THE SULTAN’S GARDEN
THE BLOSSOMING OF OTTOMAN ART • DENNY & KRODY
THE SULTAN’S GARDEN
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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, 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.
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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The Sultan’s Garden: The Blossoming of Ottoman Art 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 18, 2013. Some sixty carpets, silks and embroideries will be on view, drawn 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 Keydly 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.

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

**The Sultan’s Garden**

Foreword

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

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Ottoman art reflects the wealth, abundance, and influence of an Empire that spanned seven continents 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 unveil 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 its environs.

Beginning in the mid-sixteenth century, stylized tulips, carnations, hyacinths, honeysuckle and roses began to appear in all artistic media 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 Râstezî, and finally as chief court designer during the reigns of Süleyman the Magnificent (1520–1566) and Selim II (1566–1574), 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 century precursors.

In the early twenty-first century, there is widespread recognition of the Ottoman floral style as 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 panel illustrated here (fig. 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. Without the support of The Textile Museum’s Chief Financial/Administrative Officer, Douglas Maas, neither exhibition nor book would have proceeded to its final stage. We were fortunate to have the unflagging assistance of Katy Urrach, former Exhibition Co-ordinator of The Textile Museum, who juggled a multitude of detail. During the research, development, and implementation of the exhibition and related programs.

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, Maryclare 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 book would have proceeded to its final stage. We were fortunate to have the unflagging assistance of Katy Urrach, former Exhibition Co-ordinator of The Textile Museum, who juggled a multitude of details. During the research, development, and implementation of the exhibition and the book, we were ably assisted by a succession of friends and colleagues who opened doors, shared their collections and helped in other ways, especially: Sheila Canby, Pierca 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 Baim of the Assembly of Turkish American Associations and Dr. Elizabeth Stelton of the American Friends of Turkey. All of those colleagues who read parts of the manuscript and provided 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.

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The Authors

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 *16th-17th Century Oriental Carpets* (1997). He is one of the contributors to the recent volume *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).

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 Daud Arseven and Tahsin Öz, largely published their work in Turkey, with only a few books translated into French or English.

Outside Turkey, as late as the 1970s the majority of Ottoman Turkish ceramics produced at Iznik 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 illusory 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 rapid growth of Ottoman art. They were published in late Ottoman times by the scholar Ahmet Şevki Rıxlı and studied in more detail by Rolf Melik-Merik. From them we see the emergence in the Rıxlı of a young artist who is eventually known by the nickname Kara Memi, dark-skinned Mehmed, who eventually became head of the Rıxlı and then, after the death or retirement of Shah Kulu, overall director of the Rıxlı 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, phantoms, and antelope with flames springing from its shoulders and haunches, and waterfowl. The rapid growth of the nakkâhane 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 Rıxlı, or those from Anatolia, and the other as the department of the Akınan, literally ‘of the Persians’ but apparently composed of artists from many different origins who were not Anatolian in heritage. 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 Belik and studied in more detail by Rolf Melik-Merik. In them we see the emergence in the Rıxlı of a young artist who is eventually known by the nickname Kara Memi, dark-skinned Mehmed, who eventually became head of the Rıxlı and then, after the death or retirement of Shah Kulu, overall director of the Rıxlı. The accomplishments of the nakkâhane under Süleyman I between 1520 and 1566 established the basis of the Ottoman classical court style that was to flourish under Sultan Selim II (1566–1574), Murad III (1574–1595), Mehmed III (1595–1603), and their successors throughout the seventeenth century, and that was subject to periodic revivals in the subsequent centuries as well.
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 Memi.

How do we explain this sudden appearance in the court design atelier? Some scholars speculated that this bipartite arrangement in the court 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 Memi.

As we passed through these districts we were presented with large wreaths of flowers, the narcissus, the hyacinth, and the tulipan (as the Turks call it Fig. 2). Later, he observes: “The Turks are passionately fond of flowers, and though somewhat parsimonious in other matters, they do not hesitate to give several as presents for a choice blossom.” 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 a whole language of meaning. For example, the gift of a ‘karanfil’ (carnation), 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 pash or jonquil in a bouquet carried the message: “have pity on my passion.” She describes the interior of an Ottoman house in Istanbul in which the ceilings are decorated with paintings showing baskets of flowers.

