



# View from the Fringe

Newsletter of the New England Rug Society



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## February 10 Webinar Preview: Margaret Squires Tracks a Once-Huge Palace Carpet



**Margaret Squires**



**Chehel Sotun Palace, Isfahan**



**Joined border fragments of the carpet, Philadelphia Art Museum 1955-65-34**

On Saturday, February 10, Margaret Squires will present “Piece by Piece It Disappeared: Reconstructing the Chehel Sotun Carpet,” a webinar hosted by NERS and co-sponsored by The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum.

The focus of Margaret’s presentation is a massive seventeenth-century carpet woven in the Deccan, India, for the Chehel Sotun palace in Isfahan, Iran. Originally measuring a staggering 9 x 18 meters, this carpet pushed the technical boundaries of the medium to seamlessly cover the entire floor of the palace’s audience hall. In the late nineteenth century, the carpet was cut up and sold piece by piece from the palace, and the fragments are now distributed across at least eleven collections around the world. Based on archival evidence, historical descriptions, and physical examination of the extant carpet fragments, Margaret will trace the carpet’s history and digitally reconstruct it. Ultimately, its unique construction speaks to the transformative effects of such bespoke commissions-for-architecture on ways of making and thinking about carpets in the Safavid period.

Margaret is an advanced Ph.D. candidate at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, where she is supervised by Professor Sussan Babaie and by Professor Walter B. Denny, of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Her dissertation focuses on the relationship between carpet design and architecture in the Safavid period (1502–1722). Prior to starting her Ph.D., she was Curatorial Assistant for Art of the Islamic Worlds at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

### Webinar Details

**Hosted by the New England Rug Society, with The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum as co-sponsors**

**Date and Time:** Saturday, Feb. 10, 2024, 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/MSFringe>

# NERS Webinar History and September Presentation: Bob Bell on Afshar Pile Weaving

by Jean Hoffman



**Webinar presenter Bob Bell**

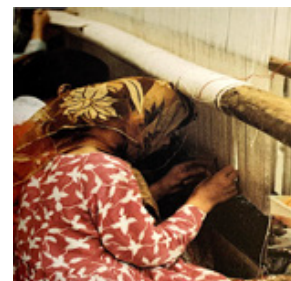
On September 23, 2023, Julia Bailey and I inaugurated our fourth season of webinars for the New England Rug Society with “The Afshar, Masters of Color,” presented by Bob Bell from his home in the Cotswolds, England.

Back in September 2020, our first webinar was an experiment driven by the pandemic. We hoped webinars would work as a stopgap to keep rug discussions and sharing alive during a puzzling aberration named Covid-19. Fortunately, our first speaker was University of Massachusetts Professor Walter Denny, who, having already switched to teaching his art-history classes via Zoom, seamlessly translated his renowned depth of knowledge, lecture style, warmth, and humor to a medium then new for rug lovers. Walter’s NERS webinar of three years ago attracted 138 attendees, drawn from the New England Rug Society’s membership and my personal outreach.

Evidence that webinars satisfied people’s hunger to connect over their shared love of antique rugs came when my first twenty-five direct-outreach emails brought over a hundred responses, including ones from Egypt, Iran, Russia, and Peru—countries in which I at the time had no contacts.

Subsequent webinars, with different topics and further outreach efforts, garnered new viewers. *HALI*’s newsletter brought in over 150 new audience members that first year. Stephano Ionescu’s “Tracing the Ottoman Rugs in Transylvania” attracted our first registrants from Romania; Jim Ford’s “Early Persian Medallion Carpets” enticed people from Iran; Alan Rothblatt’s “Rare Turkmen Asmalyks” was popular in Germany, home of many serious Turkmen collectors. “Swedish Textiles,” with Gunnar Nilsson, drew new folks from across Scandinavia. Viewers have joined us from Tatarstan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, China, Nepal, India, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Panama, and Turkey (of course)—over seventy countries. Over three seasons, 3,400 audience members have watched NERS webinars. “The Afshar: Masters of Color,” attracted 396 people from thirty-nine countries, including our first registrant from Angola, and a typically strong showing from the U.S., U.K., Canada, and Italy.

