our own time. Given the long tradition of textile production in Cairo, together with the close relationship in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries between Cairene production and Ottoman court design, such floral kilims could easily have been produced in Egypt for at least a century and a half.

These fragments of a field and border, among a number of similar pieces from the same large kilim that have appeared on the art market in recent years, show the characteristic Ottoman curling serrated *saz* leaves, fan-shaped carnation blossoms, and light-blue sprays of hyacinths. While half of a traditional Ottoman tulip survives on the pink-ground cusped border of what was once a half-medallion at the edge of the dark-blue field, the two spiky-petaled tulips within the half-medallion itself are of a type that became popular in Turkey after the sixteenth century, and are especially prominent in Ottoman court art of the first third of the eighteenth century, a period today often referred to as the 'Tulip Era.' Coupled with a palette that includes high-value pink, yellow and blue, this suggests that this example was most likely woven in the early eighteenth century.



Cover

Istanbul
 Late 17th century
 The Textile Museum 1.42
 Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in April 1927
 256 × 160 cm (100¼ × 63 inches)

Published references
 Atıl 1980, p.364, fig.217.
 Krody 2011, p.62, fig.7.
 Krody 2000, p.98-9 (detail), cat.no.3.
 Mackie 1973, p.63, cat.no.21.

Material: linen, silk
 Structure: balanced plain weave, embroidery,
 3/1 running stitch in diagonal alignment
 Warp: linen, 1Z-spun, 17/CM, off-white
 (undyed)
 Weft: linen, 1Z-spun, 13/CM, off-white
 (undyed)
 Embroidery thread: silk, 2Z-twisted yarns
 S-plyed, 7 colors: dark red, red, green, blue,
 yellow, light orange, black
 Construction: assembled from 3 loom-width
 panels. A narrow panel was also sewn on
 the top part of the cover
 Edge finish: selvedge
 End finish: rolled and hemmed
 Notes: Drawn pattern in ink on the back face
 of the fabric
 Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

1 A similar coupling of pomegranates and serrated leaves is seen on a fragment dated to the second half of 16th century in the David Collection, Copenhagen (inv.Text.6), and on a child's *kaftan* dated to the 17th century from the tomb of Ahmed I, now in the Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul (inv.13/277). Both are illustrated in Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.80, pl.31 and p.237, fig.156.

On this large embroidered cover or hanging, green stems bearing small red pomegranates intertwine with the red and yellow lattice frame, with red palmettes with serrated edges at the interstices. Each of these palmettes is embellished with tulips and carnations. Alternating rows of large pomegranates and another type of palmette fill the ogival compartments created by the intertwined lattice frame. The pomegranates contain yellow and blue tulips and green rosebuds in their bright red centers, while the palmettes carry yellow carnations and green rosebuds. The large serrated leaves cupping the palmettes carry sprays of hyacinths on their blue grounds.

The design of this embroidery appears to be a synthesis of elements seen on silk textiles of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Usually one type of design repeats throughout the length of a woven silk textile; either it is an ogival lattice with palmettes framed by large serrated leaves or an ogival lattice with pomegranates framed by large leaves. But here the embroiderer has combined elements from two different silk designs, utilizing the freedom offered by the embroidery technique. The motifs, their details, and the use of colors very closely resemble the design and color choices made for silk textiles. The artist must have been very close to the design source to be able to copy it as accurately as she did, although she might not have had both prototype silks in hand as models.

The overall design at first glance relates it more closely to the earlier *saz* style. The detailing inside the palmettes, on the other hand, is evidence of the floral style that was beginning to dominate the original silk designs on which this sophisticated and intricate embroidery is based.





27

Sofra (floor spread)

Istanbul
Late 17th century
St Louis Art Museum 175:52
Gift of Mrs Frank A. Cook, Surrey, England
Diameter approximately 109 cm (42¾ inches)

Material: linen, silk
Structure: balanced plain-weave, running
stitch in diagonal alignment
Warp: linen, 1Z-spun, 18/CM, off-white
(undyed)
Weft: linen, 1Z-spun, 17/CM, off-white
(undyed)
Embroidery thread: silk, 5 colors: red, blue,
green, white, yellow
Edge finish: n/a
End finish: n/a
Construction: assembled from 2 panels
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

The floral motifs on this plain white-ground *sofra* are closer in execution to those seen on the original silk textile prototypes than those seen on the blue ground *sofra* (Plate 28). The arrangement of the motifs toward a central circle embellished with alternating pomegranate-filled medallions and floral branches gives order to the whole composition without being overly rigid, although it lacks the joyous movement apparent in the blue *sofra*.

In addition to pomegranates, three different styles of tulips are represented on this embroidery. Tulips with three clearly separated petals frame the pomegranates and are placed within round medallions. Alternating with these medallions is the outline of a roundish tulip with a serrated tip that contains within it another, slimmer, tulip with two almond-shaped leaves. Ottoman artists so perfected the form of tulip by this time that they were very comfortable manipulating it to fit any form and shape they needed.



Sofra (floor spread)

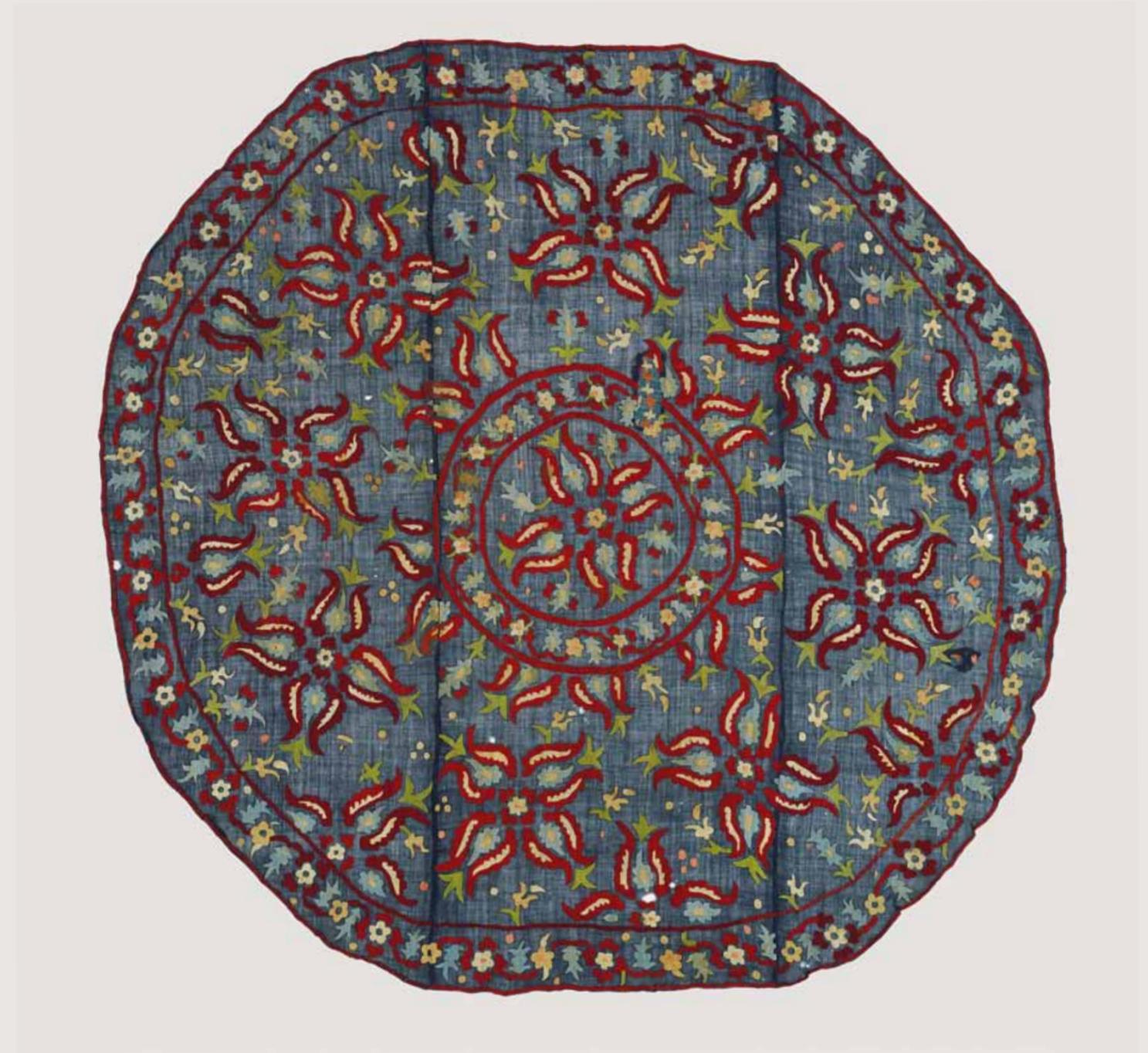
Istanbul
 Late 17th century
 The Textile Museum 2001.6.1
 Gift of Roy P. Mottahedeh
 Diameter approximately 163 cm (64 inches)

Published reference
 Krody 2011, p.65, fig.14.

Material: linen, silk
 Structure: balanced plain-weave,
 embroidery, 4/1 running stitch in diagonal
 alignment, buttonhole stitch
 Warp: linen, 1Z-spun, 18/CM, blue
 Weft: linen, 1Z-spun, 17/CM, blue
 Embroidery thread: silk, 2Z-twisted yarns
 S-plyed, 6 colors: red, light blue, white,
 pink, light green, yellow
 Edge finish: hemmed
 End finish: hemmed
 Construction: assembled from 3 panels
 Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody



Ottoman embroidered *sofras* of this early age rarely survive, especially those on dyed linen ground fabric, as in this blue ground example. The embroiderer appears to be far removed from the original design source, but she was very imaginative, arranging the tulips in such a way as to create larger flowers with four petals. Although there is a distance between this embroidery and the original silk designs, the tulips are still recognizable because of their almond shape and three separate petals. The artistic idea of layering floral designs on top of each other in order to create layered flower gardens is also seen in this composition. The design has a lively, pulsating quality and gives a sense of movement that is lacking in the more orderly example shown in Plate 27.



