



View from the Fringe

Newsletter of the New England Rug Society



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March 18 Webinar Preview: Gerard Paquin, “Crosscurrent Influences in Turkish Rugs and Textiles”



Gerard Paquin

Part of the mystery and appeal of oriental carpets is their ability to borrow designs from a wide range of sources. This presentation will consider the designs of certain Turkish rugs, documenting their influence by Ottoman textiles and considering the impetus for those artistic borrowings. It will also examine the impact of rug design on textiles, and the use of both rugs and textiles as architectonic elements in tent as well as town.

NERS member Gerard Paquin began collecting oriental rugs and textiles in the late 1970s. Seeking a broader knowledge of Islamic art and a scholarly approach to rug studies, he enrolled in the graduate art history program at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, under the tutelage of Walter Denny.

Gerard has presented academic papers at The GWU Museum and The Textile Museum and at Istanbul Carpet Congresses in 1984 and 1994; has written articles and reviews for *HALI*, *The Textile Museum Journal*, and *Oriental Rug Review*; and has spoken at various rug societies, at two of the American Conferences on Oriental Rugs, and most recently at Rug Collectors' Weekend, in Santa Ynez, California.



**Ottoman velvet yastik,
17th century, Harvard Art
Museums 1985.307**



**Central Anatolian pile yastik,
19th century, formerly Leigh
Marsh Collection**

Webinar Details

**Hosted by the New England Rug Society,
with the Hajji Baba Club as co-sponsor**

Date and Time: Saturday, March 18
1 PM ET

Venue: Your desktop, laptop, or tablet

Registration: If you have registered for
a previous NERS webinar, you will
receive an email invitation to this one.

Or register with this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/SilkWoolFringe>

April 16 Meeting Preview: Prayer Rug Show-and-Tell, Introduced by Jeff Spurr



Jeff Spurr

Meeting Details

Date and Time: Sunday, April 16, 3 p.m.

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

Directions: From Boston and east, take Mass Pike to exit 127 (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 the LEFT.

From Rt. 128 and west, take Mass Pike to exit 127 (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: To be provided by members whose surnames begin with **H** through **P**. Please arrive early to set up.



Left to right: Karabagh prayer rug, Milas prayer rug, Baluch prayer rug, Yazd ikat hanging

The next in-person meeting of NERS, on April 16, will be a show-and-tell devoted to prayer rugs—those Islamic rugs and textiles that adopt a niche form associated with prayer, the mihrab on a mosque wall, and the idea of the promise of paradise. Member and frequent speaker Jeff Spurr will begin the session with a twenty-minute introduction to the topic, based on his past work.

Among his many other accomplishments—see, in summary, p. 2 of the April 2022 issue of *View from the Fringe* (<https://ne-rugsociety.org/newsletter/fringe-v29n2-4-2022.pdf>)—Jeff was curator of the 2002 NERS online exhibition, *Islamic Prayer Rugs & Related Textiles*—still available on our website (<https://ne-rugsociety.org/xternal-html/gallery/prayer-rugs-fall-2002/index.htm>).

This was followed in print by his “Ends and Means: Islamic Prayer Rugs in Context,” (*HALI* 127 [Mar.–Apr. 2003]: 105–11).

At our February 2017 meeting, Jeff presented a fully reconsidered talk on the general topic, now retitled “Framing the Islamic Prayer Rug: Image, Symbolism, and Function.”

After Jeff’s introduction, the rest of the April 16 meeting will depend on attendee participation—so bring your prayer rugs and textiles! (A sampling of NERS members’ current or former holdings appears directly above. Will we welcome these pieces again, or be treated to an entirely new selection?)

