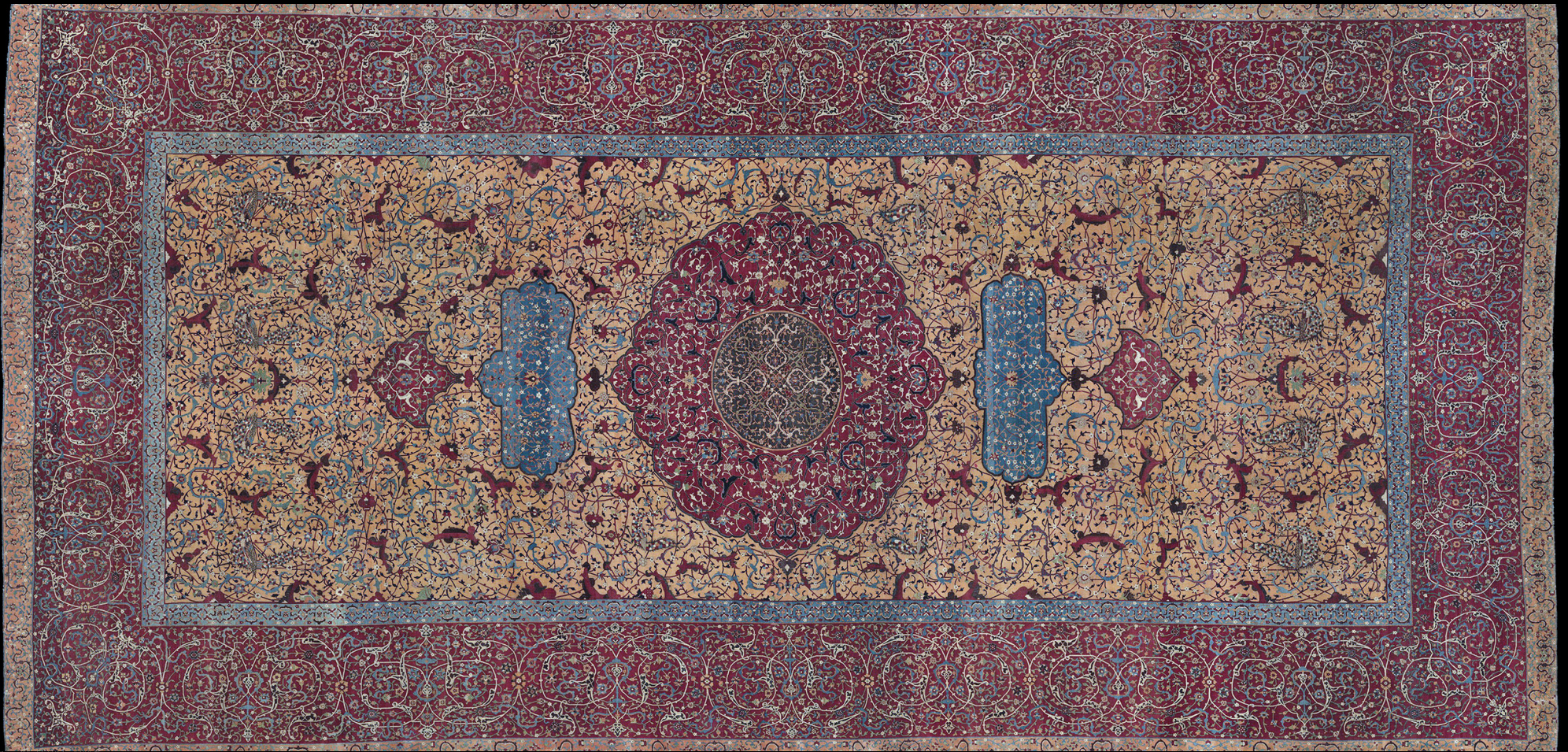


The Anhalt Carpet in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: Rethinking the Methodology of Authenticity

