



View from the Fringe

Newsletter of the New England Rug Society



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April 20 Meeting: Collector Series, Honoring Alan Varteresian



Alan Varteresian

In October 2010, NERS highlighted the textile collection of longtime member Mae Festa. That evening with Mae evoked so much enthusiasm that our Collector Series was born.

At our next meeting, on April 20, we will honor member Alan Varteresian, lifelong Greater Bostonian and collector extraordinaire. Although he is known as a Turkmen specialist because of the examples he has generously lent to various exhibitions, Alan for decades has been a hunter-gatherer of all manner of pile and flatwoven gems. Furthermore, as a member of an Armenian family whose ranks have included at least two generations of carpet dealers, he has a vast knowledge of the commercial goings-on, past and present, in New England, New York, and beyond.

Julia Bailey will talk about Alan's family history, his

April Meeting Details

Date: Friday, April 20

Time: 7:00 p.m. reception, wine and cheese
8:00 p.m. presentation and exhibition

Place: Grogan & Company, 22 Harris St., Dedham, MA
<http://www.groganco.com>

From Boston: Take Mass Pike (Rt. 90) west to Rt. 128/95 south. Take exit 17 (Needham-Rt. 135). Go east on Rt. 135 (High Street) approximately two miles into Dedham Center. At the light, take a left onto Washington Street. Harris Street is one block down on the right.

From west of Boston: Take Mass Pike (Rt. 90) east to Rt. 128/95 south and proceed as above.

From the north: Take Rt. 93 south to Rt. 128/95 south and proceed as above.

From the south: Take Rt. 95 north to Rt. 128/95 north. Take exit 15 (Rt. 1 east). Follow Rt. 1 east through several lights until you come to Washington St./Rt. 1A (with a Dunkin' Donuts on the left). Bear right (as in a rotary) to turn left onto Washington St. Harris St. will be your first left, with the gallery immediately on the right.

Parking: On both sides of the building, or in the public lot just past the overpass.

evolution as a collector, and some of his rugs. Many more of Alan's pieces—including a delectable assortment of Turkmen, Southwest Persian, and Shahsavan soumak bagfaces—will be on display for the audience to savor. Ever modest, Alan has pledged to "answer questions," and we look forward to hearing the comments of this gifted raconteur.

We also thank another NERS member, Michael Grogan, for providing the setting—his gallery, Grogan & Company, in Dedham—for what promises to be a memorable evening.

May 20 Meeting: NERS Picnic, Moth Mart, and Show-and-Tell



Surveying the moth mart at lovely Gore Place, 2009.



Anatolian kilim at the picnic show-and-tell, 2011.



Ersari *chuval* at the picnic show-and-tell, 2011.

The picnic will be held on Sunday, May 20—rain or shine—at Gore Place, the grounds of the former governor's mansion in Waltham. We'll have a huge enclosed tent with water and electricity, bathrooms in the adjacent barn, tables and chairs for all, and plenty of lawn space. Bring your own picnic lunch and we'll provide soft drinks, coffee, and tea.

Enjoy our moth mart: we invite NERS members (dealers or not) to offer a few things for sale during the picnic—and buying is of course encouraged!

Bring one or two items for our show-and-tell—mystery textiles or rugs, exotic specimens you think fellow members should know more about, or wonderful acquisitions you want to share.

Picnic Details

Date: Sunday, May 20 (note the day!)

Time: Noon to 4 p.m.

Place: Gore Place, 52 Gore Street, Waltham

From the Mass Pike: Take exit 17 and follow signs to Rt. 20 westbound (Main St. in Watertown). After 1.5 miles, turn left onto Gore St. at the second of two adjoining traffic lights (Shell station on right). Proceed 0.2 miles on Gore St. Turn left (through center island) to Gore Place entrance.

From Rte. 128: Take exit 26 onto Rt. 20 eastbound (it starts out as Weston Road and becomes Main St.). After 3.3 miles turn right on Gore St. at the first of two adjoining traffic lights (Shell station on left). Proceed on Gore St. as above.

From Newton: Go north on Crafts St. Turn right (at traffic light) on North St. Cross the Charles River and go straight. The street eventually becomes Gore St. Gore Place entrance will be on right.

Parking: Use the parking area on the estate grounds.