May 13 Meeting Preview: Jim Adelson and Yon Bard Explore Turkmen Secondary Guls

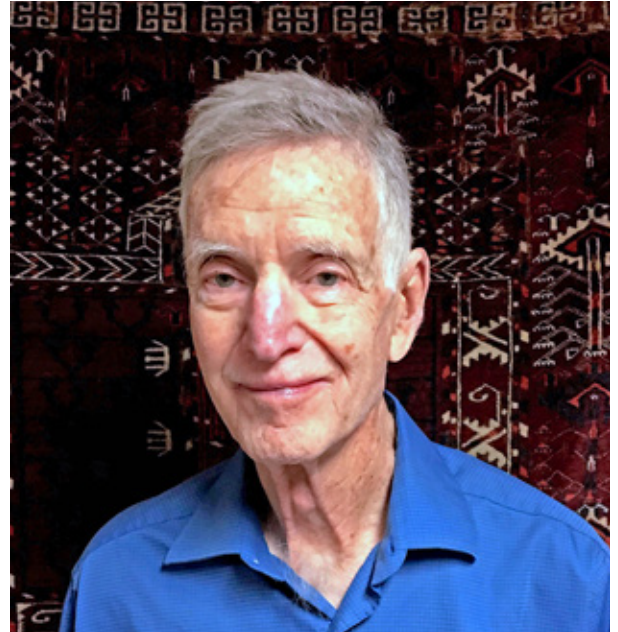
Meeting Details

Date and Time: Saturday, May 13, 3 p.m.

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

Directions: See p. 2

Food: To be provided by members whose surnames begin with **R** through **Z**. Please arrive early to set up.



Secondary guls (circled) on NERS members' Yomud main carpet (above) and Tekke torba

Yon Bard (above) and Jim Adelson

On May 13, longtime NERS members and veteran presenters Yon Bard and Jim Adelson will again team up, this time to examine secondary guls in Turkmen pile weavings.

Many Turkmen pile-rug formats—including main carpets, storage bags, and trappings—feature both primary and secondary guls. Much of the writing about Turkmen weaving has focused on primary guls, addressing their design history and speculating on their symbolic significance. Secondary guls have received far less attention, but a look at even a few examples suggests that they are more varied than primary guls, and that they allowed their weavers greater freedom of

expression. In addition, there are more instances of multiple Turkmen groups “sharing” some of these secondary guls.

Jim’s interest in Turkmen weaving developed in the 1980s and Yon’s in the 1990s. In 2004 they collaborated on the NERS session “Turkmen and Their Pile Weavings,” and in 2006 they were co-curators of the exhibition “Rare and Unusual Turkmen Pile Weavings,” at ACOR 8, Boston (see <https://ne-rugsociety.org/xternal-html/gallery/acor-turkmen/index.htm>).

All who attend this meeting—members and their guests—are eagerly encouraged to bring their own examples of Turkmen weavings with secondary guls.

December 3 Meeting Review: Mike Tschbull on Caucasian Rug Design Evolution

By Jim Adelson

At Durant-Kenrick House, Newton, on December 3, NERS member and veteran speaker Mike Tschbull presented “The Sources and Evolution of Design in 19th-Century Transcaucasian Pile Rugs: A Few Examples.”

First he showed a Zeikhur rug whose sole design elements were palmettes (1); he commented that this rug was the only such piece known to him. As far-flung design predecessors, he then illustrated an Ottoman voided silk velvet with “palmette-like” carnations, and a Ming Chinese ceramic vessel with lotus flowers (2). These were followed

by several pile weavings from the Transcaucasus and northwestern Iran, including Serapi and Kurdish rugs, all with variations of lotus palmettes.

Next Mike turned to a well-known group of ivory-field prayer rugs (3), tracing their field design—of diagonally arrayed floral motifs within a lattice—to Kashmiri jamawar, or yardage (4). In addition, Mike found antecedents for the form of their mihrabs in Indian kalamkari, or hand-painted and -printed cotton textiles; he showed an example from the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh.



1. Palmette rug, Zeikhur, 19th century, speaker's collection



3. Floral lattice prayer rug, Shirvan, 19th century, private collection



2. Mike showing palmette-related motifs in other media



4. Jamawar (yardage) made into a decorative cover, Kashmir, ca. 1800–10, Tapi Collection 04.39

The cypress tree has long been a prominent motif in many media, including manuscripts, ceramics, and textiles: as examples, Mike showed images of a sixteenth-century Persian book painting, a Turkish Iznik tile, and an Indian kalamkari, as well as of an early Caucasian carpet with stylized cypresses embraced by floral “arms” (5). He then introduced a group of highly geometrized, nineteenth-century Caucasian village rugs with jagged-ended rectangular central motifs, flanked by crescent-shaped forms that he termed “saz leaves” (6). Despite the boxy

shape of the central forms, he maintained that they were derived from the earlier, tapered cypress-tree motifs. On this group of nineteenth-century rugs, the purported cypress-tree-and-saz-leaf design had deteriorated by the final quarter of the century, as was demonstrated by an example dated 1878.

