Textile 6
Panel of medallion-patterned velvet with floral decoration.
Cut, voided red and white silk velvet brocaded with silver-gilt thread. Bursa, ca. 1600. Size: 63½ x 38; 62 x 89 cm, two pieces.
The design of repeated medallions, either in straight or staggered rows, becomes increasingly popular in Bursa velvets by the end of the 16th century. It seems to have been used in the main for fabrics destined to serve as covers for furniture, rather than for costume, as tailored fragments of velvet bearing this design are almost never encountered.
This example staggers the eight-lobed white velvet medallions on the rich dark-red ground with vertical pendants to each medallion, providing accents of silver thread on their voided ground. Alternative rows of medallions bear either four large tulips or four fan-shaped carnations, interspersed with sprays of simbel, or hyacinths, while the latter flower is also seen on the silvery pendants.

Textile 7
Fragment of diaper-patterned velvet with design of flower-decorated palmettes.
Cut, voided red, green-silk velvet brocaded with silver and silver-gilt thread, three pieces. Bursa, first half of the 17th century. Size: 25½ x 18¾; 64.5 x 45.5 cm.
The most characteristic of all Turkish textile designs was the overall diapered pattern, into which various sorts of floral forms were inserted. Appearing in Turkish art first in brocaded textiles and in velvets such as this piece, the design later spread to ceramics, embroideries, and even carpet designs in later centuries. In this example, the serrated palmette springs from a calyx in the form of a tulip, while the individual leaves are decorated with tiny tulips and carnations. The ground of the palmette motifs is enhanced by silver thread, made by a separate guild of simbel or thread-drawers and supplied then to the duhal or weaver at a price fixed by the government, the diaper-bands are decorated with silver-gilt thread.
The use of such gilt thread was a constant worry to a government concerned with the accumulation of large reserves of precious metals. The beginning of the 17th century was a time of world-wide inflation and bullionist economic policies; from time to time edicts were promulgated by the court forbidding the wasteful use of precious metals in textiles destined for export or for the free market.

Textile 8

**Velvet panel with design of flower-decorated roundels.**

Cut, voided green and red silk velvet brocaded with silver thread. Bursa, 17th century. Size: 25 ¼ x 8 ½ in., 64 x 22 cm.

Designs of this type are closely related to similar designs appearing in Ottoman Turkish ceramic tiles toward the end of the 16th century and throughout the 17th. The six roundels, each decorated with eight tulips and eight carnations, are offset by small rosettes, which would be quartered in the corners of individual tiles.

The combination of pale-green and dark-red is one which Ottoman weavers seem to have adapted from the palette of the famous Mamluk rugs of Egypt. It remained a favorite throughout the 17th century in Bursa silks, while only more rarely appearing in the kerman brocaded textiles of Istanbul.

Textile 9

**Velvet panel with flower-decorated roundels.**

Cut, voided white, red and green silk velvet brocaded with metal thread. Bursa, 17th century. Size: 26 ½ x 45 ½ in., 67 x 115 cm.

Closely similar to the previous example, this panel of velvet is probably somewhat later in date, due both to its slightly coarser weave and to the "stretching" of the design so that the roundels are no longer radially symmetrical in shape.

Despite these changes in technique and the clever use of sparsely-brocaded silver thread on the yellowish voided ground to give the appearance of gold, the velvet pile maintains a deep and glossy luster and the green is actually a stronger and better color than that attainable by Bursa dyers earlier in the 17th century.
Textile 10

Yastik or cushion cover with medallion design.

Cat. No. 62, Divided red silk velvet brocaded with metal thread. Bursa, early 18th century. Size: 43 x 24, 109 x 61 cm.

EXHIBITIONS: Los Angeles-Honolulu, 1974-75 Cat. No. 62.


This cushion cover is virtually identical to a famous, slightly larger, pair now in the Royal Armoury Museum in Stockholm, which was given to King Frederik I in the year 1731 by the Ottoman viceroy of Algiers, Ahud Pasha. The Stockholm textiles have been dated by Agnes Geiger to the period immediately preceding their being given to the Swedish monarch.

