

oriental rugs

An Illustrated Lexicon of Motifs, Materials, and Origins



TUTTLE

PETER F. STONE



This monumental reference work—long awaited by collectors and scholars—fills an important gap in the available literature on oriental rugs. Lavishly illustrated with over 1000 photographs and drawings, it offers clear and precise definitions for the rug and textile terms in use across a broad swath of the globe—from Morocco to Turkey, Persia, the Caucasus region, Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and China. It covers priceless museum-quality rug traditions as well as modern centers of production, and draws on classical scholarship as well as current terminology in use among producers and traders in these areas today. It focuses primarily on the rich hand-knotting and hand-weaving traditions of the Near East and Central Asia, but also includes some examples of Scandinavian and Native American weavings.

Rug terms are confusing. The same rug is often called by a baffling array of different names. Some of these refer to a specific geographic or ethnic origin, while others refer to a particular function, method of production or material. This book makes all these terms accessible and understandable, and aids researchers and collectors by precisely identifying each region and ethnic group and explaining the designs, motifs and materials that are typically used there. It profiles specific rugs of historical significance and explains technical terms in use by local producers and traders.

Map of the Middle East

Approximate locations of rug-weaving ethnic groups and tribes are shown in red.



MOTIF VARIATION EXAMPLES

Origin	Urban Origin		Village Origin		Tribal Origin	
Types	Mina Khani	Boteh	Caucasus Afshan	Caucasus Lori Pambak	Khamseh Murgi	Qahqa'i Medallion
Naturalistic						
Geometric						
Abstract						

MOTIFS SHARED BY PERSIAN TRIBES

Tribe	Boteh	Herati pattern	Memling gul	Mina khani	Qashqa'i type medallion	Birds
Afshar						
Bakhtiari						
Khamseh						
Kurd						
Lur						
Qashqa'i						

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Wendel Swan, a Director of The Textile Museum of Washington, D.C. and Chairman of the Executive Committee of ICOC, former President of the International Haji Babas and of the Washington Textile Group, reviewed this second edition, corrected my errors and provided pictures of rugs. He supplemented many entries. I am very grateful for his efforts to make this a useful and reliable work.

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If the Gods resent earthly perfection, I have nothing to fear. Surviving errors are my responsibility only.

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For the First Edition

Walter B. Denny, Professor of Art History, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, edited this work. For authors, familiarity breeds myopia. Errors, both subtle and blatant, are the result. Walter Denny's refreshing objectivity, great knowledge and care were invaluable in purging my many errors and lapses in judgment. The effort he has invested in the lexicon added substantially to its quality and usefulness.

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For her sympathetic understanding and encouragement, this work is affectionately dedicated to Valerie Janet Ohlhausen.

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Peter F. Stone

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introduction

Rugs terms are confusing. The same rug may have a baffling variety of names. Some names refer to geographic or ethnic origin. Others refer to structure, design, or function. The names themselves may offer no clue as to the type of reference. Variant spellings of these names compound the problem. This confusion of terms discourages those seeking a beginning understanding of oriental rugs. It also frustrates those researching the subject. Even a Linnaeus could not bring order out of this chaos of names. However, a single source for commonly accepted definitions of oriental rug terms can dispel much of the confusion.

There is a growing wealth of research in rug attribution, technical structures, ethnography, and history. This research is published in monographs, periodicals, and survey texts. By organizing this research under alphabetical entries, we can increase its usefulness for those seeking specific information about oriental rugs.

SCOPE.

This lexicon includes definitions and explanations for names and terms referring to:

- **pile rugs and flatweaves of the Near East, North Africa, continental Asia, Europe, and the United States**

- **geographic locations and ethnic groups noted for their rugs and weavings**
- **functional weavings of tribal and nomadic origin**
- **the rug trade and the rug-weaving craft and industry**
- **designs, motifs, and symbols of pile rugs and flatweaves**
- **rug and textile structures**
- **specific rugs of historical significance.**

RUG RESEARCH.

Rugs have received greater recognition as art in recent years. During the same period, rug research has developed in scope and quality. Researchers in oriental rug studies have adopted the scientific methods of art historians. These include detailed technical structural analysis, chemical and chromatographic dye analysis, and microscopic identification of fibers.

Tribal weavings have received greater research attention. Recently, our understanding of southwest Persian tribal weavings, Baluchi weavings, and Kurdish weavings has grown tremendously.

These are very positive trends. At the same time, there are problems in rug research. Because oriental rugs are relatively fragile artifacts, the historical record is incomplete.



There is no direct and continuous chain of evidence linking some types of rugs and their origins or documenting the evolution of rug designs.

Tribal peoples do not usually leave written records. The history, migrations, cultures, and crafts of many rug-weaving tribal peoples are poorly documented or not documented at all.

Recent wars and revolutions in the Near East have radically altered historic patterns of rug production and distribution. Current rug production conditions have not been thoroughly studied or documented.

Due to these and other research problems, there are gaps in our knowledge. In some cases, the gaps are occupied by partial research and reasoned speculation. In other cases, unverified knowledge and trade lore fills the void. Where information in the lexicon is speculative, we have tried to indicate this. There are controversies in rug attribution and design origin. Generally, where there are opposing views, the concepts and information are described in the lexicon as questioned. To present current and generally accepted views, information has been cross-checked against recently published research.

FORM OF ENTRIES.

A primary entry consists of a term or name followed by less common equivalent terms or names, cross-referenced. The language of origin, other than English, is enclosed in parentheses following the primary term. If there are additional foreign terms, their languages of origin also appear in parentheses. The same parentheses may enclose the original form of the foreign term or place name in italics. A literal translation of foreign terms and place names may be included in quotes. The definition or explanation follows. Then, cross-references are provided to related topics and terms. Strict letter-by-letter alphabetical order, regardless of spaces or hyphens, is used in sequencing primary entries. The format of entries is shown here:

primary entry (language of origin, *original foreign term*, “literal translation”),

secondary entry. Definition or explanation. See “cross-reference.”





DEFINITIONS.

The first definition of a term is usually the technical definition within the field of oriental rug and textile studies. This is followed by more specific definitions or definitions of the term in general usage. For place names, the location is given first followed by a description of weavings of that area. For names of ethnic groups, the geographical location of the group or other identifying information is given first followed by a description of their weavings.

TYPOGRAPHIC USAGE.

Boldface is used for primary and secondary terms or cross-referenced terms defined or explained within an entry. Parentheses enclose the language of origin of the entries. Capitalized initial letters are used for proper nouns and terms that are usually capitalized. Quotation marks or parentheses enclose references to other entries and translations of foreign words. Italics present foreign words in the context of an entry, scientific Latin names, subheadings, and publication titles.

TERMS FOR TEXTILE STRUCTURES.

In defining terms for textile structures, the common meaning of the term is presented first. This is usually

followed by a definition using the system of classifying and describing rug structures in *The Primary Structure of Fabrics* by Irene Emery or *Woven Structures* by Marla Mallet. The terms “asymmetric knot” and “symmetric knot” are used in describing structure of pile fabrics. These are not technically correct terms, but they are used because they are generally understood in rug studies. The terms “soumak” and “weft wrapping” are used in the absence of more specific information. There are many types of weft wrapping, but published descriptions rarely differentiate these types for flatweaves.