Bob Bell opened his presentation by describing himself as an expert in how to love and appreciate rugs. Bob’s forty years of collecting and research have focused on tribal weavings, among which he discovered those of the Afshar.



**1, 2. Afshar village; Afshar weavers on an upright loom**



**3. Detail of a Kirman rug depicting an enthroned Nadir Shah, Hadi Maktabi Collection**

He first addressed the geographical context of the Afshar people—a Turkic population descended from the Oguz tribes who migrated from Central Asia between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries—the majority of whom settled in what is now Iran.

Describing the Afshar as semi-nomadic, Bob explained that we know little about the group before the nineteenth century, by which time many were settled in villages of mud huts (1), where they wove at home using vertical looms (2).

He noted the most famous Afshar, Nadir Shah, a warrior known for conquest, who extended the lands of Persia during his 1736–47 reign as shah (3).

**4. Afshar masnad with splendid colors and intact, complex end finishes, photo courtesy of Hakan Aydın**



**6. Front and back detail of fig. 4, showing red wool wefts and multicolor wool-overcast selvage**

**7 (below). Boteh-patterned Afshar rug, the detail showing a wide range of colors used even in the smallest motifs, private collection, U.S.**

**5. Afshar rug with cypress trees, Robert & Patricia Bell Collection**



Next, he introduced Afshar weavings, in the form of a masnad (individual seating rug), made to be rolled out for the reception of important guests. This masnad demonstrated features that Bob considers central: the masterful use of color, excellent weaving quality, and the use of diverse techniques in end finishes (4).

He then shared an image of his family with an elegant Afshar rug hanging behind them; some forty-one years ago Bob had left a dinner given by legendary dealer Raymond Bernardout with that Afshar under his arm, and it now graces his daughter's home in Canada.

Most Afshar weavings, Bob continued, are small and squarish in format: masnads tend to measure 3' x 4' and most other Afshar rugs around 4' x 5'–6'. One of his favorites was a cypress-tree rug with brilliant colors (5).

Structural features of Afshar pile weavings (6), he noted, include red wefts and an earthy brick red in the pile, multicolored selvage overcasting, and brocaded kilim end finishes sometimes more colorful than the pile itself.

The date of most weavings ranges from the mid-nineteenth century to the first quarter of the twentieth. It is rare to find examples made before 1850, and Bob said he was eager to see any known ones.

As his webinar title implied, a distinguishing feature of Afshar weavings is their color. A close-up view of a dark-ground, boteh-patterned rug, for instance, revealed a plethora of warm, bright colors (7).

While similarities exist between Afshar and Baluch rugs, their makers are not ethnically related, although their territories in some cases overlapped.

Bob went on to discuss what he called “classic Afshars”: one “older than most” masnad, for example, with characteristic multicolored selvage overcasting and chevron-pattern kilim ends utilizing weft substitution, hadva classical Persian design comprising a central medallion with flower-in-vase pendants and quarter-medallion corners (8). Yet it was clearly a tribal or semi-nomadic piece, as evidenced by the flock of sheep and goats depicted in its field.

Bob showed other iconic floral or cypress-tree designs originating in Kirman Province. Even the Moshe Tabibnia Gallery, in Milan, which specializes in pre-eighteenth-century carpets, surprised Bob by exhibiting a late nineteenth-century Afshar and describing it as “classical” in design.

Bob wrapped up his presentation with a tour through various types of Afshar weavings. Underscoring the

importance of the horse in Afshar semi-nomadism—and harking back to the frequent depictions of Nadir Shah on horseback—were several examples of saddle covers, as well as bags and bagfaces. These often featured boteh designs, but two had what Bob termed mythical motifs, possibly representing paired dragons and phoenixes (9), and a third had both human figures and bizarre “from outer space”-looking forms (10). Bob also tantalized his viewers with design links between Afshar weavings and those of the Turkmen, with whom the Afshar share Oguz Turkic origins.

Bob summed up his presentation with the image of a bagface (11) that to him embodies “signature” Afshar color, beauty, and variety of design and technique—a weaving that declares “I am Afshar.”

