The Holbein pattern, the same as that of the rather smaller rug no. 38, was immensely popular from the middle of the 15th century onwards. Comparisons with similar rugs depicted in Persian miniatures, European manuscripts and paintings suggests that the chequered background of this example, with alternate red and black squares, came into use during the 15th century. The interlace border is reminiscent of earlier kufic borders.

The warp is of white wool and there are two shoots of red wool after each row of knots. The knots are of the Turkish type, about 9 per square cm, in wool of six colours.

Unpublished

Published: Berlin-Dahlem (1971a, no. 586)

41 Lotto rug
Length 183cm, width 121cm
National Museum, Budapest, no. 1952.228
Turkey, Ottoman period, late 15th early 17th century

The 'Lotze' pattern was used in innumerable Anatolian rugs and carpets during the 16th and 17th centuries, see no. 42. The angular version of the pattern, called the 'kilim' style, has recently been attributed to Transylvania. The border pattern employed in this rug was current by the middle of the 16th century since it appears in a rug depicted in a portrait of Lady Jane Grey in the National Portrait Gallery, London. The warp is of undyed wool and there are two shoots of light red wool after each row of knots. The knots are of the Turkish type, about 9 per square cm, in wool of six colours.

Unpublished

Published: Kendrick (1974, p. 74); Beattie (1964, no. 4)

42 Lotto carpet
Length 390cm, width 245cm
The Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, V.R.D. Collection, no. Boughan 4
Turkey (Anatolia), Ottoman period, 17th early 18th century

The pattern of this carpet consists of stylized foliage ornament arranged so as to form alternating rows of seated serpents and crosses. Named from its appearance in paintings by Lotto, it first appears in a rug depicted by Sebastiano del Piombo in a portrait group of 1516 in the National Gallery, Washington, D.C. Like its older relative, the 'Holbein' pattern, it was reproduced in a vast number of Anatolian rugs and carpets, whose centres of production are unidentified but are thought to have been in the Usakh area; the latter attribution, however, has recently been questioned by Ellis (1975). The colour scheme of a yellow pattern with blue details on a red ground is almost invariably. This carpet was originally a good deal longer; the border at one end has been made up with parts of the side borders. The corners of the border are designed with more care than is usual in Turkish rugs. The warp is of ivory wool and there are two shoots of red wool after each row of knots. The knots are of the Turkish type, about 14 per square cm, in wool of seven colours.

Published: Beattie (1959 and 1964, no. 2)

43 Star Usakh carpet
Length 224cm, width 193cm
National Trust, Hardwick Hall
Turkey (Anatolia), Ottoman period, late 16th century

The name given to this type of carpet derives from the eight-pointed star alternating with a slightly smaller lozenge in an endlessly repeating pattern. A diversity of stars and medallion designs with similar ornament, colouring and technique have been ascribed to Usakh through their likeness to more recent productions of that area, see Boeck and Kullmer (1970, p. 39). Two 17th century Usakh designs can be seen in nos. 44 and 46, the second having a later version of the border on this carpet. This border is very similar to one on a medallion Usakh in a portrait of Henry VIII and his family made for Queen Elizabeth c. 1570, see Strong (1960, pl. 95). A star Usakh lies beneath the feet of the Doge in Paris Bordone's painting of 1534. In 1954–5 two European 'star' carpets were made for Sir Edward Montagu copying an Usakh design. The Hardwick carpet is thought to date somewhere between the prototype of these carpets and a piece repeating the same border in the Kunstgewerbe-museum, Cologne, see Beattie (1959). The knots of the carpet are of the Turkish type, 12 per square cm, on a warp of undyed wool. There are two shoots of red wool each after row of knots.

Published: Erdmann (1963, pp. 77–78); Berlin-Dahlem (1971a, no. 181)

44 Star Usakh carpet
Length 276cm, width 197cm
Statens Museer for Kunst, Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin-Dahlem, no. 85.387
Turkey (Anatolia), Ottoman period, 17th century

This is a fragment of one of the lesser-known Usakh patterns which were studied by Erdmann (1963). The most celebrated example of this group was a carpet in the Berlin collection, now destroyed, and in Detroit. Carpets comparable with some examples of the group are seen in paintings of the second quarter of the 17th century. Other examples are known in private collections. This carpet has a woolen pile with 13 Turkish knots per square cm on a white woolen warp; red woolen weft, two shoots between each row of knots.

Published: Erdmann (1963, pp. 79–77); Berlin-Dahlem (1971a, no. 181)
45 Prayer rug with flowers, foliage and arabesque ornament

Length 18 cm, width 117 cm

Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst, Vienna, no. 7.8327

Turkey, Ottoman court manufactory, late 16th century

This rug from the former Austrian Imperial collection includes a variety of elements—the luxuriant composition of the wine-red field, the incisely drawn arabesque in the spandrels of the arch, the Chinese-inspired cloud ornament in the quadrants below and the elegant rhythmic pattern of the light blue border—which are characteristic of the finest Ottoman decoration and are paralleled in the best late 16th century tileswork of Istanbul. Carpets and prayer rugs in this style are generally assigned to workshops operating for the Ottoman court, though they have also been variously attributed to Damascus, Cairo, Bursa and Istanbul; later Ghiziers prayer rugs reproduce some features of the style in a debased form. The present rug is closely related to, a technically similar one in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, and another, less similar technically, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. See Washington (1974, no. 11) and McMullen (1965, pl. 4). The way of this example is of green silk on two levels and there are two shoots of red silk at each row of knots. The knots are of Persian type, about 56 per square cm, in two colours, chiefly wool, but cotton is used for white and yellow areas—a characteristic feature of a group of these Ottoman court carpets.