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 Turks to Europe. 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.

In her monumental work on Ottoman gardens, Dr. Nurhan Atasoy has documented the long fascination of Turkish artists with gardens, garden architecture, and the cultivation of flowers. 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 (eşkiyâh) (Fig. 2). 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 the work of artists such as Kara Memi, whose career is documented both in Ottoman records of the late sixteenth century, shows a red tulip may denote a red-turbaned (eşkiyâh) (Fig. 2). 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.

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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. Arslan, 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 hereto unknown to the public and, in many cases, to scholars as well. The second exhibition, curated by Dr. Ejin Ayl 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. 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 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 Tulip: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey; the other on drawloom-woven textiles, Tulip: Imperial Ottoman Silk and Velvet. Other publications shed light on the role of the floral style in manuscript illumination, embroidery, carpets, metalwork, and armature, 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. 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 sincere form of flattery, European artists and artisans have borrowed 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 Ahı Vari - 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 even England and France? To answer these questions we must first look back into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.
personalities, we can see calyx forms that vaguely resemble 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 evident in fifteenth-century Mamluk silks from Egypt and velvets from Italy. 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 cloaked 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 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.

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 sixteenth 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 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 ‘sak leaf’ motif. 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. 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).

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**Figures**

- Figure 4: Detail, design for an embroidered collar, ink on sized paper, probably Tabriz, late fifteenth century; Topkapı Palace Museum, album album 318, folio 118B.
- Figure 5: Detail, design for an embroidered collar, ink on sized paper, probably Tabriz, late fifteenth century; Topkapı Palace Museum, album album 318, folio 118B.
- Figure 6: Detail, design for an embroidered collar, ink on sized paper, probably Tabriz, late fifteenth century; Topkapı Palace Museum, album album 318, folio 118B.
- Figure 7: Detail, design for an embroidered collar, ink on sized paper, probably Tabriz, late fifteenth century; Topkapı Palace Museum, album album 318, folio 118B.
- Figure 8: Embroidered panel showing an Ottoman sultan on horseback, silk on linen, mid-sixteenth century; The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, The M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, California.
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. 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. 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 Rumiyân 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. 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.

Artistically the situation was complex, even anarchic. Looking at the art of the sükûkahâm in these years, we see one distinctively Ottoman strain—the ornamentation 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 opaque watercolors on sized paper; Topkapı Palace Museum, Revan 804, folio 89

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.
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 Cretan by birth, inducted into the Ottoman military bureaucracy as a young child, Rüstem methodically worked his way through the hierarchy 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 vezir or grand vezir from 1544 to 1553, then, after a two-year hiatus, reassumed the position from 1553 until his death in 1561. 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 of the popular and able soldier-prince Mustafa, 1553. His role in the accession of Selim to the throne, led to his being blamed for the murder of the popular and able soldier-prince Mustafa, 1553, then, a two-year hiatus, reassumed the position from 1553 until his death in 1561. His efficient taxation policies and control of spending built up the wealth of the Ottoman state to an unprecedented degree.

Romanticism

Rüstem's role in the 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 his patron's death in 1561. Here we can see, on walls that are for the first time in Ottoman history completely covered with polychrome slip-covered stone-paste 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. 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 incorporated a large and dynamic scale that 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. Second, by curtailting the artistic influence of Italy in the realm of textiles, as well as by encouraging the development of the Iznik 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 in both in decorations for royal buildings and in tableware sold in the bazaar, which diffused the new style widely. The development of the Iznik (lampaş) production in Istanbul saw the creation of an entire industry whose products were ideally suited to the new floral style. Unlike Italian velvets, Iznik kilims, which today are woven in Istanbul, at first woven in Bursa, and from Iran to Egypt. The finest court embroideries of this period, surviving in only a very tiny handful of examples, are covered with tulips and carnations. Carpets designed by court designers in Istanbul, at first woven in Egypt and later (or in near Istanbul), immediately adopted the new floral vocabulary, which had by 1580 gradually become the dominant feature of their designs. Ottoman stone-carvers adapted garden flowers in a variety of practical objects (Figure 12), as well as using floral motifs in mosques, palaces, and especially in rich sculptures that adorned public fountains. Ottoman craftsmen in glass, gilt, and painted wood also used the new style with great enthusiasm, as did the artists who painted decorations on the walls of mosques and palaces. Illuminators, bookbinders, and masters of such Ottoman art forms as jär in the cheaper, immediately took up the new floral vocabulary. The Ottomans did the floral style become less common in the contemporary arts in almost all media from the later sixteenth through the later seventeenth century.
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 Late Eyyûb 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 Late Eyyûb 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 was used as a significant aspect of governance and the projection of royal power. 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.45 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.