We are lucky to have had Bob Bell share his passion and knowledge with us.



8. “Classic” medallion-design Afshar rug, Jean Hoffman Collection

9. Afshar bag with “mythical” motifs possibly representing dragon and phoenix, current whereabouts unknown

10. Bagface with human figures and odd creatures (or flora?), Jean Hoffman Collection

11. “Signature” Afshar bagface, current whereabouts unknown

# October 7 Webinar Report: Amanda Phillips on Ottoman Textile History

By Julia Bailey



On October 7, as part of the webinar series Rug and Textile Appreciation Mornings (RTAM), The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum hosted

scholar Amanda Phillips, presenting “Sea Change: Ottoman Textiles 1400–1800,” based on her 2021 book of the same title. NERS and the Hajji Baba Club were webinar co-hosts. Since a video of the program is available to all (see <https://vimeo.com/channels/1643456>), this report is brief, touching on only a few of Amanda’s observations and examples.

In the Ottoman Empire, Amanda pointed out, the textile trade generated immense revenues and touched every level of society. Its enduring success, she maintained, resulted from Ottoman openness to expertise and objects from far-flung locations—exemplified, for instance, by a royal Ottoman child’s kaftan made of tie-dyed silk imported from India **(1)**.

It was not only textiles that traveled, but also the technologies and human expertise used to make them. An impressively massive, drawloom-woven, silk and metal-foil hanging known as the Olivera Silk **(2)** now resides in Studenica Monastery, having arrived in Serbia around 1410.

In addition to its bands of floral and geometric ornament, this textile has two types of epigraphic bands **(2a)**, one expressing generic praise but the other—inelegantly compacted and arguably a hasty addition—specifically naming Ottoman Sultan Bayezid (i.e., Bayezid I, r. 1389–1402). Possibly woven in Bursa, the Olivera Silk in all its complexity of production would have required the involvement of a host of laborers and artisans from throughout and beyond the Ottoman Empire. And, as a luxury object, it in turn left its presumed place of origin for a foreign home—its migration to Serbia perhaps having to do with Bayezid’s marriage, in 1390, to Serbian princess Olivera Despina.

Ottoman textiles, Amanda pointed out, also had afterlives, due to their ability to transform. For example, an Ottoman silk lampas with monumental Qur’anic inscriptions in striking zigzag bands **(3)** was created as a temporary wall covering of a Meccan or Medinan shrine. Having served this honored purpose, it was subsequently removed and cut up, part of it being refashioned into a coat **(4)** that would have borne witness to the personal piety of its wearer.

As a co-sponsor of this webinar, NERS thanks Amanda for sharing her broad knowledge of Ottoman textiles—technical, social, economic, and art-historical—with a new audience.



**1. Ottoman child's kaftan, resist-dyed Indian silk, date unknown, Topkapı Palace Museum 13/807**



**2. Olivera Silk, lampas, possibly Bursa, 1389–1402, Treasury of the Studenica Monastery 12 2a (inset). Olivera Silk, details of differing inscription bands**



**3. Detail of an Ottoman epigraphic textile, 1600s, silk lampas, made for Mecca or Medina, and 4. coat fashioned from part of the textile, both Topkapı Palace Museum 13.658**

# October 21 Webinar Report: Sheila Fruman on a Generation of Textile Travelers

By Julia Bailey



## Sheila Fruman, and the cover of her new book

Hosted by Textile Museum Associates of Southern California (TMA/SC) and co-sponsored by NERS, webinar presenter Sheila Fruman introduced a large audience to a selection of adventurous young American and European travelers who, during their Eastern travels in the 1970s, serendipitously developed lasting, varied, and influential involvements with rugs and textiles. Sheila's October 21 talk was based on her new book, titled *Pull of the Thread: Textile Travels of a Generation*, from Hali Publications.