The design is a typical one for the velvet yastiks of Bursa: a central medallion contains an eight-pointed star encompassing a lobed medallion, while large tulips fill the spandrels. The border of rosettes is augmented at each end by a row of so-called "lappets" or compartments, each bearing a highly stylized rosette.

With their reduced color range and slightly duller sheen, these later Bursa velvets, many of which tend to incorporate slightly "granular" designs such as those seen in the points of the star, are nevertheless surprisingly high in quality, given the economic tribulations of the "Age of Tulips" and their effect on many of the Ottoman luxury industries toward the end of the reign of Ahmet III.

Textile 11

Tomb cover with design of calligraphic zig-zag bands.

White silk brocaded on green satin. Istanbul (?), probably 18th century. Size: 33⅞ x 25⅞, 85.2 x 65.4 cm. Damaged and worn.


Textiles of this type are rather frequently encountered in Western collections and seem to have been used as covers for the symbolic sarcophagi, or sumaks, found in Ottoman ğaliüs or tombs, of important personages. They employ religious
inscriptions in thuluth script for decoration, and are most difficult to date, as their designs do not incorporate any features that can be readily compared to datable material.

The Arabic inscriptions in the small lozenges of the design praise God: "Oh merciful! Oh much-forgiving!" The zig-zag bands include inscriptions from the Koran, and evocations of the deity, including an elaboration on the shahada or Profession of Faith: "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is His Prophet."

Technically speaking, these tomb covers are superb accomplishments; the script is clear and readable, brocaded in a weft-faced twill in white silk, and the green ground color, the holy color of Islam, has remained quite fresh considering the vicissitudes to which this textile has been subjected.

Textile 12
Panel from a börcha or square cover.
Colored silk and metal thread embroidery on linen, 18th century. Size: 19¾ x 20¾, 49 x 52 cm, Border missing.

REPRODUCTIONS FOR COMPARISON: M. Göünül, "Some Turkish Embroideries," Konst des Orinôtu VI, 1, 1969, fig. 37.

The art of embroidery was practiced with a needle and colored silk threads on a piece of plain cloth, and thus required none of the expensive, complex looms used to weave the velvets and brocaded silks already described. Following local and familial traditions, the embroiderer used a series of free and "counted" stitches, and relied for designs upon the various inspirations of her visual environment, and upon her imagination.

The börcha was a kind of bindle, used to wrap other textiles or similar dry goods, and usually had an embroidered border, missing in this example. The decoration of Ottoman embroideries was usually floral, and here the artist has used her needle to create a field of light-red roses or peonies, complemented by pale-blue leaves and accented by silver-gilt metallic thread.
Textile 13

Large sanjak or shield-shaped banner.

White silk and metallic thread brocaded on red and green satin. Probably Istanbul, early 19th century. Size: 122 x 82 cm, 3 x 21 ft.

REFERENCES: Sotheby’s, April 12, 1776 (reproduced).

REPRODUCTIONS FOR COMPARISON: Denny, Textile Museum Journal 4, 1, 1974, figs. 16-17.

The importance of flags and banners in Islamic culture, both as symbols of political might and as expressions of religious ideology, closely parallels the significance of such objects in the Western tradition. Islamic literature and historical writing are full of references to the profanity of banners as seen in military parades, battles or religious festivals, and as a mark of the hajj, or Holy Pilgrimage, to Mecca and other Islamic shrines.

Large banners such as this were used by the Ottoman Turks from the 15th century onward, although apparently none of the surviving examples of this particular type can be dated earlier than the 17th century. Examples are preserved in the Army Museum, Vienna; the Wawel Castle in Krakow, Poland; the Louvre, Paris; the Fogg Museum, Cambridge; and in other collections in Europe and the United States. They were used primarily in parades and processions in later Ottoman times, and their inscriptions show a purpose which invokes the concept of jihad or Holy War, at once a religious and political duty of the devout Muslim in past times.

