



# Carpets and Carpet Weaving as Cultural Markers: Turkic Carpets and Turkic Identity

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Bridging World Regions: The Turkic Connection  
Histories and Identities

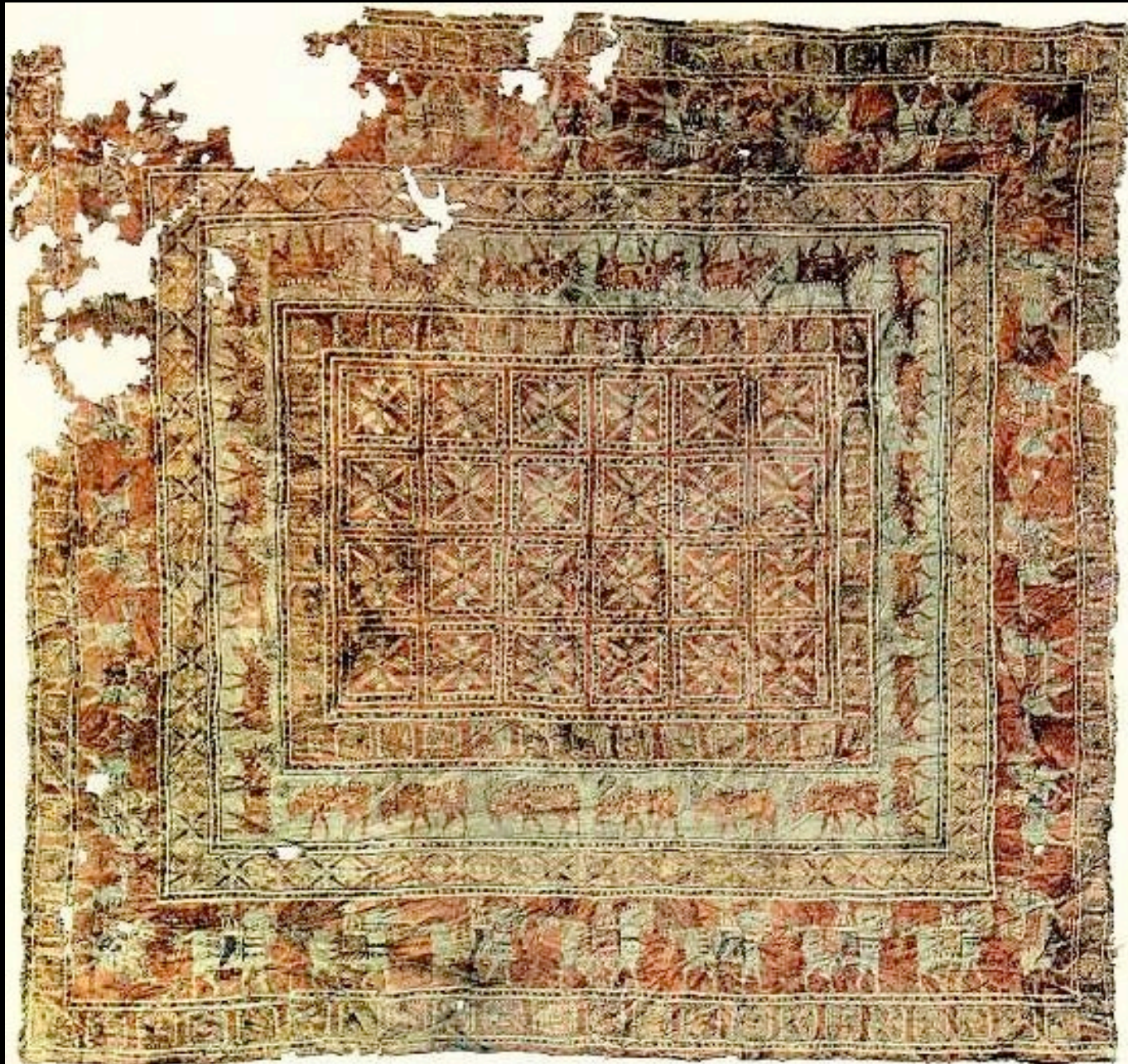
University of Virginia, February 25-26, 2011