Where structure or design information is given for rugs from a specific source, the structure or design is “average” or “typical,” unless otherwise noted. For a specific source, structural or design variation may be very great. For hand-knotted pile rugs, the pile is assumed to be wool unless otherwise noted.

For any specific source of rug production, structural and technical details may change over time according to commercial demand. Generally, there is an historical trend from higher to lower knot densities, from wool to cotton foundation, and from vegetable to synthetic dyes.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA.

Brief biographical sketches are included of deceased individuals who achieved international prominence in rug studies or through their association with oriental rugs. A lexicon is about language. This lexicon is about the language of oriental rugs. It is analytical in that it presents very specific terms for rug origins, structures, and designs. Examining the parts rather than the whole makes this book useful. However, the attraction, charm, and beauty of oriental rugs is not in the parts, but in the whole. Many oriental rugs and other weavings are works of art, from the narrowest to the grandest meaning of the word “art.” An analytical understanding of oriental rugs is ultimately justified by the experience of oriental rugs as art.



Foreign Terms And Place Names

by John R. Perry

A good part of the confusion surrounding rug terminology stems from the variety of languages used by the weavers, sellers, buyers, and connoisseurs of this most cosmopolitan of products. Very few of the names for relevant peoples, places, techniques, and types are to be found consistently spelled in the literature. Much of this inconsistency reflects dialect differences or a clash of sound, writing, and transcription systems in the languages subsequently involved. Thus “alcatif,” “qtifa,” and “kadife” all go back to the same Arabic term for a pile or nap rug, independently processed through Portuguese, Moroccan/French, and Turkish.

Some variants result simply from slips of the pen or typewriter. Many a sensible word has been turned into nonsense by the miswriting of *u* for *n* or *b* for *h*, or vice versa. Thus *Murdschekar*, *Murchehkkbur* and *Murcheh Khvort* are all the same place to a Persian; it was a German (with a poor ear or a poor informant), a Frenchman (with poor eyesight or working from scribbled notes), and an Englishman (working from literary Persian) who carved “Murcheh Khurt” into such varied shapes.

There are no universal systems of transcription (written representation of the sounds of words) or transliteration

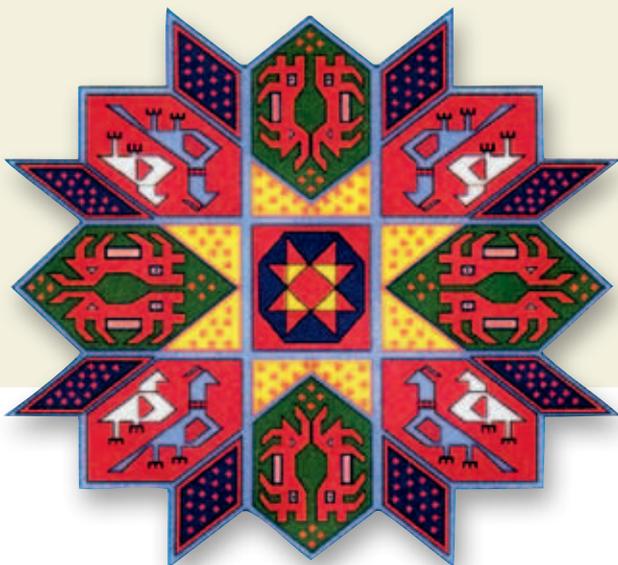
(representation of the written form of words in a different writing system). In a work of reference, pedantry must give way to conciseness and accuracy, which involves compromises. Wherever possible, first place has been given to a widely accepted form, whether rigorously transcribed or not. A few general observations must suffice here on the relations between the language systems that are encountered in this field, with a note where these systems typically break down. This will help the reader identify analogous spellings, read and pronounce an unfamiliar term with confidence, and recognize a variant of a familiar term, however outlandishly disguised.

ARABIC-SCRIPT LANGUAGES AND THE WEST.

From the eighth century, throughout most of the Near East, Central Asia, and north India, Arabic script was widely used for literary languages (including Arabic, Persian, western and eastern Turkish, and Urdu). The Arabic “alphabet” is deficient, in that it does not have characters for most vowels. It is particularly unsuited to representing the eight-vowel system of Turkic languages.

Literacy was not—and still is not—widespread in rural and nomadic areas. Thus the early Western rug-collectors had little more than their ears to work with; and since these were attuned to English, French, German, or Russian sounds, the resulting transcriptions of native terms left much to be desired. All the more since the orthography of their own languages (particularly English and French) was—and still is—a chaos of historically conditioned letter-combinations. The final stage of confusion is reached when we try to interpret another’s transliterations in ignorance of the conventions of the original or an intermediate language.

For example, the sound represented in English by *j*, as in *judge* (or by *dge*, of course!) also occurs commonly in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. It does not occur natively in French, German, or Russian, where it has to be represented by unfamiliar letter-combinations. Thus an Iranian of Central Asia, properly known in English as a “Tajik,” is in German *Tadschik*, in French *tadjik*, and in Russian appears with the same *dj* combination written in Cyrillic characters. Since it



ORIGINAL SOUND, as in	AS TRANSCRIBED VIA:			EXAMPLES
	FRENCH	GERMAN	RUSSIAN	
Bach	c, k, kh	ch	kh	chalat, khalat
ship	ch	sch	sh	frach, alloucha
chop	tch	tsch	ch	Tchetchen, tschoval
job	dj	dsch	dzh	dzhidzhim
very	v, w	w	v	Zejwa, Zeyva
war, how	ou	w, u	u	Chichaoua
yes, say	i, y	j, i	i, y	Zeyva, Zejwa
q (see Persian)	k, g, gh	k, g	k, g	germez, ghermez

was through the Russians that the Western world was introduced to the peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus, the Russian form was transliterated into English; and since there was no “French *j*” sound in English, the Russian letter following *d* was represented as *zh*—hence the “English” form *Tadzhik*, with three letters for the value of one. The same cycle of analysis and resynthesis of one sound produces the forms *Azerbaidshan*, *Azerbaidjan*, and *Azerbaidzhan* for “Azerbaijan.”

Similarly, our perception of a Berber term from North Africa may have been filtered first through a local spoken form of Arabic and/or literary Arabic, then through written French (e.g. “Ouaouzquite,” to be pronounced approximately *wa-ooz-keet*). English itself is notorious for its spelling traps, as the tourist visiting Cirencester (*sisister*) or Godmanchester (*gumster*) can attest. Thus a short “a” vowel common in north Indian languages sounds like the English vowel of such words as *sung*, *luck*, *but*, *hurry*. English speakers therefore represented this Indian vowel as “u” in writing *Lucknow*, *suttee*, *curry*, etc. *Lucknow*, luckily, preserves the context of the substitution; the unfamiliar



“dhurrie” (pronounced *darry*) is likely to be mispronounced as *doory*.

To pronounce a term with confidence, it helps to know the word’s linguistic lineage. This is not always possible, but the table of systematic correspondences of sounds and spellings on the previous page will guide the reader in making an educated guess.

It can be seen from several of the examples how, once the language context has been established from one orthographic feature, other conventions become clear. Since in “Chichaoua” (a town in Morocco) *ch* must be French for *sh*, the *ou* lurking between two other vowels must represent *w*, to yield a pronunciation *shishawa*. German-processed “Zejwa” and “chalat” will respond to similar reasoning. Occasional words imported into Italian or Spanish will, of course, follow the conventions established for, say, *e* and *g* in those languages.