The first of Sheila's nine subjects was London-born **Pip Rau (1)**. Living in Jerusalem with her husband and family in the 1960s, she began buying Palestinian dresses. Back in London in 1971, she opened a shop—Rau—and filled it with more of them, as well as textiles, jewelry, carpets, and other decorative artifacts that she found in Istanbul. Starting in 1976, she added yearly trips to Kabul, where she developed a network to locate the Uzbek ikat textiles for which she is best known, due to her 1998 catalogue, *Ikats: Woven Silks from Central Asia, the Rau Collection*, and an exhibition of her pieces at the Victoria & Albert Museum in 2007–8.



1. Pip Rau among her ikats

**Frank Ames (2)** is the author of three books on Kashmir shawls. The son of travel- and antiques-loving parents, he grew up in New York. Having trained and first worked as an engineer, he joined his father's used-car sales business and hung out in the Greenwich Village music scene before heading to Europe. In Paris he bought up jacquard-woven shawls from flea markets and then began hunting them down in Scotland. After amassing 200, he successfully auctioned them off and, in 1979, headed to India in search of the handmade originals, even visiting weavers in Kashmir to observe the technique used in making them.

In Jaipur in 1975, Londoner **Joss Graham (3)** met the founders of the clothing company Anokhi, who had just acquired a huge collection of embroidered textiles from Hindu refugees of Pakistan. Since other London shops supplied by Anokhi didn't seem to want them, would Joss handle their sale? In sudden possession of about 1500 pieces, he decided instead to study them, and flew to Karachi to further his education. By 1980 he had opened a shop and become a prominent dealer, supplying collectors and museums with South Asian textiles.



2. Frank Ames among shawls and a suzani



3. Joss Graham in his London shop

From London, American **Andy Hale (4)** hitched a Volkswagen-bus ride to Kabul, where his initial search for carpets turned to pursuit of Lakai and Kungrat embroideries. By 1975, he was a Kabul resident; his friend **Kate Fitzgibbon (5)**, who between Kabul trips worked in Berkeley as a rug restorer for Murray Eiland, would join him there. Andy roamed northern Afghanistan ferreting out carpets and textiles; he and Kate also commissioned new carpets from Turkmen weavers. The 1978 leftist coup and subsequent Soviet occupation ended Andy's Kabul residency; his buying trips henceforth were to Peshawar, Pakistan, where many Afghan dealers had resettled. In the 1980s, through their lectures, Andy and Kate gained recognition as experts in Central Asian textiles. Noting this, academic and philanthropist Guido Goldman, who had assembled a large and spectacular collection of Uzbek ikats, hired the pair to research and catalogue them in what became the ambitious and deluxe volume *Ikats: Silks of Central Asia*. [Ed.: The first exhibition of the Goldman ikat collection was held at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, from May through August, 1997. The show subsequently traveled to other U.S. venues nationwide.]

Raised in the Philadelphia area, **Elizabeth Hewitt (6)** had become a textile dealer in Istanbul when, in 2001, she encountered newly produced Uzbek ikats, tracked down the importers, and flew off to Tashkent to meet the makers. Shown Elizabeth's samples, fashion designer Oscar de la Renta used them in his current line and ordered much more ikat yardage for future seasons. For Elizabeth, impediments ensued: feuding among the ikat makers, variations in the quality of their output, and, due to dictator Kerimov's export ban, the need to smuggle the fabrics out of Uzbekistan. But for years thereafter, de la Renta's runways featured dramatic ikat-based couture (**6a**). In addition to Elizabeth's Istanbul shop, she co-owns Tamam, formerly in New York's East Village but now online only.

**Susan Gomersall (7)**, in turn, owns Kea Carpets and Kilims (**7a**), located first in Brooklyn (2001–19) and then in Hudson, N.Y. (2011–now). Back in 1973, thanks to a postgraduate art scholarship, she left her native England for Athens. With that city in political turmoil, she decamped to Lesbos; a short voyage to nearby Ayvalik, Turkey, provided her first—and enthralling—encounter with kilims. Still in Greece



**4 (above left): Andy Hale in Afghanistan**  
**5 (left): Kate Fitzgibbon with a shipment of Afghan socks**  
**6 and 6a (above right) Elizabeth Hewitt, and an ikat coat on the 2008 Oscar de la Renta runway**  
**7 and 7a (right) Susan Gomersall, and her shop, Kea Carpets and Kilims**



after her scholarship ended, she joined American friends in an overland drive through Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. For her it was the beginning of a twelve-year nomadic adventure, visiting villages and tribes and learning about various weaving traditions largely unknown to Westerners. Eventually, in 2000, Susan published *Kilim Rugs: Tribal Tales in Wool*, and she remains kilims' cultural ambassador.