The Diffusion of the Floral Style and the Empire

As provincial centers within the Empire grew in economic importance, sub-styles in various media, such as the embroideries of flowers in almost every medium in Ottoman art, 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 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.

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hyacinths, and honeysuckle permeate the pile carpet weaving of Milâs, Mêmi, and Macer, of Konya, Sivas, and Çankırı. 

The small pile-weave yastıks (silk or cotton covers) woven over the centuries in many centers across Anatolia demonstrate an amazing 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 subcultures with the far-off regions of the Ottoman Empire, is a testament both to the powerful evidence for cultural continuity, especially in the realm of 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 late 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 did not have their spirits evoked by the styles and traditions of the ancient Near Eastern public monuments of Ankara, the Republic’s capital, self-consciously turned to underline the importance of the Anatolian homeland, the ‘center of the Heart’ of the Ottoman Empire, and its adoption into the arts of diverse peoples and subcultures with the far-off regions of the Ottoman Empire, is a testament both to the powerful evidence for cultural continuity, especially in the realm of 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 late 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.

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Çağataytürk 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.10 Received at first with considerable excitement,11 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.12 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 elı 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, elı 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 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.13 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 kılıms of the late 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
began to come to the attention of scholars. The kilims with S-spun wool found in the Great Mosque of Divriği in 1979 constitute the largest single group of these, with other examples coming to light in various museums such as the Bayerisches Armeemuseum in Ingolstadt. 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). 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 certain motif found in late 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 latter 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, “...what can be done with fewer assumptions is done in vain with more.”

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, hunting horns and horse trappings. The evidence of works of art themselves is equally impressive, ranging from the hundreds of Ottoman carpets still bound 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. 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 Islam originals, are all part of a European artistic fascination with, and inspiration by, Ottoman works of art over many centuries. 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 preeminence in 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-looms; the complex technology of silk weaving, together with the equally complex technology of preparing and dying silk for weaving, was not present in the early days of Imperial Russia. The result was an unprecedented reliance by the Romanovs on the luxury fabrics of their frequent wartime adversary and equally frequent trading partner, the Ottoman Empire. 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 Donskoy Sobor (known to art historians by the French term imitations and even a pair of silk hunting gloves. Other examples include numerous Bibles bound in Ottoman textiles in two characteristic Ottoman techniques – seraser and seraser with specifically Orthodox iconography. 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 25). 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 Biblical scenes in Ottoman velvet, saddles and other horse ornaments made with velvet, and even pair of silk hunting gloves. Even more interesting from the art historian’s point of view is the impact of the Ottoman floral style in...
The Sultan's Garden

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.18 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.

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.

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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 ateliers 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 to the Ottoan floral style. From the realm of manuscript illumination it rapidly spread to the realm of 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 borders of the empire. The artistic vocabulary from these seventeenth- and eighteenth-century commercial goods permeated the border of the empire. The artistic vocabulary from these domestic, within the Ottoman Empire, but also extended far beyond the borders of the empire. The artistic vocabulary from these commercial goods permeated the Ottoman Empire, led to the rapid diffusion of the new floral style.

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 view 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 primary, 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 Ötger Ghiselin de Busbecq made back in the sixteenth century. In the matter of arts 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 cloths of the whitest silk, and bright remants 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 mere stroke of chisel was never presented to my gaze.75

Whatever military power may bring any empire to its pomp, a broader view of human accomplishment reminds us that the historical memory of any political entity will ultimately reside in 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.
The evolution of style in Ottoman ornament is discussed in Raby and Tanındı 1989. The Sultan's Garden

Necipoğlu 2001, certainly suggests a relationship between the two, but it is probably from the use of the reliefs as inspiration by some recent weavers, rather than idealizing an artistic continuum dating from the time of the reliefs themselves.