Published: Rug (1913, p. 316); Sircar and Trechtlew (1926, pl. 56); Ellis (1969, pl. 1); Dumbad (1973, p. 200)

46 Usbek medallion rug

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Islamisches Museum, no. 1.9327

Turkey, Ottoman period, 17th century

The export of Turkish carpets to Europe continued unabated throughout the 17th century. The Levant Companies of England and Holland imported carpets in large numbers, and Usbek carpets are the type most frequently represented in paintings of the period in these countries. Several types of design continued to be popular well into the 19th century, though the details frequently became stereotyped and even inaccurate. This carpet was probably woven in the mid-17th century as its style is vigorous and the details well drawn. It may be compared with several other examples, in the St Louis Art Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. It is woven on a white woolen warp with a woollen pile of Turkish knots and two shoots of red woolen weft after each row of knots.

Unpublished

47 Usbek prayer rug

Length 110 cm, width 120 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Islamisches Museum, no. 1.154

Turkey, Ottoman period, 17th century

Carpets were made in Usbek from the 16th century and they were among the most familiar of oriental carpets exported to Europe. Prayer rugs, however, were rarely exported at that time, except perhaps to other Muslim countries, and because they were in daily use for the prayers of the faithful few have survived. This splendid example may be assigned to the early 17th century and is greatly superior to the later rugs which repeat some of its motifs. The stylized cloud-band adapted from Persian designs is a frequent motif in Usbek rugs (compare nos. 48 and 49) but seldom is it used as skillfully as here. The carpet has a white woolen warp, and two shoots of red weft after each row of knots of the Turkish type.

Published: Bode and Einzel (1975, cover and pp. 55, 60); Brahms (1960, pl. 136)

48 Usbek prayer rug

Length 160 cm, width 120 cm


Turkey, Ottoman period, mid 17th century

The design of the border, the interlacing stems with foliate arabesques in the corners of the field and the shape and ornamentation of the central medallion are all characteristic of 17th century Usbek carpets, as are the colouring and technique of this rug. Large numbers of 17th and 18th century rugs survive with quarters of squares placed in the corners of the field to create mirror-image arches. In this example, a four lobed medallion and a detached pendant hang at one end in place of a mosque lamp, suggesting that the rug was intended for use in prayer. The amount of detail in the cloud-band border indicates a date around the middle of the 17th century for this piece: the cloud bands are still vigorous, but the hooked ends protruding from them have become simple V-shapes on the sides of the border. The rug contains 11 knots of the Turkish type per square cm in wool of six colours. The white wool warp is bound by two shoots of red wool weft after each row of knots.

Published: London (1935, p. 25, pl. 135)

49 Usbek prayer rug

Length 390 cm, width 173 cm

Private Collection, England

Turkey, Ottoman period, about 1700

Basically the same type as no. 48, with the same design in border and spandrels, the slightly stiffer treatment of the border and the loss of some detail indicate a later date. Also later is the invasion of the central field by a floral motif from the border. The ornamentation of the central medallion resembles the central motif on some 'Transylvanian' rugs, see Schinzler (1933, pls. 51, 54).

WOollen pile chiefly in red, yellow and blue-black is in knots of the Turkish type, 10 per square cm, on a warp of white wool. There are two shoots of red wool weft after each row of knots.

Published: Mustafa (1911, fig. 38); Spühler (1978)
59 White ground rug
Length 170cm, width 145cm
Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, no. 79/68
Turkey (possibly Ushak), Ottoman period, late 17th century

White ground rugs appear in European paintings and inventories (in the latter, designated as "Turkish") from the 17th century. The majority of surviving pieces are of the "bird" pattern, named from a rhomboid leaf with a 'beak' at either end, from which the design on this rug is supposed to derive. But the elongated blossoms with asymmetrical angular stems seem neither to be direct descendants of the flowers in the ground pattern on Star Ushak carpets. The most common border on the 'bird' rugs is the cloud band found on many Ushak carpets of the 17th century, compared to no. 48, as are the inconspicuous trefoils on stalls of this carpet. Given also similarities of technique, it is possible that the white ground rugs were another product of the Ushak looms.

A slightly later rug with the same border and guard-strips has been published, see Erdmann (1955, pl. 150). A variant was in the Protestant church at Richtiap, see Schmutzler (1973, pl. 16). Knots of the Turkish type, 7 per square cm, are made on a white wool warp, with two shoots of yellow wool weft after each row of knots.

Published: Vigh and Layser (1925, pl. VII).