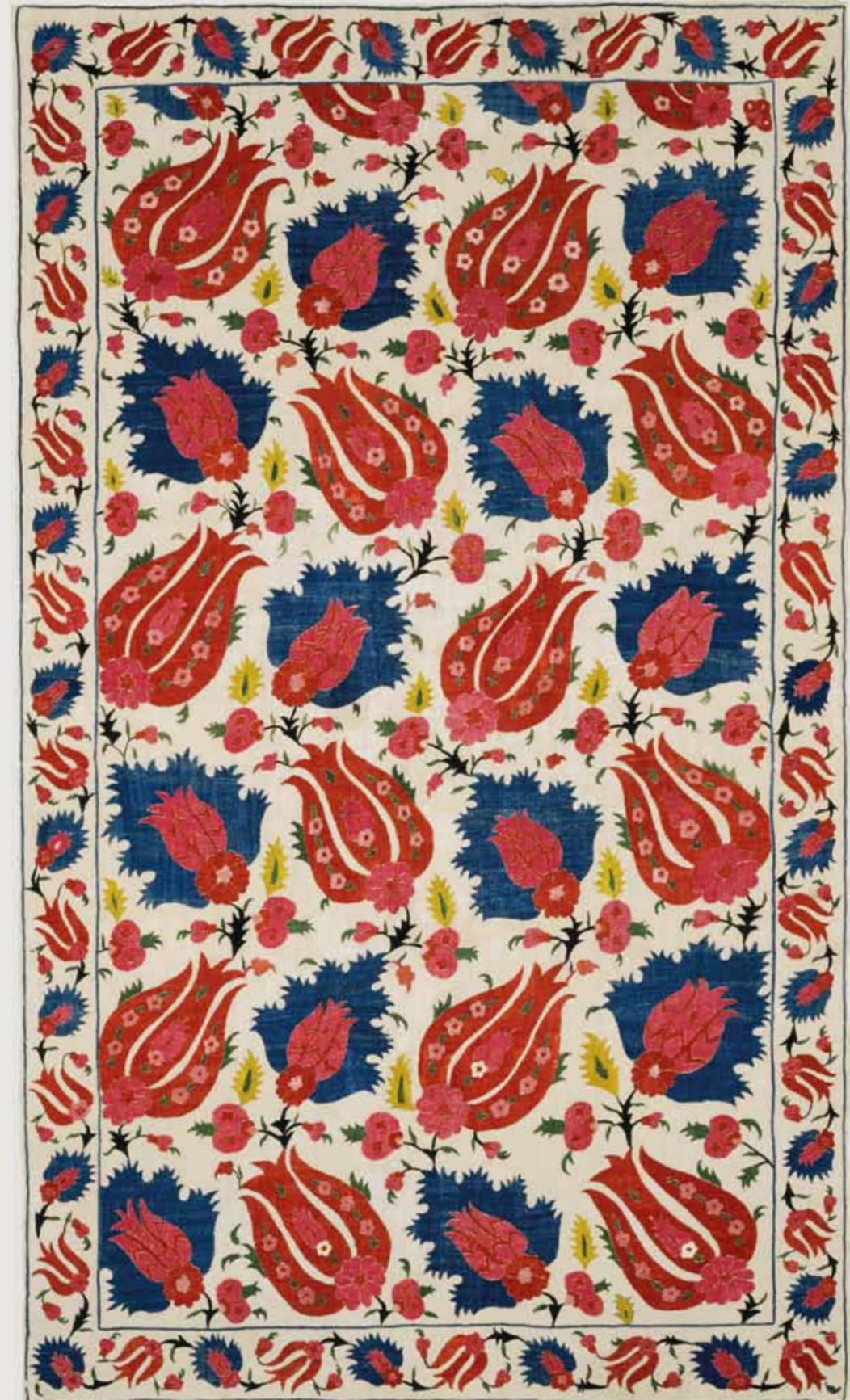
Cover

Istanbul
 Mid to late 17th century
 Private Collection
 222 × 131 cm (87½ × 51½ inches)

Material: linen, silk
 Structure: balanced plain-weave, embroidery, *atma* stitch (self-couching); herringbone stitch (details inside tulip and palmette)
 Warp: linen, 1Z-spun, 16/cm, off-white (undyed)
 Weft: linen, 1Z-spun, 22/cm, off-white (undyed)
 Embroidery thread: silk, 1 (untwisted) and 2Z-twisted yarns S-plied, 7 colors: red, dark pink, pink, green, blue, yellow, black
 Edge finish: selvedge both sides
 End finish: rolled and hemmed
 Construction: assembled from 3 loom-width panels
 Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

The streamlined look of tulip blossoms in nature allowed the Ottoman court designers to reduce the image of the flower to its minimum lines without losing either integrity or identity.

This large embroidered cover is decorated with a composition often referred to as an 'ascending vine,' composed of three or four parallel undulating vines that span the entire decorative surface. Two different types of blossoms are superimposed on each vine, alternating left and right at regular intervals. Such compositions are also often used on silk *kemha* textiles such as the one seen in Plate 10, and it appears that embroiderers embraced it enthusiastically. Here the motifs are blue palmettes with serrated edges and tulip centers, and large red tulips with pink five-petaled flower details. Although the vine is not visible, the movement of the flowers and palmettes to right and left clearly implies its presence. The embroiderer has also offset and alternated the direction of the tulips and palmettes on each vine, adding further movement and playfulness to the design.



30

Hanging

Istanbul
18th century
The Textile Museum 2011.8.2
Gift of Joseph W. Fell
166 × 117 cm (65¼ × 46 inches)

Material: wool, silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: balanced plain weave, fulled, embroidery, chain stitch
Warp: wool, 1S-spun, 18/cm, red
Weft: wool, 1S-spun, 17/cm, red
Embroidery thread: silk, 1 (untwisted), 7 colors: white, blue, light blue, pink, dark pink, off white, green
Embroidery thread: silver metal wrapped Z-direction around off-white silk core thread
Edge finish: stripped
End finish: stripped
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

This eighteenth-century Ottoman hanging is embroidered in chain stitch with silk and metal-wrapped threads on a fulled wool foundation fabric. Considering the finesse and quality of the workmanship, it appears to be a product of a high-end Istanbul workshop, and was probably embroidered using a tambour hook instead of needle. Although it has a niche design in the center, it was likely to have been used as a wall-hanging rather than a prayer cloth.

The lavish floral designs are perfect examples of their type and demonstrate how the classical sixteenth-century floral style was transformed in the Baroque period into an increasingly ornate, florid, playful and eventually lavish style. Tulips, carnations, roses, and hyacinths became almost three-dimensional compared to the more poster-like look of earlier representations with their sharp edges and solid colors. This change was due to color selection and combination as well as the drawing of the design. The palette is softer and paler than the rich primary colors and dark tonalities favored in the earlier period. The depiction of individual motifs changed as well, becoming ever more natural in appearance, but also delicate in character.



Small 'Kara Memi' carpet with two quatrefoil medallions

Probably Karapınar district, Konya Province, South-central Anatolia
 Probably 18th century
 The Textile Museum R34.00.1
 Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1949
 256 × 156.5 cm (102 × 61½ inches)

Provenance: Stefano Bardini Collection

Published references
 Farnham 2001, p.82, fig.17.
 Atıl 1980, p.324, fig.189.
 Beattie 1976, p.66, fig.10.
 Martin 1908, p.133, fig.333 (detail).

Material: wool
 Structure: knotted pile, warps on same level,
 symmetrical knot, 2 passes of weft
 between rows of knot, knot count: 26H ×
 28V/cm (6H × 7.5V/in)
 Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plyed, off-white
 (undyed)
 Weft: wool, 1Z-spun, red
 Pile: wool, 2Z-spun, 7 colors: off-white
 (ivory), dark-brown, red, 2 shades of blue,
 green, yellow
 Edges: not original
 Analysis by Walter B. Denny and Sumru
 Belger Krody

This small carpet is woven with very rich colors, using only a small amount of dark-brown outlining for the two quatrefoil medallions, each ornamented with highly simplified lotus blossoms that float on a red field, surrounded by dark-green vines bearing yellow and blue carnations and individual hyacinth blossoms. The outer border, with a ground of dark purple-red characteristic of this group of carpets, which are thought to have been woven near Karapınar, shows simplified versions of classical Ottoman lotus palmettes and rosettes.

For a long time carpets such as this, because of their heavy repair, were seldom shown in museum exhibitions; today's viewers, however, are sufficiently sophisticated to accept fragments, fragmentary works, and even heavily restored examples, with a comfort based on the ability to project the original artistic product from the elements of that artistry that have survived. For this reason, it is no exaggeration to state that this small carpet is one of the greatest masterpieces of Anatolian weaving in The Textile Museum, and a reflection of the penetration of the Ottoman floral style into the weaving traditions of locales far from the capital of Istanbul.



'Kara Memi' long rug with floral design

Central Anatolia
Probably late 18th or early 19th century
The Textile Museum R34.7.2
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers
510 × 128 cm (201 × 50½ inches)

Provenance: Frank Brangwyn Collection

Published references
Krody 2004, p.95.
Beattie 1976, p.72, fig.22
Ellis 1974, Konya carpets entry.
Yohe and McCoy Jones 1968, pl.43.