# The Earliest Known Carpet, from Pazyryk: 4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE





## The Persian Claim: Achaemenid Echoes





## The Armenian Claim: Kermes Dye





## The Turkic Claim: Symmetrical Knot, Geography





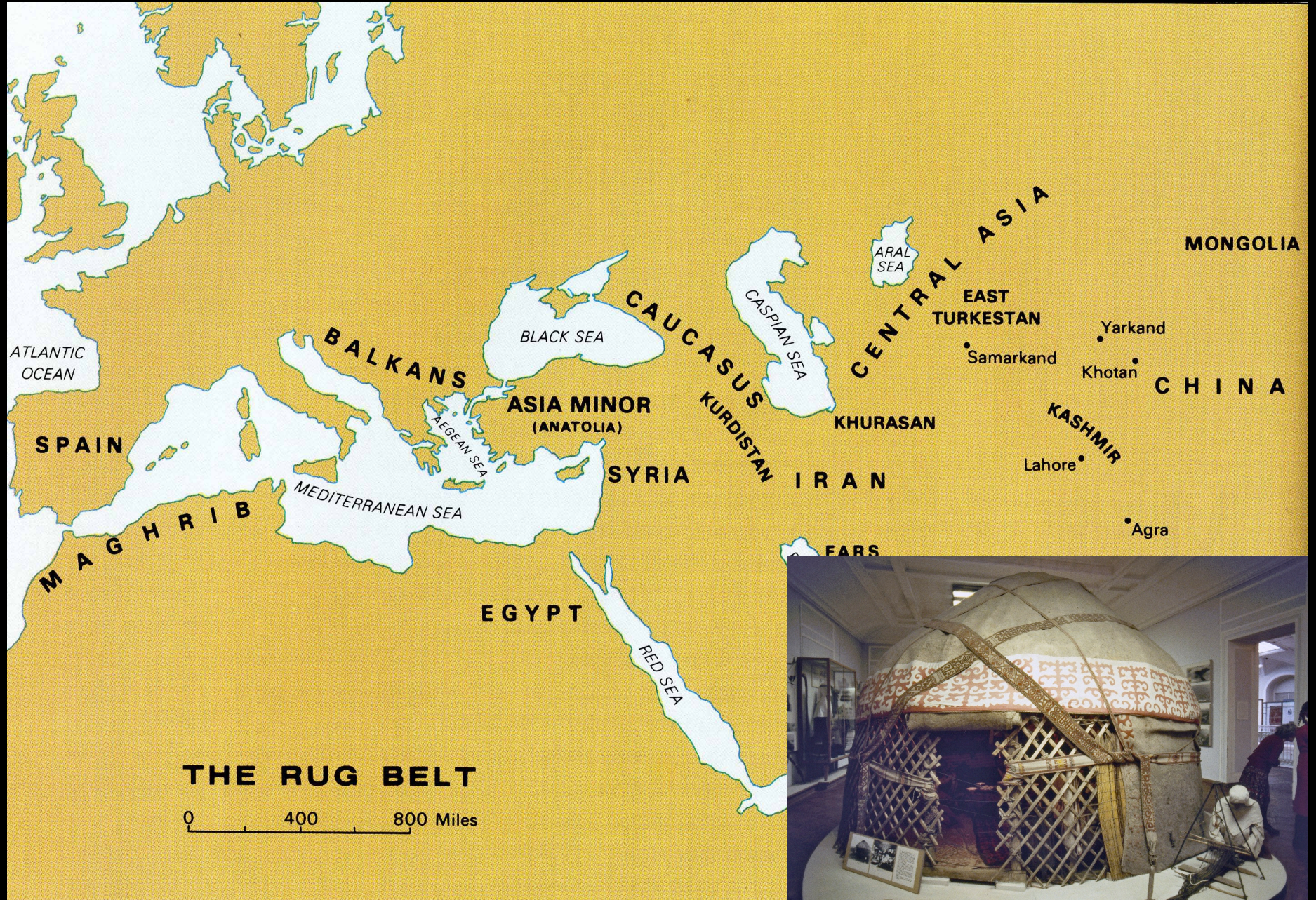
# Why all the Fuss?

## *Cultural Embeddedness* of Carpets: Social and Economic Role of Carpet Making and Carpet Trading





# Geography of Carpets: The “Rug Belt”, Carpet-Weaving, and the “Yurt”





# Tribal Identity: The Turkmen Boys in Central Asia and Anatolia

## I. KÂŞGARLI'DAKİ OĞUZ BOYLARI<sup>44</sup>

BOYUN ADI			DAMGASI
1	Kınık	قنق	ك
2	Kayığ	قېغ	ك
3	Bayundur	بايندر	ب
4	İwa, Yıwa	اڤا، ڤا	ا
5	Salğur	سلر	ل
6	Afşar	افشار	ف
7	Beg-Tili	بكتى	ك
8	Bügdüz	بگدز	د
9	Bayat	بيات	ا
10	Yazgır	ييزغر	ز
11	Eymür	ايمر	م
12	Kara-Bölük	قارابلك	ك
13	Alka-Bölük	القابلك	ك
14	İğdir	اكد	ك
15	Üregir, Yüregir	اكر، یركر	ك
16	Totırka	توترقا	ك
17	Ula-Yuntluğ	اولايندك <sup>45</sup>	ك
18	Töker	توكر	ك
19	Beçenek	بچنك	ك
20	Çuvaldar <i>cavaldur</i>	چولدر <sup>46</sup>	ك
21	Çepni	چېنى	ك
22	Çarukluğ <i>Çaruklı</i>	چرقلق <sup>47</sup>	ك

44) Daha önce de işaret edildiği gibi, Kâşgarlı listesine iki boyu dahil etmemiştir.

45) Metinde böyleise de aslında Ala-Yuntluğ olup, istinsah hatası ile bu şekli aldığına şüphe yoktur. (46) Bunun da aslında چولدر (Çavaldur) şeklinde olması muhtemeldir. (47) Kilisli, I, s. 56-58; Atalay, I, s. 55-59.