Mike next illustrated several medallion rugs whose borders featured birds with prominent, comb-like tails (7); he interpreted these as peacocks. One example of such a rug, from the Burns collection, was dated 1809. Mike traced the source of these pile-rug peacocks to nomadic weavings, in particular the type of sumak storage bags known as mafrash (8). He noted that nomads and villagers, who relied on the same dyers, perhaps intermingled where the dyeing process took place, leading to the peacock design passing from the nomads’ flatwoven articles to village pile rugs.



5. Cypress-patterned rug, Karabagh, 18th century, Philadelphia Museum of Art 43-40-74



6. Karabagh long rug, dated 1837, speaker's collection



7. Karabagh rug with peacock border, 19th century, Rippon Boswell, Dec. 4, 2010, lot 96



8. Sumak mafrash panel with peacocks (detail), Karabagh, 19th century, speaker's collection

For his final design-source consideration, Mike turned to the familiar Lesghi star **(9)**. He noted several earlier theories of the motif's origin, including its possible invention in a nineteenth-century design studio, or its evolution from a Kufic inscription. Alternatively, he suggested, the design might have originated in kilim or zili weaving, whose structures favored stepped forms; he showed a simplified version on a flatwoven Khamseh packband. But he also made a case for the motif's derivation from Anatolian pile weaving, specifically small-pattern Holbein rugs and their variants **(10)**.

In any case, the design was widely used throughout the nineteenth century, appearing in both pile and flatwoven pieces from the Transcaucasus and other nearby areas.

Given the popularity of Transcaucasian rugs among collectors, the show-and-tell portion of the program drew approximately fifteen examples, a subset of which are highlighted here. Mike opened the segment by displaying "in the wool" the Zeikhur palmette rug with which he'd started his presentation.

An ivory-field prayer rug **(11)** had a well-spaced array of colorful botehs (although synthetic dyes were detected among the colorants). Another rug featured an Afshan design on a blue field **(12)**; Mike commented without further elaboration that the design came from Ottoman sources.

A large sumak rug had "Crivelli" stars in the field and



9. Shirvan rug with field design of Lesghi stars, 19th century, speaker's collection



11. Member's Shirvan prayer rug with boteh-filled ivory field



10. Small-pattern Holbein variant rug found at Divriği, 16th century (?), Vakıflar Museum No. A-305



12. Member's Afshan-pattern Kuba rug

a Zeikhur border **(13)**. A compartmented rug exhibited certain Talish characteristics **(14)**. A small Avar rug **(15)** had a design that suggested its relationship to felts.

An unusual Daghestan rug with deeply saturated colors **(16)** had formerly belonged to Rosalie and Mitch Rudnick. Then came a classic Fachralo Kazak prayer rug **(17)**.

A long, ivory-ground rug categorized as Karagashli was distinguished by its dense field patterning and intricate trefoil

main border **(18)**. Finally, a Kuba long rug with an Alban field pattern had a main border more often associated with Zeikhur rugs **(19)**.

Our great thanks to Mike for persevering through many rescheduled meeting dates; for at long last sharing with fellow NERS members his thoughts on design origins; and for picking a topic that attracted so many rugs for a lively and enjoyable show-and-tell.



More Caucasian rugs brought by members to the show-and-tell following Mike's talk:

- 13. Sumak with "Crivelli" medallions**
- 14. Compartment rug, possibly Talish**
- 15. Avar rug**
- 16. Daghestan medallion rug**
- 17. Fachralo Kazak prayer rug**
- 18. Karagashli long rug**
- 19. Alban/Zeikhur long rug**

December 10 Webinar Review: DeWitt Mallary, “The Intrigue of Baluch Rugs”

By Jim Adelson



DeWitt Mallary

On December 10, in a webinar hosted by The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum and co-sponsored by the New England Rug Society and Textile Museum Associates of Southern California, DeWitt Mallary presented

“The Intrigue of Baluch Rugs.” The Textile Museum makes its Rug and Textile Appreciation Morning webinars available to all, and anyone interested in viewing or re-viewing DeWitt’s presentation can access it at <https://vimeo.com/780868374>. What follows is therefore a much-condensed summary of his talk.

When, decades ago, he began to study Baluch rugs, DeWitt noted that the “iconic Baluch” was a camel-ground prayer rug. Now the concept has widened: DeWitt explained that he would be talking about the diverse geographical origins, tribal attributions, and dating of the various weavings known as Baluch, and would illustrate outstanding examples of Baluch rugs, bags, and balishts (cushion covers). “Baluch,” he explained, is not an ethnic or tribal label; it is the designation for a varied group of tribal and village weavings from “Greater Khorasan,” a large area in eastern Iran and western Afghanistan.