Photo Credits

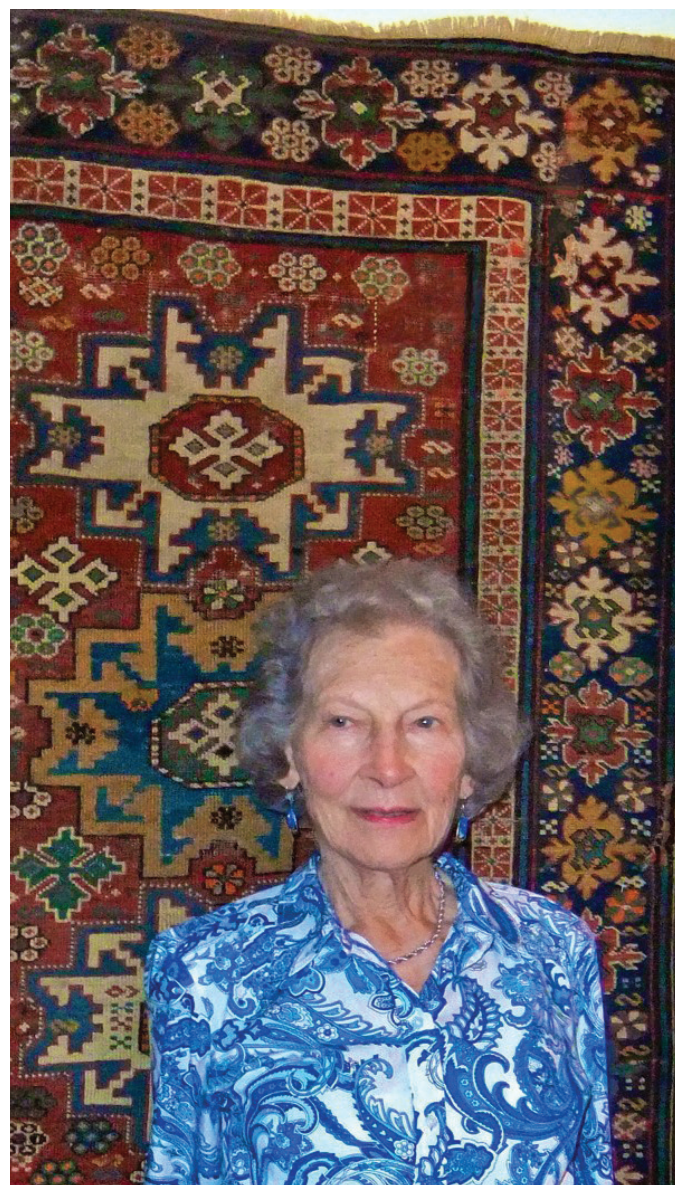
1, Julia Bailey. 2, Bob Alimi (above), Yon Bard (center and below). 3, Ann Nicholas. 4, Rich Blumenthal. 5, Courtesy MFA. 6–7, Mark Hopkins. 8–9, Doug Bailey.

In Tribute to Janet Smith, 1922–2012

It was with sadness that we learned of Janet Smith's death on January 14. But as Janet herself said, it was time. As her son David recounted it, Janet was slipping downhill months before with congestive heart failure, at one point being hospitalized in what the family thought was the end. But it wasn't. (I remember seeing her at a meeting after we'd learned of her crisis and being greeted by a warm grin and a hearty, "I'm back!") But the condition returned and worsened, to the point where she finally couldn't handle stairs and other exertions, a great frustration for a lady who had always led an active life. Her ninetieth birthday arrived and was feted by the family. Three days later she announced, "That's it; I'm done." She went to bed, fell asleep, and never woke up. What a perfect way to go.

Janet Hunter Smith was one of those people you could always count on, and one who played a steady role in making the rug society what it is. For many years she took on the tedious tasks of getting the newsletter printed and distributed, and of managing our nametags. "All easy stuff for a retired librarian," she would tell us. At one of our committee meetings it was lamented that visitors were attending our lectures without paying the guest fee. Janet said, "I'll take care of it" — and did she ever. After every meeting she would sidle up to me with a conspiratorial smile and hand over a fistful of cash. Nothing got by Janet. She was a great lady, a good friend, and for so many years a mainstay of NERS. We will miss her.