## III. YAZICI-OĞLU'NDAKİ OĞUZ BOYLARI LİSTESİ<sup>54</sup>

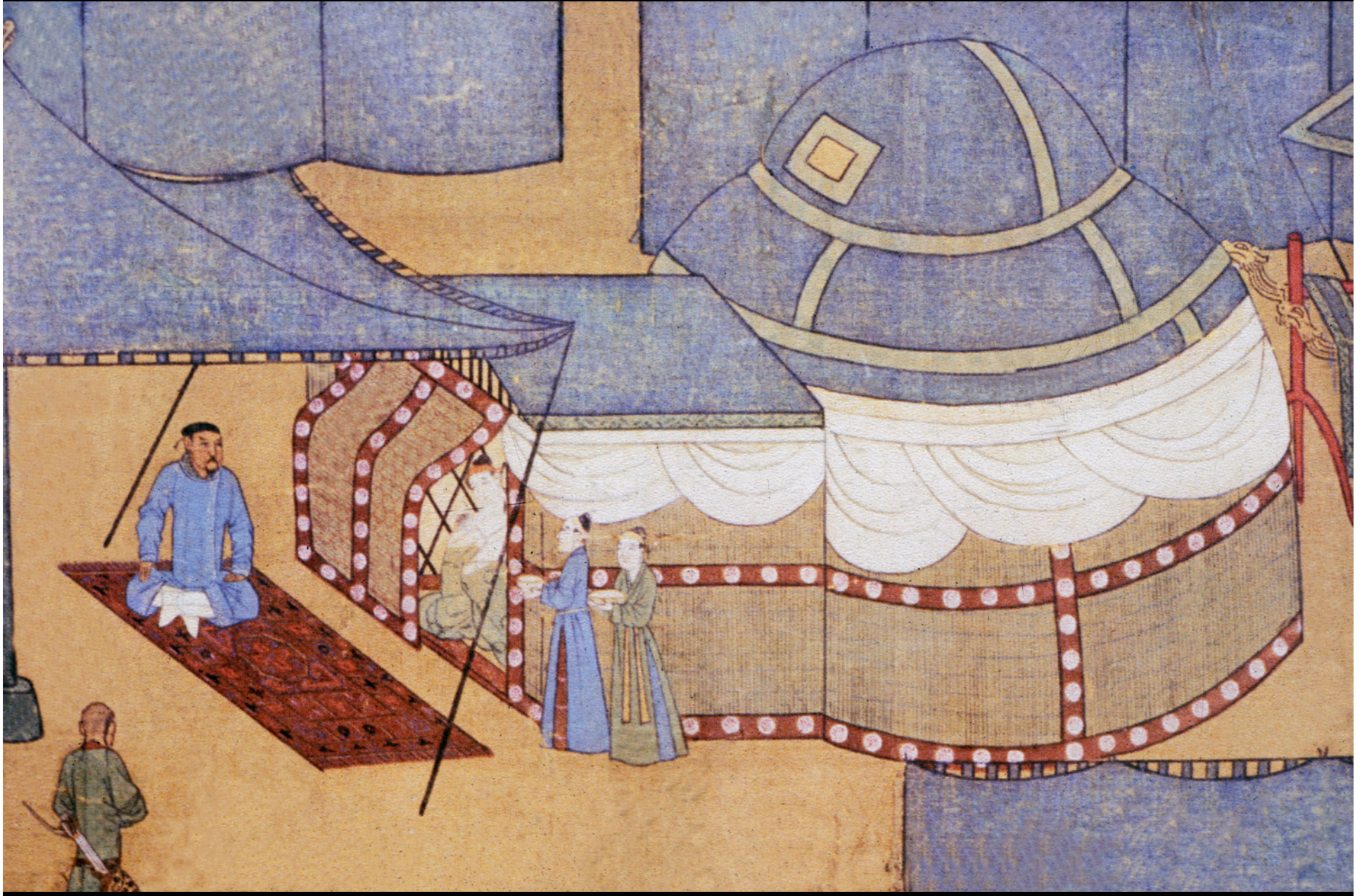
Hanlar hanı sūnūğū baş ve uca buna kan derler					
BOYUN ADI	ANLAMI	SÜNNÜK	KUŞ	DAMGASI	
Evvel, KAYI	قايي	Yani muhkem.	Sağ kam yağrın	Şahin	1
Duvum, BAYAT	بايات	Yani devletli ve nimetli.	" " "	"	2
Servum, ALKA-EVLI	القه اوي	Yani her yere yürürler, muvafakat ederler.	" " "	"	3
Çehârum, KARA-EVLU	قارا او	Yani evleri kara.	" " "	"	4
Evvel, YAZIR	يازير	Yani çok vilâyet anuñ ola.	Aşuklu Umaca	Kartal	5
Duvum, DÖĞER	دوگر	Yani derilmegiçün bir yire geleler.	" " "	"	6
Servum, DÖDÜRGÄ	دودرغا	Yani milk dultmak ve yasamak.	" " "	"	7
Çehârum, YAPARLI	ياپارلى	..... 55	" " "	"	8
Evvel, AVŞAR	اوشار	Yani cüst u çalâk ve ova ve canavara ve kuşa hevesli.	Sağ umaca ve adlu	Targancıl	9
Duvum, KIZIK	قيريق	Yani kuvvetli ve yasakda ciddü cehd edici.	" " "	"	10
Servum, BEĞDİLİ	بيگدلى	Yani boğlar sözü azıdadur.	" " "	"	11
Çehârum, KARKIN	قارقين	Yani ula neq ve dogurucu.	" " "	"	12
Evvel, BAYINDUR	بايندر	Yani hemige bay ve nimetli ol.	Sol kam yağrın	Sunkur	13
Duvum, BİÇENE	بيچنه	Yani eyu dürişici.	" " "	"	14
Servum, ÇAVINDIR	چاوند	Yani namusla ve irak çavlu.	" " "	"	15
Çehârum, ÇEBNİ	چېنى	Yani kandeki yağı göz derhal sarıgar ve cıpar.	" " "	"	16
Evvel, SALUR	سالور	Yani sal ur gıni kandeki işreç kılıç ve çemaklı revan olan.	Ucayla adlu	Uc Kuş	17
Duvum, EYMÜR	ايمور	Yani hadsiz eyu bay ol.	" " "	"	18
Servum, ALAYUNDLU	الايوندلو	Yani kısırakları ala ve eyu adlu.	" " "	"	19
Çehârum, ÜREGİR	اويرگير	Yani hemige ayluk ve ihsan edici.	" " "	"	20
Evvel, İĞDİR	ايدر	Yani ayluk ve ululuk ve bahadır-luk.	Aşuklu ve kıc	Çakır	21
Duvum, BÜĞDÜZ	بوگدز	Yani dâkelina tevazu vs kullu ve hizmet ider.	" " "	"	22
Servum, YİVA	يوا	Yani mertebesi dâkelinden üstün ola.	" " "	"	23
Çehârum, KINIK	قنق	Yani dâkelin: on her yird e bunlar aziz ola.	" " "	"	24