In defining Baluch rugs, DeWitt discovered that various past authorities had stressed different aspects of them. For example, Murray Eiland (1981) described them as having “somber color tonalities,” while David Black (1985) called their coloration “rich and somber,” but emphasized the extraordinary quality of their wool.

Although the widespread production and design variety of Baluch rugs complicate their localization, DeWitt could say that they were not woven in Baluchistan, an area south of Greater Khorasan, and not woven by ethnic Baluch peoples. He listed fourteen tribal groups that have come to be associated with Baluch weaving, while cautioning that attributions to specific tribes are often highly speculative, especially given that the towns where the rugs came to market were not necessarily the places where they were woven.

DeWitt then gave his own brief summary of what makes the best Baluch rugs intriguing to him: their beautiful, glowing colors and splendid materials; their variety of designs, whether refined or funky; and the individual creativity with which the weavers executed these designs.

Next he grouped Baluch rugs according to region, beginning with examples from northern Khorasan, particularly those marketed in Torbat-e Haidari and Mashhad. He noted their asymmetric, open-left knotting, the intensity of their colors, their selective and emphatic use of white, and the curvilinearity of their floral forms (1). The older rugs in the group exhibit a somewhat broader color range; by the end of the nineteenth century, the palette is more limited. The rugs, particularly the older examples, have a soft and supple handle, even when they are woven with deeply depressed warps. While the designs of some of these northern pieces clearly reflect their origin in Persian city weaving, others have more rustic drawing, while maintaining the same standards of outstanding wool and color. In addition to rugs, many beautiful bags (2) originate from the area.

1. Baluch rug, Torbat-i Haidari area, Khorasan, 3rd quarter 19th century, private collection



2. Baluch bagface, northern Khorasan, 2nd half 19th century, Indianapolis Museum of Art 1996.53, Colonel Jeff W. Boucher Collection



Another main group of rugs known as Arab Baluch come from Ferdows, Qain, and Birjand, in southern Khorasan. Generally these rugs have asymmetric knots open to the right, and feature several favored field designs and a typical arrangement of two blue outer borders flanking a red inner one (3). Some incorporate Turkmen-style guls (4), often but not always in multiples arranged in columns. Others, generally associated with the town of Ferdows, adopt the Herati pattern (5).

Rugs woven in the Qainat or Ghurian areas of southern Khorasan and assigned to the Bahluli tribal group are distinguished by symmetrical knotting, an enlarged range of colors, multi-cord goat-hair selvages, brown-red grounds, camel highlights, and plain-weave ends with bands of color (6).

A varied group of Baluch rugs are associated with northwestern Afghanistan, rather than Iran. These include main carpets, so-called Dokhtor i-Ghazi prayer rugs (7), and bags, some of which feature a colorful cast of birds (8).



3 (left). Arab Baluch rug, Ferdows province, Iran, 2nd half 19th century, private collection

4 (center). Arab Baluch rug with Turkmen-style guls, Ferdows province, 2nd half 19th century, private collection

5 (right). Herati-design Arab Baluch rug, Ferdows area, 2nd half 19th century, private collection



6. Bahluli Baluch rug, Qainat or Gurian area, 2nd half 19th century, private collection



7. "Dokhtor-i Ghazi" prayer rug, Herat region, 2nd half 19th century, private collection



8. Baluch bag, Afghanistan, 2nd half 19th century, private collection (formerly Mark Hopkins Collection)



9. Baluch long rug, Sistan, 3rd quarter 19th century, private collection (formerly J. P. J. Homer Collection)

From the Sistan region, farther south in Afghanistan, come imposing rugs with asymmetric, open-left knotting, long and narrow proportions, concentric-diamond designs, and prominent use of green (9). Many balishts (10) and bags (11) with related attributes were also produced in this area.

In summary, DeWitt concluded that Baluch rugs are “an extremely diverse and entertaining group,” and that the best examples hold their own with great rugs of any type.

In the Q&A following DeWitt’s presentation, the many audience questions were fielded by NERS representative Jean Hoffman. These queries—about wool quality, structural features, dyes, and the uses of smaller pile weavings such as balishts—are all accessible in the recording, along with DeWitt’s informative answers. A last questioner wanted



10. Baluch balisht, Sistan, 2nd half 19th century, private collection



11. Baluch bagface, Sistan 2nd half 19th century, private collection (formerly Arthur D. Jenkins Collection)

to know if interesting Baluch pieces are still available to collectors and novices. “Absolutely!” DeWitt responded, noting how Baluch rugs have been made in “a bunch of different places,” and are still to be had in “a bunch of different flavors.”