The band across the upper part of the banner repeats the shahada several times: “There is no God but God; Muhammad is the Prophet of God.” Like all of the red portions, it is separately woven and sewn to the green silk of the banner field. The six roundels on the sides of the field bear the names of God, the Prophet, and the first four Imams or Caliphs of Islam: Abu Bakr, Umar, ‘Uthman, and ‘Ali. The central roundels proclaim God’s blessings on them all, and invoke a verse from Surah 48 of the Koran, “and God will give you a sure victory.”

Professor Thackston of Harvard University has read the inscriptions of the central cartouche as follows: “God hath bestowed on those who strive a reward greater than on the sedentary. Degrees of rank from Him, and forgiveness and mercy. God is ever Forgiving, Merciful.” This cartouche immediately calls to mind the similar cartouche from the small book of poems in praise of Solomon 1...
continued

(Cat. No. 6) which likewise represents a banner, and bears a similar inscription invoking the help of God and a speedy victory.

The banner illustrated here is very similar to an example formerly in the Pozzi collection and now in the Musée historique de Tissus in Lyons, and to a banner now in the Military Museum in Istanbul; the latter is dated to the early 19th century, and helps to form a general dating for this slightly earlier example.

Textile 14

Yastik or cushion cover with medallion design.

Cat., voiledd red and green silk velvet and metallic thread. Bursa or Üsküdar, 19th century. Size: 48¼ x 23¼, 124 x 59 cm.


It appears that in the 19th century, production of silk velvets continued at Üsküdar, directly across the Bosphorus from Istanbul, at which time the voided ground increased in proportion to the velvet proper, and the traditional Ottoman designs were abandoned completely for Europeanized designs incorporating the aesthetic of the Louis XVI style, coupled with more than a suspicion of the Napoleonic style as well. The Ottoman idea of the yastik persisted under the European decorative veneer, a veneer reflecting the established "official" taste of the Ottoman court which controlled velvet production. At the same time, however, many practitioners of the traditional art of embroidery were preserving the older Turkish traditions in the face of such Western intrusions as this cushion cover.

Textile 15

Embroidered edging from a cover or hanging.

Colored silk and metal thread chain-stitched on cotton. Ca. 1900. Size: 95¼ x 3¼, 241 x 9 cm.

This continuously flowing and looping chain-stitched vine, bearing flowers of various sizes and shapes, shows the peculiar adaptability of the chain-stitch to the format of a long and narrow border. Such embroidery forms the decoration of many genres of textile, from the yastik or mekrama (napkin) and oushur (sash for šalvar, the baggy Turkish pants) to the kaftan or towel.
Textile 16

Wall hanging in the form of an elaborate mihrab or prayer niche.

Material: silk, embroidered with gold thread. Ca. 1900, probably embroidered in Istanbul. Size: 76.9 x 59.8 cm, 195 x 152 cm.

In the world of art, humor, even when not intended, can be found in the most unusual places. This wall hanging, embroidered in all seriousness by its anonymous creator, depicts a serious subject: the mihrab, or niche in a mosque wall denoting the direction of Mecca, portrayed as a metaphor for the divine gate leading to Paradise, and ornamented according to Koranic tradition with a hanging oil lamp:

"God is the light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His light is as if there were a niche, And within it a lamp, the lamp inside a glass, The Glass like a brilliant star. . . ." (Surah 24, Verse 25)

The subject appears countless times in Islamic art, in prayer rugs, in the architectural configuration of the mosque itself, and in depictions in miniature painting. Seldom, however, is this Islamic subject seen in as florid and ornamental a version as in this hanging.

From the twisted baroque columns to the incredibly complex lamp, this textile shows the impact of a Victorian baroque style. While we can breathe a sigh of relief that this style has today passed its period of popularity in both East and West, its appearance in this hanging cannot but cause the beholder to suppress a combination of shock and laughter.
Ornamental square bearing the tugbea of Sultan Mehmet V Reshad.

Metal thread in dival naqish stitch on white satin. Ca. 1907-1918, probably embroidered in Istanbul. Size: 22 x 22 cm or 56 x 58 cm.