(54) Tarih-i Âl-i Selseuk, Topkapı Sarayı, Revan Köşkü ktp, nr. 1390, s. 21-24.

(55) Resid ud-din eşâhalında olduğu gibi burada da baslıb vardır.



# The Wen-Chi Scroll: Early Depictions of Turks and Carpets North of China





## The Romance of Varka and Gulshah: Seljuk Iran





## 14th-century Painting in North-west Iran: Nomads and Carpets





# Turkic Carpets in Jalayrid and Timurid Painting





## The 15<sup>th</sup>-century Turkmen of North-west Iran





## Nomadic Survivals in Ottoman Turkey and Safavid Iran

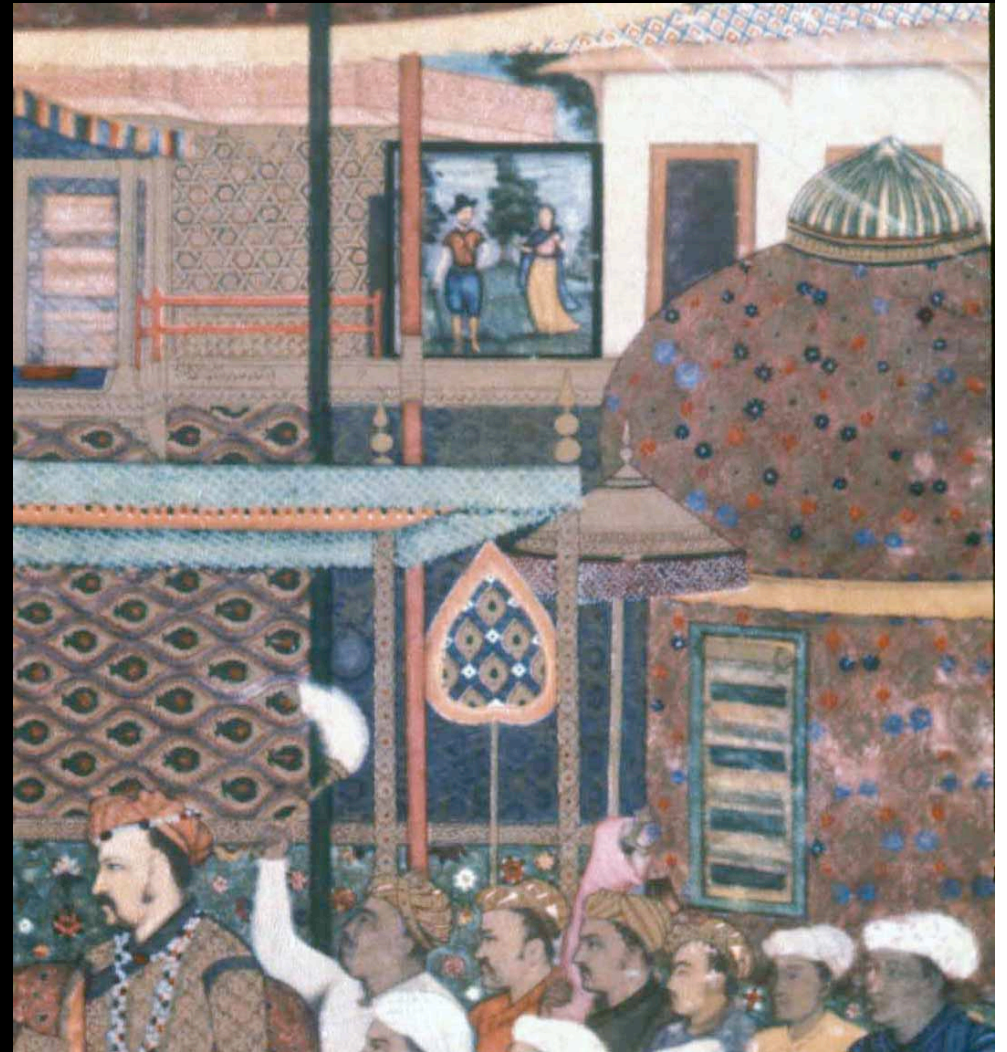








## Nomadic Survivals in Mughal India, ca. 1620





Filling a 1600-year chronological gap between 350 BCE and 1250 CE: the “Black Hole” of carpet studies