Mark Hopkins



Janet Smith with one of her rugs in 2010. For more about her life, see *View from the Fringe*, Oct. 2010.

Editor's note: Because of Janet's long association with the Goodnow Library in Sudbury, where she worked and remained a volunteer, NERS has donated to the library three books in her memory: Eiland's *Oriental Rugs: A Comprehensive Guide*, Thompson's *Oriental Carpets*, and one of the last remaining copies of our now out-of-print *Through the Collector's Eye: Oriental Rugs from New England Private Collections*. Each volume will carry a bookplate dedicating it to Janet.

Rug and Textile Events

Exhibitions

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: Embroideries of Colonial Boston: Domestic Embroideries, through June 3.
Baltimore Museum of Art: Embroidered Treasures: Textiles from Central Asia, through May 13.
De Young Museum, San Francisco: The Art of the Anatolian Kilim: Highlights from the Caroline and H. McCoy Jones Collection, through June 10.
Seattle Asian Art Museum: Colors of the Oasis: Central Asian Ikats, through Aug. 5.

Textile Museum of Canada, Toronto: Portable Mosques: The Sacred Space of the Prayer Rug, through Sept. 3.
The Textile Museum, Washington: Woven Treasures of Japan's Tawaraya Workshop, through Aug. 12;
Dragons, Nagas, and Creatures of the Deep, through January 6, 2013.

Auctions featuring rugs

Rippon Boswell, Wiesbaden, May 19 (Collector Carpets)
Grogan, Dedham, May 20 (May Auction)

February 10 Meeting Review: A Night at the MFA



Lauren Whitley discusses an 18th-century Chinese carpet on loan to the MFA from a private collection.

On February 10 the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, was once again the site for an NERS meeting, with Lauren Whitley, curator in the department of Textile and Fashion Arts, hosting and leading the session. Fortunately, this year's outing lacked both the treacherous snowbound roads and the noisy First Friday crowd we encountered last year, making for a more relaxing evening.

After a welcoming reception with refreshments in the Riley Seminar Room, the NERS group proceeded to the Upper Rotunda to take in four Chinese carpets on display. Lauren opened with a few general remarks on Chinese carpet weaving, noting that some scholars say that it came from the west through Mongolia, arriving in China in the thirteenth century. She commented that carpets were used differently in China—they were highly prized and less frequently placed on floors than hung on walls or laid over tables. Finally, she observed that there was much more uniformity in Chinese carpet weaving than in that of many other areas. The design vocabulary was fairly well defined, with a set of motifs that appeared repeatedly in both carpets and other Chinese art forms. The palette was also less varied, with tans, blues, and browns usually being the main colors chosen. Chinese carpet structure was consistent, too, using cotton warps and asymmetrically knotted wool pile.

Two of the four Chinese carpets on display were from the MFA collection, and two were on loan. The first example Lauren discussed (pictured above) dated to the eighteenth century; its field design featured a large-scale phoenix on rocks. It had two principal borders, one with simple fretwork and the other with images of bats (symbols of happiness)

and peonies or peaches (representing longevity) amid more complicated fretwork.

The second carpet was perhaps slightly younger, dating to around 1800. It had a geometric *shou* character (another longevity symbol) in the center and dragon motifs featured in both field and border. Another border contained fretwork surrounding ancient motifs that we now label swastikas. This carpet had a predominantly tan-and-blue palette.

The third carpet (shown at top right) dated to the eighteenth century, and used lions (wrongly called “fo dogs”), symbolizing courage and strength, as design elements. Peonies adorned the wider border, and pearls—light circles—appeared in the inner one. The final carpet, from the same era, had a pale field with an overall design arrangement rather than the central motif of the other three carpets. Peonies, lotus flowers, peach blossoms, and butterflies all embellished the field, with more peonies in the main border.

The last part of the evening program gave NERS members a chance to see some smaller carpets and fragments in the MFA collection. These pieces are rarely on display, but Lauren and former curator Julia Bailey had them brought to the department offices for us to savor (see below). Julia explained that an early focus of the MFA, like many museums, was on classical carpets, and that the MFA had benefited from the generosity of a number of donors, particularly the art theorist Denman Waldo Ross.

