



View from the Fringe

Newsletter of the New England Rug Society



Vol. 26 No. 1 September 2018

www.ne-rugsociety.org

September 14 Meeting Preview: Mike Tschbull on Jajims



Mike Tschbull

On September 14, at Durant-Kenrick House, Newton, NERS member and repeat speaker Raoul “Mike” Tschbull will present “Why Warp-Faced Covers Are Collectible: Jajims of the Transcaucasus and Iran.” (Originally scheduled for last February, Mike’s talk was postponed because of weather and other issues.)

Iranian and Transcaucasian warp-faced covers—jajims in the vernacular—have a long history and many uses, serving as bedding or bedding covering, protection for nomads’ packs, padded seating, quilt tops, and yard goods.

In his presentation, Mike will emphasize jajims from East Azerbaijan and the Transcaucasus, but will also show Lur, Qashqa’i, and Chahar Mahal examples. In addition, he will include objects that illustrate the long history of warp-faced weaving.

Mike is a longtime collector of Transcaucasian and East Azerbaijani village rugs and nomadic flatweaves, as well as of Bakhtiari bags. He is president of the Near Eastern Art Research Center and is a past ACOR Board member. Best known for his catalogue *Kazak: Carpets of the Caucasus* (1971), he has also published many articles in *HALL*.

Members are invited to bring jajims for show-and-tell following Mike’s presentation.

September 14 Meeting Details

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Durant-Kenrick House, 286 Waverley Ave.
Newton Centre, MA, 02458

Directions: From Boston and east, take Mass Pike to exit 17 and follow signs for Boston/Newton Centre, making a U-turn over the Pike. At Newton Centre sign, go RIGHT on Centre St. for 0.1 miles. Go LEFT on Franklin St. for 0.3 miles. Turn RIGHT on Waverley and go 0.2 miles. House is on LEFT.

From Rt. 128 and west, take Mass Pike to exit 17, turn RIGHT onto Centre Street and follow directions above.

From Watertown Square: Take Galen Street (Rt. 16) toward Newton Centre for 0.4 miles. Continue to Washington St. toward West Newton/Newton Centre, making a U-turn over the Pike. At Newton Centre sign, go RIGHT on Centre Street and follow directions above.

Parking: On Kenrick Street. Parking places at the end of the Durant-Kenrick House driveway may be used for dropping off people or supplies, but **NOT for parking during the meeting.**

Food: Provided by members whose names begin with **A** through **G**. Please arrive before 6:45 to set up, and plan to stay afterwards to clean up.



Detail of a silk jajim, Shekki (Azerbaijan)

October 5 Meeting Preview: Ali Istalifi on Central Asian Suzanis



Ali Istalifi

On October 5, London-based dealer Ali Istalifi will present “Central Asian Suzanis: Understanding the Tradition and Attribution of These Dowry Embroideries.” Brilliant and inventive in design and color, suzanis have captured the imagination of textile lovers worldwide. By explicating their designs, materials, and needlework techniques, Ali will provide a way of dating them and attributing them to various Central Asian centers.

Ali was born in Kabul in the late 1970s. His father, Abdul Istalifi, was one of the leading sellers of rugs and textiles, and his mother was a law professor at Kabul University. Ali grew up in London, where he trained for and pursued a media career. After September 11, however, he returned to his father’s home town, Istalif (the source of his surname), famed for its pottery, whose



P. I. Kotov, *Suzani Sale in Bukhara*, oil on canvas, 1920s, State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

populace had fled when the town was destroyed by the Taliban. With his father and a small group of friends, Ali raised funds to rebuild the community and revive its pottery tradition. Within five years, many former residents had returned, and ceramic production resumed. For the first time, beautiful turquoise Istalifi wares were exported from Afghanistan; after the works of forty local potters were shown at the Santa Fe International Folk Art Market, CNN interviewed Ali about his remarkable efforts to save a town and its artistic culture.

During his years of shuttling between Afghanistan and Europe, Ali learned about Central Asian textiles, particularly suzanis and ikats. He assembled his own collection and helped other collectors build theirs. For a 2016 exhibition at the Birmingham (Alabama) Museum of Arts, he wrote the catalogue *All the Colors of the Rainbow: Uzbekistan Ikats from the Collection of Peggy Slappey*. In 2017 he lectured at the World Ikat Symposium, at SOAS University, London; again in London, he recently addressed the Oriental Rug and Textile Society (ORTS) of Great Britain on suzanis, ikats, and other Central Asian textiles.

In Ali’s own words, “I guess I live and breathe this material . . . in a time where the part of the world I come from suffers from so much destruction . . . I feel it is my duty to show and connect the [rest of the] world with the depth of our culture.”