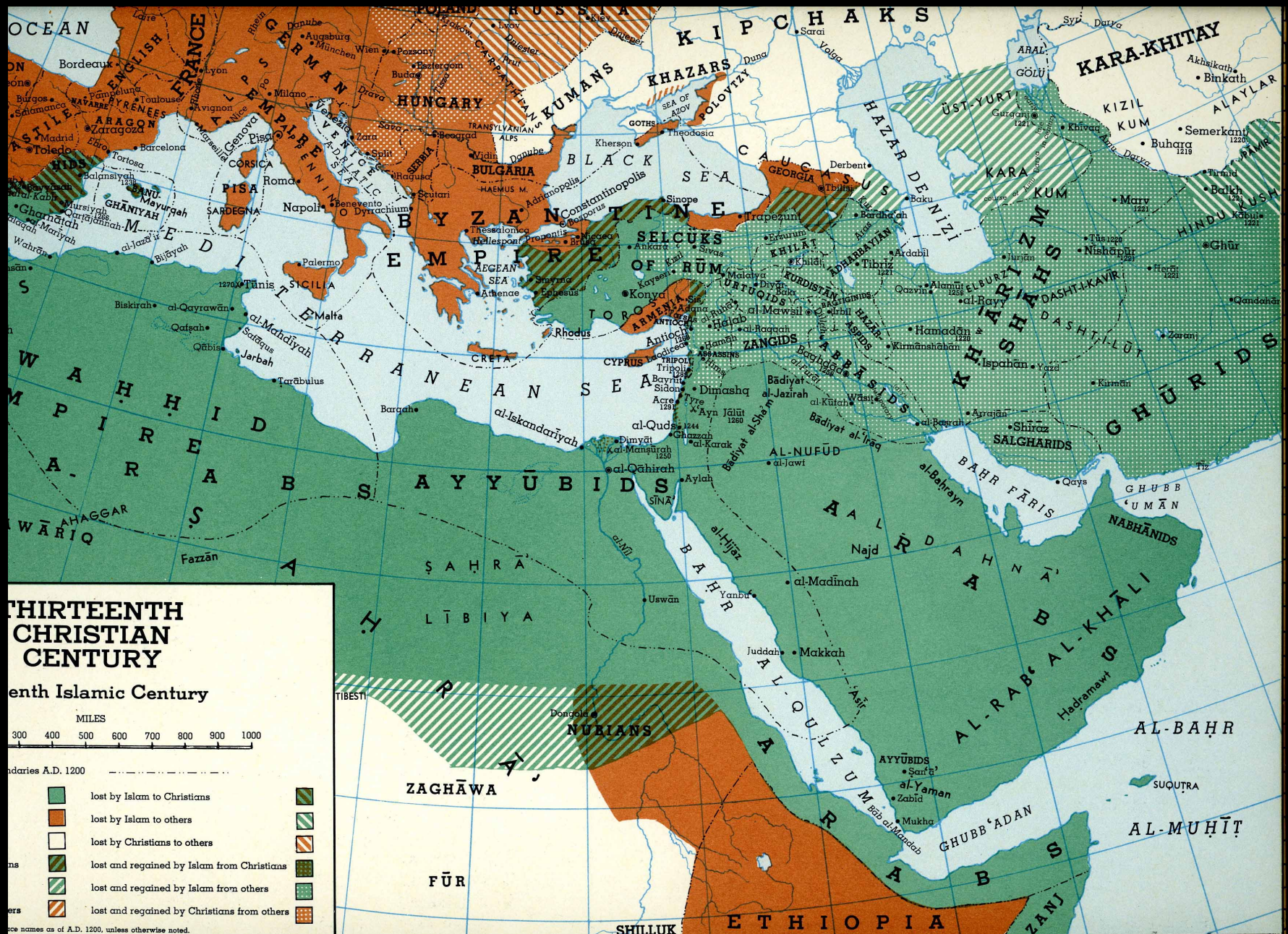








# 1600 Years After Pazyryk: Carpet History (what we know of it) Begins in Anatolia





Early Turkish  
Carpets in Anatolia







Fundamental Design Types:  
“Large-Pattern Holbein” and  
Kufesque Border











“Strapwork Star” and  
Kufesque Border











Octagonal "Gul"  
Medallions in Rows



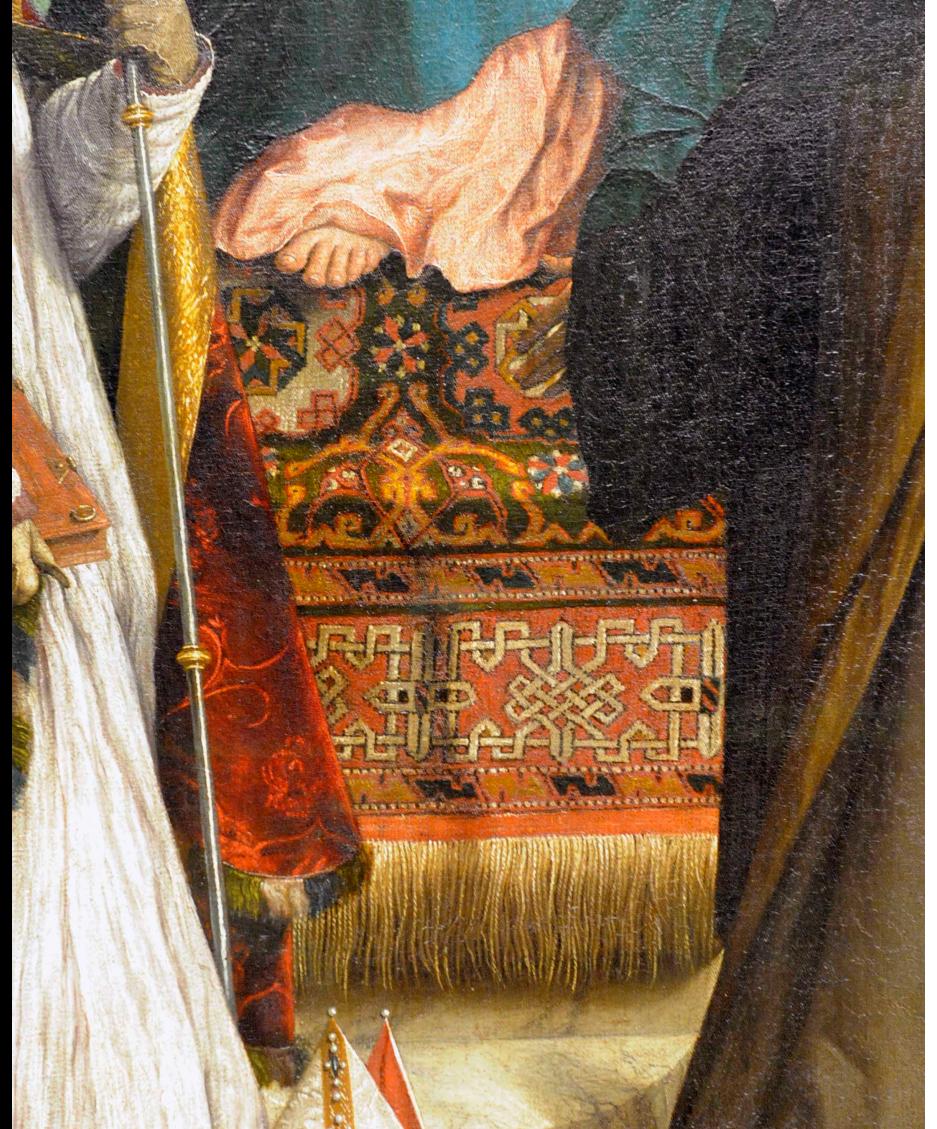




“Small-Pattern Holbein”  
Interlace Medallions in  
Rows; “Knucklebone” Border  
and Kufesque Border











“Memling Gul” Small  
Medallions in Rows









## Commerce and the Impact of Early Anatolian Carpets: Spain











Syria





Iran





# Egypt





## Mughal India and the Deccan





# Yuan China





# Revisionism: Are Early Anatolian Carpets Turkic?





HERWIG BARTELS

# On the Origins of Anatolian Kilim Designs

Over the past several decades, there has been a widely accepted understanding that Anatolian kilims were woven by a mainly nomadic population whose Turkic ancestors began to migrate westwards from the remote steppes of Central Asia from the 11th century onwards. The Central Asian origins of these tribes has led most scholars to seek the source of kilim designs and motifs among the Turkoman tribes still living in the southern U.S.S.R., Afghanistan and Western China, while, apart from some cautionary statements,<sup>1</sup> very little has been said about the origin of designs and motifs as attributable to a pre-Ottoman vocabulary of decoration.