Julia spoke first about a cartouche-shaped border fragment from one of the two Ardabil carpets, woven in 1540. The Ardabil Carpet in the Victoria and Albert Museum is world famous; less known is the fact that, at the end of the nineteenth century, parts of a twin carpet were used to restore it. (The “second Ardabil” is now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.) A few border fragments not used in



Julia Bailey shows fragments to NERS members.

the restoration came onto the market at the time, and Ross acquired one and donated it to the MFA.

The next object was a border fragment from a Persian silk medallion carpet, now lost. Two small fragments, also donated by Ross, came from the primary and secondary borders of a small Mughal Indian carpet of velvet-like fineness; woven on a silk foundation using extremely high-quality pashmina goat hair for the pile, it had a knot density of around 2,000 knots per inch. Now surviving only as fragments in a few museums, it was made circa 1630, likely for Shah Jahan, who built the Taj Mahal.

We next turned our attention to a so-called Transylvanian carpet. So named because many examples were donated to churches of the Transylvanian region in Romania, where they were displayed and preserved, these rugs were in fact produced in western Anatolia. This example was woven in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century and remains in excellent condition, with great color. In the MFA, it had been forgotten in an attic for many years, and so received even less light exposure than it might otherwise have; it was rediscovered fairly recently. We next focused on a “vase carpet” fragment (named for the vases in the ascending floral designs of some examples, including this one). Julia explained that these carpets, mostly dating to the seventeenth century, had been attributed to various parts of Iran, but that the research of May Beattie convincingly suggested a Kirman origin. This fragment, like other vase carpets, had a distinctive three-weft structure, with two wool wefts and one of cotton. The reason for this structural choice is unknown, but over time, the cotton (or silk) wefts tended to deteriorate, causing warps to surface and giving the pieces a somewhat corduroy-like appearance on the front.



Embroidery, Caucasus (?), 18th century, MFA 43.2046.



Chinese carpet with lions, 18th century, MFA 17.614.

Our next jewel, which came into the museum in 1908, was a fragment from what must have been quite a large Salor *chuval*. The piece exhibited the very depressed warp that characterizes such Turkmen weaving. Also on display was a velvet ikat fragment, which entered the MFA much more recently, having been donated by Guido Goldman after the MFA staged an exhibition of pieces from his ikat collection in 1997. A complete soumak *mafrash*, probably woven by the Shabsavan of the Moghan area in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, featured a parade of stylized peacocks among its geometric ornaments. The MFA acquired it in 1927.

A second vase carpet fragment from the museum collection was likely earlier than the first, with a more curvilinear central field design and terrific, large-scale strapwork in the border. Julia mentioned that another substantial fragment of the same carpet is in the collection of the Louvre. The final piece of the night was a bold silk-on-cotton embroidery (opposite), probably made in the eighteenth century in the Caucasus or Northwest Iran; its design and colors are reminiscent of both dragon carpets and later rugs of the southern Caucasus. Like most of the other examples selected for the evening, its colors remain strong, despite its long life.

NERS is most grateful for the hospitality of the MFA, and in particular for Lauren's willingness to make even infrequently displayed items of the MFA's outstanding collection viewable for our enjoyment: thanks, Lauren!

Jim Adelson

March 9 Meeting Review: Elena Tsareva on Eurasian Felts



Elena Tsareva discusses the history of felt making.

On March 9, at First Parish in Lincoln, NERS members enjoyed an extra meeting. Our presenter was Dr. Elena Tsareva, a respected scholar and prolific author traveling on a research and lecture tour from St. Petersburg, where she works at the Kunstkamera of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The topic of her talk was Eurasian felted textiles.

Elena explained that her initial interest in felts came from seeing examples that had been given to the Todaiji Temple in Nara, Japan, in AD 787. These felts, which had been presented to the temple by a Chinese empress, were attributed to China, but the evidence for their place of creation seemed unconvincing. The literature and scholarship on felts was in fact very limited, particularly given their longtime existence, great numbers, and importance.

The initial use of felt, Elena explained, was for floor coverings, but they have served many other functions: socks, for instance, were made from thin felt and clothing such as head covers from somewhat thicker felt. In addition to warmth, felts provide significant fire and water resistance—making them appealing for yurt covers or even the exteriors of boats.