Material: wool
Structure: knotted pile, symmetrical knot,
pulled left, warps slightly in two levels, 2
weft passes between rows of knots, knot
count: 32H × 38-40V/dm (8H × 10V/in)
Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plied, off-white
(undyed)
Weft: wool, 1Z-spun, red-brown
Pile: wool, 2Z-spun, 8 colors light red, purple
(thicker than others), light blue-green,
white, dark blue-green, light orange,
medium brown (corroded), yellow
Edges: selvedge
Ends: stripped
Analysis by Walter B. Denny and Sumru
Belger Krody

1 Oakley 2011.

Often attributed to the district surrounding Karapınar, a market town in Konya Province in south-central Anatolia, carpets of this group are often woven in long formats and are overwhelmingly executed using floral designs such as that seen here. The green-ground outer border (an original surrounding guard border has been stripped from the carpet) probably developed from an original that had reciprocal design elements, while the inner border bears long forms with zigzag lines that are simplified from a design of sprays of hyacinths. By contrast, stylized tulips, hyacinths, pomegranates and carnations can clearly be seen ornamenting the three multi-lobed yellow ground medallions in the field, and the red-ground field itself bears numerous blue and white tulip forms as well as other, simpler, forms that are the vestigial remains of classical Ottoman flowers.

We will probably never be able to explain adequately the appearance of so many Ottoman floral forms in this single group of carpets, although early examples from this general area, some showing the impact of the kilim or slit-tapestry weaving technique on pile weaving, are now identified, and the entire group has just been subject to a revisionist examination by Penny Oakley in *HALI Magazine*.¹ It is clear that carpets such as this one represent the third of four broad stages of design evolution: the first stage is seen in carpets in the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha and the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum in Istanbul; the second is exemplified by three superb examples in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam; the third is typified by this carpet and its peers; and the fourth, showing the greatest degree of stylization, seen in examples showing very late and hard-to-decipher elements of the design.





33

Karapınar kilim

Konya region, Central Anatolia
Before 1800
Collection of Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf
533 × 135 cm (210 × 53 inches)

Published reference
Denny 2010.

Material: wool
Structure: slit tapestry weave
Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plyed, white
Weft: wool, 1Z-spun, 5 colors: red (2Z), light
pink, blue, yellow-green, white, light
brown
Edges: stripped
Ends: stripped
Analysis by Walter B. Denny and Sumru
Belger Krody

1 Denny 2010.

Most rugs of the 'Karapınar' group, no matter what their technique or age, are woven in a long format such as seen in this splendid tapestry-woven kilim. A strong relationship with pile-woven prototypes is suggested by its border, which not only surrounds all four sides of the composition, but at one end turns into an elaborate *elem* or skirt panel probably based on an earlier reciprocal design.¹

Laterally projecting tulips and vertically oriented forms, probably derived from carnation blossoms, ornament the central ogival medallions, whose outline is probably adapted from earlier pile-woven examples with elaborately serrated edges. In common with many 'Karapınar' layouts, the design of the medallions is echoed in the field design to either side. The artist's decision to use a palette in which only three colors, red, white and blue, are dominant contributes to the powerful impact of this unusual and beautifully-preserved kilim.



34

Kilim

Probably Lâdik area, Central Anatolia
Early 19th century
Collection of Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf
270 × 161 cm (106 × 63¾ inches)

Material: wool, cotton
Structure: slit tapestry weave, outlined with weft wrapping
Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plied, white
Weft: wool, 1Z-spun, 10 colors: dark red, light blue-green, red, dark blue, dark brown, medium reddish brown, orange, white, light brown, yellow
Edges: selvedge
Ends: warp fringe, knotted
Analysis by Walter B. Denny and Sumru Belger Krody

An intermediary stage of development of kilim design between the early floral kilims, now believed to have been woven in Egypt, and the well-known later kilims of Anatolia that incorporate floral designs in a more geometric form, seems to have flourished in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in central Anatolia, probably in or near the market town of Lâdik in Konya Province. A number of kilims have survived in various collections; the present example, while exhibiting a range of colors suggesting that it is later in the chain of stylistic development, is otherwise typical in design and layout.

Alternate horizontal bands in the design show traditional Anatolian geometric motifs, but the red-ground bands contain sprays of six tulips, three to the left and three to the right in each spray (a motif found in many Central Asian pile carpets as well, such as Plate 36), while the blue-ground bands incorporate stylized hyacinths and what are probably carnations and either very small tulips or rosebuds. Some of the surviving examples in this design and layout have astonishingly soft wool; normally kilims were woven of compactly-spun 'hard' wool that would better resist abrasion when put to hard use as floor or couch covers, or wall hangings in a small crowded village room or nomad tent.



Red-ground *seccade* with vine border

Lâdik district, Konya Province, South-central Anatolia,
Probably around 1800
The Textile Museum R34.6.4
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1911
171 × 106.5 cm (67¼ × 41 inches)

Published reference
Paquin 1984, p.12, fig.14.

Material: wool
Structure: knotted pile, warp slightly in two levels, symmetrical knot, 2 passes of weft between rows of knot, knot count: 33H × 55V/dm (8H × 14V/in)
Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plied, off-white (undyed)
Weft: wool, 1Z-spun, off-white (undyed)
Pile: wool, 2Z-spun, 8 colors: red, blue, dark blue, dark brown, off-white (undyed), yellow, light red (pink), purple
Edges: not original, applied fringe
Ends: not original
Analysis by Walter B. Denny and Sumru Belger Krody

1 Balpınar 1982.

In her interviews with weavers in the Lâdik area in south-central Anatolia, Belkis Balpınar found that Lâdik carpets with this particular border, among the most attractive of all Anatolian prayer rug types, were locally ascribed to the village of İnnice and its surroundings.¹ In the majority of Lâdik prayer carpets, the main border is directly derived from the floral borders of the most famous sixteenth-century Ottoman court prayer rugs, designed in Istanbul and woven either in Cairo or near Istanbul using Cairene materials and techniques. It consists of large tulips flanked by leaves ornamented with carnations, alternating with rosette forms derived from classical Ottoman lotus palmette and rosette designs. By contrast, as seen in this attractive example, the 'İnnice' group shows a continuous vine that meanders in rectilinear fashion around the carpet, outlining various rectilinear forms probably derived from the ornamentation of early carpets of the 'Holbein' group.

Almost all rugs of the Lâdik group include a panel, usually woven 'above' the point of the 'niche' field, consisting of rows of tall stylized tulips as seen here. Although in the old collection records of the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum in Istanbul, where numerous examples of Lâdik prayer carpets are to be found, these stately flowers were described as *haşhaş çiçeği*—literally 'hashish blossoms', but in fact opium poppies—their appearance in early carpets clearly identifies them as the familiar Ottoman tulips.

Lâdik prayer rugs are frequently woven 'upside down'—that is, the weaver often begins weaving at the complicated end of the design that contains the point of the niche, its adjacent spandrels, and the floral panel. In İnnice examples such as this one, however, the 'bottom' of the design, as illustrated, is usually also the bottom of the carpet, where the weaver began her work.



Seccade

Central Anatolia
19th century
Collection of Marilyn Denny
171.5 × 95.25 cm (67½ × 37½ inches)

Material: wool, cotton
Structure: knotted pile, warps on same level, symmetrical knot, 2 weft passes between rows of knots, knot count: 29H × 31V/dm (8H × 9V/in)
Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plied, off-white (undyed)
Weft: wool, 2Z-spun, red
Pile: wool, 2Z-spun, 8 colors: red, pink, blue, purple, blue-green, dark brown, light yellow, white
Pile: cotton, 5Z-spun, white
Edges: original
Ends: plain-weave skirt
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

Over the centuries, Central Anatolian artist-weavers from market towns and villages such as Kırşehir (Kirshehir) or Mucur (Mujur) have produced some of the most distinctive and attractive of all Turkish carpets in the *seccade* (*sajjadah*) or prayer-rug size and design format. Characteristically woven 'upside-down' (the weaver began her task at the top end of the carpet as illustrated), this small carpet exhibits the shiny wool, brilliant colors, and careful corner articulation of borders we associate with the best weaving of this area. The main border, rarely seen in carpets from this area, is a marvel of invention with its hooked outlining of motifs on a yellow ground; the secondary blue-ground border incorporates sprays of six-petaled blossoms that cannot be associated with any traditional Ottoman form. But the central green-ground field—the opening of the portal arch of the design—is surrounded by a peripheral row of tiny carnation blossoms, while the octagonal yellow-ground cartouche in the panel above the top of the arch shows the same symmetrical spray of tulips that we also see depicted horizontally in a striped kilim, and vertically in a small prayer kilim (Plates 34 and 40).



Seccade with design of a flowering tree

Demirci district, Manisa Province, West Anatolia
 Probably early 19th century
 The Textile Museum 1971.23.8
 The Rachel B. Stevens Memorial Collection
 148 × 101 cm (58¼ × 39¾ inches)

Published reference
 Fertig 1972, p.35, pl.18.

Material: wool
 Structure: knotted pile, warps slightly in two levels, symmetrical knot, 2 weft passes between rows of knots, knot count: 43H × 55V/dm (10H × 15V/in)
 Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plyed, off-white (undyed)
 Weft: wool, 1Z-spun, red and blue-green
 Pile: wool, 2Z-spun, 8 colors: blue, red, off-white, dark brown/black, blue-green, orange, purple, yellow
 Edges: selvedge
 Ends: plain weave skirt with supplementary weft patterning
 Analysis by Walter B. Denny and Sumru Belger Krody

(Not presented in the exhibition)

The fondness of Turkish carpet-weavers and embroiderers for the arched *seccade* or prayer rug format is well known. Examples in slit tapestry weave (kilim), knotted pile, and embroidery were created throughout the Ottoman lands over many centuries in designs ranging from the barest minimalism to ornate and complex renditions of paradisiacal motifs. Certain motifs that originate in early *seccade*, such as the so-called 'Bellini' motif, the panel of flowers above the niche, water ewers symbolic of purification before prayer, and single or double columns to either side of the niche, have a long history in Turkish weaving, and persist in village and even nomadic weaving into the twentieth century. Of all of the motifs adorning prayer rugs, however, the flowering tree is probably the most ubiquitous and shows the widest variety.