Our hearty thanks to DeWitt for so clearly laying out the appealing aspects of these weavings, and for illustrating their characteristics with such excellent examples. After hearing him, many webinar attendees are doubtless more knowledgeable about—and more intrigued with—Baluch rugs.

January 14 Webinar Review: Ali Riza Tuna, “New Perspectives on Anatolian Kilims”

By Jim Adelson



Ali Riza Tuna

On January 14, in a webinar hosted by Textile Museum Associates of Southern California (TMA/SC) and co-sponsored by NERS, Ali Riza Tuna presented “Myth to Art: New Perspectives on Anatolian Kilims.” Cheri Hunter, of

TMA/SC, welcomed viewers, noting that the program had more than a thousand registrants, from fifty-three countries.

At the outset of his presentation Ali said that he would approach Anatolian kilims from an art-historical perspective, but he began with an explanation of Anatolian kilim structure: the slit-tapestry technique, in which colored wefts completely cover the warps to create the designs, and wefts of one color turn back rather than dovetailing or interlocking with wefts of a different color (1).

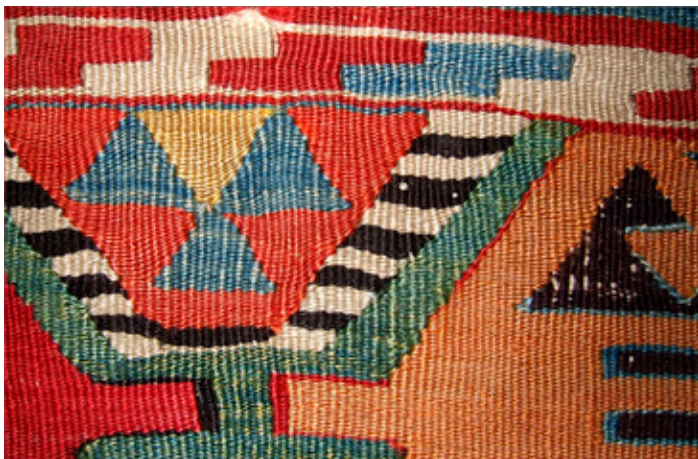
While kilims have been woven for a very long time, Ali continued, kilim collecting and scholarship have blossomed only over the last thirty or forty years. Tracing Anatolian kilims’ aesthetic and historical development has been difficult, since, unlike pile carpets, they do not appear in Western paintings and are largely undocumented in historical or trade registries. They don’t seem to have been woven in workshops. The culture of the nomads and peasants who made them has been lost due to economic and social change; information gained from the descendants of the makers of old kilims, whether about the meaning of motifs or the kilims’ intended use, is scarce.

Initial studies of Anatolian kilims, such as Yanni Petsopoulos’s *Kilims* (1979), organized these textiles by the regions and towns where they were sold. The fieldwork of subsequent researchers, including Udo Hirsch, Belkis Balpinar, Josephine Powell, and Harald Böhmer, enabled kilims’ classification by their weaving communities. But there lingered questions about the “language” of kilims’ abstract motifs, prompting theories based on testimonials of the latest generation of kilim weavers, or on comparison with other media.

These prior studies have left Ali with yet more questions, among which are: What makes a kilim design so recognizable? What are the keys to the “communication” that happens between us and the kilims, despite our ignorance of their symbolic language? What is it about them that makes us project our own myths onto their forms? To address these questions, Ali suggested, different disciplines are needed, including ethnography, archaeology, mythology, art history, and the anthropology of images. He considers his 2022 book, *From Myth to Art: Anatolian Kilims*, an introduction to this multidisciplinary approach.

One preexisting perception of kilims is that they are essentially “decorated utilitarian weavings.” Ali proposed turning this view around—thinking of kilims’ imagery as paramount, and their textile medium simply as what integrates that imagery into the life and culture of a community.

Different cultures develop and utilize different styles for their images. Kilims use a distinct, abstract style, in contrast to media from other cultures (including textiles such as European tapestries), which reflect a more descriptive or representational style (2).