An Illustrated Lecture by
Walter B. Denny
University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Hali London 24-30 June 2019
Carpets in Iran, 1400-1700: New Perspectives
The Courtauld Institute of Art, Vernon Square, London
Tuesday 25 June 2019

The “Anhalt” Carpet in the Metropolitan Museum of Art



1973: Thumbs Down from Ellis, Beattie and Spuhler



The Influence of Kurt Erdmann's Radical Hypothesis about the Topkapi Prayer Rugs and the "Saltings"





Some of the Later Consequences of “Fake Mania”



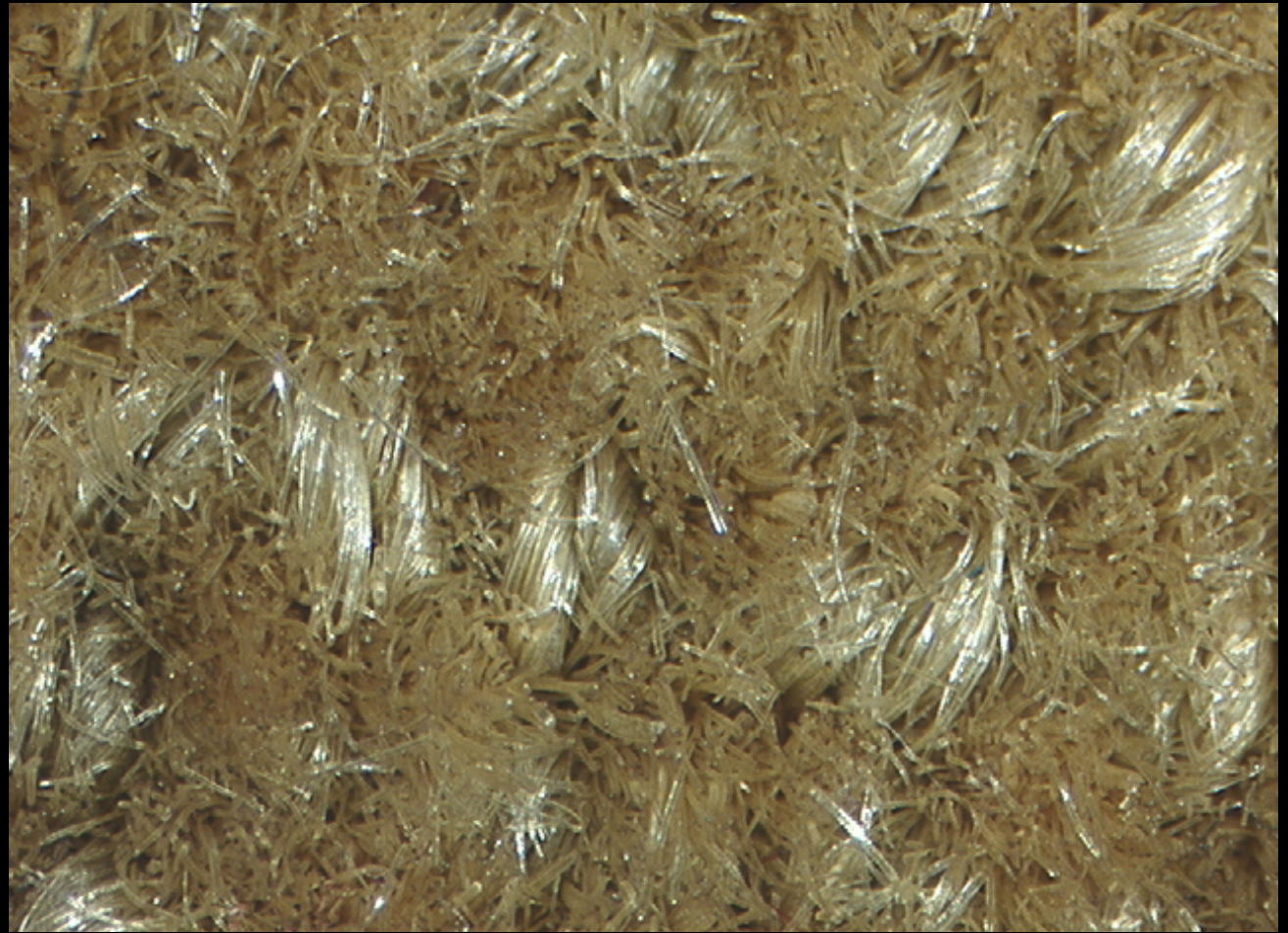