51 'Transylvanian' rug
Length 163cm, width 138cm
Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, no. 79/67
Turkey (Anatolia), Ottoman period, late 17th-early 18th century

So many rugs with this design were found in churches of Transylvania that they came to be known as 'Transylvanian', even though it was always understood that they were made in Anatolia. Western European and even American paintings of the 17th and 18th centuries show that their popularity was by no means confined to Eastern Europe. The earliest known painting showing the characteristic border and guard-stripes seen in the present rug dates from 1610, by Cornelis de Vos. Thomas de Keyser's portrait of Constantia Huregan in the National Gallery, London, dated 1627, shows the field with this type of spandrill, lamp and flowers. Some rugs have the arch at only one end, with flowers spreading over the whole field from a hanging lamp; see Dimand (1973, fig. 176, no. 81) and Schmutzler (1973, pl. 42, 43). But on most examples, as in the present case, the design has been transformed to give ends as mirror image. The design and ornamentation of the spandrills derive from the Ushak rugs, compare no. 47. This rug is woven with about 20 knots of the Turkish type per square cm on a warp of red wool. There are two shoots of red wool weft after each row of knots.

Published: Vigh and Layser (1925, pl. XII), Budapest (1970, no. 178).

57 Prayer rug with three stilted arches on six columns
Length 168cm, width 113cm
Textile Museum, Washington, D.C., no. 32.22.1
Turkey (Anatolia), Ottoman period, 17th-early 18th century

Rugs of this type, with the same field and border design, appear in Dutch paintings of the 17th century, particularly clearly in Nicolaas van Gelder's Still Life of 1664 in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. The arch flanked by two smaller arches appears in 16th century prayer rugs in the Ottoman court style in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, and in Bucharest; see Washington (1974, no. 3) and Beattie (1968, fig. 3). The present design appears to be an angular, provincial version of such curvilinear prototypes. Later derivations of the design, simplified still further, are seen in the Ladik prayer rugs of the late 18th and 19th centuries. Beattie finds these Ladik rugs technically dissimilar from the 17th and early 18th century pieces preserved in Transylvanian churches which may have been made in various parts of Anatolia; an origin in European Turkey has also been mooted; see Beattie (1968, pp. 253-5). The warp is of pale red wool and there are two shoots of pale red wool after each row of knots. The knots are of the Turkish type, about 15 per square cm, in wool of eight colours. The missing lower border has been replaced with a tile border of the same design from another rug.

Published: Jacoby (1973, pl. 46); Washington (1974, no. XII).
54 Prayer rug with six columns
Length: 165 cm, width: 133 cm
Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, no. 7946
Turkey (Anatolia), Ottoman period, 17th–18th century
The design of this rug, with red columns and polychrome rosettes on a yellow ground, is striking in its simplicity. The triple arch motif seen in the rug no. 53 is here reduced to the six supporting columns only. The warp is of yellow or yellow twisted with brown wool and there are two shots of yellow wool weft after each row of knots. The knots are of the Turkish type, about 15 per square cm, in wool of six colours.
Published: Beattie (1964, fig. 22); Baradi (1976, no. 7).

55 Ghiordes prayer rug
Length: 175 cm, width: 124.5 cm
The Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, V.P.D. Collection, no. Bouillon 7
Turkey (Ghiordes), Ottoman period, early 18th century
The border of this handsome prayer rug is a late version of the border designed for 16th century rugs of the Ottoman court manufactory (compare no. 45). The use of this border, the shape of the prayer arch and the columns which support it, here transformed into long decorated rectangles with a flower at each end, are typical of the 18th-century rugs made in Ghiordes. Also typical are the disciplined knotting, comparatively thin body and rich polychromy of this piece. The design is distinguished by a particularly fine hanging mosque lamp, beneath which is a central suspended upside down containing a carnation. A later Ghiordes rug in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, copies this feature but omits the columns; see Dimand (1973, fig. 123). Knots are of the Turkish type in wool of twelve colours and white cotton, 19-20 per square cm, on a warp of pale tan wool, with two shots of red wool weft after each row of knots.
Published: London (1914, no. 38); Beattie (1964, pl. 13, no. 15).

56 Salting carpet
Length: 23 cm, width: 163 cm
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, no. T.402-1910, from the Salting Collection
Turkey (Hereke), Ottoman period, probably 1860-80
This finely knotted rug in brilliant colours, scintillating with silver, was published in the 1860s as a Persian carpet of the 16th century. As studies of carpets developed, doubt was expressed concerning date and provenance of this and other rugs similar in style and technique. By 1931 they were tentatively attributed to 'the neighbourhood of Constantinople not earlier than the 18th century'; see London (1931). Endmann (1966) dates them to the first half of the 19th century, suggesting an origin from the Sultan's looms at Hereke, since the Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul, still holds the largest collection of these rugs. Beattie (1968) doubted whether Hereke produced carpets until later in the century, which would make this piece, published in the 1860s, an early example. This particular design was probably inspired by early Persian carpets rather than a direct copy: the fabulous boats grouped in the corners lack an enclosing quarter-medallion and the disposition of the birds is infelicitous. The verses in the borders, by the poet Hīfīg (1320-89), read