October 5 Meeting Details

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Durant-Kenrick House, 286 Waverley Ave.
Newton Centre, MA, 02458

Directions: See page 1.

Food: Provided by members whose names begin with **H** through **P**. Please arrive before 6:45 to set up, and plan to stay afterwards to clean up.

November 16 Meeting Preview: Gerard Paquin on Textile Designs in Turkish Rugs



**Ottoman velvet yastik (detail),
17th century, Textile Museum**



Gerard Paquin



**Knotted-pile Turkish yastik (detail),
19th century, Paquin Collection**

On November 16, NERS member and repeat speaker Gerard Paquin will present “Silk and Wool: Textile Designs in Turkish Rugs.” About his talk, he says, “Part of the mystery and appeal of oriental carpets is their ability to incorporate designs from a wide range of sources. However, an inquiry into design origins should do more than just satisfy our curiosity. Ideally, it leads us to a better understanding of the economic and artistic contexts in which a rug is woven. My talk will examine the use of Ottoman textile designs in Turkish rugs and the impetus for those artistic borrowings. It will also attempt to draw some conclusions about how we define and use both textiles and rugs, and how they relate to our built environment.”

Gerard lives in Hatfield, Massachusetts, where he owns a bicycle shop and a bar. Since about 1980, he has been an avid collector of oriental rugs and Islamic textiles, traveling widely in pursuing them and acquiring knowledge about them. He has written articles for *HALI* and the *Textile Museum Journal* and has spoken at ACOR, the Textile Museum, various rug societies, and other venues. In 2014, selections from his collection were featured in a solo

exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (see <http://www.ne-rugsociety.org/newsletter/fringe-v22n1-09-2014.pdf>, pp. 4–7); he also lent to the exhibition “The Classical Tradition in Anatolian Carpets,” held at the Textile Museum in 2002–3.

Gerard will bring several of his own Turkish pile rugs with designs that originated in Ottoman textiles; he invites members to bring rugs from any weaving area whose designs they believe to be borrowed from textiles.

November 16 Meeting Details

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Durant-Kenrick House, 286 Waverley Ave.
Newton Centre, MA, 02458

Directions: See page 1.

Food: Provided by members whose names begin with **R** through **Z**. Please arrive before 6:45 to set up, and plan to stay afterwards to clean up.

Chairman's Report for the 2017–18 Season

In advance of our Steering Committee meeting in June, I spent some time going over the list of programs that NERS has presented since its inception. It reminded me once again how fortunate we are to have a committed membership that has sustained this organization and allowed it to continue to program such high-quality presentations on a broad range of rug- and textile-related topics. Sadly, more than a few of the other rug societies that were also active during those decades no longer exist. I'm grateful that we are not merely hanging in, but enthusiastically looking forward to both covering new ground and reexamining established areas of interest.

Leadership

Functionally, the roles on the Steering Committee have remained stable. Julia Bailey continues to edit and produce our newsletter, which regularly draws praise and admiration from both NERS members and the broader rug community. Our Recording Secretary, Jim Adelson, skillfully reports on speaker presentations, while Jeff Spurr, Lloyd Kannenberg and Yon Bard provide additional newsletter contributions. Yon is also our meeting photographer. Jim Sampson manages our finances, keeps the membership rolls, and distributes newsletters and other announcements. Jeff posts upcoming meetings on RugRabbit.com. Richard Belkin brings the lights and screen and Richard Larkin supplies the coffee. Included in my role as Chairman of NERS is managing the speaker program, arranging meeting venues, and operating the digital projection equipment. I've also recently begun to administer our Facebook page, which is again active. Jeff and I alternate introducing speakers at the meetings. Ann Nicholas remains our representative on the board of ACOR. Our ongoing thanks go to Martha Brooks for her continuing administration of the NERS website.

Meetings and speakers, 2017–18

Meetings during the past season once again saw a mix of scholarship, history, reminiscence, and collector enthusiasm. In September, we began the season at the MFA, with a behind-the-scenes look at their marvelous quilt collection guided by Jennifer Swope and noted quilt collector Gerry Roy. In October, Tom Farnham recounted the meteoric rise and subsequent decline of legendary collector and self-promotor, F. R. Martin. November's meeting saw the tables at the front of the room at Durant-Kenrick House piled high with massive stacks of Tibetan rugs, to illustrate the presentation of Nick Wright and Tom Mond.

In February, winter went on the attack and defeated us,

not for the first time. The planned February meeting by Mike Tschebull on jajims from Iran and the Transcaucasus was cancelled, but has been rescheduled as the first meeting of our 2018–19 season (see p. 1). It also provoked a rethinking of our scheduling. In the upcoming season, we will maintain the number of meetings (six plus the picnic), but we will hold them from September through November and March through May.