This prayer rug from Demirci district of Manisa Province shows a remarkable stylistic continuity with past Ottoman traditions. The outer main white-ground border consists of lotus blossoms in the *hatayi* style, appropriately segregated in this area of the rug. The vegetal sprays in the spandrels of the niche are borrowed directly from a well-known type of eighteenth-century Gördes rug. But the center of the niche is taken up entirely with a single flowering tree, reminiscent of the flowering trees of paradise that are described in the Qur'an:

*...mid thornless lote-trees and serried acacias
 and spreading shade and outpoured waters...*

(LVI, 26 : Arberry 1996)

Ever since the depiction of paradise as a flowering tree under an arch that was created, almost certainly by Kara Memi himself, for the mosque of Rüstem Paşa in 1561, Ottoman artistic convention allowed a botanically illogical but artistically compelling image of a tree with a wide variety of blossoms that themselves belonged neither together nor on a tree. This convention is continued in this carpet, where on close examination we see on the central tree half a dozen different kinds of flowers, of which the tulips, shown as a series of three diagonal bands, and the hyacinths, in pale green near the bottom of the tree, are only barely recognizable, and the other flowers are stylized beyond identification to the same degree that the inscription at the top of the carpet is stylized beyond legibility. Nevertheless, the overall artistic effect is both pleasing and entirely Ottoman in its layout, motifs, and sense of artistic propriety.



Carpet with floral design

Demirci, Manisa Province, West Anatolia
 Probably mid-19th century
 The Textile Museum R34.5.1
 Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1912
 160.5 × 132.5 cm (63¼ × 52¼ inches)

Material: wool
 Structure: knotted pile, warps slightly in two levels, symmetrical knot, 2 weft passes between rows of knot, knot count: 40H × 43V/dm (10H × 12V/in)
 Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plyed, off-white (undyed)
 Weft: wool, 1Z-spun, yellow and red
 Pile: wool, 1Z-spun, 9 colors: dark blue, light blue, medium blue, green, yellow, red-brown, red, dark red-brown, dark brown
 Edges: selvedge
 Ends: plain-weave skirt on top, warp fringe bottom
 Analysis by Walter B. Denny and Sumru Belger Krody

Dark in coloration, with only a tiny hint of undyed white wool, this west Anatolian descendant of the seventeenth-century 'Transylvanian' double-ended carpets is knotted with lustrous wool in intense colors. The characteristic purple-red ground of the central field carries an arabesque of stylized lotus blossoms with a vase at either end, possible descended from an original lamp form in a single-ended prayer rug. The blue surround that includes side borders and spandrels at either end is ornamented on its outer periphery by a row of tiny red carnations. The dark-yellow main border, a hallmark of Demirci area weaving, is divided into triangular compartments by a serrated dark-purple-red vine; the compartments are alternately decorated with sprays of three red carnations accompanied by a single red tulip and a single blue hyacinth, and a spray of three generic blue flowers, each spray accompanied by a single tulip with blue and red petals.

The separation in this village carpet of the traditional lotus-blossom arabesque, called *hatayi* (from Cathay in Turkish), from the traditional Ottoman garden flowers, follows an implicit rule of propriety that had been used first by sixteenth-century Istanbul court artists and then by their Anatolian successors for centuries. Another hallmark of Demirci area weaving is the predominance of end borders at both ends of the carpet over side borders, with a single row of yellow knots separating the interrupted designs.



'Transylvanian' *seccade*

West Anatolia
 Probably early 18th century
 The Textile Museum 1965.55.3
 Gift of Joseph V. McMullan
 168 × 121 cm (66¼ × 47½ inches)

Provenance: Joseph V. McMullan Collection

Material: wool
 Structure: knotted pile, warps slightly in 2 levels, symmetrical knot, 2 weft passes between rows of knot, knot count: 32H × 37V/dm (8H × 10W/in)
 Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plied, very light yellow
 Weft: wool, 1Z-spun, very light yellow
 Pile: wool, 1Z-spun, 5 colors: red, blue, black, yellow, white
 Edges: not original
 Ends: plain-weave skirt
 Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

An intermediate stage of stylization of floral motifs between the classical carpet examples of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and the village carpets of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be seen in the so-called 'Transylvanian' group of seventeenth and eighteenth-century carpets in *seccade* or prayer rug format. These were woven in western Anatolia and exported in vast quantities to central Europe where they survive as votive gifts donated to churches in Romania and Hungary. This example, simple in its layout and central niche area, but extremely complex in its border, represents the group in this book.

The border is adapted from that seen on a well-known type of late sixteenth-century Ottoman court prayer carpet woven in Egypt, neither of whose major elements is directly derived from Kara Memi's floral revolution. The first is a rosette 'embraced' by two *saz* leaves that on this carpet appears as an eight-pointed star; the other is a complex lotus palmette, that also appears here with two attached curved leaves, but whose design is bilaterally rather than radially symmetrical.

Interspersed among these major elements we find the flowers: small-scale sprays of blue hyacinths were easy to render, but the same cannot be said of the rather heavily stylized carnations and the tiny three-pronged tulips. Two large carnations appear to either side of the point of the notional gateway arch, and these uncharacteristically have petals of different colors.



Small red-ground carpet with carnations

Probably South-west Anatolia
19th century
The Textile Museum R34.2.6
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1912
164 × 131.5 cm (64½ × 51¼ inches)

Published reference
Yohe 1968, pl.31

Material: wool
Structure: knotted pile, warp on same level, symmetrical knot, 2 weft passes between rows of knots, knot count: 36V × 33H/dm (8H × 7V/in)
Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plied, white (undyed)
Weft: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plied, red-brown and off-white (undyed)
Pile: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plied, 8 colors, purple, undyed white, undyed off-white (tan), green, red, yellow, blue, dark brown
Edges: selvedge
Ends: plain-weave skirt top, warp fringe bottom
Analysis by Walter B. Denny and Sumru Belger Krody

Modeled on a *yastık* or bolster cover, with the characteristic crenellated lappets or *alem* flaps at each end, but larger and disproportionately wider than a *yastık*, this small carpet is unusual in the large scale of the stylized carnations in the field; these are accompanied by tiny pairs of long-spouted water ewers that reflect imagery more commonly found in *seccade* carpets with an 'arch' at one end.

The central field is surrounded by a narrow reciprocal guard stripe of white and dark purple-brown interlocking trefoils. This is surrounded in turn by a geometric border of great antiquity whose forms have appeared throughout Anatolia since the fifteenth century. In a similar vein, the main blue-ground border, with its eight-pointed flowers, is not a reflection of Kara Memi's sixteenth-century Ottoman innovations, but goes back instead to the much older Anatolian tradition of carpets of the 'Holbein' group, which in turn appear to have nomadic Türkmen progenitors. Finally, the outermost border, on a dark purple-brown ground, is composed at the end by rows of rather conventional eight-pointed stars, but on the sides of the carpet incorporates an almost totemic form of an arrow-like projection from a complex cartouche that may indeed reflect totemic elements in earlier Anatolian art traditions, although we will probably never be certain of their meaning.

The splendid condition of this carpet and its very fresh colors, with only the corrosion of the dark brown to indicate any substantial age, mark it as an anomalous acquisition for George Hewitt Myers, who was undoubtedly beguiled by the richness of its colors and the luxuriant thickness of its pile.



41

Kilim *seccade*

Probably South-central Anatolia
Probably early 19th century
Collection of Marilyn Denny
165 × 119.5 cm (65 × 47 inches)

Material: wool, cotton
Structure: slit tapestry weave with
weft-wrapping for outlines
Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plied, off-white
(undyed)
Weft: wool, 1Z-spun, 6 colors: red, green, blue,
dark brown, purple, light orange
Weft: cotton, 3Z-spun yarns S-plied, white
Edges: original selvedge
Ends: warp fringe knotted and braided
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

Anatolian kilims are by the very nature of the tapestry technique ill-suited technically for the depiction of curvilinear forms, and therefore tend to adapt such forms to a simple and geometric formula. The artist of this kilim woven in *seccade* format made a bold decision to tackle a difficult problem. In the field of a prayer kilim she wanted to use a symmetrical motif of a spray of tulip blossoms vertically and on a large scale that in other Anatolian weavings was almost always depicted on a small scale and horizontally (Plates 35 and 38). Moreover, to give the final product an almost in-your-face quality, she employed brilliant white cotton for the central field. The need to use dovetailing in all the vertical lines of her composition (the horizontal lines in tapestry-woven carpets can be fine and straight but the vertical lines usually employ dovetailing—a term adapted from cabinet-making—where two colors meet), left her undaunted, and she made the tulips not only very large, but gave them petals of contrasting colors.

The enduring appeal and the cultural embeddedness, down to the village level, of the stylized floral forms originating in the sixteenth-century Ottoman court, is perhaps never more eloquently and poignantly seen than in this kind of boldly-conceived and executed village weaving. Working within the circumscribed boundaries of traditional artistic forms, over and over in Anatolian weaving we see the assertive and creative independence of individual weavers whose artistic works seek to break the mold of conventionality in order to achieve a powerful and novel effect.



Green-ground *seccade* with floral border

Probably Central or East Anatolia
 Early 19th century
 The Textile Museum R34.28.7
 Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1913
 172 × 124 cm (67¼ × 48¾ inches)

Published reference
 Yohe 1968, pl.72.