"Call for wine, make scattering of roses: from fate what seeskest thou? Thou at noon spoke the rose: Bulbul what sayest thou? Take the cushion into the rose-garden, so that of the lovely one and the wine-pourer Thou mayest take the lip and kiss the cheek, drink wine and smell the rose..." Move thy box-tree [litur] proudly towards the garden
So that the cypress from thy stature may learn submissiveness.
Today thy harem is abed with purchasers. Understand that, and store a road-provision from the capital of gloom... Every bird with a song comes to the King's rose-bed, The bulbul with a lyric, Hīfīg with a prayer.'
About 140 Persian knots per square cm in fourteen colours of wool are tied on a silk warp, with areas of brocaded metal thread. There are three shots of yellow silk weft after each row of knots.
Published: Liévre (1882–3, IV); Beattie (1964, no. 19 and 1968); Endmann (1966).
57 Silk medallion carpet with hunting scenes
Length 480cm, width 355cm
Museum of Fine Art, Boston, no. 66.293, gift of John Gooch, Centennial and other funds
Persia, Safavid period, 16th century

Hunting was an elaborate princely diversion described in Persian legend and poetry from the earliest times and depicted in every artistic medium. As a theme for carpet designs it appears in the early Safavid period and four of the most celebrated carpets of the mid-16th century belong to this group. No. 58 is dated to 1542–3 but this example may well be earlier and its fine detail is enhanced by the silk pile. The other hunting carpets are in the Royal Collection, Stockholm, and in the Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst, Vienna. The lifelike people and animals may be compared to those in contemporary wall-paintings, miniatures, pottery and silks but here they are set against the classic Safavid carpet structure: a field with a central medallion and dependent cartouches surrounded by a broad border flanked by two narrow ones. The carpet is woven with a silk warp, weft and pile, Persian knots per square cm, with some areas brocaded in silver-gilt thread.

58 Medallion carpet with hunting scenes
Length 570cm, width 365cm
Poldi Pezzoli Museum, Milan, no. 124, property of the Italian Republic
Persia, Safavid period, early 17th century

Only three of the great Safavid carpets are dated – the two Ardabil carpets, dated 1539–40 and this example. Unfortunately, the date in the central cartouche of this carpet may be read either as 934 (1522–3 AD) or 949 (1532–3 AD). Sarre and Trenkwald preferred the later date, which seems to accord better with the style of the carpet. The design has the classic Safavid structure: each quarter of the carpet repeats exactly. The curiously stiff and almost angular palmette border and the effect of cross-hatching made by the floral stems in the ground contrast with the sinuous treatment of similar motifs in nos. 56 and 61. Within the carpet itself these formal elements contrast with the lively animals and hunting scenes. This carpet was probably woven in Qum or Tabriz and the others in central Persia. The name Ghâyith al-Din Hamad which appears in the cartouche together with the date possibly refers to the silk-designer or master Weaver of similar names, but this is not certain. The carpet has a silk warp, three shoots of cotton weft after each row of knots and a woolen pile with about 41 Persian knots to the square cm. One end is heavily restored.

Published: Sarre and Trenkwald (1939, pls. 24–5); Ehrmann (1960, p.167).

59 Medallion carpet with landscape and animals
Length 572cm, width 270cm
H.S.H. Prince Charles of Schwarzenberg Collection
Persia, Safavid period, second quarter 16th century

This medallion carpet depicting an idealised garden embodies the finest qualities of Safavid design. Border and field are well balanced and the motif is subordinated to a single decorative unity, but each bird, animal or flowering tree is rendered with astonishing naturalism. The carpet may be closely compared in its general design with no. 59 and several others with similar themes, but it is likely to be the earliest and certainly one of the most attractive of the group. The design of the central medallion imitates its qualities: life-like ducks in neat pairs flack in a pond surrounded by stylised cloud-bands. The reciprocal border resembles that of the Chelsea carpet in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, though the hunting animals there are here replaced by quietly perching birds. A phoenix in each corner with a bird in its talons provides the only touch of savagery. The carpet has been attributed to Tabriz. It is woven on a cotton warp with silk wefts, three shoots after each row of knots (two straight and the middle wave) with a woolen pile; 55 Persian knots per square cm.

Published: Sarre and Trenkwald (1939, I, pl. 71).

60 Medallion carpet with landscape and animals
Length 701cm, width 566cm
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, no. 49.6, gift of J. Paul Getty
Persia, Safavid period, mid-16th century

This carpet depicts the Persian concept of Paradise. To the Safavid designer Paradise was set in a fertile garden with flowering trees, streams, birds and animals – some of which were familiar from life on earth, such as the cranes in the centre, while others, like the phoenixes and dragons, were borrowed from Chinese mythology. Gentle, winged houris are also in attendance. The structure of this design is similar to that of the medallion carpet no. 58. A counterpart to the present carpet, in the Islamschene Museum, Berlin, was badly damaged in the war. Finer versions of this design may be seen in a carpet of which half is in Cracow and half in the Musée des Arts D’Orient, Paris, and a fragment in the Museum of Art, Philadelphia. In a sense these carpets are the ancestors of the garden carpets of the 17th and 18th centuries in which the field is divided into formal beds of flowering shrubs separated by water courses. The carpet has a cotton warp and woolen and cotton wefts, three shoots after each row of knots, with a woolen pile of 38 knots per square cm.