In March, Louise Mackie's talk on luxury Islamic textiles matched the beauty of her examples with her equally high levels of erudition and enthusiasm. And while we're on enthusiasm—in April, Peggy and Tom Simons gamely brought a huge selection of Pakistani textiles for us to see and handle while they told wonderful stories of how they had gathered the collection. At Gore Place in May, the forecasted rain held off and we had the moth mart and show-and-tell outside the big tent.

Finances and Membership

After the previous season's sharp increase (from 105 members to 119), membership dipped back to 107. Nonetheless, we added two new members—**Donald Breyer** and **Martha McEntee**—and continue to be one of the largest and most active American rug societies. True to our name, the great majority of our members hail from New England (with every state represented). But some of us are from farther away: New York (four), Texas (three), and one in the United Kingdom. Special acknowledgment is due to our Supporting and Patron members, whose "above and beyond" generosity has helped maintain our financial health. Supporting members for 2017–18 were **Donald Breyer, John Clift, Jean Hoffman, Barbara Kaslow, Jeremy and Hanne Grantham, Ann Nicholas and Richard Blumenthal, and Richard Larkin and Martha Brooks**. Patron members, who support NERS at the highest level, are **James Adelson and Debbie Sheetz, Julia and Doug Bailey, Richard Belkin, Louise and Buzz Dohanian, Michael Grogan, Lloyd and Susan Kannenberg, Lena and Charles Nargozian, Mitch and Rosalie Rudnick, Beau Ryan, Julian Taibi, Susan and Michael Zellmann-Rohrer, and Alan Varteresian**. Thank you all.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Steering Committee, I'd like to extend to every NERS member our warm thanks for your support during the past season. We hope that, during the year to come, you'll attend as many meetings as you can and continue to offer the encouragement, enthusiasm, and constructive ideas so necessary to keeping our society vital and rewarding. Please send suggestions for possible future program topics or speakers to me at chair@ne-rugsociety.org.

Joel Greifinger

April 27 Meeting: Tom and Peggy Simons on Indus Valley Textiles



1. Tom and Peggy Simons show the dress, found in the Pakistan ambassador's residence, that precipitated their collecting

On April 27, Tom and Peggy Simons **(1)** gave NERS our first full-session overview of Indus Valley textiles, based on knowledge they gained and examples they collected during Tom's service as ambassador to Pakistan. Their presentation was a true family affair, with sister Sara Simons and daughter Suzanne assisting.

Peggy explained that their interest in fiber art had started in Warsaw in the 1960s, and had grown and matured significantly by the late 1990s, when they got to Pakistan. Tom showed a picture of the ambassador's residence in Islamabad as of 1997 (it has since been relocated). Conditions forced him to use an armored car, with a gunman; nevertheless, he traveled extensively in the country and didn't hesitate to emerge from the car to meet the locals, including textile dealers.

In population, Tom told us, Pakistan is a large and diverse country **(2)**, now with over 200 million people—more than Russia. Ninety-five percent of the population is Muslim, and the army is the dominant political force.

Peggy then explained that Tom's and her relationship with the country's textiles began with a Baloch (Baluch) dress **(1, 3)** that she discovered in the ambassador's residence. It launched both their collecting and their coming to know designers and museums preserving Pakistani crafts.

The Simons divided their "textile tour" into four regions, starting with Sindh. Sindh's agriculturally rich, Indus-irrigated central area, specializing in cotton growing, is surrounded **2** on both sides by deserts. Karachi, the largest city, is the financial and industrial center of the country. In addition to its large Islamic majority, Sindh is the only area with a substantial Hindu population, and is also "home" to many nomads.



2. Map showing Indus Valley textile-producing regions



3. Back of the "found" Baloch pashk (woman's wedding dress), further described on p. 7

Illustrating Sindh textiles, the Simons started with an *aboohini* (woman's wedding shawl) and a silk-embroidered *ghagharo* (skirt), both from Tharparkar, a desert area near India. Although the geographic origin of these pieces was certain, Tom and Peggy weren't sure which group had produced them. Next they showed a *guj* (woman's wedding dress) embroidered with geometric and stylized floral motifs, from Thano Bula Khan, on the west side of the Indus (4). They also had Sindh headgear for men, which they kiddingly labeled "dork hats."

Also from Sindh was a "belly piece" from a woman's blouse (5). Embroidered in silk with small mirror elements on a black cotton ground, it came from either the Dars



4. Thano Bula Khan *guj* (woman's wedding dress)



5. "Belly piece" from a woman's blouse, Sindh

or the Pali community, in the Tharparkar area. (Such mirrors, they noted later in their presentation, used to be mica, but are now commercially manufactured.) Following this were several *thalposh* (dowry cloths), with peacock, camel, and bridegroom motifs. When asked their age, Tom replied that he thought they were made between 1900 and 1940. The last of this group was a sampler, probably used to wrap a wedding present.