Many eminent scholars have been firm adherents to this view. According to Hanna Erdmann, almost all Oriental carpet designs have 'migrated from east to west',<sup>2</sup> while Werner Brüggemann emphatically believes in the Chinese ancestry of most Anatolian designs.<sup>3</sup> These attitudes reflect the generally accepted view, summarised by Robert Pinner as '... the pile carpet was invented and brought westward by the Turkish nomads,' and questioned in his article in *Hali*, vol. 5, no. 2.

Contrary to this general current of belief, I suspect that many pre-Ottoman kilim designs are not of Turkic origin. I will use a number of kilim motifs and designs, that comparative evidence suggests were in common use in Asia Minor prior to the invasion by Turkic nomads, to demonstrate my point. This material — textiles, mosaics, stuccoes and wall paintings — belongs to the earlier civilisations of Iran, Egypt, Syria and Anatolia, from whence some of the designs found their way, via Byzantium, Sicily and Spain, as far west as mediaeval Central Europe.

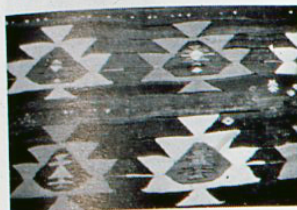
I am not an art historian, and cannot comment on generally established attributions in matters of time and place. I shall not specify whether a design used for comparison is from Egypt, Syria or Iran, whether it is Hellenistic, Coptic or Byzantine or whether Sasanian, Sogdian or Fatimid. Besides it would be impossible for a valid examination and identification of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Ornaments to be confined only to kilims. To put it in legal terms, I am aiming at a reversal of the burden of proof as to the origin of these kilim designs.

## The Early Historical Background

In 1961-63, James Mellaart conducted excavations at Hacilar and Çatal Hüyük which



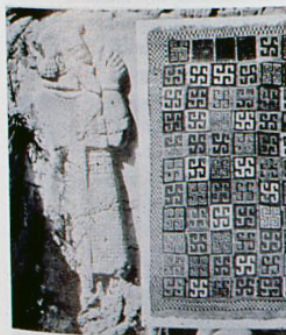
1. Cross motifs. Hacilar, 5600/5200 BC; after J. Mellaart, *Hacilar*, p. 350



2. Detail of Anatolian kilim



3. Seal, ceramic, Çatal Hüyük, 5940/5700 BC; after J. Mellaart, *Çatal Hüyük*, pl. 121



4. Rock relief, Ivriz, 2nd half 8th c.; after K. Bittel, *op. cit.*, pl. 328; Pile carpet, Kurdistan, 17/18th c. after K. Erdmann



5. Detail of Anatolian kilim



6. Floor mosaic, Antioch, 2nd c. AD; after D. Levi, *pl. VIIb*



7. Detail of Anatolian kilim



8. Tapestry. Wool on linen, Egypt, late Hellenistic, 4/5th c. AD; after O. Wulff and W.F. Volbach, *Spätantike und koptische Stoffe aus ägyptischen Grabfunden*, Berlin 1926, pl. 19



