Table carpet - Table carpet

Object: Table carpet

Place of origin: Cairo (Although this carpet's design fits contemporary Ottoman court taste, it was most likely woven in Cairo rather than Istanbul. This is shown by the type of knot used (asymmetric) and the spin of the wool (S-spun), which are specific to Cairo craft practice., made) Egypt

Date: 1550-1600 (made)

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Hand knotted woollen pile, on woollen warp and weft; asymmetrical knot, open to the left; 195 knots per sq. in (3,000 per sq. dm)

Museum number: 151-1883

Gallery location: Medieval & Renaissance, Room 63, The Edwin and Susan Davies Gallery, case 11

Public access description

The threads used in the warp of this carpet were dyed green so that they would form a coloured fringe as it hung over a cube-shaped table. The warp was prepared so that the greatest width of the carpet could be accommodated on the loom and the weavers tied knots within the required outline. When the carpet was finished, the excess warp threads were trimmed and secured.

Descriptive line

Table carpet woven in cruciform shape, wool knotted pile on wool foundation, medallion design with Ottoman floral motifs on red ground, probably Ottoman Cairo, Egypt, 1550-1600

Physical description

Table Carpet, hand knotted woollen pile on woollen warp and weft, woven to shape asymmetrical knot.

WARP: green and yellow wool, often twisted together; S3Z; 26 threads per inch (100 cms); depressed.

WEFT: yellow wool and red wool; unable to ascertain number of ply, but the threads are S-spun, Z-plied; 3 shoots after each row of knots; 15 knots per inch (80 knots per dm).

PILE: wool; 8 colours: red, yellow, green, dark blue, blue, light blue, brown, white; asymmetrical knot open to the left and tied around 2 threads; 195 knots per sq. inch (3000 per sq. dm).

SIDE FINISH: Web of 9 cords (the outer one is composed of three warp threads and is thicker than the others) worked with yellow wool; the outer cord is oversewn with red wool.

END FINISH: Maximum of 8" (20.5 cms) loose green warp ends.

DESIGN: Field: Central square: red ground containing central roundel with carnations, hyacinths and tulips coming out of central boss. Outer roundel has tulips, roses, carnations, daisies and tiger stripes. Each corner contains a floral spray. Flaps: the four flaps have inner roundel as above but also corner medallions with the blue/green carnations, hyacinths and tulips on a yellow ground.

Main border: elaborate saz blossoms with curling leaves on a red ground.

Narrow borders: which separate flaps and field; bracketed blue and red blossoms on yellow.

Dimensions

Height: 89 cm, Width: 125 cm, Depth: 114 cm

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Object history note

When purchased, this carpet was thought to be a Persian canopy carried above a person of rank during processions. Bought at the Bon Marche sale, Paris, through Mr. Purdon Clarke

Historical significance: Table carpets are normally round or cruciform; this is the best-known example of the latter type.

Historical context note

Carpets like this were made in the East Mediterranean for export to Europe (since tables were not a standard item of furniture in the contemporary Islamic world).

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O67146/table-carpet-table-carpet-unknown/