Mehmet V, successor to the universally disliked Abdul Hamid II, was placed upon the Ottoman throne as the result of the Young Turk revolution of 1908. During his reign, Turkish artists and architects for the first time in two centuries began a serious attempt to recapture the spirit of the Ottoman Classical Style of the 16th century. The realm of embroidery, however, remained relatively untouched by the new classicism, and this patriotic silk satin square utilizes the broad “floating” of metallic thread of the dival naqish stitch, which was often used in the Europeanized embroideries such as the wall hanging (Textile 16).

The tugbea or stylized royal signature-emblem is surprisingly close in form to its 16th and 17th century progenitors (cf. Cat. No. 8), but the proportions are those reached at the time of Sultan Mahmud II, the great Ottoman reformer, in the early 19th century. For the benefit of those who might have difficulty deciphering the Sultan’s name entwined at the bottom of the tugbea, the name “Reshad” appears embroidered to the right, and two stars with crescents, the emblem of the Ottoman Empire, crown the composition.
CERAMICS

The first ceramic production under the Turks in Anatolia to reach an artistic level
above that of humble everyday wares was that used in building revetments. At
first colored glaze was applied to the simple bricks employed in Seljuk buildings;
subsequently, large tiles glazed with turquoise, blue, or brown colors were cut
into carefully planned shapes, forming tile mosaic decorations used on the surfaces
of important buildings, and incorporating traditional vegetal, geometric, and
calligraphic designs. The invention of the "dry-line" (odadı sırız) technique
allowed glazes of different colors to be fired on a single tile, making complex
designs easier and cheaper to produce.

In the late 15th century the potters of Kütahya and Iznik, who had previously
made simple glazed wares, began to utilize an artificial clay composed of kaolin
(potter's earth) mixed with a flint-like material called piş, clearly in an attempt to
duplicate the technique of Chinese porcelain. The earliest wares and revetments
made in this technique were painted with blue decorations in traditional Islamic
style, utilizing the nuri arabesque, under a clear glaze. Later experiments with
various adaptations of Chinese designs, and then with polychrome underglaze-
painting in which turquoise, purple, and dark-green were added to the basic blue-
and-white. This led by the second quarter of the 16th century, to a felicitous
collaboration of court designers with the ceramic ateliers. The collaboration
reached its height after 1560, by which time the Iznik potters had developed the
famous polychrome red and green. From 1560 until 1620, the production of Iznik
ceramics was unrivaled in the Islamic world, but in the 17th century, a decline in
quality set in. The tile factories were briefly revived in Istanbul in the early 18th
century, but the afterglow of the classical age may be seen most clearly in the
charming bourgeois pottery made by the Armenian communities of Kütahya in
the 18th and 19th centuries.

Ceramic 1
Color-glaze tile revetment from a sandal or cenotaph.
Anatolia (Konya?), 18th century. Size: 87 x 87 x 87, 24 x 24 cm.; ½, ⅔ in. thick.
REFERENCES: Sonatel, No. 3, reproduced. Continued
This fragment of the pentagonal end of a symbolic sarcophagus, which once rested on the floor above the actual burial in an Anatolian **kimesh** or tomb, has lost its topmost "gable" together, in all probability, with the name of the deceased person for whom it was fashioned. The remaining inscription, molded in the white siliceous clay and covered with a thick turquoise glaze, contains inscriptions in praise of God, and bears the date Hegra 611, corresponding to A.D. 1254.

Such relatively unsophisticated ceramic revetments as this, with their great thickness and slightly warped outlining, appear to belong to the very earliest phase of ceramic building revetments in Anatolia in the beginning of the 13th century. The choice of a cursive version of the Arabic script, rather than the complex and geometric kufic usually employed for major commemorative inscriptions, again points to a relatively humble artistic origin; the colored glaze, which has become known as "Turkish blue" in English, was evidently the easiest to make from the plentiful copper ores found on the central Anatolian plateau.

**Ceramic 2**

**Fragment of a color-glaze mukarnas (stalactite decoration).**

Probably from a frieze or mihrab niche. Bursa, 15th century. Size: 13 1/4 x 4 1/4, 14 x 9.8 cm.