The Sindh examples continued with a *rumal* (head cover), most likely from the Meher semi-nomadic group. A Thatta *lunghi* (sash or turban cloth) embroidered with silk and gold-wrapped thread was worn for ceremonial occasions, as was a Meghwar *bokano* (man's wedding sash). An embroidered gun case and a wedding cloth (p. 17, bottom row center) were both products of the Meher group.

The Simons next presented items from the hybrid area of Sindh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat, spanning the Pakistan-India border. They started with a Rajasthani boy's jacket (6) and a small bag utilizing the same stitch as the jacket. A dagger belt featuring stylized scorpion motifs was followed by a set of cuffs embroidered in metal thread. Next came a bottle, beaded over a coconut, whose decoration included a swastika (7)—an ancient Hindu design long predating the Nazi version of the motif.



6 Boy's jacket, Rajasthan



7. Bottle beaded over a coconut, Sindh-Gujarat border

Tom then presented a *ralli* (quilt), noting that quilting is thought to have been introduced by English and American missionaries in the nineteenth century and is now widespread in Sindh (8). In contrast, an *ajrak*, laboriously dyed with indigo and madder and used for a man's turban, had a far older lineage: a statue excavated from the site of Mohenjo-Daro, dating from 2000–1500 BCE, may depict one of these textiles. Although *ajrak*-making has largely disappeared, Tom in his role as ambassador was presented with a contemporary one, as was President Clinton on a visit to Pakistan. Last in this group was an *ajrak* (9) used as the back of the *ralli*.

The second region in the Simons' textile tour was Balochistan, west of Sindh and bordering Afghanistan and Iran. Although Balochistan is the biggest region of Pakistan, it is relatively poor and sparsely populated. Its challenging terrain is inhabited by Baloch, Pashtuns, and Brahui. Textiles from Balochistan in the Simons' collection included several small, embroidered bags called *bushkiri*, most of them Baloch, but a few made by Pashtuns. Tom also returned to the Baloch dress that had been Peggy's first Pakistani textile find. A *pashk*, or woman's wedding dress (1, 3), it had a lushly embroidered yoke and sleeves, a kangaroo-style pocket, and a back embellished with printed fabric.



8. *Ralli* (quilt), Chauhan group, Sindh



9. *Ajrak* cloth used as the back of the *ralli* shown above

In addition, Tom showed and passed around separate yoke, pocket, and cuff elements from another Baloch *pashk*. Next came two Pashtun men's shawls from Waziristan (10), a hybrid area on the Afghanistan border, and finally a Pashtun pillow cover.

The third region represented in the Simons' collection was Punjab, a populous and comparatively rich area of eastern Pakistan and northern India. Among its textiles, Punjab is most famous for *phulkari* embroideries, most commonly made as shawls and head scarves. The first examples, a shawl and a pillow cover, were possibly from the Hazara Division, to the north. Next were two shawls from the Punjab proper, one of which Peggy modeled (11). The other, dating between 1870 and 1890, featured parrots in the design. Last was a recently



10. Pashtun man's shawl, Waziristan



11. Peggy modeling a *phulkari* shawl from Punjab

made pair of gold-embroidered men's shoes, to be worn on special occasions such as weddings (**p. 17, bottom row, right**).

The fourth and final region, in the upper reaches of the Indus north of Punjab, was Indus Kohistan, located among some of the highest mountains in the world. The first textile from this area was an *abochohini* from the Swat Valley (**12**). Next was a heavily embroidered dress, hugely flared by means of some 350 gores (**13**). A child's vest made by the Shin people (semi-nomadic shepherds) had much finer embroidery than the dress that preceded it, as did a Shin baby's hood (**14**).

A boy's tunic attributed to Nuristan (in eastern Afghanistan, just over the border from Pakistani Chitral) had been constructed in two layers, joined by embroidery (**15**). The final examples were two women's headdresses made by the still-pagan Kalash people in Chitral. These were decorated with cowry shells, presumably obtained through trading.

Our wholehearted thanks to Tom and Peggy for sharing their knowledge and obvious love of these Indus Valley textiles, to which most NERS members have previously had little exposure. We particularly appreciate their bringing so many of their pieces for us to see and examine first-hand!

Jim Adelson



12. Abochhini (woman's wedding shawl), Swat Valley



14. Shin child's vest and baby's hood (detail), Indus Kohistan



13. Woman's dress with multiple gores, Indus Kohistan



15. Nuristan boy's tunic, front (inset) and sleeve detail

May 20 Meeting: Annual Picnic

Despite foreboding skies, rain held off for the 2018 NERS picnic, allowing about thirty attendees to shop the moth mart, eat lunch, and enjoy an extensive show-and-tell (**below, and pp. 10 and 11**) without having to seek refuge in the Gore Place tent.