Atasoy and Kobyli 1999, pla.119-122), and the Kırşehir kilim that she had located in the Great Mosque of Divriği (Yetkin 1971) in which she described a fragment of a large and important 13th-century, 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. See Denny 1979.

In three articles, one by Murray L. Eiland Jr., and two by Arseven n.d., it was a great revelation for the team of scholars who surveyed the Moscow collections for the major study on Ottoman silk textiles, Leddy (Balpınar et al. 2001, pp.100-103, pls.51-56.

For illustrations of some of Fortuny’s Ottoman-inspired designs, see the exhibition catalogue (the electronic) for Ansambl' Angazh in Mos. (Atasoy Denny and Krody 2002, pp.35-39.

For so-called carpet design revolution, see Ellis and Wearden 2001, p.52, for illustrations of Oriental Rug Review, Autumn 2011). See also Ölçer and Denny 1999, especially pls.75, 76 and 47.

As depicted in various works on Oriental rugs, but in the less well-known and now defunct Orient&Home, in three articles, see by Murray L. Elkind II, and two by Marita Radtke (1985/6).

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 Belknap in 1986, suggests a relationship 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 17th and eighteenth 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. See Denny 1979.

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Two influential pioneering works were a survey volume by Yanni Petsopoulos (1976) and an exhibition catalog by David Black and Clive Loveless (1977). The first major study on early Anatolian kilims was Henry Ruscher’s work on the kilims of the Kırşehir province, published in facsimile in 2005 under the auspices of Ereğli Demir ve Çelik Fabrikası in Istanbul. On Ottoman the auspices of Erer’s patronage, see Atasoy 1981.

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Section of an embroidered cover

16th or early 17th century
The Textile Museum 1.22
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers
121.7 × 78.7 cm (48 1/8 × 30 5/8 in.)

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.
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 sixteenth century
The Textile Museum 16.4.6
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1952

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

Warp: wool, 4 S-spun yarns Z-plied, yellow
Weft: wool, 3 S-spun, 2 S-spun yarns, red
Pile: wool, 3 S-spun, 4 S-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 nakkaşhane (the design bureau) 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 showpieces 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 rich 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.
Fragment of a floral serenk from a costume

Probably finished
Late 16th century
The Textile Museum 1.57
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1951
126.5 × 69 cm (49¾ × 27¼ inches)

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 holly berry-like forms, defines ogival compartments with red satin weave grounds in which complex pear-shaped medallions packed with tulips, carnations, rosebuds, 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.
Loom-width of *kemha* with small-scale floral decoration

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.

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**Pronunciation:** [Charles Hekar 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 directions

Warp (foundation/satin): silk, 2 untwisted y-strings S-twisted, medium blue

Warp (binding/twill): silk, 1 twist, white

Weft (foundation/satin): silk, 2 untwisted, medium blue

Weft (pattern/twill): silk, 3 Z-twisted or 4 Z-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 1993, pp. 110-11, no. 30.

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1. [Kashani & Berndt 1999, pp. 200-21, nos. 50.](#)

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56 *Introduction to the Cast of Characters*
Introduction to the Cast of Characters

Published references
Atasoy et al. 2001, p. 309, fig. 4; 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 warp.
Warp (main): silk, 1 S-twisted, white.
Warp (pile): silk, 1 S-twisted, red.
Weft: cotton, 1 Z-spun, white.
Weft (before pile): cotton, 1 Z-spun, white.
Weft (after pile): cotton, 1 Z-spun, white.
Weft (front of pair): cotton, 1 Z-spun, white.
Weft (back of pair): silk, I (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 selvedges 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 seat 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.
Velvets incorporating a layout of staggered rows of carnation blossoms were produced in Bursa from the late 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 into the design. In alternate horizontal rows of carnations, the tulip-shaped calyces 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. Complete surviving velvet covers in their original form are relatively rarely found in museums.
The Classical Ottoman Floral Style

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)
Weft (foundation/satin): silk, 2 untwisted S-twisted, blue
Weft (binding/twill): silk, 2 untwisted Z-twisted, light red
Weft (pattern/twill): silk, 2Z-twisted, 3 colors: green, white
Weft (pattern/twill): gilt metal wrapped S-direction around yellow silk (continuous) paired with 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.