HALI
LONDON

24 - 30 JUNE 2019

The Ellis Argument: COLOR



THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

EXAMINATION AND ANALYSIS REPORT

To: Navina Haidar, Denise Marie Teece, Islamic Art *DSR reference no.*

From: Nobuko Shibayama *Date:* September 1, 2010

Received and archived for DSR *Date:*

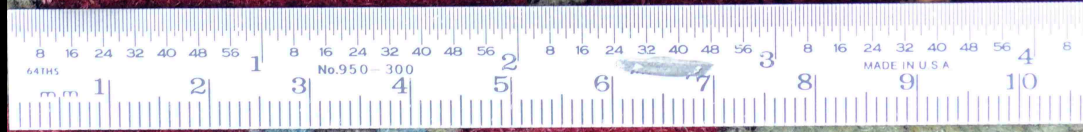
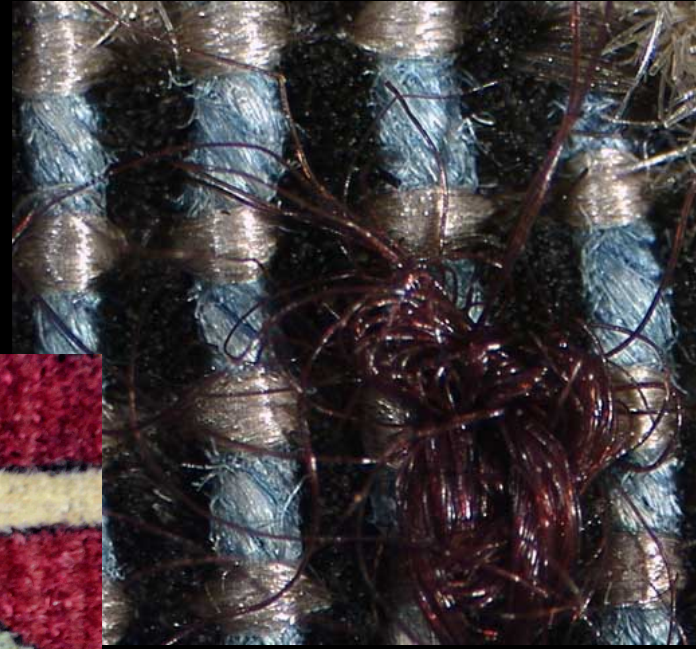
Accession no. 46.128 (Islamic Art)

Re. Dyes used on a 16th c. Persian 'Anhalt' carpet (Iranian, Safavid period, 1501–1722)