Members shop the moth mart and, after picnicking, take their places for the show-and-tell

Top row: Swedish textiles—*röllakan* (double-interlock tapestry) *åkdyna* (carriage-cushion cover), Vemmenhögs, SW Skåne; mixed-technique (*röllakan*, *dukagång*, and *halvkrabba*) *täcke* (bed cover) from Herrestads, SE Skåne; *röllakan åkdyna* with initials VSD and 1848 date, southeast Skåne (Herrestad or Ingelstad district)

Middle row: Yi women’s costumes from Yunnan, China—hemp-ground wedding attire, with applied woven wool bands (skirt) or wool embroidery (tunic), Luxi County; “Dragon Wife’s robe” worn at funerals of senior women, silk appliqué on indigo-dyed cotton, Malipo County

Bottom row: joined sections of a Yomud tent band; Yomud main carpet



Top row: Baluch pile *khorjin* face; Aleppo kilim with unpatterned center

Middle row: Karabagh pile rug; Moroccan rug, possibly Azilal, with rag pile; Southwest Persian pile *khorjin* face

Bottom row: Kurdish Sauj-Bulag pile rug; Hmong bed coverlet assembled from various textiles, Vietnam; Ukrainian lace-trimmed and embroidered towel inscribed “Good Morning”



Santa Ynez Rug Collectors' Weekend: Three NERS Attendees Report

Judy Smith sets the stage: A few times a year, enthusiastic and highly knowledgeable rug collectors, dealers, and restorers gather in Southern California to pore over new acquisitions and engage with one another about the geographic origin, age, construction, and aesthetics of these treasures. In the spring of 2017, this coterie decided to invite forty other “ruggies” to a special weekend event near Santa Barbara. It was so successful they expanded the invitation list to seventy-five this spring.

Most participants have known each other for years, as buyers, sellers, authors, and friends sharing time at conferences, auctions, and Textile Museum events. This created a friendly, warm, and welcoming experience for all, including the newcomers.

A volunteer committee organized a rug-immersion feast for the lucky attendees—and are preparing to do it yet again next April.

Mike Tschebull adds: The 2018 event took place over a two-and-a-half-day period, starting Friday evening, April 20, with a grand party at Jim Burns's estate. California wine is so good *in situ*. I came back with the experience of a Zinfandel I have to have.

The next two days were all rug sessions all the time. I did one on Bakhtiari flatwoven bags I bought in Iran (1). Jim Dixon did one on “Smyrna” rugs, tattered but impressive examples, large palmettes on orange-red [or blue] fields (2). But the best session, given by Betheny Mendenhall and Michael Lubin, with contributions by Peter Scholten and Patrick Pouler, was on Anatolian kilim fragments. That alone was worth the trip.



1. Bakhtiari flour bag in Mike Tschebull's collection

No pics, no AV allowed: the organizers said no. Also no shared invitee list. It was okay though—everybody had name tags, hand-lettered with style by Stephanie Morehouse. Bethany was in control of organization, which always works. Very convivial, somewhat like early ACORs. I met and talked with a lot of people I didn't know. I hope it happens next year, but these types of events are ephemeral.

And finally, Lloyd Kannenberg fills in the details: The Rug Collectors' Weekend is an invitation-only gathering of serious, knowledgeable ruggies. Somehow I was included anyway, maybe for comic relief. The venue is the Santa Ynez Valley Marriott in the wine country west-northwest of Santa Barbara, California. This year's sixty or so attendees included a respectable delegation of ten New England Rug Society members.

The drive from LAX up the coast along Route 101 provided views of the destruction wrought by the fires and mudslides that had struck the region only months before, but once in the mountains the scenery was beautiful and pristine.

The organizers, led by Brian Morehouse and Betheny Mendenhall, had prepared an enjoyable and instructive program, opening with a Friday afternoon wine and cheese reception at the fabled estate of Jim and Stephanie Burns.

Saturday was devoted to a massive “Show and Tell.” In the morning session attendees were invited to present one or two pieces and comment briefly on them. Brian did his best to maintain an orderly house, grouping us by region: Caucasian, Anatolian, Kurdish, and so on eastward. He must have felt it was like herding cats. If you can imagine our



2. Detail of a Smyrna carpet sold at Sotheby's in 2014

picnic show-and-tell indoors and going on for three hours you will have some idea what it was like. The pieces shown were wonderful, but there was a strict “no photography” rule. After lunch all the show-and-tell pieces were laid out on tables so we could get up close and personal with our favorites and discuss them informally with their owners and others who gathered around. I took a shine to a magnificent Indian embroidery that had been presented by a young dealer. Yes, there were dealers in attendance, but if they had material to sell the bargaining had to be done in their own rooms. Not exactly our Moth Market!