TURKISH.

Since 1928 Turkish (in the narrower sense of the term, i.e. the language of the Republic of Turkey) has used the Latin alphabet with a completely regular orthography. Those few letters that do not approximate English usage are as follows.

- c:** *j* as in *jog*, e.g. *cicim*.
- ç:** *ch* as in *chip*, e.g. *Çanakkale*.
- ı:** *e* as in *the* or *i* in *sir*, e.g. *Topkapı*.
- ş:** *sh* as in *ship*, e.g. *Uşak*.
- ğ:** **silent; lengthens the preceding vowel, e.g. Niğde (nee-deh).**
- ö:** **approx. as in nurse, with lips rounded; German böse, French peu, e.g. Gördes (=Ghiordes).**
- ü:** **approx. as in few, with lips rounded; German für, French lune, e.g. Yörük.**

In Turkish words, each syllable is pronounced separately: Tekke is *tek-keh*. The vowels *a, e, i, o, u* are pronounced approximately as in Spanish.

The designation “Turk.” for the language of origin generally means modern Turkish or its ancestor, Ottoman Turkish. However, it may also stand for “Turkic,” an adjective embracing the closely related language family of the Azerbaijani Turks, Turkmens, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kirghiz and Qashqa’i. A term designated as “Turk.” may be common to two or more of these varieties of Turkish, and particularly in its transcribed form it may not be possible to assign it a definitive origin. Most of these languages are spoken in the Russian Caucasus and Central Asia, and were originally transcribed with the Cyrillic alphabet: see the “Russian” column in the preceding table.

Some of the Turkic languages have consonants which may be written as *q, kh,* and *gh* (see under Persian). These are usually equivalent to the modern Turkish *k, h,* and *ğ* respectively (e.g. qanât, kanat). The vowel *y* in Turkic words transliterated through Russian is equivalent to the undotted *i* (e.g. “asmalyk”).

PERSIAN AND ARABIC.

Persian was for many centuries both the principal literary language and the spoken lingua franca of the eastern Islamic world, supplementing Turkic, Kurdish, Pashto, Baluch, and other vernaculars. It is still widely used in Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan as well as Iran. As such it has borrowed freely from other local languages and in turn provided them with vocabulary of its own and many terms taken from Arabic.

Most terms of Arabic origin that appear in this lexicon have been “processed” through Persian. Persian still uses a modified form of Arabic script, and systems of transliteration are almost identical for the two languages. It is thus convenient to treat them together from the viewpoint of unfamiliar sounds and spellings.

- dh:** (Arabic only) like **th** as in *the, wither*, e.g. *dhar'* (see "zar").
- gh:** like French uvular **r**, but produced even farther back in the throat (Arabic, Turkic langs, e.g. Ghormaj). In Persian of Iran it is pronounced the same as **q**, e.g. *ghermez*.
- kh:** like **ch** as in German *Bach*, Scottish *loch*. E.g. *Khila, Bakhtiari*.
- q:** like **k**, but farther back in the throat, e.g. *Qajar*.
- â:** In Persian, long "a" as in *raw* or *war*; to be distinguished from *a*, as in *bat*, e.g. *Râvar, kenâreh*. In Arabic and Turkish, generally the long equivalent of *a*, e.g. *salât, lâle*.

The apostrophe is used to represent one of two letters sounded differently in Arabic, but pronounced identically in Persian, as a slight hiatus between vowels (Sa'idâbâd) or between vowel and consonant (Za'farânlu). The vowels *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u* are pronounced approximately as in Spanish. The other letters and combinations used are roughly equivalent to English usage or otherwise self-evident.

Adjacent letters found in transliterations of Turkish, Persian, etc., may sometimes stand for separate letters (hence distinct sounds) and not the combinations listed above: thus *Akhisar* is *Ak-hisar*, *Mashhad* is *Mash-had*.

FORMATIVES.

There are several suffixes in Persian and Turkish used to form adjectives or otherwise expand the meaning of a base word in predictable ways. The most common of these, and their typical uses in rug terminology, are as follows.

- âbâd (Persian):** forms names of inhabited places, settlements, cities, e.g. *Meshkâbâd* (from *meshk*, "musk").
- dân (Persian):** "container," e.g. *qâshoq-dân*, "spoonbag."
- i (Persian and Arabic):** forms an attributive adjective and related nouns, "from/belonging to a place, tribe, etc.; characterized by," e.g. *Baluchi*, "of the Baluch people," *aksi*, "pictorial," from *aks* "picture."
- li, -lu (Turk.):** similar in function to **-i**, e.g. *parmakli*, "fingerlike, finger-shaped" (*parmak*, "finger"); *Qaragözlü*, tribal name (*qara göz*, "black eye").
- lik, -luk, -lyk (Turk.):** something made for, appropriate to, or containing the base referent, e.g. *eyerlik*, "saddle cloth" (eyer, "saddle").

CHINESE PLACE NAMES.

Since about 1975 the so-called Pinyin system of romanization has been universally accepted for Chinese geographical names. Thus the older form "Peking" is written "Beijing," which more closely approximates the sound of the Chinese word in the Mandarin dialect. This standard is adopted for Chinese place names in this lexicon, with cross-references to variant spellings. The only relevant conventions of Pinyin that do not approximate English usage are as follows.

x: like *sh* as in *ship*, e.g. *Xinjiang* (*shin-jang*).

zh: like *j* as in *job*, e.g. *Guizhou* (*gway-joe*).

The traditional spellings are retained for place names in East Turkestan, such as "Khotan," since these are familiar in rug literature.



aba (Arabic). A striped fabric or a sleeveless, loose outer garment. Also, a heavy wool cloth.

Abadah. See “Abâdeh.”

Abâdeh, Abadah. A town in southwestern Iran on the highway between Isfahan and Shiraz. Some rugs woven in this town have designs similar to Persian city rugs. Others copy local tribal rugs. Knot density is about 80 to 160 symmetric knots per square inch on a cotton foundation. Wefts are sometimes dyed blue. See “Iran.”



Abâdeh carpet *Dilmaghani & Co.*

Abbas I, Shah. Abbas I, called “the Great,” shah of Persia, reigned from 1587 to 1629. In wars with the Uzbeks, Ottoman Turks, and Portuguese, he consolidated the dominion of Persia from the Tigris to the Indus. His reign was distinguished by a magnificent court, the construction of mosques and public buildings, and a great expansion of commerce. He established workshops which produced carpets for his palaces and for state gifts. Approximately 300 silk carpets woven during or shortly after his reign have survived. Most of these silk carpets have been attributed to Isfahan and Kashan. See “Iran,” “Polonaise carpets,” and “Vase carpets.”

Abbasid caliphate. Caliphs ruling at Baghdad from 750 to 1258 C.E. who claimed descent from Abbas, uncle of Muhammad.