In 1969, on a school break in Yugoslavia, **John Gillow** (now based in Cambridge, England) realized he much preferred traveling over his science studies. A 1974–75 trip took him and his wife **(8)** to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, and thence the length of Africa. Seeking to support his family and future travels, John found that saleable textiles could be had from India, and that lowly ragpickers could educate him in these textiles' sources and uses. His subsequent searches have extended throughout Africa and Indonesia. He loves dealing in affordable textiles and sharing his knowledge about their makers and sellers. To that end, he is the author of eight books **(8a)**.

Rather than join his family's Ohio lumber business, twenty-two-year-old **Steven Cohen (9)** chose travel. In 1971, with the proceeds from his boyhood coin collection, he bought an around-the-world ticket on Pan Am. In the Istanbul Grand Bazaar he acquired his first textiles; then,

marooned in Kabul by the war between East and West Pakistan, he learned enough Dari to negotiate the market there **(9a)**. Over the following five years in Kabul, Steven supplied various American and Canadian dealers with some three hundred Turkmen and Baluch carpets, bagfaces, and tentbands. For himself he bought humbler and less coveted embroidered bags **(9b)**. An inheritance from his grandfather in 1976 allowed him to go to graduate school; finding no textile-friendly academic programs in America, he entered the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), at the University of London, where he earned his doctorate. His subsequent research and many publications on Mughal carpets have helped establish rugs as worthy subjects of academic study.

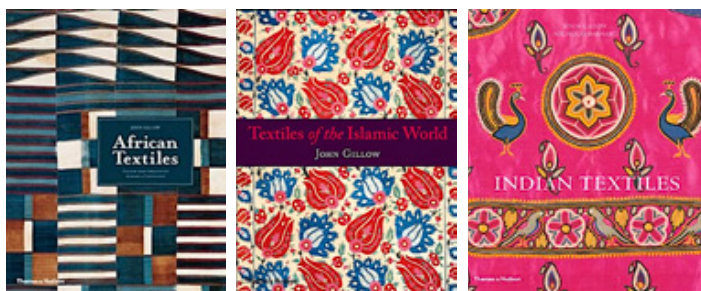
In conclusion, speaker Sheila Fruman underscored the collective role of her subject travelers, and others in their generation, in elevating the scholarly status and broad Western appreciation of textile arts—appreciation that in turn led to the revival of regional handicrafts and the preservation of textile-making techniques.

A recording of Sheila's webinar is not currently available, and this report is just a scant summary of the lively and richly illustrated account she provides in *Pull of the Thread: Textile Travels of a Generation*, which takes us on our own vicarious trip to a colorful and adventure-filled bygone era.



**8. Travelers John Gillow and his wife, 1974 or 1975**

**8a. Three of John's eight books**



**9. Steven Cohen as pictured on his International Student I.D. card**

**9a (bottom). Chicken Street, Kabul, 1970s**

**9b. Two Katawaz embroidered bags**





# President's Report: The 2023 Season

By Joel Greifinger

In last December's President's Report, Jim Adelson began with a proud and confident assessment of the programs and accomplishments of 2022—optimism warranted by that year's webinars and in-person programs. Tragically, Jim is not writing this report on the organization he was so ably leading at the time of his sudden death, in June. But I'm sure that he would have felt happy to reflect on the activities of NERS over this past year.