Material: wool
 Structure: silt tapestry weave
 Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plied, undyed brown
 Weft: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plied, 9 colors: red (S), dark blue, blue-green, medium blue, light yellow, brown, medium reddish-brown, off-white, dark reddish brown
 Edges: selvedge, simple weft return
 Ends: stripped
 Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

Kilim-technique *seccade* or prayer rugs were woven in great numbers in Anatolia from the later eighteenth century onward, and they often follow the format and colors seen here: a green-ground central niche-like field, red spandrels, and a wide yellow border with flowers. This example shows stems with pairs of stylized carnations in the main border, and a comb-like form probably derived from a leaf or a tulip blossom on the blue-ground inner border. The major forms in each spandrel of the top of the design have not been identified. Two tiny ewers are depicted at the very top of the composition in each spandrel, and other ewers punctuate the top main border. The vaguely tree-like form in the green-ground niche is surmounted by a hexagon composed of concentric rings in different colors. Similar forms often appear in tapestry-woven and pile-woven Anatolian carpets; they undoubtedly served as *nazarlık*—charms to ward off the evil eye. Many small motifs ornament the niche, where the green weft has been doubled-back on diagonal lines to form a complex and enigmatic visual texture.

Floral forms present a difficult challenge for kilim weavers. Especially in certain diagonally striped white floral forms, such as those of the inner border in this *seccade*, they force a degree of simplification and stylization that over time makes the individual floral prototype harder and harder to identify. The design of this carpet clearly owes its origins to Central Anatolian pile prayer rugs of the Lâdik type. The direction of the ewer forms, the broken warps resulting in a narrower top dimension, and the lower left corner design, all suggest that this carpet was woven from the bottom up as illustrated, and originally conceptualized from left to right.

The proliferation of kilim-technique *seccade* rugs in nineteenth century Anatolia is hard to explain. It is possible that such carpets were considered highly saleable in the marketplace, and certainly the small *seccade*-sized works were easier and quicker to complete than the much larger kilims commonly used as covers in the village and nomadic environment. The purpose of a *seccade* or prayer rug was twofold: to provide the ritual 'clean place' required for the performance of the *salat* or five daily Muslim prayers; and to provide something soft and resilient on which one could kneel and prostrate one's self during prayers. Since such carpets executed in the kilim technique were both fragile and very thin, affording little cushioning to the knees of a worshipper, it seems highly probably that these carpets served principally as decorative wall hangings in their original weaving environments.



43

Seccade with green niche and inscription

East Anatolia
Approximately 1886
Private collection
145 × 115.5 cm (56¾ × 45½ inches)

Material: wool
Structure: slit tapestry weave
Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plied, white (undyed)
Weft: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plied, 6 colors: blue-green, red (blue-red), yellow, brown, white (undyed), dark blue
Edges: selvedge
Ends: warp fringe, knotted
Analysis by Walter B. Denny and Sumru Belger Krody

The artistic variety of central Anatolian kilims echoes that of pile rugs. In its distinctive coloration—especially the purple-red and the dark golden yellow—this example, almost certainly falls within the orbit of the important center of Kırşehir (Kirshehir) to the north of Konya. The preponderant design of small repeating geometric motifs forms the major decoration in all four borders, and in the central green field. Carnation sprays following the Ottoman model decorate the two white-ground spandrels to either side of the arch motif at the top of the carpet. A partially legible inscription evoking the name of the Prophet is repeated to either side of the apex of the arch reads:

Ya Muhammad ..[unreadable]... 1304

The Hegira date 1304 corresponds to CE 1886-1887, which is perfectly plausible given the colors, design, and workmanship of the carpet.



44

Seccade with simple triangular niche

Bayburt, East Anatolia
18th century
Private collection
148 × 95.5 cm (58¼ × 37¾ inches)

Material: wool, silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: slit tapestry weave, supplementary-weft patterning in few areas and outline of the motifs in the border
Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns plied S, white (undyed)
Weft: wool, 1Z-spun yarn, 8 colors: purple, red, blue-green, light green, brown, light orange, white (undyed), medium blue
Weft: metallic-wrapped thread, gilt or copper strip Z twisted around off-white (undyed) silk thread,
Weft: silk, 1 (untwisted), off-white (undyed)
Edges: stripped
Ends: warp fringe
Analysis by Walter B. Denny and Sumru Belger Krody

A truly remarkable design juxtaposition in both concept and execution is that of this east Anatolian kilim *seccade* with Plate 42. The latter is finely woven, has very stately proportions, and a stepped arch over a green-ground field. Its borders are composed of vertical vines with pairs of carnations, and in each of the arch spandrels there is a curious tall motif that to this point has eluded a convincing explanation of its origins and meaning.

This example uses the same basic layout and motifs, but in an altogether simpler manner. While the *seccade* in Plate 42 impresses by its elegance, the present example creates a remarkable impression of elemental, pared-down minimalism in its layout, while using the same basic border form and spandrel decorations. Here, however, the carnations of the border have developed spiky outlines, and the artist has increased their effectiveness by showing them in white against a madder-dyed purple background the color of eggplant. The field under the notional arch is now a simple triangle, and the weaver has attempted to make a virtue of necessity by echoing the necessarily dovetailed side borders in the alternation of dark purple and white at the top and bottom.



45

Kilim with carnations

Anatolia
Before 1800
Collection of Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf
304 × 169,5 cm (120 × 67 inches)

Material: wool, cotton
Structure: slit tapestry weave with design outlines in supplementary weft wrapping
Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plied, white (undyed)
Weft: wool, 2Z-spun yarns S-plied, 8 colors: dark blue (Z), medium blue-green, medium brown, dark-brown, dark pink, purple-pink, red, dark brown
Weft: cotton, plied with wool in S direction creating a muddle white
Edges: selvedge
Ends: cut
Construction: assembled from 2 loom width panels
Analysis by Walter B. Denny and Sumru Belger Krody

Countless examples of floral kilims such as this, with staggered rows of carnation blossoms in different colors, have survived from eighteenth through twentieth-century Anatolian village production; the varieties of design and coloration suggests that they were woven all over Anatolia, possibly by nomadic peoples as well as by settled villagers. This particularly handsome example was woven in two narrow strips joined in the middle, but has evidently been shortened by about a meter from its original length.

What makes this example of special interest is the appearance on its border of three recognizable varieties of Ottoman flowers: stylized hyacinth sprays, smaller carnations, and small 'two-horned' motifs probably intended to represent tulips. The wide variety of colors, shown in rows of blue, magenta, white, brown, red, and green carnations on a dark-brown ground, is unusual, and the light-orange border beautifully complements the rich and colorful field.



Yastık face

Probably South-west Anatolia
Probably late 18th or early 19th century
Gerard Paquin Collection
97 × 60 cm (38 × 23½ inches)

Material: wool
Structure: knotted pile, warps on same level, symmetrical knot, 2 2Z-spun weft yarns passes between rows of knot, knot count: 28H × 34V/dm (7H × 8V/in)
Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns plied S, off-white (undyed)
Weft: wool, 1Z-spun, , dark brown (probably undyed)
Pile: wool, 2Z-spun yarns plied S, 7 colors: red, yellow, green, blue, purple, white (undyed), black brown (slightly corroded)
Edges: 2 bundles of 2 warp yarns wrapped in dark purple pile wool
Ends: stripped
Analysis by Walter B. Denny and Sumru Belger Krody

1 See Denny and Krody 2002, pp. 94-95, cat. nos. 32-33 for the pairing; The Textile Museum velvet *yastık* (1.79) was not available for this exhibition.

This pile *yastık* face from Anatolia, clearly based on a well-known type of Bursa velvet *yastık*,¹ while missing most of its *elem* or 'lappet' elements at either end, adheres closely to the velvet prototype in the eight-lobed central medallion, which probably was originally intended to depict eight artichoke 'flowers' radiating from the center. The two pendants at either end however clearly show the hyacinth blossoms present in the original.

The finer knotting and shorter pile of *yastık* faces such as this one permits an altogether more complex design that can both incorporate improvisatory expressions of the weaver's artistry, as seen in the small motifs of the red field in this example, and at the same time demonstrate a more faithful adherence to the forms of the prototype. However, in almost every case, the real impact of such small marvels of design as this is best exemplified in the use of brilliant but simple primary and secondary hues of the color spectrum.

A *yastık* with very similar design is published in McMullan 1965, pp.338-339, plate 117.



47

Yastık face

Probably Konya Province, Central Anatolia
Probably late 18th or 19th century
Collection of Marilyn Denny
106.5 x 62.23 cm (42 x 24¼ inches)

Material: wool
Structure: knotted pile, warps on same level, symmetrical knot, 2 weft passes between rows of knots, knot count: 33 H x 27 V/dm (9H x 7V/in)
Warp: wool, 2Z-spun yarns plied S, off-white (undyed)
Weft: wool, 1Z-spun, off-white (undyed)
Pile: wool, 2Z-spun yarns plied S, 9 colors: red, white, blue, blue-green, yellow, reddish-brown, dark brown, purple, pink
Edges: original selvedge
Ends: stripped
Analysis by Walter B. Denny and Sumru Belger Krody

1 Morehouse 1996.

In small Anatolian pile-woven carpets such as this, created in vast numbers over the centuries, we can often see the entire world of Anatolian carpet design encompassed in a very small space.¹ While the limited format creates challenges for the designer/weaver, and while many of these small carpets clearly owe a debt to the well-known Bursa velvet examples (Plate 13), they often far surpass the prototypes in their brilliant use of color, their qualities of gifted improvisation, and in their power of visual impact.

This *yastık face* is a good case in point. The *elem* end panels, with their multiple pentagonal compartments, and the main border contain stylized floral forms that are sufficiently removed from the prototype to make their specific identification difficult if not impossible. The weaver has also improvised a very original octagon with two vertical pendant elements in the middle of the composition. However, small three-petaled carnations are still visible in the lower part of the white-ground field, and large red carnations are clearly seen in the blue-ground corner pieces of the field.

In an ancient English carol to the Virgin, she is compared to a rose in which "*conteyned was Heaven and Earth in littel Space.*" It is more than tempting to apply such a metaphor to the best Anatolian *yastıks*, which in their 'little space' contain, if not heaven and earth, then an amazing wealth of imaginative artistic invention and skillful improvisation.



Bedspread

Epirus
 Late 17th to early 18th century
 The Textile Museum 81.70
 Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1926
 275.6 × 224 cm (100.5 × 88 inches)

Published references
 Krody 2006, p.102, cat.no.5.6; p.147 (detail).
 Trilling 1983, p.87, cat.no.13, pl.7.