Abkhazia. An area of the northwestern Caucasus inhabited by the Abkhaz, a sub-group of the Circassians. They are Sunni Muslims and may have been a very minor source of nineteenth-century Caucasian pile rugs. See “Caucasus.”

abr (Persian). Sky-blue, cloud. Also, Persian for ikat fabrics. See “ikat.”

abrash (Arabic, “dappled, piebald”). A change in color in the field and border of pile rugs due to differences in wool or dye batches. Abrash may develop as different dye batches in a rug fade at different rates. The color change extends across the rug, weft-wise. Abrash is more likely to occur at the top of a rug than at the bottom, as beginning yarn batches are used up. Abrash is sometimes imitated in new commercial production of hand-knotted and power-loomed rugs.

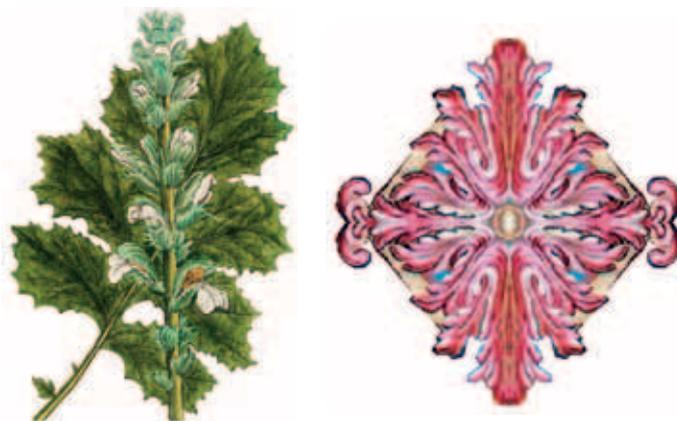


Abrash in a Bakshaish rug (detail) *Alberto Levi*

abrisham, abrishom (Persian). Silk.

Abruzzi. A district of central Italy. From the seventeenth century, Abruzzi has been the source of flatwoven furniture covers and hand-knotted rugs. These are woven on narrow looms. Designs are usually geometricized floral, animal, or heraldic motifs. See “Italy.”

acanthus. A plant of the Mediterranean area having toothed leaves, *Acanthus spinosus*, *Acanthus mollis*. Stylized representations of the acanthus leaf are familiar as architectural ornamentation and have been recognized in some oriental rug designs. Acanthus leaves are a common motif in Savonnerie rugs.



Acanthus leaves *Savonnerie rug (detail)*

accessory fabric. A fabric superimposed (appliqué or quilted), inlaid, or seamed to a ground fabric.

accessory objects. Non-fabric objects attached to a fabric. In tribal weavings, such accessory objects as beads, sea shells, bells, bones, feathers, buttons, or coins are sometimes attached to the fabric as non-functional decorative or shamanistic additions.



Uzbek bag with accessory objects
R. John Howe

accessory stitches. Functional or decorative stitches in a fabric that include flat stitches, looped stitches, and knot stitches.

acrylic. A synthetic fiber of acrylonitrile. Acrylic may be dyed before extrusion as filaments to be spun. When dyed in this manner, acrylic is very color-fast. It is static-free and stain resistant. Acrylic is used as a substitute for wool, but is not resistant to crushing.

Achaemenian dynasty. Rulers of ancient Persia from about 550 B.C.E. to 331 B.C.E. Certain designs in the Pazyryk carpet are very similar to decorative motifs used in Achaemenian architecture. See "Pazyryk carpet."

acid dyes. Dyes derived from coal tar through the action of nitric acid. They produce bright colors in animal fibers. They are soluble in water and must be used in an acid solution. The first such dye was Bismarck brown developed in 1862. See "basic dyes" and "dye, synthetic."

A.C.O.R., American Conference on Oriental Rugs. An association of approximately 25 local rug societies. Its goal has been to present a national oriental rug conference every two years. These conferences have included seminars, exhibitions, and sales of rugs of interest to collectors.

A.D. (Latin *Anno Domini*, "In the year of our Lord"). The year counted from the time of Christ, a system of date designation generally used by western countries. See "A.H.," "C.E.," "Islamic dates," and "Gregorian date."

Ada-Milas. The peninsula south of Milas in southwestern Anatolia. The area is a source of prayer rugs and rugs with a narrow, vertical, central panel containing a highly abstract tree-of-life design. The field is filled with repeated geometric figures in brownish red.

Adam. A style of architectural and interior decoration in vogue from about 1765 through 1790. The Adam brothers were architects in England whose decorative style consisted of motifs drawn from Roman, Pompeian, and Etruscan work. Ovals, octagons, fans, wreaths, garlands, and medallion shapes were common features of their decoration. Rugs were made to the designs of the Adam brothers in Moorfields, England. Often these rug designs reflected the paneled relief ceilings of the rooms in which the rugs were to be used. Colors were gray, light blue, and jasper. See "Moorfields."

Adana. A town of south central Anatolia, and a source of multi-panel kilims. Adana is a trading center for rugs. See "Turkey."



Adana kilim *Simon Knight*

Adiyaman. A city of eastern Anatolia and a source of tülüs and Kurdish rugs. See "Turkey."

Adler Kazak. See "Chelaberd."

Admiral carpets. Carpets of fifteenth-century Spain with armorial bearings of the hereditary admiral of Castile. Many of these carpets bear the arms of the Enriquez family. The field is a lattice of octagons containing geometricized blossoms, with a few containing geometricized birds or animals. Heraldic shields are arranged on this field. These rugs are all wool with the Spanish knot. See "Spain" and "Williams Admiral Carpet."

Adraskand. A town of western Afghanistan, south of Herat, in a district that is a source for kilims and pile rugs woven by Pashtun and Baluchi peoples. See “Afghanistan.”

Afghan. A trade term for certain Turkmen carpets of the Ersari tribe. These are main carpets, coarsely woven, with the gulligul design and are about 8 feet by 10 feet. Also, a woven or knitted coverlet (general usage). A native of Afghanistan. See “Ersari.”

Afghanistan. A country of Central Asia bordered by Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China, and Pakistan. About 75 percent of the population is Sunni Muslim. Rugs are woven by native Afghans (Pashtun) and by Turkmen tribes, most of whom migrated to Afghanistan in the 1920s. These tribes include Ersari, Tekke, Yomud, and Sariq. There is some rug production from Baluchi and Uzbek peoples in Afghanistan. Pile rug production consists largely of pieces with traditional Turkmen guls and geometric designs in shades of red. A wide variety of flatweaves is produced along with bags, animal trappings, and other special-function tribal weavings.

Rug export from Afghanistan increased in the 1970s with the large-scale production of lower-quality rugs. Afghanistan carpets that are single-wefted and without offset warps may be termed *yaktâr* and those that are double-wefted with offset warps may be termed *dotâr*. Soviet Russian troops occupied Afghanistan in December of 1979 in support of a communist régime. Armed resistance to the occupying forces and to the civil government involved much of the rural population. Soviet troops withdrew in February of 1989 and the communist régime was defeated in May of 1992. Warfare resumed in 2002 with the United States incursion into Afghanistan. Rug production, marketing, and distribution were disrupted by warfare. Most descriptions of rug production and marketing centers refer to conditions in prewar Afghanistan. See “Afghanistan war rugs.”