Loom width of blue-ground kemha

Inscribed:
17th century
The Textile Museum 3.303
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1935.
137.5 × 65.5 cm (54½ × 26¼ inches)
The Classical Ottoman Floral Style

Published references
Atasoy et al. 2001, p. 204, fig. 90A II.
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 2 twisted, red
Weft (foundation/satin): silk, 2 untwisted yarns 2 twisted, light red

Warp (binding/twill): silk, 2 untwisted yarns Z-twisted, light red
Weft (binding/twill): silk, 2 untwisted yarns Z-twisted, light red

Warp: (pattern/twill): silk, 1 (untwisted), red (orange-red)
Weft (pattern/twill): silk, 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

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 kafan 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 engulflled 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.
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

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2. Atasoy et al. 2001, pl. 4, fig. 245.
The classical arrangement of an Ottoman living room, whether in the public (selamlık) area of a house where visitors could be received, or in the private (yastık) part of a dwelling, was a series of sitting or reclining platforms (çintemani) around the periphery. These were furnished with mattress-like cushions, usually covered with velvet or embroidered fabrics, in an upper-class home, and with bolster (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: heddle 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 çerzes 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 pastoral or bolster cover is a çerze:

Differences in technique and medium in Ottoman textiles resulted in the different organization of working 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 design, and often using either an agroivalence lattice format, or stacked or staggered rows of small medallions, carnation flowers, or other floral motifs at the ‘flaps’ or lappets originally at each end of the piece. Pairs of emblematic ‘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 çerze weavers 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 çerze fabrics such as this would have been affordable only by the wealthiest elements of Ottoman society.
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 Turkmen horse trappings dubbed kejebe¹ 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 warps 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 warps 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.
The Classical Ottoman Floral Style

Provenance: Charles Dikran Kelekian
Published references:
Atıl 1980, p. 357, fig. 207.
Denny 1973, p. 64, fig. 20.
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 first in 1/4 twill order (S direction) with discontinuous weft bound in twill W S direction.
Warp (main): silk, 1 S-twisted, white
Warp (pile): silk, Z-twisted, red
Weft (before pile): cotton, 1 Z-spun, white
Weft (after pile): cotton, 1 Z-spun, white
Weft (front of pair): cotton, 1 Z-spun, white
Weft (back of pair): silk, I (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 yastık s 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 yastık s with their characteristic lappet ends. See Binney 1979, nos. 40a and b, p. 68.
2 See Morehouse, 1996.

The artistic challenge to the textile designer implicit in yastık s 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 yastık s are displayed horizontally in the home. 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 centre, 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 yastık s 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. Ottoman velvet yastık s were also exported to North Africa and to Europe, where some of them found their way into chasubles and other church vestiments.

Provenance: Charles Dikran Kelekian
Published references:
Atıl 1980, p. 357, fig. 207.
Denny 1973, p. 64, fig. 20.
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 first in 1/4 twill order (S direction) with discontinuous weft bound in twill W S direction.
Warp (main): silk, 1 S-twisted, white
Warp (pile): silk, Z-twisted, red
Weft (before pile): cotton, 1 Z-spun, white
Weft (after pile): cotton, 1 Z-spun, white
Weft (front of pair): cotton, 1 Z-spun, white
Weft (back of pair): silk, I (twisted), white
Weft (supplementary) gilt metal wrapped S-direction around off-white silk
Edges: selvedge, satin weave, white and red
Ends: stripped
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Published references:
Atıl 1980, p. 357, fig. 207.
Denny 1973, p. 64, fig. 20.
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 first in 1/4 twill order (S direction) with discontinuous weft bound in twill W S direction.
Warp (main): silk, 1 S-twisted, white
Warp (pile): silk, Z-twisted, red
Weft (before pile): cotton, 1 Z-spun, white
Weft (after pile): cotton, 1 Z-spun, white
Weft (front of pair): cotton, 1 Z-spun, white
Weft (back of pair): silk, I (twisted), white
Weft (supplementary) gilt metal wrapped S-direction around off-white silk
Edges: selvedge, satin weave, white and red
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2 See Morehouse, 1996.
The Classical Ottoman Floral Style

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, 3 untwisted, white
Weft (pattern/twill): silk, 3 Z-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 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 rum 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.
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.
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.
Block-printed textile fragment

Cairo, Egypt; probably Istanbul, Turkey
Second half sixteenth century
The Textile Museum 75.211
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1954
13 1/4 x 17 1/16 inches