The Beattie Argument: CONDITION









The Spuhler Argument: DESIGN



HAJI
LONDON
24 - 30 JUNE 2019









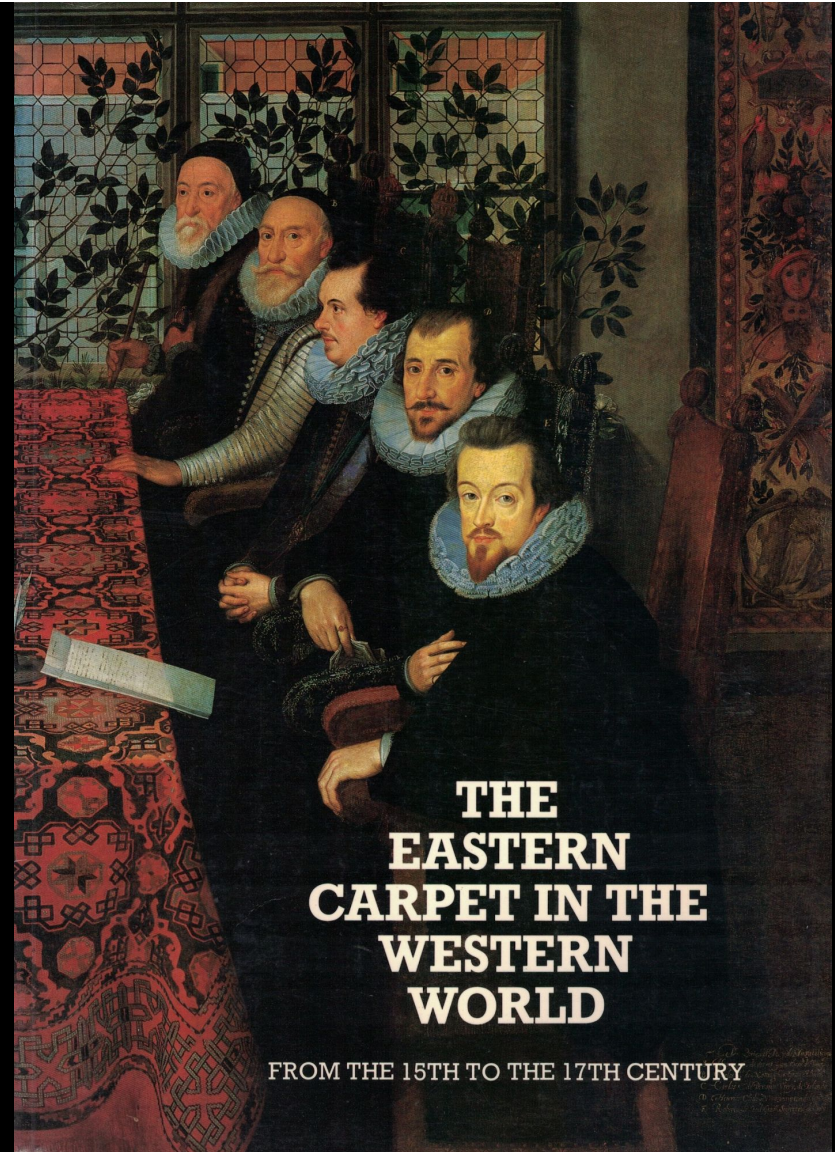
LONDON
24 - 30 JUNE 2019











**THE
EASTERN
CARPET IN THE
WESTERN
WORLD**

FROM THE 15TH TO THE 17TH CENTURY

The Search for Answers at the Met 2008-2011







The Yellow Color and the Dyestuff Issues

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

EXAMINATION AND ANALYSIS REPORT

To: Navina Haidar, Denise Marie Teece, Islamic Art *DSR reference no.*

From: Nobuko Shibayama

Date: September 1, 2010

Received and archived for DSR

Date:

Accession no. 46.128 (Islamic Art)

Re. Dyes used on a 16th c. Persian 'Anhalt' carpet (Iranian, Safavid period, 1501–1722)

LOOKING FOR ASYMMETRY: Cartoon or Knot Plan?