In constructing felts, Elena noted that it was not possible to use vegetable fibers or the kemp of wild sheep, which lack the scales that cause the material to stay together after the felting process. Felts had to be created from domesticated sheep wool, silk, or camel hair; possibly the earliest felts were made from goat hair. The process of woolen felting is basically similar all over the world, with a particular set of steps. First is shearing, to get the raw material; then beating, to make it airier, softer, and cleaner. Then it is spread, watered, and rolled up, giving the fabric its distinctive character. Pattern is created via a number of different techniques, as outlined below. Finally, there tends to be more rolling, repeated as necessary to complete the work.

Elena briefly outlined nine different methods, practiced by different cultures, of decorating felt: 1) rolled-in or rolled-over designs; 2) appliqué of decorative motifs, potentially of different materials, onto the felt foundation; 3) inlay or mosaic, with patterns cut from two differently colored panels and attached together to make two articles; 4–6) decoration with sewn-on cords, stitching, or embroidery; 7) decoration with other attached elements, such as shells, buttons, or ribbons; 8) painting (rare); and 9) printing (also rare).

Elena then turned to the history of these techniques, noting that while there is 100,000-year-old evidence of sewing and thread, felt making is much more recent. As she had previously noted, felting implied the domestication of sheep, which first occurred ten to eleven thousand years ago. It also required very large quantities of wool: a complete yurt cover, for example, needs the wool of 190 sheep. The domestication of dogs and horses to manage the large flocks would have occurred only five or six thousand years ago, or possibly later.

The earliest evidence of felting, from Mesopotamian Sumeria, is provided by depictions of head coverings that, from their shape, had to be made of felt. The Hittite civilization, to the northwest of Sumeria, used felts for both headgear and footwear, including boots with turned-up toes; felt fragments have been found in Hittite graves excavated by modern archaeologists. Similar early felts also survived in the Tarim Basin, where sand and extremely dry conditions better preserved the remains, even of those over 4,000 years old. These “Sumer-Iranian” felts were characterized by high-quality wool that was the basis for fine white felts with multicolored, rolled-in decoration.

European feltmaking started almost as early, with the oldest examples from Germany, Holland, and Scandinavia—also headgear, including helmet linings—dating back to the second millennium BC. European felts, in contrast to the

Sumer-Iranian group, started with woven material, which was then subjected to the felting process.

Further to the east, there was also a long-lived history of felt making among the peoples referred to as Scythians, who inhabited territory along the Great Steppe Corridor from China to the Balkans. Since this region included the Pazyryk area, Elena called this mode of felt making the “Pazyryk tradition.” The Scythians used felt for hats, caftans, socks, and even early umbrellas, as well as for decorative items such as horse masks. They created white felts—thin and dense in comparison with other types—and were the first to pattern them via the appliqué technique.

Another distinct felting style came from a group inhabiting the steppes of northern Mongolia, referred to as Hsiung-nu, whose felts date back to between the first century BC and the first century AD. Hsiung-nu felts have thick foundations made of several layers, which are heavily stitched and covered with different textiles. The Hsiung-nu felts were often used in funerary contexts. The felting style of the Hsiung-nu has been carried forward by Kazakhs, and Tatars in the Volga Region continued this type of felting until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, even though others in the same area practiced the European style of felt making.

After her introduction to these four major groups—Sumer-Iranian, European, Pazyryk, and Hsiung-nu—Elena gave briefer descriptions of felts from other areas, or from later production. She showed a decorative hanging from the northern Caucasus that utilized a number of distinct motifs, including sun, moon, and totemic figures. Structurally, this piece was executed in Pazyryk style. The Lakhs made felt boots similar in appearance to earlier ones from the Hittites, and also made battle masks intended to scare enemies as well as protect their own faces.

An enormous variety of felts, including floor coverings, hats, bags, and much more, come from the Kirghiz. By contrast, felts were used less in Iran, with hats being the primary felted objects. In the southern Caucasus, felt clothing was more common, particularly for shepherds. Anatolia, like Iran, tended to reserve felt for headgear, in particular the tall hats worn by dervishes and the royal family. Felt production extended throughout North Africa and all the way to Spain. In Europe, felt-making traditions continued in certain clothing; Elena showed examples from Byelorussia, Ukraine, and the Baltic territories.