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 onto 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
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; 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.”
Fragment of a green-ground kemha

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-sixteenth-century Istanbul. The scale-like textured pattern of the thick ogival vines is also clearly influenced by contemporary Italian velvet design.
The Classical Ottoman Floral Style

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 weft 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

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
Warp: silk, I (untwisted), white
Warp (pile): silk, Z-twisted, red
Weft (before pile): silk, 1 S-twisted, light yellow
Weft (aft pile): silk, 1 S-twisted, light yellow
Weft (front of pair): silk, 1 S-twisted, light yellow
Weft (back of pair): silk, I (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: selvage, satin weave, white
Ends: striped
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

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

20
Loom-width length of velvet with ogival layout and floral design

Probably brocaded
Circa 1550-1560
The Textile Museum 83.40
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1951
101 x 62 cm (39½ x 24½ inches)
21
Loom-width of ogival-layout kemha with carnations

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: lampas, combination of 4/1 satin
and 1/3 twill (Z direction)
Warp (foundation/satin): silk, 20-twinned
white, red
Warp (binding/twill): silk, 1 (untwisted),
white
Warp (foundation/satin): silk, 20-twinned,
light red
Warp (pattern/twill): silk, 4 (twisted), color:
white
Weft (foundation): silk, 47 (twisted), color:
white
Weft (pattern): gilt metal wrapped
2-direction around yellow silk
Weft (pattern/twill): yellow, light red
Weft (foundation/satin): yellow silk
(continuous)
Edges: selvage, 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 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.
The Classical Ottoman Floral Style

Loom-width velvet with carnations

Bursa
Late 16th to early 17th century
The Textile Museum 119
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1951

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

¹ Textile fragments with a similar design are published in: Sumru Belger Krody, Collection of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation 1963, pl.57, attributed to Bursa, late 16th century. Bursa, kemha, p.169, a very similar example attributed to the early 17th century.
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 kemah fabrics in brilliant primary hues, has been entirely successful in the sophisticated but restricted palette of Cairene carpet weaving.
Fragement of a floral saff mosque carrot

Uşak district, West Anatolia
Probably early 17th century
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1927
189.5 x 83cm (74½ x 32¾ inches)

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 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 jambal 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.

Safs 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.
The Classical Ottoman Floral Style

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


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 in "chinoiserie" 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 cutting serrated euleaves, 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 silhouette 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.

25
Kilim fragment
Cairo, Egypt
Probably early 18th century
Collection of Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf
54 1/5 x 105 3/4 (21 1/5 x 41 1/2 inches)

¹ Balpinar 1982.
² Atasoy 2000.
Cover

Late 17th century
The Textile Museum 44.2
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in April 1927
256 × 160 cm (100¾ × 63 inches)

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 intersections. 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.
Material: linen, silk
Structure: balanced plain-weave, running stitch in diagonal alignment
Warp: linen, Z-spun, 18/CM, off-white
Weft: linen, Z-spun, 17/CM, off-white
Embroidery thread: silk, 5 colors: red, blue, green, white, yellow
Edge finish: n/a
End finish: n/a
Construction: assembled from 2 panels

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.
Material: linen, silk
Structure: balanced plain weave with
embroidery, 21½ running stitches in diagonal alignment, buttonhole stitch
Warp: linen, 12 sp, 16/12 x 9/12 Blue
Weft: linen, 12 sp, 16/12 x 9/12 Blue
Embroidery thread, silk, 4½ twisted yarns
8-ply, 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 softras 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.

Sofra (floor spread)

Izmir
Late 17th century
The Textile Museum 2001 6.1
Gift of Roy P. Mottahedeh
Diameter approximately 64 in (163 cm)
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 keme 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.
The Classical Ottoman Floral Style

Material: wool, silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: balanced plain weave, fulled, embroidered, chain stitch
Warp: wool; 1S-spun, 18/cm, red
Weft: wool; 1S-spun, 17/cm, red
Embroidery thread; silk; 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.
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.
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, was seen in examples showing very late and hard-to-decipher elements of the design.

¹ Oakley 2011.
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 crewel 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.