REFERENCES: Soestel, No. 16, not reproduced.

EXHIBITIONS: Los Angeles-Honolulu, 1974-75, Cat. No. 52.

REPRODUCTIONS FOR COMPARISON: Gabriel, 1958, pl. XLII, 3; Arseven, fig. 427 (the mihrab of the Green Mosque); Skira, p. 206.

In the first half of the 15th century, the vigorous architectural patronage of the Ottoman capital of Bursa led to the adoption of new techniques of ceramic architectural decoration, among them that known as "wet" or "dry cord" work, in which "dry" lines of a greasy pigment kept various colored glazes separate as they liquefied in the firing process. The results were complex compositions in dark-blue, turquoise, white, and yellow that could be made on mass-produced modular pieces of moulded tile and then cemented into place on the walls of buildings.

In the latter part of the 19th century, the vigorous Vali or Governor of Bursa, Ahmet Vefik Pasha, embarked on an extensive program restoration of old monuments, at which time many fragments of Bursa buildings seem to have found their way to the West. This ceramic element may have formed part of the non-varnished facade revetments of the tomb of Sultan Mehmet I (d. 1421), which
framed the elaborate decorated doorway of the famous "Green Tomb" next to that sultan's mosque in Bursa, and were probably part of an elaborate mukarnas moulding. Similar fragments are found in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and in private collections.

**Ceramic 3**

**Blue-and-white footed dish in Chinese style.**


The technique of the blue-and-white porcelain of China was so well developed in Islamic lands by the late 14th century that many of the miniature paintings depicting court life of the period gave prominence to the rare and costly Chinese vessels.

In the late 15th century, Turkish artisans working in Iznik and Kutahya in northwestern Anatolia developed a hard white siliceous ceramic material, similar in appearance to the harder and more translucent porcelain, on which they were able to paint designs in cobalt-blue pigments under a clear and shiny glaze. By the second quarter of the 16th century, the artists of Iznik were producing ceramic wares of very high quality, utilizing both traditional Islamic designs and free adaptations of the designs of Ming and Yüan porcelain.

This deep dish, on a high foot which was turned separately and then joined to the dish before firing, shows a design of exquisitely drawn floral spirals freely adapted from 15th-century Chinese originals. The five interlocking circular compositions of the bottom of the dish are echoed in the independent elements of the ovato or oise of the dish, while a simple vine-scroll meander decorates the rim.

The cusping of the rim, again a characteristic of Chinese porcelain, is quite commonly found in many of the fine Iznik products of the first half of the 16th century.
Ceramic 4

Large blue-and-white dish in Chinese style decorated with grape clusters.

Iznik, ca. 1540-55. Diameter: 17¾ in, 44 cm. Height: 3½ in, 7.5 cm. Some repairs.

Reproductions for comparison: Art, 1973, No. 89.

A particular group of Ming porcelains which captured the fancy of the Iznik artists depicts three bunches of grapes hanging amid an arbor of leaves and curled vine tendrils, the whole composition surrounded on thereverse with small floral sprays. The Iznik artists added to the palette a turquoise which was used for accents in the composition, and the paleness of the entire design contrasts with the blue-black used in the Chinese originals. The stencil-like separation of leaves in the central flowers of the small sprays, a convention well established in Turkish ceramics by the early 16th century, shows the intrusion into the basically Chinese design of the conventions of Turkish tile-painting.

This dish, unusual in its very large size, is decorated with a rim design which in Chinese porcelains represents waves of the sea crested with bits of foam. By about 1540, the Turkish artists had simplified the original by rendering the waves as a series of tight spirals, which, as the century progressed, were to become increasingly more abstract. The underside of the saucer of this large dish is also decorated with small floral sprays similar to those on the inside, and, in homage to the Chinese original, the dish, once turned on the potter’s wheel, was given the cusped edging of Ming blue-and-white porcelain.

Closely similar examples are found in many collections, among them the Benaki, Athens; the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; the Musée de Sévres; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and the Freer Gallery, Washington, D.C.