1. Slit-tapestry technique: detail of a kilim, eastern Central Anatolia, 17th–18th century (shown in full in *Myth to Art*, plate 37) Photo © Ali Riza Tuna, 2023



2. Descriptive style: detail of *Sight*, one of the famed “Unicorn” tapestries, Flanders, ca. 1500, Musée de Cluny, Paris, Cl.10831–10836



3, 4. Details of a Cappadocian kilim (left) and an eastern Central Anatolian kilim (right), illustrating mutual forms (For whole kilims, see *Myth to Art*, plates 7 and 37) Photos © Ali Riza Tuna, 2023



5. Detail of a grain-bag face, Western Anatolia, Kilaz tribe (see *Myth to Art*, plate 76) Photo © Ali Riza Tuna, 2023

A fundamental component of the “kilim style,” Ali continued, is “mutuality of forms,” with reciprocity between the positive and negative parts of a kilim motif, so that every shape is dependent on its neighbor **(3, 4)**. Elaborating on this concept, Ali encouraged us not to think of mutual forms as separate, adjacent motifs, in what he called an “exclusive” reading, but rather to consider them together as a combined whole, in an “associative” reading. He illustrated this associative approach with a detail of a brocaded grain bag made by Anatolian kilim weavers: if its blue areas are read as positive or “salient” forms, rather than as background, they lend themselves to zoomorphic interpretation—perhaps as dragons, which can be seen in association with adjacent white phoenixes **(5)**.



6. Front cover of a 2018 issue of *The Economist*, by artist Noma Bar

For many kilims, however, we lack the cultural knowledge to interpret the symbolic and highly abstracted images. As a clever example of “associative reading,” Ali showed an image excerpted from a 2018 cover of *The Economist*. It could be read as depicting elements of male business dress—suit, collared shirt, and tie—and alternatively as showing a woman’s silhouetted torso and extended arms. In a contrasting color, a hand intrudes into her profiled form, below her waistline. United with the cover’s disambiguating caption, “Sex and Power: #Me Too, One Year On,” both readings merge and take on specific meaning **(6)**. But an Amazonian tribesman, say, lacking the cultural knowledge of Western corporate clothing and recent social movements, would not similarly be able to discern this specific, context-dependent meaning.

Ali then turned to the second major feature of “kilim style”—the color field. His examples included a kilim with a single color constituting its field **(7)**, another with a lone motif within the plain-colored area **(8)**, and a third with repeated motifs therein. In every case, Ali maintained, the color field is no mere background, but an active part of the whole design—an essence in its own right, which he likened to the seawater surrounding a fish. And even the plainest of colored fields likely has its own mutual or reciprocal relationship with the borders that surround it.



7 (left). Eastern Anatolian kilim, Sivas area (see *Myth to Art*, plate 26)

8 (below left). Western Anatolian kilim, Yacğıbedir tribe (see *Myth to Art*, plate 21)

9 (below right). Center detail of an eastern Central Anatolian kilim (see *Myth to Art*, plate 37)

Photos © Ali Riza Tuna, 2023



Having explored the components of “kilim style,” Ali returned to a question of technique: why Anatolian weavers focused exclusively on slit-tapestry weave. Very rare exceptions show that they were familiar with interlocking or dovetailing techniques; why then didn’t they use them? Over time, he explained, technique and style influence each other. Slit-tapestry technique is restrictive, avoiding long vertical lines and favoring angled forms over curvilinear ones; it inclines weavers of successive generations to remain within, and perpetuate, the “kilim style”—a unique iconographic

tradition separate from the “descriptive” style of Byzantine, Greek, Coptic, or Renaissance European (2) tapestry traditions.

Turning from considerations of technique and style, Ali pointed out the effect of Anatolian kilims on observers of any cultural background: their ability to convey an impression of life. He maintained that, like certain Renaissance paintings in which depicted human bodies, faces, and limbs communicate life, certain trunk-, head-, or limb-like forms in kilim motifs, in active engagement with their surroundings, establish an expressive, gestural communication with their onlookers (9).

In conclusion, Ali summarized his presentation as follows: "Within the scope of this lecture we have developed the analysis part of the kilims' imagery. We have seen that the kilims' images represent a unique iconographic tradition different from other image representations. The images within the genuine kilim tradition have their own semantics in meaning creation. We have elaborated that this meaning takes shape within the cultural context of the weaver and also of the observer, these two sometimes being independent and asynchronous from each other in time and even in space. We have progressed in understanding the mechanism of this meaning creation through the concept of 'associative reading' . . . Organizing the image space in complementary forms, where any change in one individual motif impacts the other neighboring forms, reflects a very special mentality and vision of the world."