## Programs Past and Future

Since Jim's last report, our excellent NERS webinars have included Gunnar Nilsson's "Swedish Textiles from 1680 to 1860," Gerard Paquin's "Silk and Wool: Crosscurrent Influences in Turkish Rugs and Textiles," and Bob Bell's "The Afshar, Masters of Color." Additionally, NERS has co-sponsored DeWitt Mallary's "The Intrigue of Baluch Rugs," Ali Riza Tuna's "A New Perspective on Anatolian Kilims," Amanda Phillips's "Sea Change: Ottoman Textiles 1400–1800," and Sheila Fruman's "Pull of the Thread: Textile Travels of a Generation." Coming up next, on February 10, will be Maggie Squires, presenting "Piece by Piece It Disappeared: Reconstructing the Chehel Sotun Carpet." Join us for this and future webinars, and take full advantage of your member benefit to access the recordings for all NERS-hosted sessions! Once again, we're extremely grateful for Jean Hoffman and Julia Bailey's leadership, expertise, and dedication in lining up speakers and topics and undertaking the extensive preparation needed to make each webinar a success.

Our in-person meetings have continued, albeit at a less frequent pace than pre-pandemic. Last December, Mike Tschebull presented "Sources and Evolution of Transcaucasian Village Rug Design and Color." In April Jeff Spurr provided an introduction to a show-and-tell of members' prayer rugs and textiles in prayer format, and in May Jim Adelson and Yon Bard explored the esoterica of Turkman secondary guls in a fashion that held the interest of even decidedly non-Turkmaniac listeners like myself. In addition to the traditional moth mart and show-and-tell, our annual picnic, in August, featured memorials to both Jim Adelson and longtime member Alan Varteresian.

## Membership

As of this writing, NERS has 165 members, nineteen of whom are from outside the U.S. Worldwide access to our webinars no doubt prompts continued growth beyond our historical base; more than half our current members live outside the six New England states.

Since annual membership now runs for the calendar year, it will expire on December 31, 2023. Members will receive a renewal reminder via email; please renew as soon as possible. The money from memberships lets us provide you with our webinar and in-person programs, store and make available all our recorded webinars, produce and distribute this newsletter, improve capabilities and access via our new website, make available all our past online exhibitions, communicate with you about our own and others' rug and textile activities, and more. If you're inclined to provide an additional donation with your renewal, as some members have, that's heartily appreciated.

Special acknowledgment and thanks are due to our Supporting and Patron members, whose "above and beyond" generosity has helped maintain our financial health. Supporting members are **Deborah Anderson, John Clift, David Lawson, Richard Lerner, Sharon Lichtman, Stephanie Kline Morehouse and Brian Morehouse, Ann Nicholas and Rich Blumenthal, Gerard Paquin and Ann Benedict, Paul Ramsey, Michael Sampson and Tina Young, Sharon and Len Soltzberg, Bonnie Stern, Chuck and Theresa Wagner, and Lisa Wagner.** Patron members, who support NERS at the highest level, are **Debbie Sheetz, Doug and Julia Bailey, Richard Belkin and Meredith Laufer, Shahyan Faroukh Dastur, Armen and Louise Dohanian, Carla Faita, Thomas Harris, Elizabeth Herridge, Jean Hoffman, Ali Istalifi, Susan and Lloyd Kannenberg, Charles Nargoizian, Lena N. Nargoizian, Amir Oskouei, Peter Pap, Beau Ryan, and Julien Lafayette Taibi.**

## The Steering Committee and Their Contributions

As always, the Steering Committee helps keep NERS rolling along. Jim Sampson has continued his work as Treasurer, and John Clift has ably taken up the Membership portfolio. Richard Belkin is the liaison with our Newton meeting venue, Durant-Kenrick House. Lloyd Kannenberg and Richard Belkin handle in-person meeting tasks, from supplying equipment to providing beverages. Both are contributors to *View from the Fringe*. Jeff Spurr is our Secretary and a *View* contributor, and sometimes introduces in-person speakers. Julia Bailey co-directs our webinar program and brings our newsletter to life as its editor and producer. I update our website (with the assistance of our consultant, Bob Alimi) and also administer our Facebook page. As President, I guess I'm now retired from my leisurely but august role as Chairman Emeritus.