Published: Sarre and Trenkwald (1939, I, pl. 72); Valentin (1949); Bode and Kirihmet (1970, pp. 96–103).
61 Medallion carpet with animals
Length 427cm, width 229cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., no. 163, Widener Collection 1945
Persia, Safavid period, mid-16th century
This classical medallion carpet epitomizes Safavid taste. Although entirely symmetrical in its composition with a carefully drawn tracery of stems and a massive border, the animals are treated with extraordinary naturalism. As in the carpet no. 60 there is a mixture of real and mythical animals — yaks, part-dragons, part-stags, and leopards, for example. The entire design of the central medallion is based upon the Chinese cloud-band. Several features may be compared with those of no. 60, the border, the central medallion (but not its cloud-bands) and its animal style. This carpet is woven in woolen pile in Persian knots, about 30 per square cm, with woolen warp and cotton weft.
Published: Riegl (1901, no. 144, pl. 79, 80); Dilke (1959, pl. IX)

62 Silk medallion carpet
Length 244cm, width 150cm
Bayeux Musée National de la Tapisserie, Paris, no. 16
Persia (Kashan), Safavid period, late 16th century
A well-defined group of very fine silk carpets has survived from the late 16th century, several of which appear to come from the same cartoon. This carpet has a counterpart in the Altman collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and possibly another in the National Museum, Colombo. The ribbons or bands punctuated by floral panels which have been placed around the central medallion is an unusual and distinctive feature of the design. A modified version appears in a 'Polonaise' carpet in San Marco, Venice, which probably dates from 1603. The main border is unconventional and its tightly curled cloud-bands are much closer to their Chinese originals than those forming the decoration of the corner medallions. Over a dozen carpets can be attributed to this workshop which Erdmann believed was the same as that which produced the carpet no. 57. The carpet is woven in silk pile with Persian knots.
Published: Riegl (1903, no. 74, pl. LXVI); London (1912, no. 185); Pope and Ackerman (1938-9, pl. 14a); Erdmann (1970, pp. 61-2, pl. 61); Dimand (1973, no. 15)

63 Silk and gold kilim
Length 270cm, width 130.6cm
Persia (Kashan), Safavid period, 1600-25
When the Polish Carmelite priest Paul Simon visited Kashan in 1608 he saw tapestry woven rugs being made as well as other rich carpets and textiles. Above all he admired the so-called 'Polonaise' pile rugs, a type he had seen in Istanbul. The carpet no. 62 is one of these Persian tapistry rugs which were made in Kashan and are often classed with the 'Polonaise' pile rugs (see no. 64-6). Arabesque and floral designs similar to the pile-woven versions are found but others are tapestry woven renditions of the medallion and animal carpets of the 16th century. This rug is almost a pair in size and pattern with one in the Islamic Museum, Berlin, acquired in 1914 from the Empress Friederike. The corner animals are turned the other way in the Berlin version and there is an inscription. Both have a central medallion with a dragon and phoenix in perpetual combat. Dimand suggests that the kilims with softer colouring, such as this example, were probably woven in Isfahan.
Published: Siret and Trenkwald (1936, II, pl. 45); Erdmann (1970, p. 219, pl. V); Dimand (1973, pp. 55-7)

64 Silk and gold 'Polonaise' carpet
Length 239cm, width 144.8cm
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, no. T. 36-1922, gift of Christabel Lady Aberconway
Persia (Isfahan or Kashan), Safavid period, about 1600-20
The fragmentary carpet, woven in silk and brocaded in gold and silver, belongs to a group of visiting gifts that the princes of Europe. In 1603 and 1622 gifts of silk carpets were made to the Doges of Venice, some of which are still in San Marco. Another group now in Rosenborg Castle was sent to Denmark in 1619 by the Shahyad Safi. The fame of Persian silk carpets was such that Sigismund Vasa of Poland commissioned a group in 1622. Even Queen Elizabeth of England had, in 1599, an apartment in Hampton Court 'ornamented with silk hangings worked in Turkish knot' — a gift from the Earl of Leicester. This fragment is almost identical to one in the shrine of the imam 'Ali at Naiif in Mesopotamia, the most revered Shi'a shrine, probably woven in the royal workshops at Isfahan, which is also a reasonable provenance for this piece. A Polish traveller of 1668, however, reported similar carpets being woven in Kashan and this is also a possible provenance. Such carpets were found in Polish collections in the 19th century and for this reason they came to be grouped together under the general misnomer of 'Polonaise'. This carpet is woven on a silk warp and weft with about 40 Persian knots per square cm. One border has been cut and rejoined.
Published: Ago-Oglo (1941); Dimand (1973, pp. 55-60)
65 Silk and gold 'Polonaise' carpet
Length 206cm, width 127cm
Cleveland Museum of Art, no. 26.721
Persia (Isfahan or Kashan), Safavid period, early 17th century
Throughout the 17th century silk carpets with arabesque and floral designs were woven in the royal workshops of Isfahan and Kashan for presentation to foreign potentates. There may also have been some private production when royal orders had been filled, though no examples have yet been discovered in Persia itself. This carpet is typical of the 'Polonaise' group. While there are variations in colour and in the structure of the design, the field is often divided into two halves, as in this carpet. The two other 'Polonaise' carpets in this exhibition provide interesting contrasts in design; compare nos. 64 and 66. A similar carpet in the Kevorkian Collection was sold in 1996 and passed into the collection of J. Paul Getty. Few 'Polonaise' appear in the paintings of the period; an exception may be the carpet in the portrait of a young woman by Frans Merijn in the State Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, in which the border may be compared with this example and the field with several others. The carpet is woven in silk with Persian knots on a silk warp with a cotton weft after each row of knots.
Published: Cleveland (1970, p. 237); Dimand (1973: 99, 59-65)