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

¹ Denny 2010.
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 38), 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.
The Floral Legacy in Anatolia

Material: wool
Structure: knotted pile, warp slightly in two levels, symmetrical knot, 2 passes of weft between rows of knot, knot count: 33 H × 55 V/dm (8 H × 14 V/in)
Warp: wool, 2 Z-spun yarns S-plied, off-white (undyed)
Weft: wool, 1 Z-spun, off-white (undyed)
Pile: wool, 2 Z-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 Belge Koruy

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 hashashięş —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.

Red-ground acceade with vine border

Lâdik district, Konya Province, South-central Anatolia, Probably around 1800
The Textile Museum R 34.6.4
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1911
(51 1/6 or 163 5/16 × 101 5/8 in.)
Over the centuries, Central Anatolian artist-weavers from market towns and villages such as Kırşehir (Kirsehir) 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).
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...

(LV, 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.
Material: wool
Structure: knotted pile, warps slightly in two levels, symmetrical knot, 2 weft passes between rows of knot, knot count: 40 H × 43 V/dm (10 H × 12 V/in)
Warp: wool, 2 Z-spun yarns S-plied, off-white (undyed)
Weft: wool, 2 Z-spun, yellow and red
Pile: wool, 2 Z-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, possibly 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.
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 fourteenth century

The Floral Museum 1934.2.6
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1912

46 x 38.5 cm (18¼ x 15¼ in.)

Material: wool
Structure: knotted pile, warp on same level, symmetrical knot, 2½ ft passes between rows of knots, knot count: 36 x 33/dm² (8 H x 7 V/in) 
Warp: wool, 24-spun yarns 6-ply, white (undyed)
Weft: wool, 24-spun single-ply, red-brown and off-white (undyed)
Pile: wool, 24-spun single-ply, brown, purple, undyed white, undyed off-white, green, red, yellow, blue, dark brown
Edges: selvage
Borders: plain-weave skirt top, warp fringe bottom

Analysis by Walter K. Denny and Sumru Belger Krody

Modelled on a pastel or bolster cover, with the characteristic crenellated lappets or alemlaps at each end, but larger and disproportionately wider than a pastel, 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.
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.
Material: wool
Structure: silt tapestry weave
Warps: wool, 2 Z-spun yarns S-plied, undyed brown
Wefts: wool, Alp- or Angora-spun, 2 Z-spun, S-plied, undyed brown, dark 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 late 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 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 well 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 two-fold: 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 oneself 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 probable that these carpets served principally as decorative wall hangings in their original weaving environments.
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.
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 bottoms.
Kilim with carnations

Anatolia

Description:
Collection of Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf

Dimensions: 304 × 169.5 cm (120 × 67 inches)

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 suggest 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.
Material: wool
Structure: knotted pile, warp on same level, symmetrical knot, 2 x 2精神病 with pairs of passes between rows of knots, knot count: 28 H × 34 V/dm (7 H × 8 V/in)
Warp: wool, 2 Z-spun yarns plied S, off-white (undyed
Weft: wool, 2 Z-spun yarns, dark brown (probably undyed)
Pile: wool, 2 Z-spun yarns plied S, 7 colors: red, yellow, green, blue, purple, white (undyed), black (slightly corroded)
Edges: 2 bundles of 2 warp yarns wrapped in dark purple pile yarn
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, while missing most of its claw 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. 138-139, plate 117.
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 clowntowned 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 “contayned was Heaven and Earth in little Space.” It is more than tempting to apply such a metaphor to the best Anatolian portraits, which in their “little space” contain, if not heaven and earth, then an amazing wealth of imaginative artistic invention and skillful improvisation.
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 Epoprot culture, including its embroidery, came to reflect the strong Ottoman political, cultural, and social presence.
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 on 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.

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. The design on each length has an omelette motif 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.
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 first glance and require closer analysis.
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 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.
Cap

Damascus or Aleppo, Syria
Around 1800
Private Collection

Height: 17.78 cm (7 inches), Diameter: 12.7 cm (5 inches)

Domical caps composed of four 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 the 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 headdress, at once powerful and delicate in its visual impact.