# November 7 Meeting Report: Turkish Rug Show-and-Tell

By Julia Bailey



**Gerard Paquin**

At our November 5 meeting, at Durant-Kenrick House, Newton, NERS member Gerard Paquin introduced his audience to the many forms and functions of Turkish rugs and flatweaves. Then, in our best-organized show-and-tell session in memory, he showed examples from his and Marilyn Denny's important collections, as well as vetted pieces provided by other attendees. In his introductory remarks, Gerard emphasized the "staggering variety" of Anatolian rug types and formats, and of the weaving regions that produced them. He noted that while pile rugs have been collected for well over a century, flatweaves have attracted attention relatively recently, with publications such as Laudreau and Pickering's *From the Bosphorus to Samarkand: Flat-Woven Rugs* (1969), Black and Loveless's *The Undiscovered Kilim* (1977), and Balpınar Acar's *Kilim, Cicim, Zili, Sumak: Turkish Flatweaves* (1983).

The show-and-tell, in which Gerard was assisted by Vedat Karadağ, visiting from Turkey, began with flatwoven examples: a Turkmen zili from the Taurus mountains **(1)**, a Kurdish kilim-woven cushion cover from Malatya **(2)**, and a sumak- and kilim-woven piece, possibly a grain-bag face, from the Taurus Mountains **(3)**—its "Memling gul" motifs also long used on pile rugs, including yastiks **(3a)**.

Next came pile weavings other than rugs: a double bag from the Milas area **(4)**, a divan cover from Malatya **(5)**, and, from Konya, a weighty, long-piled tulu shepherd's coat **(6)**, looking startlingly like a sheep's own pelt.

A series of prayer rugs followed. First was a Milas **(7)** so meticulously planned that it led Gerard to ponder whether such rugs were made for prayer or for the market, and to contrast it with a fragment of a decidedly non-commercial Ayrancı long-piled runner **(8)**.



**1**



**2**



**3**



**3a**



**4**



**5**



**6**



**7**



**8**

Like the Milas, a Lâdik prayer rug—its customary row of flowering plants hanging upside down below the mihrab (9)—and a colorful Mucur (10) were outstanding exemplars of standardized design. Far less typical were a prayer rug with multiple dates and camel hair in its main border (11)—Vedat assigned it to Sivas—and a vivid Konya village rug with a limited but forceful cast of field and border motifs (12).

Also atypical was an ivory-ground fragment (13), illustrated with its few known relatives in Franses's *The Orient Stars Collection* (2021), where it is assigned to the Taurus Mountains and dated circa 1650–1750. A lustrous Kurdish prayer rug from Gaziantep (14) featured generous use of cochineal in its field and rigorous overall symmetry. Last among the prayer rugs was a western Anatolian kilim (15) with multiple borders and a flower-filled ivory mihrab.



9



10



11



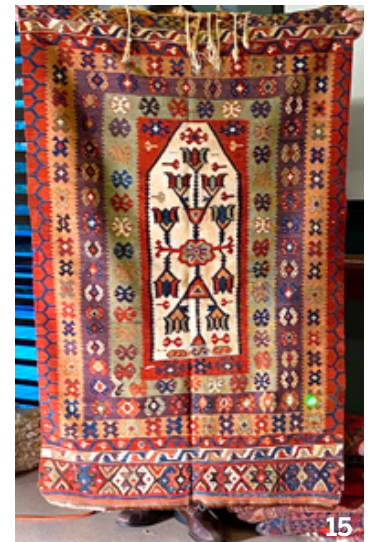
12



13



14



15

Turkish Rug Show-and-Tell Meeting (cont.)

Rugs with historic or borrowed designs came next. One possibly Central Anatolian example (16) had a single medallion of the type depicted by the fifteenth-century artist Ghirlandaio. Another, from Dazkırı (17), replicated the design of certain seventeenth-century Anatolian rugs preserved in Transylvanian churches. A third (18), made in Konya and formerly in the Rudnick Collection, had medallions reminiscent of those on rugs shown in Holbein paintings. A fragmentary fourth rug shared its overall *ak su* field design (19) with Turkmen pile weaving (19a).