Sunday’s program of talks opened with Brian Morehouse’s lecture, “The Influence of Azerbaijan Silk Embroideries on Rug Designs” (3). It was an expanded and updated version of his article in the recently published *Stars of the Caucasus*. This was followed by “‘Memling Gul’ Motifs in Turkmen Rugs and Trappings,” a collective presentation by Alan Rothblatt, Kurt Munkacsi, and Michael Rothberg. It opened my eyes to some of the fine points of Turkmen weavings. The examples displayed were superb.

The morning session ended with Michael Lubin and Bethany Mendenhall’s “Anatolian Kilims: Why Fragments?” with an enormous parade of spectacular pieces, mostly from their own collections. I was bright green with envy. Their answers to the question posed by their title can be summarized as follows: First, fragmentary kilims are a lot more common than intact ones. Second, intact kilims are typically enormous, so it is difficult to display them. Finally, with fragments you can pretend to be a serious tapetologist, when all you really care about are those eye-dazzling colors (4).



3. Azerbaijan embroidery, formerly Kirchheim Collection, compared with a Kasim Ushag rug offered on rugrabbit.com

Mike Tschbull and Jim Opie kicked off the afternoon session with “Structural Variation and Design Evolution in Luri/Bakhtiari Bags.” Jim’s perspective on these weavings is well known from his *Tribal Rugs*, but here he focused on the origin and development of specific motifs. Mike brought a remarkable selection of bags, extraordinarily varied in both design and technique. He pointed out that pieces like these were regarded as a non-perishable part of a tribal family’s capital, to be stored away and sold as economic necessity required.

Jim Burns spoke next, illustrating his “Talish Rugs from the Late Eighteenth to the Nineteenth Century” with examples from his wonderful collection. It was fascinating to follow the gradual evolution from early curvilinear forms to more geometric—one might even say mechanically drawn—later ones. Jim Dixon closed the session with “The Lotus Motif in So-called Smyrna Design Rugs.” When I read the title I panicked: I had never heard of “Smyrna design” rugs! Was I about to be outed as the ignoramus I am? A desperate online search saved my bacon. The “Smyrna design” is also called “floral Ushak”! Saved by the internet. Jim’s three examples were noble wrecks, and his discussion of the continental travels of the lotus motif was intriguing.

The festivities closed with a farewell banquet Sunday evening. Besides being a feast for the senses, the weekend provided a welcome opportunity to reconnect with old friends, meet “online-only” friends in person, and make brand new acquaintances. I would have welcomed more East Coast participation, but that’s up to the organizers. As it is, Brian and Bethany were the heart and soul of the weekend, and its success is a tribute to them both.



4. Anatolian kilim fragments offered on rugrabbit.com

Fourteenth International Conference on Oriental Carpets, Washington

To take advantage of a Washington “ikat fest”—concurrent exhibitions of Uzbek ikats donated by Guido Goldman to the Freer/Sackler Galleries **(1)** and the Textile Museum **(2)**—ICOC XIV, speedily organized by Wendel Swan, convened from June 7 to 10.

Twenty-one vendors, a third of them from Istanbul, set up in the Dealers’ Fair **(3)** at the conference hotel. Plenty of rare and high-quality pieces were to be had, but it’s doubtful that the mere 110 conference enrollees, however enthusiastic and well-heeled, could have bought enough to repay the dealers’ efforts.

Two days of academic sessions, arranged by Alberto Boralevi and held at a GWU auditorium **(4)**, included Uzbek-focused presentations, a report on the Azerbaijan Carpet Museum, and talks on influential collector/dealers, recent classical-carpet discoveries, non-“Rug Belt” weavings, and rug fibers. Less convincing were a couple of speculative forays into design origins and interpretation.

In contrast to the unevenness of the academic program, a beautifully installed exhibition, mounted at GWU’s Corcoran