Material: linen, silk
 Structure: balanced plain weave, embroidery,
 split stitch, outline stitch
 Warp: linen, 1Z-spun, 23/cm, off-white
 (undyed)
 Weft: linen, 1Z-spun, 23/cm, off-white
 (undyed)
 Embroidery thread: silk, 1 (untwisted), 4
 colors: brown, purple, dark pink, dark
 brown
 Edge finish: selvedge
 End finish: warp fringe
 Construction: assembled from 4 loom-width
 panels
 Notes: pattern drawn on back face of fabric;
 embroidered before assembly
 Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

By the sixteenth century, the urban elite of the Epirus region of northeastern Greece, especially in the regional capital of Ioannina, appear to have adapted fully to the Ottoman aesthetic and design vocabulary. Among the floral motifs seen on this embroidered bedspread, tulips are framed by hyacinth sprays in the main border, and the scrolling carnations and tulips in the narrow outer border have unmistakable Ottoman origins. They were most likely transferred to Epirus with the influx of Ottoman textiles, art objects, and interior and exterior decorations on buildings. Even the colors, blue, red, green, and yellow with white highlights, point to the strong impact of the Ottoman textile arts.

Epirus had more direct contact with Ottoman artistic ideas than many other regions of Greece, and integrated them more successfully into its local creative tradition. During the early expansion of the Ottoman Empire in the early fifteenth century, Epirus was annexed much earlier than many other parts of Anatolia and northern Africa, so that many aspects of Epirote culture, including its embroidery, came to reflect the strong Ottoman political, cultural, and social presence.



49

Curtain

Chios
Mid- to late 17th century
The Textile Museum 1.74
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1952
271 × 152 cm (106½ × 59¾ inches)

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: weft-float weave with 2/1 twill interlacing and continuous supplementary-weft patterning
Warp (main): silk, 2Z-twisted, red
Weft (main): silk, 1 (untwisted), medium brown
Weft (Supplementary): silk, 3-4S-twisted, 4 colors: green, pink, white, blue
Weft (Supplementary): gilt metal wrapped
Z-direction around white silk (continuous)
Edges: selvedge
Ends: stripped
Construction: assembled from 2 loom-width and 1 half loom-width panels
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

- 1 Similar textiles are published in Atasoy *et al.* 2001, pp.173-175.
- 2 Many textiles in this style were found or associated with religious institutions; see Atasoy, *et al.* 2001, pp.173-175.

This curtain is composed of fabrics woven on the island of Chios in the Aegean.

Located west of the Bay of Izmir in Anatolia, it has always been a strategic location on the trade route carrying luxury goods as well as other staple goods back and forth from the Mediterranean to Istanbul.

Chios's main industry appears to have been textile production, principally cotton and silk. It had an established sericulture industry, all the production of which went to weave silk textiles on the numerous Chian looms. From the fifteenth century onwards, there are records in Genoese and Ottoman archives referring to textile production and the myriad types of textiles produced in Chios. This curtain, because of its decorative scheme and other related material found in churches with accurate dating, is possibly dated to the mid-seventeenth century when the island was an important Ottoman silk weaving center.¹

The floral imagery on this textile is derived from a blend of Ottoman and Italian artistic styles. The rose bouquets in the spandrels and rose bushes in the wide end borders show the flower in its different stages of maturity. The drawing of the tulips and lilies that fill the vase at the bottom of each niche, and the tulips alternating in and out of the narrow borders, also have strong connections with Ottoman design sources.

This large textile was made from two and half fabric lengths. It was designed to hang from a wall or to cover an opening, probably in a religious building.² The design on each length has an ornate niche carried by thin columns on either side. The fabric was designed so that when two or more of lengths were joined the whole textile creates the illusion of a columned courtyard.





50

Skirt border

Crete
17th century
Private collection
130.5 x 26.5 cm (51½ x 10½ inches)

Material: linen, cotton, and silk
Structure: balanced plain weave, embroidery,
Cretan stitch, herringbone stitch, chain
stitch, satin stitch, outline stitch, feather
stitch, stem stitch (whipped), knot stitch
Warp: linen, Z-spun, 22/cm, off-white
(undyed)
Weft: cotton, Z-spun, 20/cm, off-white
(undyed)
Embroidery thread: silk, 1 (untwisted), 8
colors: red, dark blue, green, yellow, dark
brown, light yellow-brown, yellow, white
Construction: assembled from 2 panels
Notes: pattern drawn on front face of fabric;
embroidered before assembly
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

Once the hem of a Cretan women's skirt and embroidered with the complex and crowded composition, this long fragment includes imagery that is an amalgamation of Ottoman and European art.

Two-tailed mermaids often appear in Cretan embroidery. Here they are each placed above a vase, from which spring flowers, branches, and tendrils. Many more real and mythical creatures perch on these branches. All of these motifs can be found with little alteration in European pattern books and decorations as well as in embroidered textiles and lace produced in Europe, especially in Venice.

The floral imagery, on the other hand, is of eastern origin. The carnation with a fan-shaped head is a very recognizable Ottoman motif. Its introduction to Cretan embroidery was probably indirect rather than stemming directly from Ottoman originals. Tulips and carnations as well as other Ottoman floral imagery were absorbed by Venetian textile designers and producers into their design vocabulary to create fabrics that appealed to their wealthy Ottoman clientele. These Venetian textile designs might have been the source for the floral designs in the hem of this skirt.

The Venetian control of Crete, which lasted for nearly 500 years, accounts for much of what we see in that island's embroidered textiles. The penchant for combining multiple stitches in a single piece, the majority of embroidery motifs and designs, and the cut of the garments, all recall the dress and style of Crete's long-lasting rulers. But this influence also carried with it some other foreign aspects that are not perceptible at a first glance and require closer analysis.





51

Bohça (wrapping cloth)

Northwest Iran or Transcaucasia
18th century
The Textile Museum 3.33
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers
89 × 85.5 cm (35 × 33½ inches)

Material: silk, linen
Structure: balanced plain-weave,
embroidery, 4/1 running stitch in diagonal
alignment
Warp: linen, 1Z-spun, 21/cm, light brown
Weft: linen, 1Z-spun, 26/cm light brown
Embroidery thread: silk, Z2S, 8 colors: pink,
yellow, white, light brown (tan), dark
yellow, medium blue, light blue, black
(outline)
Edge finish: not visible
End finish: not visible
Construction: lined with facing that is turned
around to create piping
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

(Not presented in the exhibition)

The embroiderer of this cover approached her design process differently from her Ottoman counterparts. She covered the whole surface of the ground fabric with tiny stitches. She then divided her design into two areas: a center field and then a border. But instead of demarcating these areas with a line of stitches and using the ground fabric as the backdrop for her design, which would have been the familiar method for an Ottoman needlewoman, she embroidered the whole background in light pink thread for border and blue-green for the main field.

Although her manner of design composition was different, the type of stitches that she chose and the motifs she preferred to embroider reflect an interest in Ottoman aesthetics. Fan-shaped heads of carnations circle the central star form, while tulips with three separate petals radiate away from the center, pointing toward the four edges.

At first glance, from a distance, the design of this textile is reminiscent of covers cut and pieced together from second-hand luxury textiles, which were probably used to cover a variety of surfaces in Iranian homes.



52

Cap

Damascus or Aleppo, Syria
Around 1800
Private Collection
Height: 17.78 cm (7 inches), diameter: 12.7 cm (5 in)

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: slit tapestry weave
Warp: cotton, 3S-spun yarns Z-plied, white
Weft: silk, 1S-twisted, 5 colors: red, pink, 3 shades of green
Weft: wool, 1S-spun, brown (possibly undyed)
Weft: silver metal wrapped S-direction around white silk
Edges: not visible
Ends: not visible
Construction: braided tassel made with black silk and silk metal wrapped S-direction around white silk; fishbone cording with gilt metal wrapped S-direction around yellow silk dividing the cap in 4 quadrants
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

Domical hats composed of four more or less triangular silk tapestry-woven panels with the wefts running vertically, sewn together with a tassel added at the top, were apparently made in Syria during the later centuries of Ottoman rule, and were intended to be worn by women. The white ground on this particularly attractive example originally gave a silvery metallic impression, as its silk yarns are S-wrapped with thin strips of silver foil. But the bright red bi-petaled tulips on green stems, and the variegated tulip blossoms on the triangular brown central field of each panel, dominate this beautiful piece of headwear, at once powerful and delicate in its visual impact.



Embroidered collar from an ecclesiastical cope (front and back)

Probably Moscow, Russia
17th century
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Purchase, Rogers Fund 1917, 17.157
33.5 × 82 cm (13¼ × 32¼ inches)

Provenance: Indjoudjian Frères, Paris.

Material: silk and metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: velvet, embroidery, couching
Warp (main): silk
Warp (pile): silk, red
Weft (before pile): cotton?
Weft (after pile): cotton?
Weft (front of pair): cotton?
Weft (back of pair): cotton?
Embroidery thread: silk, blue and green
Embroidery thread: gilt metal wrapped around yellow silk
Embroidery thread: gilt metal wrapped around white (undyed) silk
Edge finish: not visible
End finish: not visible

- 1 For the various uses Ottoman textiles were put to see *The Tsars and the East* 2009; for the bible bound in Ottoman fabric see Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.181, fig.35.
- 2 Atasoy *et al.* 2001, pp.240-252.
- 3 For the Moscow *sakkos* with dated inscription see *The Tsars and the East* 2009, pp.12, 122-123, and Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.103, plate 55, p.246, cat. no. 40.

In the early modern period, the technology of the draw-loom, by which elaborately patterned silk fabrics are created, was unknown in Russia. As the Duchy of Muscovy gained in power and territory, eventually to become the modern Russian state, the demand for luxury fabrics to accompany the elaborate court and churchly rituals was centered in the Moscow Kremlin and the churches and monasteries of Russia.