A lengthy and rapid-fire Q&A session, overseen by Jean Hoffman, followed; selected portions are recapped here, with Ali's answer directly following each question.

What material was used in Anatolian kilims? Primarily wool, but some cotton. Were the beautiful dyes all natural, and were they from local dyestuffs? Yes, natural, with dyeing either done by the weavers or by professional dye masters in the villages. Regionality of available dyestuffs led to some colors being associated with certain areas.

Were all of your subject kilims from Anatolia proper? Were such kilims produced in other areas in the Ottoman empire? Kilims made in areas other than Anatolia are similar in their slit-tapestry techniques and some of their motifs. But kilims from the European portions of the Ottoman empire, and from the neighboring Caucasus and Iran to the east, are different in their imagery and fundamental spirit.

How do Caucasian kilims and Anatolian kilims differ? That's a subject broad enough for its own webinar, especially since there is considerable variety among Caucasian kilims themselves. Contrast, for example, Avar kilims, with their dragon-like forms, and striped Gendje kilims. But in general, Anatolian kilims show a greater diversity of motifs, and their weavers seem to have had more freedom of execution. This observation must be qualified, however, because the Caucasus, unlike Anatolia, did not have a long tradition of preserving old kilims.

How was the transition named in your book title, "From Myth to Art," brought about? What is art? "Art" is a relatively recent construct. In craft, an item is made primarily for functionality; the transition from craft to art occurs when the object that's made reflects significant expressivity, whether of a culture, of that culture's myths, or of its maker personally.



10. Western Anatolian kilim, Yüncü tribe (see *Myth to Art*, plate 34) Photo © Ali Riza Tuna, 2023

How do Anatolian kilims relate to abstract expressionism? Independent and asynchronous, these arts were "two parallel currents which never met." But there are striking formal resemblances, and some abstract expressionist painters sought "mythical content" in their works.

Can you discuss, for instance, the meaning of the (Yüncü) kilim behind you? The Yüncü were a tribe in western Anatolia who, although apparently Muslim, kept their shamanistic beliefs. They are known for kilims with a red and blue (and occasionally green) palette. This eighteenth-century (or earlier) example (10) features two rectangles enclosing a tree-of-life motif, images perhaps suggesting the old Anatolian myth of the earth, the sky, and the central pole or tree connecting them.

Do you, Ali, have a favorite kilim? Kilims are like books, each one a new experience that brings about a new idea of oneself in response. I can't pick a favorite, but what's most important in my response to any kilim, even more than design, is color—the quality and harmony of the colors.

Our thanks to Ali for introducing and explaining aspects of his new approach to Anatolian kilims. This review is just a summary of his presentation; for his full perspective, illustrated with many more gorgeous examples, we recommend his book.

Upcoming Rug and Textile Events

Auctions

- Mar. 1, Boston, Bonhams Skinner
Rare Textiles (live and online)
- Mar. 18, Vienna, Austria Auction Company
Fine Antique Oriental Rugs XXXII
- Mar. 18, Weisbaden, Rippon Boswell & Co.
Online Auction
- Mar. 19–29, Marlborough, Bonhams Skinner
Art Underfoot: Rugs and Carpets (online only)
- Apr. 19, Philadelphia, Material Culture
Oriental Rugs from American Estates 58
- Apr. 27, Boston, Bonhams Skinner
Jim Dixon: Woven Gardens (live and online)
- June 3, Wiesbaden, Rippon Boswell & Co.
Major Spring Auction

Exhibitions

- Until May 28, Denver Art Museum
Rugged Beauty: Antique Carpets from Western Asia
- Until July 1, Washington, D.C., The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum
Prayer and Transcendence
- Mar. 9–May 29, Seattle Art Museum
Ikat: A World of Compelling Cloth

Symposia and Conferences

- March 21–22, Washington, D.C., The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum
Prayer Carpets Colloquium (online), with keynote address by Walter Denny. For program and registration go to <https://museum.gwu.edu/exhibition-program-prayer-carpets-colloquium>.
- March 25, Denver Art Museum symposium *From Workshop to Nomad: New Thinking about Rug Weaving Categories and Design Influences*, with talks including Mike Tschbull, "The Sources and Evolution of Field Designs in 19th Century Transcaucasian Village Pile Rugs." For program and tickets go to <https://www.denverartmuseum.org/en/calendar/2023-avenir-institute-symposium>.
- May 2–4, Buellton, Cal., Santa Ynez Valley Marriott Hotel
Fifth Annual Carpet and Textile Forum (formerly *Rug Collectors' Weekend*). For registration and hotel information, email bmendenhall@cox.net.