Afghanistan

There are entries under the following Afghanistan geographic names:

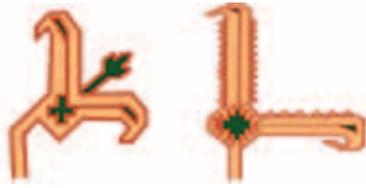
Adraskand	Kabul
Alti Bolaq	Khairabad
Andkhoy	Kunduz
Aq Chah	Labijar
Babaseqal	Laghari
Balkh	Lokari
Barmazid	Maimana
Behsud	Maurchaq
Chakhansur	Qaisar
Charshango	Qala-i Nau
Chichaktu	Qala-i Zal
Daulatabad	Qarqin
Ghorian	Samangân
Ghormaj	Sar-e Pol
Herat	Sharkh
Jengal Arjuk	Shebergân

Afghanistan war rugs. Beginning with Baluchi weavers in Herat, rugs were woven with weapons and war imagery shortly after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The earliest of these rugs showed a few weapons within traditional fields and borders. In later rugs, war imagery displaced most traditional motifs in the field. Finally, in the latest rugs, both traditional field and border motifs were displaced completely by war imagery. See “Baluchi.”



Afghanistan war rug (detail) Smithsonian

afshan, avshan (Persian *afshân*, “scattered”). An all-over design found in Caucasian, Indian, Persian, and Turkish rugs. It consists of stylized, right-angle blossom cups or calyxes on a stem surrounded by florets.



Afshan motifs



Kuba rug with afshan motif *Hagop Manoyan*

Afshar, Avşar. A Turkic tribe (called “Turkmen” in earlier histories) with scattered groups in Turkey, the Caucasus, and Iran. The largest group is located in Iran south of Kerman. There are both nomadic and village pieces produced by the tribe. Structural characteristics of their pile weaves include primarily wool foundation with pink or orange wefts and warp offset. Twentieth-century Afshar rugs may have a cotton foundation. Rugs of the Afshars are squarish with increasingly geometricized designs in later rugs. There is great variation in rug design, but one of the most common is a floral central medallion with floral spandrels and an opposing vase of

flowers at the top and bottom of the rug. Afshars produce flatweaves in slit tapestry, soumak, weft substitution, and double interlocking weft structures. See “DaHaj,” “rakhat,” and “Sirjân.”



Afshar rug *John Collins*

aft rang. See “haft rang.”

Afyon (Turk., “opium”). A town of central Anatolia now referred to as Karahisar. It is a source of rugs similar to those of Konya. See “Karahisar.”

age in rugs. See “dating rugs.”

agedyna (Swedish). A Flemish type weaving. A flatwoven, long cushion used in carriages and sleighs and on short benches. See “rölaken.”



Agedyna *Peter Willborg*

Agra. An ancient city of north central India and former capital of the Mughal Empire. Carpet workshops were in production in Agra in 1619. After the partition of India in 1947, many Muslim weavers immigrated to Pakistan. The industry has recovered, and presently there is an active carpet-weaving industry in Agra. Some rugs are woven by prisoners of the Agra Central Jail. See “India.”



Agra rug *Doris Leslie Blau*

A.H. See “Anno Hegirae.”

Ahar, Ahjar. A town in the Heriz region of northwest Iran. A designation of fine weave or curvilinear design in Heriz rugs. Contemporary rugs of Ahar have medallions and spandrels. The symmetric knot is used at a density of about 65 per square inch on a cotton foundation. The wefts may be blue. Single-wefted rugs of the Heriz area may be termed “Ahar.” See “Iran.”

Ahmedabad. Formerly a rug-weaving center in west central India. There is no significant current production. See “India.”

Ahura Mazda. See “Zoroastrianism.”

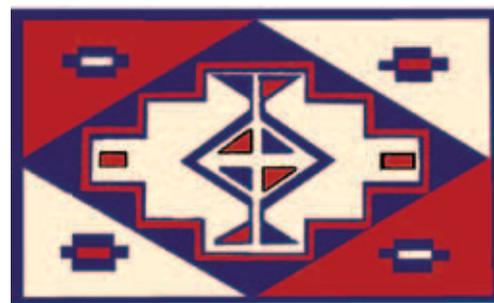
Aibak. See “Samangân.”

Aimaq, Chahar Aimaq (Turk. or Mongol, “four tribes”). Four semi-nomadic tribes of partly Turko-Mongol origin inhabiting Afghanistan and Iran: the Hazara, Firozkohi, Jamshidi, and Taimani. See entries under these names. Some of these tribes are noted for their rug production. Their weavings are sometimes confused with those of the Baluch. See “Afghanistan” and “Timuri.”



Aimaq (Jamshidi) rug *Michael Craycraft*

aina gul, mirror gul (Persian *âyena*, “mirror”). A Turkmen gul consisting of a quartered diamond in a rectangle or a stepped diamond within a regular diamond within a rectangle. These are termed “compartment guls.”



Aina gul *After Moshkova*

Ainabad. See “Bibikabad.”

aina-kotchak. See “kochak.”

aina khalata. Small mirror bag.

Ainalu. A tribe of the Khamseh Confederacy of southwest Iran. See “Khamseh Confederacy.”

Aintab, Aintap. See “Gaziantep.”

ajdaha, ejderha, (Persian *azhdahâ*, “dragon”). A dragon motif in Persian rugs, usually reduced to an “S” shape or “Z” shape. It is

common in borders as overlapping or sequential “S” or “Z” shapes. See “dragon and phoenix” and “S-borders.”

ak, aq (Turk.) White.

ak chuval. A joval with a white ground pile skirt and white flatwoven stripes. See “joval.”



Ak Chuval *Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Steven Price*

Akhisar (Turk. *ak hisar*, “white castle”). A town of northwest Anatolia. The town is a minor source of prayer rugs in red and orange. Small pompons may be attached to the selvedge. Kilim ends may be ornamented with pile buttons. See “Turkey.”

Ak Karaman. A breed of fat-tailed sheep of central and east Anatolia.

Aksaray. A town of central Anatolia and a center of Turkmen carpet weaving during the Seljuk period. Aksaray is a source of kilims. Often, there is a design offset between the two halves of these kilims. See “Turkey.”



Aksaray kilim (detail)



Aksaray yastik *R. John Howe*

Akşehir (Turk., white town). A town of western Anatolia and a rug weaving center in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

aksi (Persian, “pictorial”). Used to describe rugs with a pictorial emphasis rather than a design emphasis. See “pictorial rug” and “war rugs.”

Akstafa, Akstafa peacock. The town of Akstafa and the river Akstafa are located in the Transcaucasus. The Akstafa peacock motif is a geometricized bird with an elaborate tail. As a design element, it is found on rugs of Shirvân in the Caucasus and in Turkish rugs. Akstafa design rugs of nineteenth-century Shirvân are woven with the symmetric knot at a density of about 107 knots per square inch. Average size is

about 34 square feet. Warps are wool and wefts may be cotton or wool. See “Shirv-ân.”



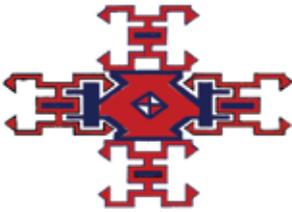
Akstafa peacock



Torba with ak-su motif *Sothebys*



Akstafa rug *Sothebys*



Ak-su motif

ak yup (Turk.). White tent band.

alachiq. A domed felt tent of the Moghân Shahsavan.

ala chuval. Anatolian flatwoven storage bags. These bags are made in pairs. Designs are woven in horizontal or vertical panels. Sizes are about 2 feet to 4 feet high and about 20 inches to 30 inches wide. The bag is open on a short side. See “joval.”