Ottoman fabrics in particular helped to meet these needs.

Today the Kremlin Armory Museum contains one of the largest groups of Ottoman textiles in the world, mostly incorporated into Orthodox church vestments and furnishings, but also including coronation regalia and furnishings, saddles and horse trappings, and even book bindings.¹ Among the Ottoman fabrics preserved in Moscow are many that were specially woven in Istanbul on looms controlled by the Istanbul Orthodox Patriarchate, ornamented with specifically Orthodox images of the Virgin and Child, Christ depicted as an Orthodox bishop, or figures of six-winged seraphim (see fig.17) and sometimes even incorporating inscriptions naming the cleric for whom the garment was made and giving a date.²

When incorporating Ottoman velvet or lampas fabrics into liturgical vestments, Russian artists often added elaborate embroidery in metallic thread worked into monochrome velvet as plackets, collars, yokes, and other ornamental or structural components of such garments. These embroideries often incorporated Russian versions of the classical Ottoman floral forms. This collar from a liturgical cope, worked in gilt-silver thread on red velvet, is a striking example of sixteenth-century Russian appropriation of Ottoman floral forms. Ottoman tulips are clearly depicted in the interstices between the silver palmettes bearing crosses. Other examples found in Moscow and St. Petersburg are decorated with Ottoman carnations and serrated *saz* leaves.³



Fragment of a silver-ground Safavid textile

Iran
 18th century
 The Textile Museum 1.69
 Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1952
 92 × 47 cm (36¼ × 18½ inches)

Provenance: Charles Dikran Kelekian

Published reference
 Lévy, *La Collection Kelekian* n.d., pl.51 (left).

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
 Structure: plain-weave with complimentary wefts and inner warp
 Warp (inner): silk, 2Z-twisted, off-white
 Warp (binding): silk, 1 (untwisted), gray
 Weft: silk, 1 (untwisted), 6 colors: red, yellow, off-white, green, dark green, pink
 Weft: silver-wrapped S-direction around white silk
 Edges: stripped
 Ends: stripped
 Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

¹ Once thought because of their excellent condition and fresh colors to have been woven in Turkey in the 19th century, these carpets are now generally recognized as being products of 16th-century Iran. See Eiland, Jr. and Pinner 1999, especially the contributions by John Mills and Michael Franses.

² See Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.18 and fig. 8.

The relationship between Ottoman and Safavid carpets and textiles is a complex one. We now believe that the extraordinary state of preservation of certain luxurious Safavid prayer carpets given as gifts from the Safavid Shah to the Ottoman Sultan in the later sixteenth century may have been due to the fact that these carpets, in addition to having inscriptions that may have suggested Shi'ite religious belief to the Sunni Ottomans, were simply in a foreign taste not popular at the Istanbul court.¹ The same may be said of certain Mughal textiles also given as gifts to the Ottoman sultans, which were stored in the Topkapı Palace to be discovered in as new condition at the end of the twentieth century.²

Although Persian art had a powerful influence on the Ottoman style in the first half of the sixteenth century, attested to by the significant number of emigré artists in Istanbul who had formerly been employed at the Safavid court, the impact of Ottoman design on Iranian artistic tradition is considerably more difficult to define. Certain Ottoman silks, such as velvet furnishing fabrics, may have found limited acceptance in Iran, but the overall impact appears to have been slight; the differences in stylistic taste were simply too great.

This eighteenth-century textile, probably a product of Safavid looms (although a Mughal provenance is not out of the question), uses the familiar ogival lattice layout with a silver ground. Each highly symmetrical spray of three blossoms is crowned by a carnation with separated petals that was obviously inspired by Ottoman prototypes. The stamped ridges that were added to this textile after weaving add an additional element of texture that contributes to its overall impression of silvery richness.



Cover composed of Persian and Mughal textiles

Probably North India
18th century
The Textile Museum 1.83
Gift of Mrs. Philip Hoffman
81 × 80 cm (32 × 31½ inches)

Center panel

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: plain-weave, supplementary-weft
patterning (brocading) in twill interlacing
Warp: silk, 1 (untwisted), light orange
Weft: silk, 1 (untwisted), light orange
Supplementary weft: silk, 2 Z-twisted yarns, 4
colors: blue, white, green, dark blue
Supplementary weft: gilt metal-wrapped
S-direction around light yellow silk

Wide outer border

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: plain-weave, supplementary-weft
patterning (brocading) in twill interlacing
Warp: silk, 1 (untwisted), blue
Weft: silk, 1 (untwisted), blue
Supplementary weft: silk, 1 (untwisted), 3
colors: dark pink, purple, green
Supplementary weft: silver-wrapped
S-direction around white silk

Narrow inner border

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: warp-float weave
Warp: silk, 1 (untwisted), 5 colors: white,
brown, green, red, black
Warp: gilt metal-wrapped S-direction around
white silk
Weft: silk, 1 (untwisted), red

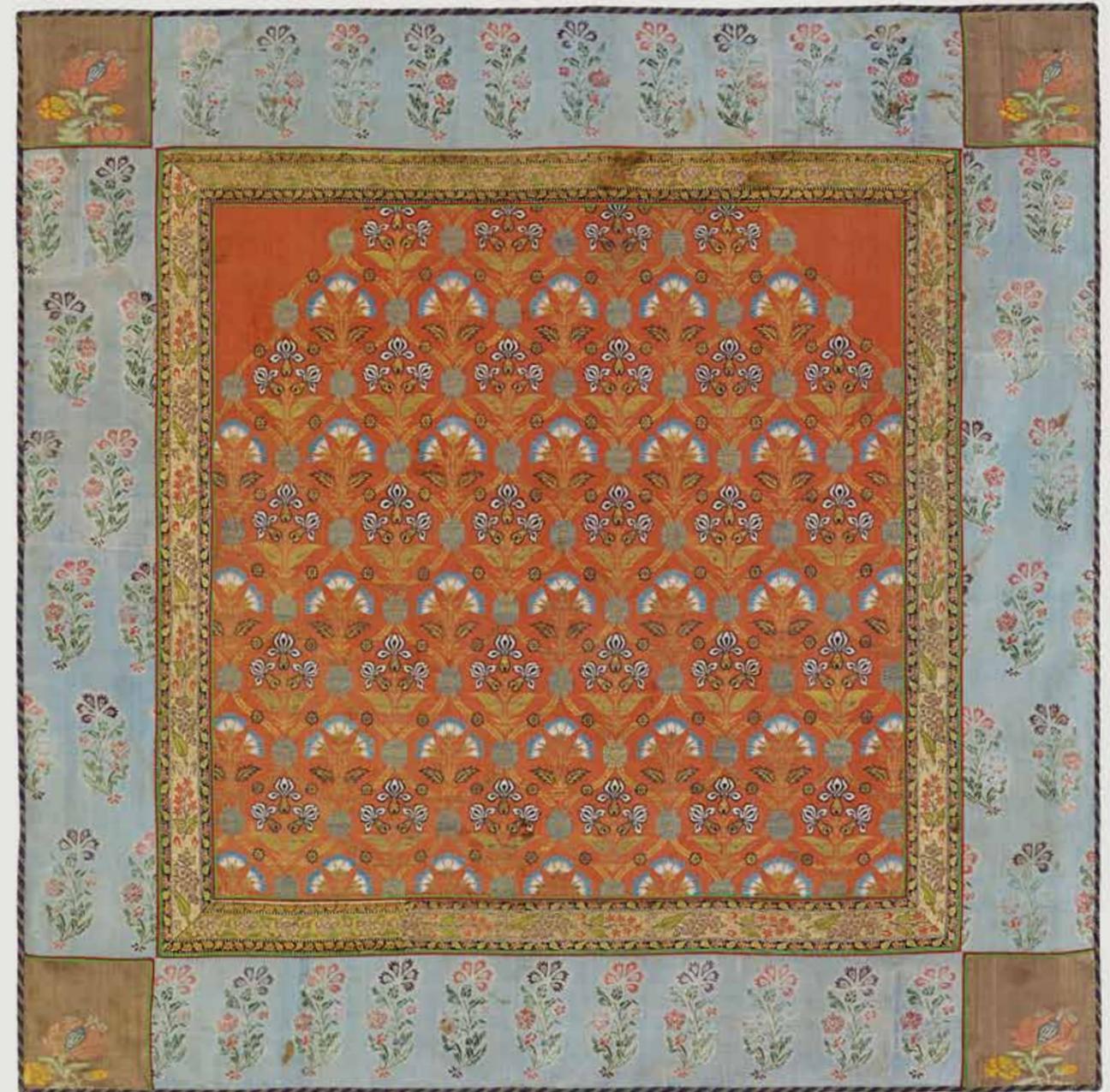
Four small corner panels

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: plain-weave, supplementary-weft
patterning (brocading) in twill interlacing
Warp: silk, 1 (untwisted), light brown
Weft: silk, 1 (untwisted), light brown
Supplementary weft: silk, 2Z-twisted yarns, 7
colors: pink, dark, pink, white, yellow,
green, blue
Construction: assembled from 4 different
fabrics and lined with facing
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

It is no easy task to differentiate between small-scale floral Mughal and Safavid fabrics of the eighteenth century. This fragmentary example, with its Ottoman-style carnations and extremely naturalistic iris blossoms within a small-scale ogival lattice, sewn together with borders that appear to be of Indian origin, seems to belong to the Mughal end of the spectrum; the orange ground also suggests a Mughal provenance.

The Ottoman-style carnation was one of the most distinctive floral forms to be adopted by other cultures, and one of the easiest to copy and to recognize. Carnations with five separated stencil-like petals also appear in the wide outer border with its light blue ground, while sprays of hyacinths appear on the narrow inner border.