Material: silk, metallic-wrapped thread
Structure: slit tapestry weave
Warp: cotton, 3 S-spun yarns Z-plied, white
Warp: silk, 3 S-twisted, 5 colors: red, pink, 3 shades of green
Warp: wool, 1 S-spun, brown (possibly undyed)
Weft: silver metal wrapped S-direction around white silk
Edges: not visible
Length not visible

Construction: braided tassel made with black silk and silver 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
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. 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
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.
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.
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. 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 its implied rules of syntax as well.
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 Słuck (now in Belarus) by Jan Mazaraki and his son Leon, Armenian weavers from Istanbul. The sash in Plate 57 is inscribed “SŁUCK” 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 Słuck 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 Paschal Fabryce in Warsaw. Paschal 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 Sévres-like vase rather than the mound of earth in the earlier Słuck piece.

Eventually, French factories in Lyon began producing sashes for the Polish market that reproduced both Słuck and Paschal 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.
Material: silk, metallic wrapped thread  
Structure: complementary weft plain weave with inner warps and areas of discontinuous supplementary warps  
Warp (inner): silk, I (untwisted), light blue-green paired with light pink  
Warp (binding): silk, I (untwisted), light pink  
Weft (ground, end panel, proper left): silk, 1 S-twisted, light brown and silver gilt wrapped S-direction around white silk  
Weft (ground, end panel, proper right): silk, 1 S-twisted, dark brown and yellow gilt metal wrapped S-direction around pink silk  
Weft (discontinuous supplementary, and ground, center stripes, proper left): silk, 1 S-twisted, pink and green and yellow gilt metal wrapped S-direction around pink silk  
Weft (discontinuous supplementary, and ground, center stripes, proper right): silk, 1 S-twisted, white and blue and silver gilt wrapped S-direction around white silk  
Edges: selvedge  
Ends: added metallic-wrapped thread fringe band  
Remarks: inscription in the corners reads "SLUCK"  
Analysis by Sumru Belger Krody

Material: silk, metallic wrapped thread  
Structure: complementary weft plain weave with inner warps and areas of discontinuous supplementary warps  
Warp (inner): silk, I (untwisted), pink  
Warp (binding): silk, I (untwisted), light pink  
Weft (ground, end panel, proper left): silk, 1 S-twisted, light brown and silver gilt wrapped S-direction around white silk  
Weft (ground, end panel, proper right): silk, 1 S-twisted, dark brown and yellow gilt metal wrapped S-direction around pink silk  
Weft (discontinuous supplementary, and ground, center stripes, proper left): silk, 1 S-twisted, pink and green and yellow gilt metal wrapped S-direction around pink silk  
Weft (discontinuous supplementary, and ground, center stripes, proper right): silk, 1 S-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
Sash

Poland

18th century

The Textile Museum 8.3.12

Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1929

18.1 x 13.5 (0.030 x 0.021 meter)

Material: silk; metallic wrapped thread
Structure: complementary weft float weave with inner warp and area of discontinuous supplementary wefts
Weaving order: S-twisted, pink, blue, white; S-twisted, white and blue and silver gilt-wrapped S-direction around pink silk; S-twisted, pink, blue, white; S-twisted, pink and grey and yellow gilt-wrapped S-direction around pink silk
Weft (ground, center stripes, proper left): silk, S-twisted, pink, blue, white; silk, S-twisted, blue and silver gilt-wrapped S-direction around pink silk; silk, S-twisted, pink, blue, white; silk, S-twisted, white and blue and silver gilt-wrapped S-direction around pink silk
Weft (ground, center stripes, proper right): silk, S-twisted, pink, blue, white; silk, S-twisted, blue and silver gilt-wrapped S-direction around pink silk; silk, S-twisted, pink, blue, white; silk, S-twisted, white and blue and silver gilt-wrapped S-direction around pink silk
Weft (ground, end panel, proper right): silk, S-twisted, pink, blue, white; silk, S-twisted, blue and silver gilt-wrapped S-direction around pink silk; silk, S-twisted, pink, blue, white; silk, S-twisted, white and blue and silver gilt-wrapped S-direction around pink silk
Weft (ground, end panel, proper left): silk, S-twisted, pink, blue, white; silk, S-twisted, blue and silver gilt-wrapped S-direction around pink silk; silk, S-twisted, pink, blue, white; silk, S-twisted, white and blue and silver gilt-wrapped S-direction around pink silk

Structure: complementary weft float weave
Material: silk, metallic wrapped thread

158.25 cm (62 1/2 in.)

Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1929

The Textile Museum

12th century

Poland

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