66 Silk 'Polonaise' rug
Length 210cm, width 143cm
Staatliche Museum zu Berlin, Islamisches Museum, no. 1.23
Persia (Isfahan or Kashan), Safavid period, early 17th century
This is an example of the splendid rugs, of silk enriched with metal thread, which were produced in Isfahan and Kashan and were often presented by the Shah as official or diplomatic gifts; see nos. 64, 65. The colour scheme of salmon pink, light green and brown, with gold and silver, is characteristic of the type. The rug, which was given to the Berlin Museum by Fiane Joh. von und in Liechtenstein, is one of a pair; the second rug is in a private collection. Warp and weft are of silk; the knots are of Persian type, about 34 per square cm.
Published: Vienna (1939, pl. IV); Berlin (1935, fig. 14)

67 'Portuguese' carpet
Length 671cm, width 513cm
Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst, Vienna, no. T.8339
Persia or India, Safavid or Mughal period, 17th century
One of the finest of a group of puzzling and unusual carpets which has provoked discussion and disagreement for a century. Others are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; in the Museum der Tüxen, Lünen, the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Winterthur (USA) and Knole in Kent. The stiff palmette and arabesque border appears on many 17th-century Persian carpets, but not the serrated central medallion. Are the Europeans in the corners part of a Portuguese diplomatic mission which has arrived in the Persian Gulf, or does the scene commemorate Bahadur Shah, the last great ruler of Gujarat in north-west India? He was drowned, possibly murdered, in 1537 while travelling on a Portuguese ship outside the town of Diu. The carpet could have been made in southern Persia, or in Gujarat, or as the oldest theory suggested, in Goa. The model for the scene may be a lost miniature or even a European print. Persian weavers worked in India under Moghul patronage, so similar decorative features and techniques are to be found in the carpets of both Persia and India at this time. Later versions of this design were made as far away as the Caucasus. The warp and weft are cotton and there are 50 Persian knots per square cm.
Published: Surre and Trachtenberg (1956, L.P. 33); Bode and Kohl (1976, pp. 112-14); Ellis (1972, pp. 267-81) (Note: in a private collection)

68 Carpet with tree design
Length 118cm, width 81cm
Iran (Isfahan Museum, Tehran, no. 3980, on loan from the Museum of Shah 'Abbás II, Qum, Persia, Safavid period, 1671
This carpet comes from a set of fourteen-shaped Ritual floor of the twelve-sided tomb-chamber of Shah 'Abbás II (died 1666) at Qum. It is one of the few Persian carpets to be woven with a date and a name, 'Nizam al-Dowleh of Jashgaran. However, the place of the family home of the master weaver is not necessarily an indication of where the carpet was made. 17th century writers mention silk carpets from Jashgaran, but also from Kerman, Kashan and Isfahan. In contrast with nos. 59 and 60, the trees and birds in this garden of paradise are arranged in neat rows, the motif repeating about a central axis. Other carpets from the set have this symmetrical repeat and also a straight repeat, suggesting that their design may have been borrowed from woven silks where such limitations of design were unavoidable. Similar repeats may be seen in no. 69. The carpet is woven in two shoots of silk with after each row of Persian knots, tied 50 per square cm in silk on a silk warp.
Published: London (1931, no. 324); Pope and Ackerman (1932, p. 1228B, pp. 2348-50); Bode and Kohl (1976, fig. 102)
69 Vase carpet
Length 61cm, width 260cm
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam,
no. RK1 1277, originally from the
Imperial Collection, Vienna
South or East Persia, Safavid period,
second half 17th century

Vase carpets may be divided into
different groups but all are elongated
with rather narrow borders and their
designs are intended to be seen from
one direction only. Their decoration
is entirely floral and among their
least conspicuous features are the
actual vases. The more usual 'vase'
carpets are based on a diamond-
shaped lattice of linked stems. See
Dinand (1973, pp. 72–7). This carpet
is a pair to one in the Österreichisches
Museum für angewandte Kunst,
Vienna. Their colouring is unusual
and the stiff horizontal lines of the
flower vases suggest a later 17th
century date, as do their rather
stiffened borders. The provenance
of these carpets has been variously
proposed as Kerman, Jazeh and
Isfahan. The carpet is woven with a
cotton warp and weft; three shoots
after each row of knots, and a wooden
pile of 19 Persian knots per square
cm.