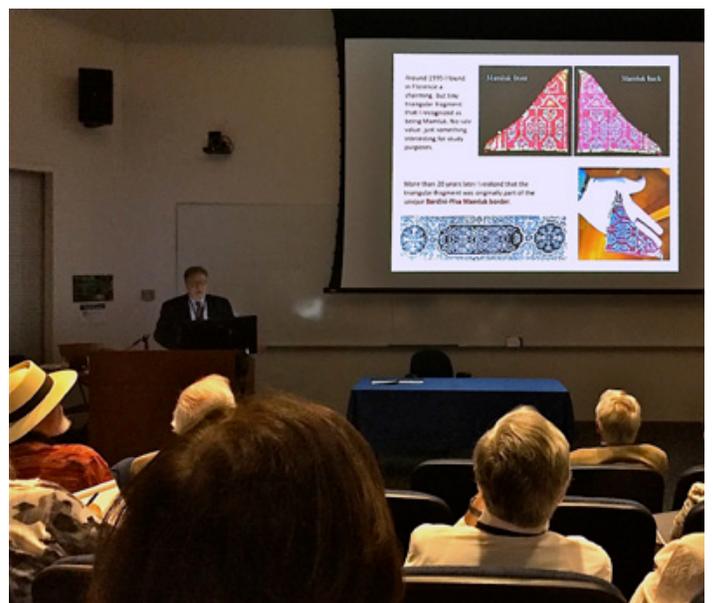
1. Uzbek ikat robes donated by Guido Goldman, shown with Oscar de la Renta adaptations, at the Freer/Sackler



2. Goldman-gift Uzbek ikat panels on exhibition at the Textile Museum



3. NERS member Amir Oskouei’s booth in the ICOC Dealers’ Fair, at the Hamilton Hotel, Washington



4. At one of the academic sessions, Alberto Boralevi speaks on his rediscovery of the “Bardini-Pisa” Mamluk

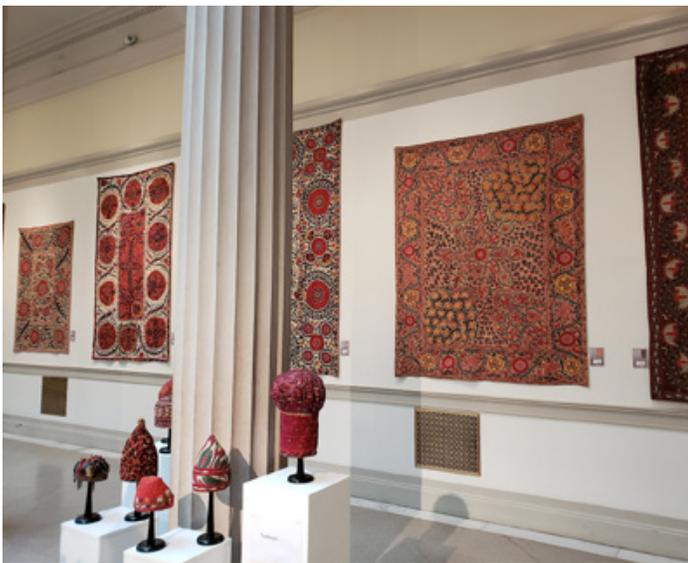
School of Arts and Design just for the duration of the conference, featured a consistently dazzling array of private collectors' suzanis, rugs, bags, trappings, and headgear (5, 6).

At the TM, a final show-and-tell began with attendees' Kirghiz, Uzbek (7), and Turkmen pieces, followed by a geographically wide range of long-piled "minimalist" sleeping rugs, a stunning Kurdish Sauj Bulagh long rug and carpet fragment (8), Shahsavan sumak articles of known or speculative (9) function, and Caucasian rugs.

Thirty subscribers to a sold-out conference extension took in focus sessions at the TM, gallery talks at the Sackler, receptions in local collectors' homes, a tour of the Avenir Center (the TM storage and conservation facility in Ashburn, Virginia), and small-group viewings of Coptic, Byzantine, and pre-Columbian textile holdings at Dumbarton Oaks.

In the opinion of fellow NERS member and conference attendee Gerard Paquin, "outside of [the academic sessions], this was a very, very good ICOC."

Julia Bailey



5. A wall of spectacular suzanis from private collections, shown at GWU's Corcoran School of Arts and Design



6. More privately owned rugs and textiles displayed at the Corcoran for the duration of ICOC



7. Diamond-design Uzbek *julkhyr* (sleeping rug)



8. Sauj Bulagh long rug and carpet fragment



9. Small, tasseled, bottom-opening Shahsavan flatwoven pouch, perhaps made to cover the teeth of a weaver's beating comb

Kilims at the Textile Museum

The exhibition "A Nomad's Art: Kilims of Anatolia," at the GWU/Textile Museum from Sept. 1 through Dec. 23, will debut outstanding Turkish kilims given to the museum by the late Murad Megalli. For further information, see <https://museum.gwu.edu/kilims>



Western Anatolian kilim (detail), 1750–1800, TM



Central Anatolian kilim (detail), 19th century, TM

Ronnie Newman Rugs at Skinner



1. Western Anatolian yastik (detail), ca. 1800



2. Ming carpet fragment (detail), 16th century

Skinner's next Fine Oriental Rugs & Carpets sale, on Sunday, Oct. 21, will feature early examples—Turkish **(1)**, Northwest Persian, Turkmen, and Chinese **(2)**—from the collection of the well-known dealer Ronnie Newman.

