



Prayer rug - Turkish, Ladick type 9.54

Old wall display notes from Burrell Collection.

Prayer rug - Turkish, Ladick type, mid 18th century, woollen type, woollen warps, woollen wefts.

Noorah Al Gailani 25/1/13 -

There are 10 Ladik type rugs in the Burrell Collection.

The top of this prayer rug, (9.54), is the red area with the slightly arched design, not the tulips. The blue area represents the mihrab. A mihrab is a niche in the wall of a mosque or religious school (madrasa) that indicates the direction of Mecca (qibla <kayblaa>), which Muslims face when praying. The worshiper would stand on the tulips and prostrate themselves, on the mat, facing Mecca.

The 3 arches each have a blue crescent moon projecting from them. These are auspicious signs and represent time and the lunar months, similar to an Alam, the ornamental finials that crown Turkish minarets, domes and mosques.

Sufi Muslims believe that the prayer mat / rug is the only piece of personal space that they occupy on earth. It is their individual space – rejecting materialism.

Shia Muslims have an unglazed, clay table called a 'turbah' <toorbah>, which means clay. This will have been made from clay brought from Karbalah in Southern Iraq where Imam Hussain was martyred. This is placed onto the rug where they will lay their forehead. It is wrapped up after use.

These 3 rugs are almost double the average size of rugs today. All have vertical flowers. Nos. 5 & 6 have a semi-abstract floral (tulip) composition in their main field. No 7 is empty in this area, but has a similar tulip design at the far end. All have several borders, No7 being the most complex. This was the rug described by

the Curator, as being the best quality. Nos. 5 & 6 are of comparatively, lower quality. Quicker weaves & less subtlety between colours. All have an arch / niche (mihrab), which would be directed towards Mecca. In the centre, at the top of each arch is an upturned, stylised crescent. This is an Islamic symbol typical of the finials on top of minarets & mosques. The jagged edges, of the arch, represent architectural features in Anatolian / Islamic buildings where they are used to deflect light to give a 3rd dimension effect.

Curator's Talk (Noorah Al Gailani) 9/1/13

3 Turkish, Ladik type, prayer mats Mid 18th C, woollen pile, woollen warp & weft. All previously displayed together.

No5 – 9/54 No6 – 9/57 No7 – 9/53

Made in the Ladik area of Anatolia in Turkey by village women, on domestic hand looms, using local vegetable dyes. Piled, knotted rugs. Anatolia plateau area has lots of sheep and is renowned for producing woollen rugs. Patterns were designed by the women and influenced by what they saw - different textiles, expensive designs (court prayer rugs) were copied & altered to suit themselves. The area was known as the home of the carpet producers for the Sultan.

Buyers, mostly pilgrims on their way (en-route) to Mecca. Rugs became a major local industry. Ladik is on the main route between Constantinople/Istanbul & Mecca. Pilgrims would take the rugs to Mecca, where they could be blessed and taken home as souvenirs/proof of their visit or as gifts to their mosque or shrine. Because of this, they can be found all over Europe & the East. The rugs gained importance and value after visiting Mecca.

Also used for domestic prayer. Muslims are obliged to pray 5 times a day.

Rugs are kept rolled up, to keep them clean. Each family will have one for each member and some spares. A child will get its own mat when it is able to read & recite the Koran. They will be given a copy of the Koran, a stand to hold the Koran, a rug, a rosary (prayer beads) and a cap (for a boy). The rug is unrolled and placed to face Mecca. Person stands at the end (facing the curved pattern) and prostrates themselves. The ritual is performed in silence. The morning prayer is the quickest, the noon prayer the longest. The rug is rolled up after the prayer. They provide a clean place to pray. This is a requirement. There will be spare prayer rugs in each house for visitors to use. Rugs would be taken to the mosque by the individual. Modern mosques tend to have one large machine woven carpet, woven as rug sections (uniform). The giving of rugs as gifts to the mosque has largely died out. Pilgrims still buy rugs as souvenirs. Rugs are still produced in Anatolia; designs have changed with the times and tend not to be so complex. They are now made as an organised cottage industry. Different materials are used in different areas. Iran – printed cloth. - in other areas – batik, woven vegetable fibres. The Burrell Collection is sited with a true North, South, East & Westside. The mats on display do not face Mecca. I DO NOT KNOW HOW THE FUTURE DISPLAYS WILL BE ALIGNED (WMR 2021). They would have to be facing South-west. During the 18th & 19th C., Europeans began to acquire rugs. They became very popular. They were not aware of their significance and used them as floor carpets. Some found their way to the Balkans and eastern European churches.

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No6 (centre of 3) – Water pot under arch with plant growing down. Water (purity) is a very important part of the prayer ritual. Purification before praying is required. Mosques have elaborate washing areas to allow quick washing of face, hands & feet before prayers. Water and plants are God's blessing /gifts/ signs of bounty. Above the pot is a square which would have had an inscription, but this has faded. Above the crescent is a rectangle with the date Senneh <senna>(year) H.1217 (1786). Inscriptions & dates would be woven into rugs on demand, responding to the buyer to show when he/she went on pilgrimage. These are not found on domestic rugs. Today, old rugs with dates are more valuable.

Internet – Elyasy rugs on line. Ladik is in central Anatolia, a short distance from the regional capital, Konya. The place is famous for its prayer rugs that are made essentially in three styles. 1st has a mihrab crowned by a triple arch and is generally made with bright red wool. 2nd a mihrab with a single, stepped arch, with a bifurcated motif at the top that is sometimes interpreted as a crescent moon, the symbol of Islam; actually, it is an Alam the ornament that crowns Turkish minarets and mosques. The background of the niche is usually red, ivory or blue and sometimes has stylized floral motifs. 3rd type has a triple-arch mihrab or a stepped arch with slender columns that stand out against a dark background. Above, or more often inside, the niche there is a large rectangular panel - generally light blue - with smaller arches. These arches are the starting point for stylized tulips with straight stalks, leaves and bell-shaped corollas. Ladik rugs are usually brightly coloured, with blue and sparkling red the predominant tones. Knot density ranges from 100,000 to 150,000 knots per square meter.

Additional help from Dr. Noorah Al-Gailali 23.4.21

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