Published: Surve and Trenkwald (1939,
I, pl. 24); Driff (1948–9, no. 20, fig. 23).

70 Dragon carpet
Length 473cm, width 322cm
Private Collection, England
Caucasus, about 1700

Besides the highly stylised dragons (in
rows near the top and bottom) after
which these carpets are named, the
earlier examples contain other animal
forms. Here, between the dragons, are
repeated two creatures in combat, the
lower animal with hooves and a short,
thick tail and outlined head
protruding from a misshapen body.
The struggling marks on the bodies of
the animals are probably a stylization
of the flames seen in Persian 16th-
century carpets, leaping the bodies of
the fabulous animals borrowed from
Chinese art. The system of
intersecting lozenges, boldly outlined
in contrasting colours, with large
rectangles or palmettes at the points,
also dates back to the 16th century in
silks. The transformation of these
designs is more contemporary
rendering of a curvilinear pattern in a
rectilinear form; the dragon rugs
show degrees of stylization and
abstraction in the ornament which took
longer to evolve. Examples attributed
to the 18th century show a decreasing
understanding of the original designs.
This carpet has a woolen warp and
weft with 14 Turkish knots per square
cm.

Published: Aga-Oghlu (1946, no. 16).

72 Velvet with figures in
compartment
Height 77.5cm, width 66.7cm
Cleveland Museum of Art, no. 42.239,
purchase from the J. H. Wade fund,
Persia, Safavid period, 16th century

Within a repeating design of lobed
medallions, a primitively figure bears
on his shield a falcon, ready to pursue a
colourful duck that has flown behind
a flowering tree. A servant comes
forward with refreshment. In
striking contrast to the delicacy of
this scene are palmettes, one girdled
by a black and white spotted snake,
the other decorated with a lion mask in
a surrounding arabesque. Textiles
with gold backgrounds gained
immense popularity at the court of
Shah Abbas (1587–1629). Added
richness is achieved by the velvet pile
pattern in which a deep red
dominates; the other colours are
orange, yellow, green, two shades of
blue, buff and grey. The colour
combinations are different in each
medallion.

Published: Underhill (1664, p. 157).
Wiefel (1960–1), p. 120, pl. 135;
Los Angeles (1909–10, p. 34, pl. 36);
73. Velvet tent ceiling with hunters and animals

Diameter: 140 cm

*Serre de Pisa, 16th century*

This circular panel of velvet is said to have been captured by the Ottoman Suleiman the Magnificent during one of his invasions of Persia in 1542. It then passed to Kara Mustapha Pasha from whose hands it fell into those of a Polish general at the rout of the Turks at Vienna in 1683. Though the colours of the silk pile have faded and the original gold ground has worn away, this velvet remains one of the outstanding examples of Persian 16th century silk weaving. Depicted are scenes from the hunt: a lion devours a gazelle (compare no. 78), a lion grapples with a man, a horseman draws his bow at a group of fleeing gazelles, another turns to survey a tame chortah that rides behind and a rifleman takes aim from behind a rock. Unfortunately, the opening for the tent pole obliterates the major portion of a fight between a horseman and a lion. The drawing of these activities, particularly the latter scene, may be compared to that in the hunting carpet, no. 77.

Published: *Townsend* (1928, pp. 254-256); *London* (1931, pp. 140-145); *Pope and Ackerman* (1938-9, pp. 26, 27, 290); *Weibull* (1952, pp. 118-120, pl. 132).
Textiles

78 Silk cloth with a scene from the story of Layla and Majnun
Height 54 cm, width 47 cm
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, no. 916–1897
Persia, Safavid period, 16th century

The headress and costume of Layla, seen here visiting Majnun who sits among trees and wild animals, is that worn by ladies of the court of Shah Tahmasp (1524–76) in the later years of his reign. The style closely follows that of contemporary miniatures, the painters of which were frequently responsible for textile cartoons. The fineness of the double cloth weave provides an admirable background to the delicate drawing of the design which is executed in silver, red and ivory thread. This cloth was probably a panel from a garment.

Published: d’Herens (1930, pl. 11), Popo and Ackerman (1958–9, pl. 129a), London (1950, no. 2).

79 Silk hanging
Width 24 cm, height 107 cm
Musée Historique des Tissus, Lyon, no. T.121–1929
Persia, Safavid period, 16th–17th century

This silk has a repeating pattern of wild animals in combat. The liveliness of the subject is well balanced by the delicate drawing and the subtlety of the green, pale yellow and orange colours. A leopard leaps in pursuit of a gazelle; a leopard, astride a mule, stabs its teeth into the flesh; a gazelle trembles under the vicious attack of a lion. These are ancient motifs which may be traced back to pre-Islamic Persia, where they were employed in Achaemenid art to great effect. They also appear on the tent ceiling (see no. 73) and the Persian and Indian animal rugs (see nos. 61 and 99). This panel is part of a silk cope, said to have come from a monastery in northern Albania. Its central part is now in the Benaki Museum, Athens. The weave is lumbas with twist pattern on a satin ground.