Offs of officers & surges > same # from foundation
1946 ANHALT C#

PLACE N.Y. LOC Med F
 TYPE Medallion NO. 46-128 Date 1873
 PROV. 1524 / 1535 State 16th C Antik Cap from Danau
 WARP: SpPl: Yn: Colr: blue and red EndDp: Lv: 268 C
 WEFT: SpPl: Yn: Colr: red and blue Shts: Dh: Tens: 33
 PILE: Kn: Pul: Opn: SpPl: Yn: Kn: Dep: List: Sturdy
 COUNT - Hr. 20 Vt. 6 SIZE - Hr. 13 1/2 Vt. 2 1/2 6:1
 SIDES 2 toothed top Overcast to top
 Cords: SpPl: Yarn: Wr: C: Rd: Colr: Weft: Double: to top
 Selvage to top to top to top to top to top to top
 ENDS: Ki: W: C: R: SpPl: Yn: Colr: Bands: to top to top
 Lower: to top to top to top to top to top to top
 Upper: to top to top to top to top to top to top
 QUALITY - CONDITION - FEEL: of heavy knit PhP: 9
good manilla but split at with c red with rather imp
 COLOUR: tone salmon to top to top to top
 IVEY to top to top to top to top to top to top
 BROWN to top to top to top to top to top to top
 GRAY to top to top to top to top to top to top
 REDS to top to top to top to top to top to top
 GREEN to top to top to top to top to top to top
 BLUE GR. to top to top to top to top to top to top
 BLUE P. M. D. to top to top to top to top to top to top
 IND. to top to top to top to top to top to top
 BLACK to top to top to top to top to top to top

PLACE N.Y. LOC Med F
 TYPE Antik NO. 46-128 Date 1873
 PROV. Antik Castle Same 193 Parthen
 WARP: SpPl: Yn: Colr: blue and red EndDp: Lv: 2
 WEFT: SpPl: Yn: Colr: red and blue Shts: Dh: Tens: 33
 PILE: Kn: Pul: Opn: SpPl: Yn: Kn: Dep: List: Sturdy
 COUNT - Hr. 18 Vt. 2 SIZE - Hr. 13 1/2 Vt. 2 1/2 6:1
 SIDES to top to top to top to top to top to top
 Cords: SpPl: Yarn: Wr: C: Rd: Colr: Weft: Double: to top
 Selvage to top to top to top to top to top to top
 ENDS: Ki: W: C: R: SpPl: Yn: Colr: Bands: to top to top
 Lower: to top to top to top to top to top to top
 Upper: to top to top to top to top to top to top
 QUALITY - CONDITION - FEEL: to top to top to top
 COLOUR: to top to top to top to top to top to top
 IVEY to top to top to top to top to top to top
 BROWN to top to top to top to top to top to top
 GRAY to top to top to top to top to top to top
 REDS to top to top to top to top to top to top
 GREEN to top to top to top to top to top to top
 BLUE GR. to top to top to top to top to top to top
 BLUE P. M. D. to top to top to top to top to top to top
 IND. to top to top to top to top to top to top
 BLACK to top to top to top to top to top to top

* lower ends - some excellent repairs in knot

The carpet in question is the Arabalt Carpet.

28-II-2008

Report on Samples from the Metropolitan Museum, New York

This is a copy of a report given to May Beattie by Mark Whiting in 1978. It was part of the file on the Arabalt Carpet in the Beattie Archives, now in custody of the Smithsonian, which was copied & sent to W. J. J. in February 2008. No copy of this report apparently exists in the Met.

Three samples from "one of their largest and most impressive rugs" were received from the Museum, via Dr. May Beattie; her comment was "All they want to know is 'Is there a synthetic dye present?'" We have examined them and now report that in each case the answer is "no". However, we would not be doing this work if that were all that we would be able to say. We believe that what the Museum authorities really want to know would be "Was this rug actually made in the period to which it ostensibly belongs?" I assume that this means the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Such a rug could be:

- (a) an authentic antique piece;
- (b) a piece woven after antique rugs became valuable, but before synthetic dyes almost completely displaced natural dyes in most parts of the world, i.e. roughly 1880-1920, or
- (c) a piece made recently and therefore containing synthetic dyes.