Much less is known about felting in some other regions: no ancient felts survive from Samarkand or the Turkmen areas, for instance, but this may indicate not that felts weren't made there, but rather that local conditions and



Elena comments on one of Jeff Spurr's Yomut felts, a cloth-covered, non-functional trapping or hanging decorated with cording, appliqué, and tassels.

practices didn't support their preservation.

Following her talk, Elena led a discussion of pieces brought in by members. Jeff Spurr provided the majority of items, including a Turkmen *asmalyk*, or wedding-camel trapping; a cord-embellished Turkmen saddle cover; a white-ground Yomut *bokhcha*, or envelope-like container, decorated with embroidery, appliqué, and cording as well as attached tassels; and a non-functional Yomut trapping (shown above). Among Kirghiz pieces brought by various members was a dish cover or bag with thread decoration, a large inlaid hanging, and a smaller inlaid piece of modern manufacture. Elena and Jeff attributed another felt, which featured a pair of decorative triangular panels, to nearby Kungrat peoples.

Many thanks to Elena Tsareva for fitting this presentation into her travel schedule, and for enlightening us on an old but relatively unfamiliar form of textile art.

Jim Adelson

March 23 Meeting Review: Peter Poullada on the Lebab Turkmen

On March 23, Peter Poullada presented “The Lebab Turkmen and Their Interactions with the Local Uzbeks” at ALMA, marking his return as an NERS speaker. He started by explaining that “Lebab” is the name of a province on both sides of the Amu Darya, or Oxus, River, in what is now eastern Turkmenistan. Many different ethnic groups, including Uzbek and Turkmen tribes, inhabit this Middle Amu Darya region and live in relative proximity to one another; local history from Bukhara and Khiva indicates, for instance, that the Uzbeks and Turkmen have lived there together for 250 years.

Peter used the term “Lebab Turkmen” with reference to the different peoples of Turkmen origin in the region, including contingents from many of the known Turkmen tribes, including Ersari, Salor, Yomud, Arabatchi, Chodor, and others. Among sources indicating the ethnic makeup of the area at different times is a particularly detailed census compiled by the Russians in 1926, which Vinnikov expounded upon in 1958. Peter distributed a handout,

taken from Vinnikov, showing the top twenty-five tribes in the Lebab, according to the census, but he cautioned that the lives and weavings of these Lebab Turkmen were considerably different from those of their fellow tribesmen living elsewhere; he illustrated some of these differences with historical accounts and photographs taken from the 1880s onward.

Showing a photo of the fortress at Chardjui (now known as Turkmenabat), he described how the local ruler, or *beg*, had both Uzbek and Turkmen troops. The Turkmen provided military support in return for land and water access, which enabled them to live a semi-settled and agriculturally based life, in contrast to their fellow tribesmen elsewhere. Another photo showed Salors on a boat on the Amu Darya; Peter commented that we don’t normally think of Turkmen on water, but that in this area some of the Salors fished and also provided ferry transport on the river.

While the lives and economy of the Lebab Turkmen were different from those of other Turkmen, their weaving remained important to them, although much of it was done for commercial purposes rather than for use within the family. One of his photographs showed the *beg* at Chardjui with a group of his courtiers, sitting on an enormous carpet with a standard design we would label “Beshir.” By the late nineteenth century, carpets were purchased for and used in many homes, not just those of leaders. Another photo pictured a family in Margilan (in modern-day eastern Uzbekistan) on a large carpet with a *mina khani* design. Another photograph, of a Jewish family in Bukhara, featured carpets, including a classic Kizil Ayak main carpet, on both the walls and the floor.

Many of the weaving styles and practices of the Lebab Turkmen, Peter pointed out, differed from those of Turkmen further west and south. Yellow was used much more extensively, for instance, which he surmised was the result of exposure to Uzbek taste. In addition, a number of Lebab Turkmen weavings were based on Persianate models and as a result were completely covered in decorative pattern, rather than preserving the prominent open space associated with Turkmen weavings from other regions.

As the final portion of his prepared remarks, Peter presented and commented on a number of pile weavings that he believes to have come from the Lebab region. Rather than arrange them by tribal origin, he tended to group them by design type and format. He started with several main carpets, the first of which he attributed to Saltiq Ersari, with *gulli gul* medallions in the central field and the general design aesthetic of Turkmen main carpets outside the



Peter Poullada answers questions after his talk.