# Flat-woven Rugs (Kilims) and pre-Turkic Anatolia: Theories and Fantasies of Pre-history





## Turkic Weaving Groups in Greater Iran





## Turkic Weaving in Transcaucasia

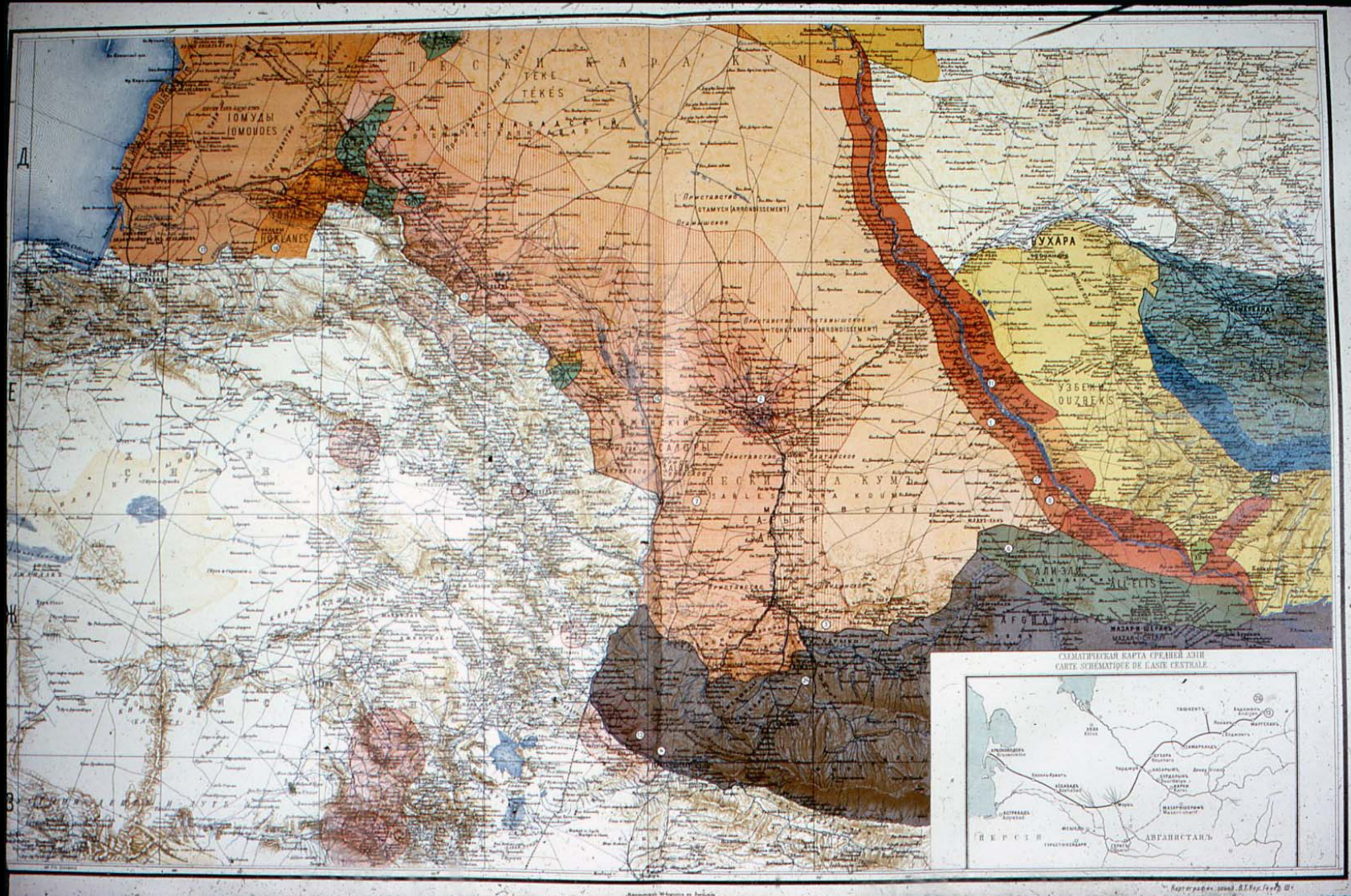








# Turkmen Carpets of Central Asia: An Explanation?





## THE TURKMEN CARPET AND THE EARLY ANATOLIAN CARPET

1. Similarities are simply a coincidence
2. Object A is derived artistically from object B
3. Object B is derived artistically from object A
4. Objects A and B have a common ancestor





























## Afterthought: The “Turkey Carpet” and European Social Status









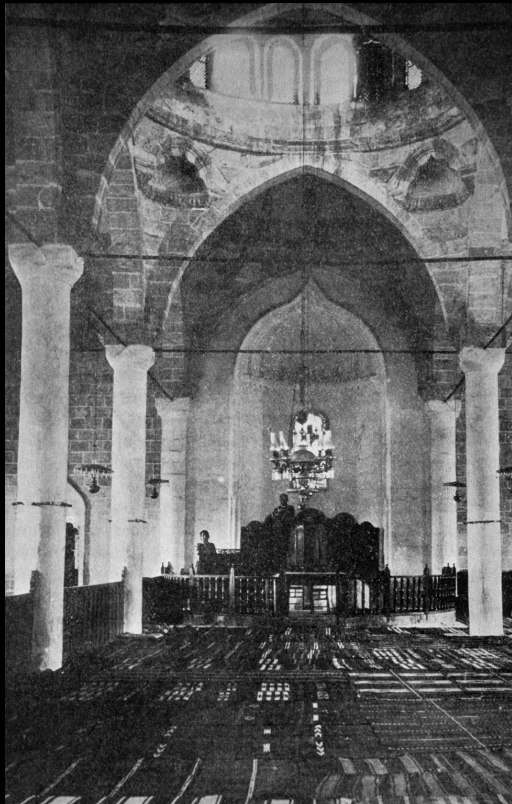
## TO SUM UP: SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

1. Who invented the pile carpet? We'll never know.
2. Who brought the carpet as we know it today to the Middle East? Probably the Oghuz Turks, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.
3. What about carpets between Pazyryk and 1250? Whatever carpets may have been created during this period, the Turkic element appears to have had the only lasting legacy.
4. What about the carpets mentioned in early Greek and Armenian sources? We don't know the technique, material, or design of these mysterious items, and probably never will.
5. Where does this leave the carpet-weaving traditions of India, Iran, Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Spain, Transcaucasia and the Balkans? Whatever their origins, these are artistically distinct traditions of great originality, beauty, and influence.



6. Is the Turkic carpet a cultural identifier? In past times, it was one of a number of artistic traditions and cultural practices that flourished among Turkic peoples. But many other peoples wove carpets also.

7. What do you think about the book published a decade ago in Germany that claimed that virtually all early Islamic carpets were created and woven by Christians? I don't think about it at all.





8. What about carpet “cultural embeddedness” today? It's less of a reality and more of an intellectual construct.





9. Will the carpet lose its “Turkic” associations? The answer to that lies in the tourism economy, rug advertising, and popular imagination.