Anatolian brocaded ala chuval (opened up) *Hugh Rance*

ak-su (Turk. “white water”). A repeated design motif consisting of interlocking quadrilaterals with projections.

alam. See “elem.”

Alamdâr. A village of the Hamadan area in northwest Iran. The village is a source of rugs with a geometric Herati pattern on a blue field.

Alanya. A coastal town of south central Anatolia and a minor source of rugs and kilims. See “Turkey.”

alasa, alasha. In Kazakhstan, a flatwoven rug consisting of woven bands sewn together. See “gadhari” and “jijim.”

Albania. Since World War II, a source of contemporary, very well-made pile rugs with Persian designs.

alcatif (Portuguese *alcatifa* from Arabic *al-qatif(a)*, “velvet, plush”). An archaic term for rugs of India.

Alcaraz. A textile and rug-weaving center in Spain from the fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries. Spanish wreath design, armorial carpets, ogival lattice carpets, and copies of Holbein rugs are attributed to Alcaraz. See “Spain” and “wreath carpets.”



Alcaraz rug (detail) Jason Nazmiyal

alem. See “elem.”

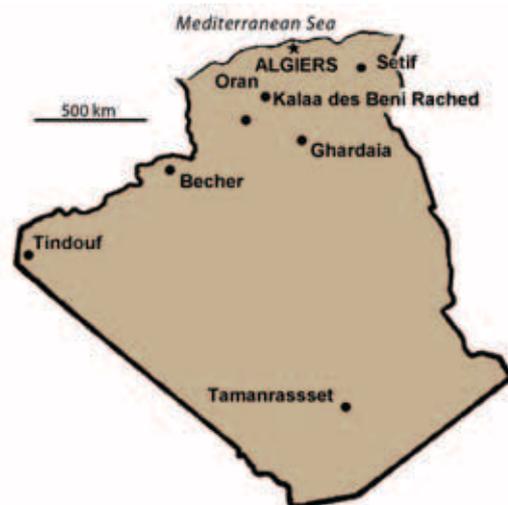
Aleppo, Halep. A city of northwest Syria, now called Haleb. It was formerly in southeast Anatolia and an administrative center during the Ottoman period. In the last half of the nineteenth century many kilims were woven in this area. They were used as curtains and wall hangings. These kilims were woven in two pieces. Cochineal was used in many of these kilims. Borders are usually white with a repeated winged or hourglass figure. Diamonds and octagons are the primary repeated field motif. Some of the kilims are woven with the sandıklı or compartment motif.



Aleppo rug (detail) Peter Willborg

Algeria. A country of North Africa. Algerian rugs are similar to those of Morocco and Tunisia. Sétif is a town southeast of Algiers that is noted for its rug production. Pile rugs are all-wool and woven with the symmetric knot. Traditionally, pile rugs are woven by men (*reggema*) with women as assistants. Currently, women are designing and weaving pile rugs. There are a few pile rug types unique to Algeria. These are the Algerian *qtif* and *tanchra* with uncut looped pile and the *frach* and Kalâa pile carpets with large flatwoven ends. See “frach,” “Guergour carpets,” “Kalâa,” “Maadid tribe,” “metrah,” “qtif,” “reggema,” “tanchra,” and “zerbiya.”

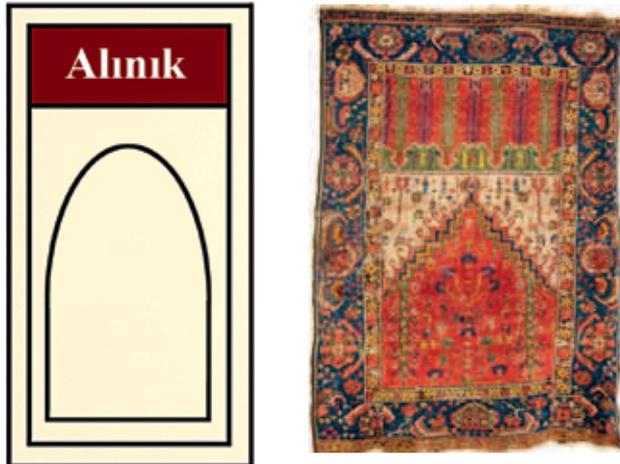
The flatweaves of Algeria are similar to those of Tunisia. The *melgout*, *hamel*, *tag*, and *draga* are flatwoven tent dividers used in different ways. Blankets (*hambel*), flatwoven carpets, sacks, shawls (*ddil*), and saddle blankets (*dokkala*) are also woven.



Algeria

Ali Eli. A subtribe of the Ersari in the area of the Amu Darya river.

alınık (Turk., “place where the forehead meets the ground during prayer”). In a prayer rug, a panel above a mihrab that may contain a Koranic inscription. See “elem.”



Alınık

alizarin (from Spanish *alizari*, “madder,” from Arabic al-’asâra, “juice, extract”). A primary active agent in the dye derived from madder, an anthraquinone that produces shades of red in combination with metals. It provides a red component of the dye. Alizarin was produced synthetically in 1870. A variety of dyes of different colors were developed from compounds of alizarin. See “madder.”

alloucha. A pile carpet of Tunisia in white, beige, brown, and gray. This rug was formerly woven of naturally colored wools. See “Tunisia.”

all-over pattern field repeat. A design in the field of a rug consisting of vertically and horizontally repeated geometrical or floral elements. Usually, the pattern is interrupted or cut off by the borders. Sometimes borders awkwardly interrupt the pattern. Such rugs may suggest that the weaver has a mental image of an infinitely repeated pattern with an arbitrary segment framed by the border. See “boteh,” “gul,” “Herati pattern,” “lattice,” “minâ khâni,” “mir-i boteh,” and “Lotto.”

alpaca. A domesticated South American ruminant related to the lama. It has long silky wool used in South American weaving.



alpaca

Alpan Kuba. A design of rugs from nineteenth-century Kuba in the Caucasus that may be a simplified version of either the Seishour Cross or the Kasim Ushag design. A medallion is surrounded by four elongated hexagons. See “Kuba.”



Alpan Kuba rug (detail) *Richard Rothstein & Co.*



Alpujarra rug *Grogan & Company*

Alpujarra. Alpujarra means “grassland.” The term refers to rugs first woven in Alpujarra in the province of Granada, Spain. These rugs were first woven in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries during the Moorish period and continued to be woven into the nineteenth century. They have a coarsely-woven looped pile and are very heavy. Usually, a separately produced elaborate fringe was attached to all four sides of the rug. Often, the date and name of the person for whom the rug was woven was included in the design. Designs were simple floral and animal motifs. Often, only two colors were used. Later rugs of Alpujarra include Christian symbols. See “Spain.”

Altai culture, Altay culture. Altai is an area of Inner Asia taking its name from the Altai mountains. From the second millennium B.C.E., the area has been inhabited by cattle-rearing nomads and agriculturists. Many objects employing distinctive stylized animal motifs of wood, bone, bronze, and gold have been found in burial sites. Felts, fabrics, and pile rugs have also been found at these sites. In the eastern Altai, a pile rug was discovered at Pazyryk that has been radiocarbon-dated to about 500 to 300 B.C.E. See “Pazyryk carpet.”