Other Rug, Textile, and Related Events

Auctions

Sept. 11, Stuttgart, Nagel, Rugs & Carpets, Textiles & Islamic Art
 Sept. 24, Vienna, Dorotheum, Oriental Carpets, Textiles, Tapestries
 Oct. 21, Boston, Skinner, Fine Oriental Rugs & Carpets (see above)
 Oct. 24, London, Sotheby's, Arts of the Islamic World
 Oct. 25, London, Christie's, Arts of the Islamic and Indian Worlds, including Oriental Rugs and Carpets
 Nov. 6, London, Sotheby's, Rugs & Carpets
 Nov. 11, Boston, Grogan & Company, Fall Auction
 Nov. 17, Wiesbaden, Rippon Boswell, Collectors' Carpets

Exhibitions and Fairs

Until Oct. 7, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Eternal Springime: A Persian Garden Carpet
 Until Dec. 23, Washington, DC, Textile Museum, A Nomad's Art: Kilims of Anatolia (see above)
 Until Feb. 2019, Sarajevo, National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Safavid Carpets from the Mahan Shrine
 Sept. 13–16, Lomellina, 14th Sartirana Textile Show, La Pila
 Sept. 22–Jan. 13, 2019, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Armenia!
 Oct. 2–7, London, Battersea Park, The Decorative Arts & Textiles Fair

Oct. 19–21, San Francisco, Greenwich Inn, Antique Rug & Textile Show (ARTS)
 Oct. 25–29, Istanbul, multiple venues, Istanbul Carpet Week
 Oct. 26–28, Berlin, Museum of Islamic Art and Kunstgewerbemuseum, Volkmann-Treffen

2019 NERS Meetings

- March 22: Jerry Becker on Navajo weaving (Durant-Kenrick, Newton)
- April 12: Collectors' Session: NERS Steering Committee members present some of their favorites (First Parish, Lincoln)
- May 3: Joel Greifinger on Kurdish weaving from three regions (Durant-Kenrick, Newton)
- May 19: Annual picnic, moth mart, and show-and-tell (Gore Place, Waltham)

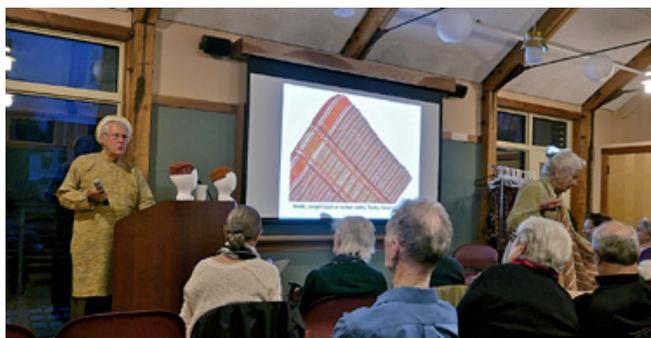
Phyllis Lewis Butler, 1934–2017

We have belatedly learned that member Phyllis Butler, of Wheelwright, Massachusetts, passed away on November 2, 2017. Phyllis and her husband, Fay, joined NERS in 2013. We offer Fay our condolences and hope that he finds solace and community in attending our future meetings.

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Rear View Mirror: Last Season's Speaker Program

(see p. 4, **Meetings and speakers, 2017-18**, for identification)



Editorial contributors to this issue: Julia Bailey (editor), Jim Adelson, Joel Greifinger, Lloyd Kannenberg, Judy Smith, Mike Tschbull

Distributor: Jim Sampson

NERS 2018–19 Steering Committee: Joel Greifinger (Chairman), Jim Adelson, Julia Bailey, Yon Bard, Richard Belkin, Jean Hoffman, Lloyd Kannenberg, Richard Larkin, Jim Sampson, Jeff Spurr

ACOR Representative: Ann Nicholas

If you haven't already done so, please renew your NERS membership now! You can pay online using a credit card: go to www.ne-rugsociety.org/NERS-paypal.htm and follow directions. Alternatively, you can mail your check, payable to NERS, to our Holliston address (see the box opposite).

The New England Rug Society is an informal, non-profit organization of people interested in enriching their knowledge and appreciation of antique oriental rugs and textiles. Our meetings are held seven or more times a year. Membership levels and annual dues are: Single \$45, Couple \$65, Supporting \$90, Patron \$120, Student \$25. Membership information and renewal forms are available on our website, www.ne-rugsociety.org; by writing to the New England Rug Society, P.O. Box 6125, Holliston, MA 01746; or by contacting Jim Sampson at jahome22@gmail.com.



The New England Rug Society

P.O. Box 6125
Holliston, MA 01746

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