Next in View (June Issue)

- Preview: August 13 Picnic, Moth Mart, and Show-and-Tell
- Webinar Review: Gunnar Nilsson, "Swedish Textiles from Skåne, 1680–1850"
- Webinar Review: Gerard Paquin, "Crosscurrent Influences in Turkish Rugs and Textiles"
- Meeting Review: Prayer Rug Show-and-Tell, introduced by Jeff Spurr
- Meeting Review: Yon Bard and Jim Adelson, "Turkmen Secondary Guls"
- Auction action: notable textiles and rugs

... and more

Photo Credits

- p. 1:** Gerard Paquin (left), Harvard Art Museums (center), Material Culture (right)
- p. 2:** Textile Museum (top), NERS website: Galleries
- p. 3:** NERS website: Galleries (top left), Julia Bailey (bottom left), Yon Bard (top right), Jim Adelson (bottom right)
- p. 4–7:** Mike Tschbull (figs. 1, 3–9), Jim Sampson (fig. 2), Balpinar and Hirsch, *Carpets of the Vakıflar Museum Istanbul*, pl. 3 (fig. 10), Julia Bailey (figs. 11–19)
- pp. 8–10:** Zoom (inset), DeWitt Mallary (figs. 1–11)
- pp. 11–14:** Zoom (inset), *The Economist* (fig. 8), all other images ©Ali Riza Tuna, 2023
- pp. 16–17:** Grogan & Company (p. 16), Tremont Auctions (p. 17)

Auction Action: Rugs and Textiles at Grogan & Company and Tremont Auctions

By Julia Bailey

Grogan & Company held a highly successful rug-and-textile sale on January 29. The major portion of Grogan's 279 offerings (91% of which sold) came from coastal collectors:

the late Southern California dealer George Gilmore, the well-known Seattle-based Jim Burns, and Bostonians Jeremy and Hanne Grantham as well as the late Chris Hunt.



From Grogan & Company:

1. Lot 20, Silk-ground suzani, catalogued as Shakhrisabz, ex-Grantham Collection, \$60,000

2. Lot 6, Tree Kazak with wear, ex-Hunt Collection, \$19,000

3. Lot 9, "Senna-Serapi" rug, wool and silk pile on silk foundation, ex-Hunt Collection, \$28,000

4. Lot 56A, Arabatchi torba, source not listed, \$15,000

5. Lot 109, Caucasian sumak/verneh horse cover, ex-Burns Collection, \$5,000

6. Lot 57, Fragmentary Kyrgyz rug, ex-Gilmore Collection, \$8,000

Offering a second chance to those of us who were resoundingly outbid at the Grogan sale, 170 more items—many from George Gilmore's estate and some from Chris Hunt's—came up for auction the very next day at the Sudbury (Mass.) firm Tremont Auctions, hosting its first rugs-only sale.

A few of the collectible lots that fetched the most in each sale, or that were especially favored by my fellow auction previewers, are shown here (with hammer prices). For the complete listings, see <https://www.groganco.com/auctions/past-auctions/> and <https://www.tremontauctions.com/>



From Tremont Auctions:

7. Lot 57, Memling-gul Yomud torba, from “a New Jersey couple,” \$4,200

8. Lot 33, sumak bag, Caucasus, ex-Gilmore Collection, \$3,600

9. Lot 4, worn Caucasian rug, catalogued as Kazak, dated 1211 (1800), ex-Gilmore Collection, \$3,800

10a, b, Lot 102, colorful small Afshar two-panel bag (both pile faces shown), inscribed “Blessings” and “O Ali,” ex-Gilmore Collection, \$3,600

11. Lot 110, Fragment of a Caucasian prayer rug, catalogued as Kazak, ex-Hunt Collection, \$1,300 (for an intact example from the Markarian Collection, dated 1273 [1836–37], see, e.g., Denny and Walker, *The Markarian Album*, cat. 39)

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The New England Rug Society is an informal, nonprofit organization of people interested in enriching their knowledge and appreciation of antique oriental rugs and textiles. Our webinars and meetings are held seven or more times a year. Membership levels and annual dues are: Patron \$170, Supporting \$110, Couple \$80, Single \$60, Student \$30.

For more information and forms for joining NERS or renewing your membership, go to <https://ne-rugsociety.org/membership/>

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