Altai gold deer of the same period as the Pazyryk carpet

Alti Bolaq. A village of north central Afghanistan near the Turkmen border. The village is a source of rugs woven by Ersaris. The rugs are double-welting and the asymmetric knot is used.

alum mordant. Aluminum sulfate (and sometimes potassium sulfate) are both called alum. These water-soluble salts are used in dyeing as a mordant. With many dyes, they produce lighter colors than tin or chrome mordants.

Alvand. See “Qazvin.”

Amaleh. A subtribe of the Qashqa’i of southwest Iran, noted for its kilims. See “Qashqa’i.”

American Conference on Oriental Rugs. See “A.C.O.R.”

American Indian rugs. See “Navajo rugs,” “Pueblo weaving,” and “Rio Grande blankets.”

Ames Pictorial Rug. This Mughal rug, a gift of Mrs. F. L. Ames, is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. It shows scenes from the hunt, domestic scenes, and mythological beasts. The border includes grotesque faces. This rug is thought to be a copy of a painting. It was woven in the first half of the seventeenth century and is eight feet by five feet.



Ames Pictorial Rug (detail)

Amo Oghli, Amoghli, Emoghli. An early 20th-century rug workshop owner, rug weaver, and rug designer of Mashhad, Iran. “See Mashhad.”

Amritsar (Sanskrit, “lake of immortality”). A city of the Punjab in northwest India, the major Sikh center. Rug manufacturing began in Amritsar in about 1860, using unemployed shawl weavers. Early production copied Turkmen designs. Production in Amritsar declined during the depression in the 1920s and during the partition of India, but has since recovered. Currently, floral designs are woven based on Persian models. The asymmetric knot is used. Contemporary rugs have a knot density of about 200 to 400 knots per square inch. See “India.”



Amritsar rug Jason Nazmiyal

AMTORG. Acronym for American Trading Organization, an export-import company representing Soviet Russian interests in the United States. The company was active from about 1926 to 1937, exporting commodities to the United States and importing machinery to Russia. From 1926 to about 1930, AMTORG exported old Caucasian and Turkmen rugs to the U.S. After 1931, it exported five-year plan rugs to the U.S. See “five-year plan rugs.”

Amu Darya. A river (the ancient Oxus) near the northern boundary of Afghanistan and the southern boundary of Turkmenistan. Several different Turkmen tribes live along this river. These include the Ersari, Salor, Saryk, and Tekke.

amulet. See “muska.”

analysis. See “technical analysis” and “dye analysis.”

Anatolia. A peninsula between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea constituting Asiatic Turkey or Asia Minor. The rug-weaving population includes Turkmen, Yörük, and Kurdish peoples. Armenian and Greek peoples in Anatolia also wove rugs. Anatolian rugs are the products of workshops such as those of Ushak, Kayseri, and Bandirma, of nomadic Kurds and

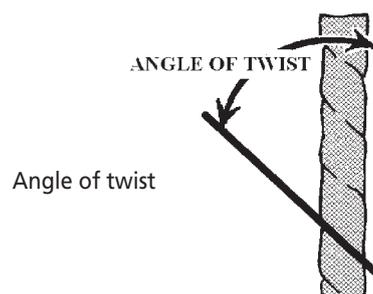
Yörük, and of thousands of villages scattered through Anatolia. The foundation and pile are wool with very few exceptions. Warps are undyed and 2-ply “S” twist; wefts are unplied. The symmetric knot is used consistently. Except in a few rugs of central and east Anatolia, there is no warp offset. Pile rug weaving is an ancient craft of Anatolia. There are fragments of thirteenth-century rugs woven during the Seljuk period. See “Turkey.”

andhani. A camel’s head covering of Pakistan.

Andhra Pradesh. A province of southern India (capital, Hyderabad) and the location of several weaving centers. See “Ellore,” “India,” “Masulipatam,” and “Warangal.”

Andkhoy. A town of north central Afghanistan near the Turkmen border. The town is a collecting point and market for rugs made in the area, primarily woven by Ersaris. Most of these rugs are based on Turkmen designs in shades of red, indigo, and white. The asymmetric knot is used. Usually, these rugs are double-wefted. Typical rug sizes are about 5 feet by 6 feet and 9 feet by 12 feet.

angle of twist. A measure of the tightness to which yarn is twisted in spinning. The angle between the longitudinal axis of the yarn and the plane of the fibers in a single or the plane of the last ply in plied or cabled yarns. The direction of spin is taken into account when measuring this angle. A twist angle of about 5 degrees is a soft-spun yarn; 20 degrees is a medium-spun yarn; and 30 to 45 degrees is a hard-spun yarn. Crêpe spun yarns crinkle and have an angle of twist of 65 degrees or more. See “twist.”



Angle of twist



Angora goat

Angora goat. A goat of Turkish origin and the source of mohair, a long, coarse, and lustrous fiber. See “mohair.”

Anhalt Medallion Carpet. A sixteenth-century carpet of northwest Persia. It formerly belonged to the Dukes of Anhalt of Dessau and is now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. This carpet is in excellent condition. It has a circular lobed medallion with pendants on a yellow field of arabesques with leaves, blossoms, and palmettes. Among the arabesques are peacocks with plumage displayed. It has a knot density of 400 asymmetric knots per square inch. The warp is cotton and the weft is silk. The size of this rug is 26 feet 6 inches by 13 feet 7 inches.

aniline dyes. Direct dyes derived from aniline, which is in turn a derivative of coal tar. The first such dye, mauve, was invented by Perkin in 1856. By 1870, aniline dyes were inexpensive and widely used. Some of the aniline dyes used in rugs were not colorfast. See “acid dyes,” “basic dyes,” and “synthetic dyes.”

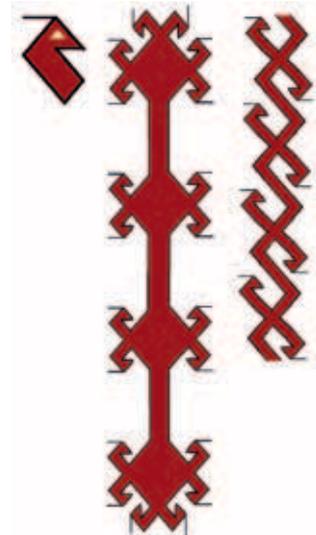
animal carpet. Any carpet design including animal motifs. More particularly, Persian and Indo-Persian rugs with representations of a variety of animals in the field of the rug. See “Animal Carpet of Leopold I,” “animal motifs,” “hunting carpets,” “Sackville Mughal Animal and Tree Carpet,” and “Widener Animal Carpet.”



Animal carpet (detail)

Animal Carpets of Leopold I, Emperor. A pair of late sixteenth-century Persian carpets given to the Austrian Emperor Leopold I by Peter the Great of Russia. The field is red and filled with animals in combat, cloud bands, blossoms, and palmettes. The inner minor border contains lines from a poem. The knot density is 320 asymmetric knots per square inch. Warps are cotton and wefts are silk. The size of the rugs is 11 feet 6 inches by 24 feet 4 inches. One rug is in Vienna and the other is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

animal head motif, animal head column. A motif also known as “latch hooks” consisting of a triangle offset on a column. The animal head sometimes possesses an eye. A short line may trail from the point of the triangle. This motif may be repeated in rows or columns and as a border or medallion outline. This motif is common in tribal and Turkic weavings.