Lebab. A Kizil Ayak main carpet also displayed the design characteristics of other Turkmen weaving. A third main carpet also featured *gulli guls* and would typically be labeled Turkmen, but Peter felt it could have been made by an Uzbek weaver in the Lebab area. He noted that the design of a so-called cloudband Beshir, in contrast, might originally have been Chinese, and that in any case the complete and dense covering of the field differed markedly from the usual Turkmen aesthetic of discrete guls floating over the background in the central field.

He also showed multiple *ensis*, the first with a design typically attributed to the Ersari, and subsequent examples that likely would also be labeled Ersari, but that Peter felt showed Uzbek influence. He then turned to *chuvals*, *torbas*, and trappings. Some had designs usually said to be derived from ikats, but Peter cautioned that certain ikat patterns themselves might have come from earlier carpets, or that such designs in both ikat and pile might have descended from a common ancestor. He also explored two other Lebab design types, both of them not found on Turkmen weaving from other areas: a banded design used on *chuvals* and sometimes *torbas*, and the *mina khani* pattern, which is hypothesized to have originated in Iran.

Following Peter's presentation, he took several questions from the audience. The first concerned how the people in the region identified themselves. Peter replied that this differed at different times; in response to the 1926 census, for example, there was motivation to claim membership in a particular tribe in order to receive better treatment. He also noted that some tribal groups had migrated to Afghanistan before coming to the Lebab, and that these multiple movements would have muted their connection with their original tribes. Another attendee asked about the term "Beshir," and Peter explained that Beshir is the name of a place—in fact, a relatively small town—making it an unlikely marketing center, much less weaving site, for all the rugs given the name. Finally, Peter was asked about the degree of Russian appreciation for weavings of the region; he responded that the Russians were more focused on Western Turkmen and their carpets, and that the Lebab and Bukhara areas, while part of Russia, were semi-independent.

The evening concluded with a show-and-tell of pieces belonging to NERS members. One (pictured at right) was a *chuval* with a full medallion and half medallions in the main field: Peter felt it was from the first half of the nineteenth century, and probably came from around Kerki, in easternmost Turkmenistan. Another was a *chuval* with a zigzag design, of a type usually attributed to the Ersari,

which he dated to the 1860s or 70s. Another *chuval* had a design often conjectured to have derived from ikat; he reiterated the possibility that the design had instead moved from pile to ikat, or that ikat and pile versions of it had a common predecessor. Next, he dated a trapping with a Persianate *Herati* central motif to the second half of the nineteenth century. Of items with gul designs, one was a nine-gul *chuval* with very creatively drawn and colored *chemche* minor guls and large amounts of light green throughout. Peter felt that it was most likely Ersari, but that an Arabatchi origin was possible. Another *chuval* followed, with a twelve-gul design commonly used in both Ersari and Saryk weaving and the whites knotted in cotton; Peter considered a Saryk provenance more likely. Then came a pair of pieces—one in the form of an *ok bash*, or tent-pole cover, the other a small bag, both thought to be Ersari. The two articles had actually been made from a single larger pile weaving, cut up and reassembled. No one could identify the format of the original from the pieces that remained; Peter thought it might have been Kirghiz rather than Ersari. He labeled the final piece a *kejobelik*, or wedding-camel trapping; it had a design apparently taken from an earlier Salor model.

Our thanks to Peter for broadening our understanding of tribal life and weaving in the Middle Amu Darya region, and for using so many arresting historical and even family photos to illustrate his points. Our thanks as well to ALMA for hosting the meeting and for inviting its members, who joined the audience and enlivened the discussion.

Jim Adelson



Lebab chuval, Kerki (?), first half of the 19th century.

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NERS 2011–12 Steering Committee: Jim Adelson, Robert Alimi, Julia Bailey (co-chair), Yon Bard, Louise Dohanian, Joel Greifinger, Mark Hopkins, Lloyd Kannenberg, Ann Nicholas (co-chair), Jim Sampson, Jeff Spurr.

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 290393, Charlestown, MA 02129; or by contacting Jim Sampson at jahome22@gmail.com.



The New England Rug Society

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