An enigmatic feature of this small fragment is the manner in which the staggered rows of ogival compartments at the top of the composition appear to be arranged in decreasing numbers to suggest they would have terminated in a point. It is possible that this fragment came from a textile that was originally planned in the form of a *seccade* or prayer rug with the pointed arch in the central field.



Velvet *yastık* for the Ottoman market

Italy
16th to 17th century
Gerard Paquin Collection
114 × 63 cm (45 × 24¾ inches)

Published reference
Atasoy *et al.* 2001, p.186, pl.44.

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: brocaded velvet, 4/1 satin foundation with ¼ twill order (Z direction) for discontinuous supplementary weft.
Warp (main): silk, 1Z-twisted, off-white
Warp (pile): silk, 1 (untwisted), red
Weft (before pile): silk, 1 (untwisted), off-white
Weft (after pile): silk, 1 (untwisted), off-white
Weft (front of pair): silk, 1 (untwisted), off-white
Weft (back of pair): silk, 1 (untwisted), off-white
Weft (supplementary): gilt metal wrapped Z-direction around yellow silk (discontinuous)
Edges: selvedge, satin weave, blue and 4 cotton cord
Ends: stripped
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

¹ Blair and Bloom 1991.
² Atasoy *et al.* 2001.

Since its first appearance on the art market, this compactly-woven velvet cushion cover with a splendid Ottoman floral design was recognized as both technically and visually different from the bulk of the many surviving Bursa *yastık* covers. It was originally published as Turkish in 1991.¹ Subsequent research by Louise Mackie having led to a definitive method of separating Turkish velvets from their Italian copies through an analysis of the pattern of their binding wefts, an Italian origin was posited in the landmark publication *Ipek: The Crescent & The Rose: Imperial Ottoman Silks and Velvets*.²

It is thought that, given their production in a distinctively Ottoman form (the *yastık* cushion cover), such textiles were created in Italy for the Ottoman market. The bulk of such Italian textiles in either Ottoman or quasi-Ottoman designs and layouts are easily distinguishable through their use of the so-called '*alto-basso*' technique that employs both cut velvet and looped-pile velvet, a characteristic of Italian velvet production. Others incorporate characteristically Italian motifs such as crowns (although these were imitated in Turkey as well). While the origins of individual pieces pose an interesting problem for the textile scholar, the really important lesson to be learned from works such as this is that in the early modern period there was a high degree of artistic and technological interchange around the Mediterranean.

This example has a central ogival medallion adorned with small tulips and carnations; the four corners of the field incorporate large tulip blossoms as well as stylized pomegranates, with quarter-medallions in the corners bearing more carnations. The major border is composed primarily of large tulips, ornamented at times with two parallel wavy bands adapted from *çintemani*, the universal good-luck symbol employed in Ottoman art over many centuries, and also employing smaller tulips. Finally, the 'lappets' or 'flaps' at each end contain six shield-shaped compartments, in which sprays of small carnations, small tulips, and large rosebuds are shown in alternation. Clearly the Italian designer of this piece was well-versed in the vocabulary of Ottoman art and in its implied rules of syntax as well.





57–59

Three Polish Sashes

These three silk sashes demonstrate an unusual conjunction between East and West. Beginning in the sixteenth century, official portraits show Polish aristocrats wearing eastern-style clothing, including a sash worn at the waist over a *kontush* or tunic.

Silk sashes were originally imported from Persia, then, beginning in 1722, from the Ottoman Empire. The first large-scale production in Poland was started in 1758 in the town of Sluck (now in Belarus) by Jan Mazaraski and his son Leon, Armenian weavers from Istanbul. The sash in Plate 57 is inscribed “SLUCK” in the corner. Bright colors were used in the design so that it would stand out against the gold weft background. The floral arrangement, depicting a symmetrically arranged, stylized flowering carnation plant growing from a small mound of earth, is typical of the Sluck manufactory.

Over time, the floral designs on Polish sashes shifted away from the prototypical Ottoman and Persianate styles to include French Rococo influence in their detailing. Plate 58 was made in the Paschalis Factory in Warsaw. Paschalis sashes—indicated by the Paschal lamb and the initials PJ in the bottom corner, as well as by the naturalism evoked in the floral bouquets—were known for their high quality. Though the theme of symmetrically arranged stylized flowers, including tulips and rosebuds, remains, there is a distinctly Rococo treatment to the base of the flower, which depicts an almost Sèvres-like vase rather than the mound of earth in the earlier Sluck piece. Eventually, French factories in Lyon began producing sashes for the Polish market that reproduced both Sluck and Paschalis designs.

Plate 59 is unusual in that it has three flower arrangements rather than the usual two, and the flowers have an extreme verticality not found in other examples. The colors—blue, red, green, and yellow with white highlights—point to a strong Ottoman artistic influence.



57

Sash

Sluck, Poland
Sluck Factory
Circa 1758-1780
The Textile Museum 82.3
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1947
392 x 35.5 cm (154½ x 14 inches)

Material: silk, metallic wrapped thread
Structure: complementary-weft plain-weave with inner warps and areas of discontinuous supplementary wefts
Warp (inner): silk, 1 (untwisted), light blue-green paired with light pink
Warp (binding): silk, 1 (untwisted), light pink
Weft (ground.): silk, 1 (untwisted), red, white, light green, medium blue-green
Weft (ground): gilt-wrapped S-direction around light yellow
Edges: selvedge
Ends: added metallic-wrapped thread fringe band
Remarks: inscription in the corners reads "SLUCK"
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody



58

Sash

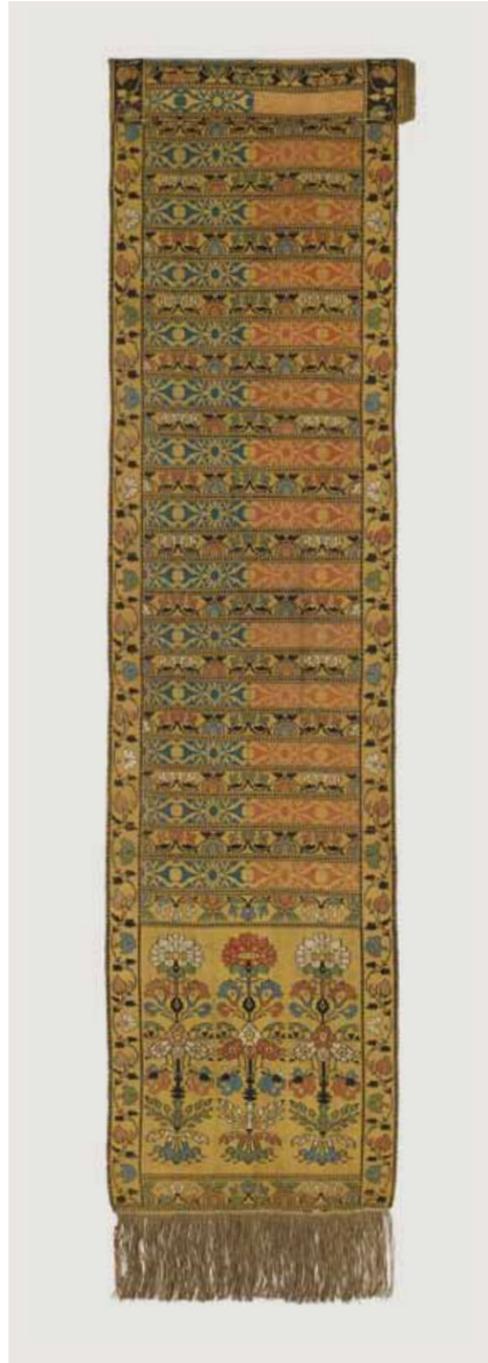
Warsaw, Poland
Paschalis Factory
Circa 1791-1794
The Textile Museum 82.9
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1948
414 x 38 cm (163¼ x 15 inches)

Published references
Maguire 2004, p.5 (top detail).
Material: silk, metallic wrapped thread
Structure: complementary-weft plain-weave with inner warps and areas of discontinuous supplementary wefts
Warp (inner): silk, 1 (untwisted), pink
Warp (binding): silk, 1 (untwisted), light pink
Weft (ground, end panel, proper left): silk, 1S-twisted, light brown, and silver gilt-wrapped S-direction around white silk
Weft (ground, end panel, proper right): silk, 1S-twisted, dark brown and yellow gilt metal wrapped S-direction around pink silk
Weft (discontinuous supplementary, end panels): silk, 1-3S-twisted, pink, blue, white
Weft (ground, center stripes, proper left): silk, 1S-twisted, pink and green and yellow gilt metal wrapped S-direction around pink silk
Weft (ground, center stripes, proper right): silk, 1S-twisted, white and blue and silver gilt-wrapped S-direction around white silk
Edges: selvedge
Ends: added fringe band
Remarks: lamb with flag insignia on the left and right corner of the sash and letters PI which stands for Paschalis, with the Paschal lamb
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody



Poland
18th century
The Textile Museum 82.12
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1949
402 × 32.5 cm (158¼ × 12¾ inches)

Material: silk, metallic wrapped thread
Structure: complementary-weft plain-weave with inner warps and areas of discontinuous supplementary wefts
Warp (inner): silk, 1 (untwisted), pink
Warp (binding): silk, 1 (untwisted), light pink
Weft (ground, end panel, proper left): silk, 1S-twisted, light brown, and silver gilt-wrapped S-direction around white silk
Weft (ground, end panel, proper right): silk, 1S-twisted, dark brown and yellow gilt metal wrapped S-direction around pink silk
Weft (discontinuous supplementary, end panels): silk, 1-3S-twisted, pink, blue, white
Weft (ground, center stripes, proper left): silk, 1S-twisted, pink and green and yellow gilt metal wrapped S-direction around pink silk
Weft (ground, center stripes, proper right): silk, 1S-twisted, white and blue and silver gilt-wrapped S-direction around white silk
Edges: selvedge
Ends: added fringe band
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody



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