Animal head motif and columns

animal motifs. A very wide range of animals has been used in oriental rug designs. Animals have been represented naturalistically, as in the Persian hunting carpets. Through progressive stylization and abstraction, they have been represented as geometric symbols, as in Turkmen rugs. Even extinct animals may be represented. The aurochs, an extinct ox, is thought to be represented in certain ancient designs in Anatolian kilims. Domesticated animals are common in the weavings of nomadic peoples. These include goats, horses, camels, and roosters. The tiger is often represented in the rugs of Tibet and the lion in the rugs of southwest Iran. The bat is common in Chinese rugs.

For some cultures, the animals represented may symbolize a trait or condition as the crane in China symbolizes long life. The animal may symbolize a particular ethnic group or tribe, as in the tauk noska gul of the Chodor Turkmen.

A geometric design may suggest an animal form to those wishing to label and classify the design where the weavers had no intention of any animal representation. Such is the case with the “Eagle Kazak” and the “running dog” border. See “symbolism in rugs.”

animal trapping. Weavings used primarily for ornament for horses, camels, and donkeys. These include blankets that cover the back and cross the chest of the animal, as well as head ornaments. See “andhani,” “asmalyk,” “at-joli,” “cherlyk,” “chul,” “dzo ke-thil,” “jol,” “kapan,” “khalyk,” “knee caps,” “sar,” “shabrak,” “takheb” and “ushter-i jol.”

Anno Hegirae, A.H. Latin designation of years in accordance with the Islamic calendar, beginning in 622 C.E., the year of Muhammad’s emigration (Arabic hijra) from Mecca to Medina. See “Islamic dates.”

Antalya. A town on the Gulf of Antalya in Anatolia, located just south of Döşmealtı. Carpets made in Döşmealtı are sometimes incorrectly termed Antalya. Antalya is a trading center for rugs. See “Turkey.”



Antalya kilim Kazim Yıldız

Antheraea pernyi. A silk-producing moth that feeds on oak leaves. See “silk.”

antique. This term is ambiguous and variously interpreted. An antique rug may be one thought to be at least 100 years old. See “dating rugs.”

antique wash. The application of chemicals to a rug to soften colors and simulate the appearance of an older rug. See “luster” and “bleaching.”

appliqué. Superimposed fabrics in which the pattern is created by an accessory fabric (or tape, ribbon, or cord) overlaid on a ground fabric or the pattern is created by cutouts in the ground fabric with the accessory fabric underlaid beneath the cutout.

appraisal. Determining the monetary value of a rug. In formal appraisal, the rug is identified and described. These properties are considered: attribution, age, condition, rug structure, design, and color.

Generally, auction prices are the best guide to the value of oriental rugs of interest to collectors. Easily identified types of rugs have a relatively narrow range of prices in the auction market. Rugs in exceptionally good or bad condition or having exceptional aesthetic merit fall outside this price range. Rugs of less popular or rare attribution have more variable auction prices. Prices are affected by changing interests of collectors and by changing tastes in interior decoration.

The valuation of contemporary decorative oriental rugs depends on current production and changing trends in interior decoration. Current retail prices are the comparative basis for valuing decorative rugs.

Monetary valuation is likely to be influenced by the motive of the person desiring the appraisal. Low appraisals may occur if the owner’s motive for valuation is purchase or estate taxation. High appraisals may occur if the owner’s motive is sale, an insurance claim, or gift deduction for tax purposes. Usually, replacement cost is the basis for declared value for insurance premium determination. Some consider it unethical for an appraiser to charge a fee based on the appraised value of the rug. See “attribution,” “condition,” “dating rugs,” “decorative rug,” “design classification,” and “technical analysis.”

apricot. A light yellowish red color, either the result of initial dye colors or the result of fading.

Aq Chah. A town and district of northern Afghanistan. The town is the chief market for rugs in Afghanistan. Rugs from the villages surrounding Aq Chah are woven by Turkmen. These rugs are in traditional designs and woven with the asymmetric knot. Colors used are red, indigo, and black, with some white, orange, and green



Arabatchi joval Sothebys

Arabatchi (from Turk. *arabacı* “(driver of) wheeled vehicle.”)

A Turkmen tribe of the Amu Darya (Oxus) region of central Turkestan. Older main carpets attributed to this tribe carry the tauk noska gul. The dominant field color in their weavings is purplish-brown. Outlines are formed in natural brown wool. There is some warp offset and the knot is asymmetric and open to the left. Wefts are spun of wool and white cotton. However, the attribution of specific rugs to this tribe is questioned. See “Turkmen.”

arabesque. A design motif of intertwining or scrolling vines, tendrils, straps, or branches. These may be classified as geometric, floral, or vegetal, including the split-leaf type known as “*rumî*.” Arabesques usually include leaves, profile buds, and blossoms. They are a common device in oriental rug designs. Systems of arabesques may be superimposed in rug designs. See “islîmi,” “saz,” “split leaf arabesque,” “Vase carpet,” and “Strapwork carpets.”



Arabesque



Iraqi Arabic embroidered rug (detail) *Tribal Collections*

Arabs. Arabic-speaking peoples inhabiting the countries of Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and much of North Africa. There are scattered groups throughout the Middle East, including Iran, and Turkestan. There is no significant rug production in Arabia. However, a so-called Arab tribe in southwest Iran, a member of the Khamseh Confederacy, produces pile rugs, and Arab enclaves in Turkestan (both northern Afghanistan and Uzbekistan) are the source of kilims. See “Khamseh” and “Bedouin.”

Arabia. A peninsula of the Near East bounded on the west by the Red Sea, on the south by the Indian Ocean, on the east by the Persian Gulf, and on the north by Iraq and Jordan. It presently comprises the states of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates. Mecca, the Muslim holy city, is near the west coast.

Arabic calligraphy and script. Arabic script derives from Nabataean script, and is a member of the family of Semitic writing systems which, via Phoenician, gave rise to the Greek and hence the Latin alphabet. The development and wide usage of Arabic script was due to the need to copy and distribute the Koran, beginning in the seventh century. Ornamented script or calligraphy developed from early Jazm script. There were many succeeding variations. These included Kufic, Thuluth, Naskhi, Nasta’liq, Muhaqqaq, Rayhani, Riqa’, and Tawqi’. Of these, only Kufic, Thuluth, Naskhi, and Nasta’liq have been found in inscriptions in oriental rugs. The inscriptions in the Ardabil carpet are in Nasta’liq. Kufesque is a group of design motifs derived from Kufic script, but not directly readable as script. The calligraphic styles were first used for textile and rug inscriptions in this approximate time sequence:

Kufic:
seventh to tenth centuries



Kufic

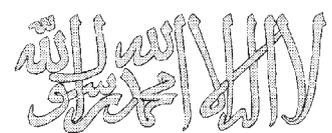
Kufesque:
eleventh to fifteenth centuries



Nasta’liq:
sixteenth to eighteenth centuries

Nasta’liq

Thuluth:
nineteenth to twentieth centuries



Thuluth

See “cartouche,” “Kufesque,” and “inscriptions.”