Our findings eliminate (c). They are:

- (i) Sample (i) (0.4 mg.) contains an insect-derived hydroxy-anthraquinone pigment, of the same type as cochineal, which could not be further identified, and also a yellow pigment, not identical with that in sample (iii) below, but possibly a flavone, or possibly berberine. The insect pigment could well be identical with that discussed below.
- (ii) Sample (ii) (1 mg.) contained an insect-derived hydroxy-anthraquinone pigment without obvious admixture. It was therefore easier to identify than those of (i) and (iii), and definitely was not normal cochineal, nor, in all probability, kermes. Its properties were reminiscent of lac, which is itself a mixture of variable composition; they might be reproduced by a mixture of carminic acid and kermesic acid, the coloured constituents of the cochineal and the kermes insects. It is stated (J.H. Hofenk-de Graaff, ICOM report, September 1969, p.80) that an insect, Margarodes polonicus L., known as "Polish cochineal" or "St. John's Blood", an Old-World insect of unknown geographical range, contains just such a mixture, and was used in European textiles before 1600 A.D. The scarcity of material, and the fact that we have no authentic specimens, has prevented us from trying to choose between these possibilities. It is possible, and in our opinion not unlikely, that there are other insects containing pigments of a similar chemical type, not yet investigated, that these were used in the fairly distant past. This could be such a case.

Contd.....

- (iii) Sample (iii) (0.4 mg.) contained an insect pigment; almost certainly identical with that present in sample (ii). It also contained a yellow dye not identical with that in sample (i). Our work on yellow dyes is less advanced than that on red dyes, nevertheless in this case there was evidence that the colour was due to the flavonol quercetin, probably present as a glycoside. The colouring matter of Sophora japonica, traditionally used as a yellow dye in the Near East, is rutin, and would show properties similar to the dye present.

Thus, hypothesis (c) can be dismissed. To choose between (a) and (b) we would need to be familiar with classical carpets and also with urban pieces of the late nineteenth century; in fact we have not worked on either. However, the subtlety of having, in one piece, three areas dyed with slightly varying shades all based on an insect pigment (itself not cochineal which in ca. 1900 had, we believe spread all over the world, displacing similar dyes) accords much better with (a) than with (b), and we consider that this piece should be regarded as genuine until strong evidence against it comes to light. If, as we hope, we have the chance to examine other Persian pieces, we will write again to reassess the position.

Signed.....
M.C. Whiting.

.....
T. Sugiura.

22.1.75

Further analysis (Stu analysed the carpet fibres) will be compared to our analyses of the material 5 2008 -
W. J. J. 28-II-07
copy will be made for Met files



Conclusions:

Color: Unusual among surviving examples, but completely authentic according to our current knowledge.

Condition: Good, but certainly not in any way suspiciously so, given our current knowledge.

Design: Well-done and completely consonant with our current understanding of Safavid-era carpet design practice; probably among the very earliest Safavid medallion carpets made from a court-generated cartoon.



What Can We Learn from the Study of the Anhalt Carpet?

1. Given the low survival rate for early carpets, it is unwise to describe a carpet as anomalous based solely on surviving examples.
2. Condition is rarely if ever a *sine qua non* for determining carpet age.
3. Judgments and consensus on style are prone to change over time, as new works come to light and we re-evaluate known works.
4. We can acknowledge and respect the accomplishments of the great pioneering scholars without accepting their work as dogma.

What Have We Learned about dealing with “authenticity” in the past 50 years?

Here are seven final points to consider:

1. A successful copyist and forger plays to the ideas, theories and aspirations current at the time of the forgery, and always builds around a bit of truth.



2. While technology is useful in the study of carpets, it is best used in context with traditional art historical methodology.



3. Every advance in knowledge is both incremental and subject to being both challenged and changed in future.



4. In scholarship, as in all human endeavor, a small amount of caution and humility can save a large amount of embarrassment.



5. In all areas of scholarship, but especially in the discipline of the history of art, *an ethos of secrecy is completely antithetical, as well as destructive, to the progress of knowledge.*

6. In our relatively young field, unexpected and complicated things are happening all the time.



7. In carpet study, coping with the unexpected is a constant.

It is also why carpet study is the most exciting area
in the history of Islamic art today.

Thanks to the Departments of Islamic Art, Textile Conservation, and
the Antonio Ratti Center at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; to
Michael Franses for ideas and images; and to the pioneers – Charlie,
May, Friedrich, and Professor Kurt Erdman -- for blazing the trail on
which we all walk today.