Published: London (1951, no. 248), Popo and Ackerman (1958–9, pl. 114).

80 Silk cloth with religious texts
Length 235 cm, width 244 cm
Iron Riza Museum, Tehran, no. 3314
Persia, Safavid period, about 1600

This tomb cover comes from the shrine of Shams al-Din at Ardabil. Its composition consists of palmettes set among an arabesque of floral ornament. The delicacy of the design is offset by the bold forms of the inscription in the border. This inscription, in highly complicated thuluth, appears to invoke God’s blessing on the twelve Shi’a imams. The phrase ‘alif alif’ (God bless) appears twelve times and the names of ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, Hasan, Husayn and Hasan al-Askari are easily identifiable. There is also the signature of Ghayth al-Yazid, a master weaver of great renown working in the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

Published: London (1931, no. 129), Popo and Ackerman (1958–9, pl. 1037).

81 Silk tomb cover
Width 103.6 cm
Imam Riza Shrine Museum, Mashhad
Persia (possibly Isfahan), Safavid period, 1669

The cover, woven in silk in pale tones, has bands of inscriptions alternating with bands of leaves and flowers. Besides Koranic quotations, Arabic verses, prayers and incantations, the inscriptions include the name of Shah Sulayman, who presented the cover to the shrine of the Imam Riza at Mashhad, and the name of the poet, Tahir, who composed the chronogram which gives its date as 1080.

The owner of the age, Sultanshah Pidjibala, with whose desire the turn of fate and good fortune accorded was presented to the shrine of King Riza. A [i.e. this] ‘ahdala, with the utmost disinterestedness, Tahir wrote for his chronogram ‘A.Z.S.I.y.a.n.sh.d.h.sh.d. w.q.f. A.m.a.m.’ [1080]. The calligrapher is named in the border as Muhammad Reza Irandi [?].

Published: London (1931, no. 842), Popo and Ackerman (1958–9, p. 2134, pl. 1084).
81 Velvet with female figures
Height 74cm, width 33cm
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, no. 65.5.4
Persia, Safavid period, early 17th century

In the scene on this velvet, ladies bold bunches of flowers stand on either side of a pool with flowering plants. Two pairs of figures sway towards each other, though their faces are turned away; the intermediate pair have the pose reversed. A striking sense of rhythm is created by this curiously arranged. An inscription states that this was the work of Salt: The embroidered details are a later addition.

Published: Unpublished

84 Velvet coat with figures
Height 137cm
Royal Armoury, Stockholm, no. 341-4
Persia, Safavid period, first half 17th century

This spectacular coat, with its design in velvet on a gilded silver ground, is a splendid example of the opulence of the art of this period. Languid youths, the epitome of indulgence and leisure, drink from cups filled from long-necked vessels. Their poses harmonise with the swaying motion of the plants among which they stand. This coat was a gift from the Czar of Russia to Queen Christina of Sweden in 1644.

Published: Pope and Ackerman (1938-9, pl. 104c); Grote (1935, nos. 31, pl. 15); Stockholm (1966, nos. 54, 69)

86 Velvet envelope with figures
Height 68cm, width 16.5cm
State Archives, Copenhagen, on loan to the Museum of Decorative Art, Copenhagen
Persia, Safavid period, 17th century

Falconry is the subject of the scene depicted on this velvet, but there is a difference in style from the examples nos. 73-7. The figures have become plumper, their poses more languid and the texture of the fabric less subtle. Characteristics which are typical of the greater luxury of the court of Shah 'Abbās who, in 1598, moved his capital to Isfahān. In miniature painting the chief exponent of the new court style was Rīāh-ī 'Abbās, whose influence extended throughout the 17th century and is clearly reflected in this example. The pattern is in velvet pile against a gold ground, and shows youths wearing huge turbans, with sashes wound round their waists. Each youth holds a falcon and a servant kneels to fill a drinking horn from a vessel with a long neck and handle. This velvet has been made into an envelope which, like no. 90, was probably used to contain a royal letter.

Published: London (1931, nos. 9688-90); Copenhagen (1935, pp. 44-63); Pope and Ackerman (1938-9, pl. 105a)

87 Velvet with strawberry plants
Height 146cm, width 73cm
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, no. 57.2472
Persia, Safavid period, 17th century

Large leaves provide a striking background for the strawberry plants, which bear both fruit and flowers, depicted on this remarkable velvet. The formalism of the design is relieved by the butterflies that hover at either side. Other pieces of the same velvet are in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the University Museum, Philadelphia. The design is in silk pile on a gold ground.

Published: Reath and Sachs (1937, pp. 123-36, pl. 88); Pope and Ackerman (1938-9, pl. 104a); Witth (1937-9, no. 54)