Fragmentary and arguably early rugs followed. One was a squarish bedding rug (20) from Çal, in southwestern Turkey, with a foundation entirely of cotton. Three central-medallion rugs were next: one with goat-hair warps and wefts and motifs that to some in the audience suggested mythical creatures (21); a more densely patterned western Anatolian example (22); and a bold, kufesque-bordered piece from the Taurus Mountains (23).



Then came a generous array of yastiks. One, possibly from Dazkırı, paid homage to Ottoman velvets (24). Others were from Konya (25, 26) and southwest (27) or eastern (28) Anatolia. A “Navajo-esque” example was probably also from Konya (29). A second Dazkırı (30) was rare for bearing a date, 1279 (1863). A radiant Konya fragment (31) was followed by an intact yastik from Uşak (32). The final yastik representatives were a flatwoven Taurus Mountains piece (33), and an Armenian “Marash” (actually Malatya) embroidery (34).

As a coda unanticipated by Gerard, attendees brought two more offerings: a kilim from Kurdish Hakkari (35), in southeasternmost Turkey, and another Lâdik prayer rug, this one with upright flowers and a craggy, serpentine border (36).

NERS thanks Gerard for his hosting and thoughtful organization of this superlative show-and-tell, Vedat for his travel-informed comments on the rugs shown, and Marilyn for the many outstanding examples she provided.



## Knotted-Pile and Needlework Price Leaders in Recent Auctions



Left: Yomud multi-gul main carpet, Rippon Boswell, Nov. 25, lot 132, €120,000 (hammer price, as elsewhere)

Above: Yomud asmalyk with wedding procession, Rippon Boswell, Nov. 25, lot 120, €100,000

Lower left: Azerbaijan embroidery, Austria Auction Company, Dec. 2, lot 174, €50,000

Below: Shahrizabz suzani, Material Culture (Russell S. Fling Collection), Dec. 4, lot 92, \$32,500



... and Some Attractive Auction Finds Now in NERS Members' Collections  
(from the Russell S. Fling Collection, Material Culture, December 4)



Lot 74, Yomud appliqué asmalyk



Lot 280, Shahrizabz hat



Lot 255, Yomud infant's hat



Lot 158, Aymara coca bag

## Future NERS Webinars and Meeting

(see March 2024 *VIEW* for details)

Mar. 9 webinar: Alberto Boralevi,  
"Exciting Carpet Finds in Italy: Forty  
Years of Hunting for Unpublished  
Masterpieces"

April webinar, date TBD: Tom Farnham,  
"Denman Ross and Henry Marquand:  
Two Collectors, Too Long Neglected"

May meeting, date TBD: Joel Greifinger,  
"All Tradition Is Change: Scandinavian  
Peasant Textiles 1750–1900"

## Upcoming Rug and Textile Events

### Auctions

Jan. 21, 2024 Boston, Grogan & Company  
The Kaffel Collection

### Exhibitions

Feb. 14–June 1, 2024, Washington, GWU/Textile Museum  
Irresistible: The Global Patterns of Ikat

### Symposia and Conferences

May 14–16, 2024, Buellton, Cal., Santa Ynez Valley Marriott  
Carpet and Textile Forum

For registration and hotel information, email  
[bmendenhall@cox.net](mailto:bmendenhall@cox.net)

June 6–9, 2024, Istanbul  
15th International Conference on Oriental Carpets

## Photo Credits

**p. 1:** Margaret Squires (left, center); C. G. Ellis, *Oriental Carpets: Philadelphia Museum of Art* (right) **pp. 2–4:** Zoom (inset); James Opie, *Tribal Rugs* (figs. 1, 2, 9); Hadi Maktabi (fig. 3); Hakan Aydın (figs. 4, 6); Bob Bell (figs. 5, 7, 11); ARTlens photography, Simon F. Toth (figs. 8, 10) **p. 5:** Zoom (inset); Amanda Phillips (figs. 1–4) **pp. 6–8:** Zoom (presenter image); Hali Publications (bookcover image); Sheila Fruman (figs. 1–9b) **pp. 10–13:** Doug or Julia Bailey **p. 14:** Rippon Boswell (top right and left); Austria Auction Company (bottom left); Material Culture (bottom right) **p. 15:** Material Culture

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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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