

TEPPICHBAZAR.AT

FREE EDITION 2026

A SHORT ENCYCLOPEDIA

The Hand-Knotted Carpet

2,400 years of knots, colour and craft — from the Altai Mountains to your living room

HISTORY · CRAFT · REGIONS · CARE

VIENNA · HAMBURG · EUROPE

A carpet is a book you can walk on

Every hand-knotted carpet is written knot by knot. A weaver ties each one by hand, cuts the yarn and moves to the next — tens of thousands of times for every square metre, sometimes more than a million.

This little book is our gift to you. It collects what we wish every customer knew before buying a rug: where the craft comes from, how a carpet is built, how to read its patterns, what the numbers on a label really mean, and how to care for a piece so that it outlives all of us.

The historic pictures come from museums that share their collections openly — the Cleveland Museum of Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and public-

domain images on Wikimedia Commons. Wherever you see a link, you can check the facts at the source. The modern pieces are from our own collection.

If you have a question — about a rug you own, one you inherited, or one you are dreaming of — write to us. We answer every message personally.

— *The Teppichbazar.at team*

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Twenty-four centuries in one page

- 4th–3rd c. BC** ◆ **The Pazyryk carpet.** A pile carpet with deer and horsemen is buried in a chieftain's tomb in the Altai Mountains. It is the oldest knotted carpet known today. [Source](#)
- 1100s** ◆ **Seljuq fragments.** Small pieces of knotted pile with tulips and winged ibexes survive from Iran's Seljuq period. [Cleveland Museum of Art](#)
- 1444** ◆ **Carpets in royal paintings.** A Timurid manuscript painted in Shiraz shows a royal feast with guests seated on patterned carpets. [Cleveland Museum of Art](#)
- 1501–1722** ◆ **The Safavid golden age.** Court workshops in Tabriz, Kashan, Isfahan and Kerman turn carpets into high art, designed by the same artists who illuminate books.
- 1533** ◆ **Holbein's "Ambassadors".** An Anatolian carpet covers the table in one of Europe's most famous portraits — carpets have become the status symbol of the Renaissance. [National Gallery, London](#)
- 1539–40** ◆ **The Ardabil Carpet.** The oldest carpet with a written date, signed by Maqsud of Kashan. [V&A, London](#)
- c. 1600** ◆ **Silk and gold.** Isfahan and Kashan weave silk carpets brocaded with gold and silver thread, many sent to European courts as diplomatic gifts. [Cleveland Museum of Art](#)
- 1856** ◆ **The first synthetic dye.** William Henry Perkin invents mauveine. Cheap aniline colours spread through the weaving world from the 1860s — and many fade badly. [Source](#)
- 1935** ◆ **Iran Carpet Company.** Iran founds a state company to organise weaving for export and diplomatic gifts.
- 2010** ◆ **World heritage.** UNESCO inscribes the traditional carpet-weaving skills of [Fars](#) and [Kashan](#) as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The oldest carpet in the world

In 1949 the Soviet archaeologist Sergei Rudenko opened burial mound No. 5 in the Pazyryk valley, high in the Altai Mountains of Siberia. Water had seeped into the tomb and frozen solid — and in the ice lay a carpet.

The Pazyryk carpet measures about **183 × 200 cm**. Its centre is a grid of star-like squares; one border shows a procession of deer, another a line of riders on horseback. It has roughly **360,000 knots per square metre** — finer than many carpets made today.

The burial is dated to the 4th–3rd century BC, which makes the carpet about 2,300–2,400 years old. Who wove it is still debated: some scholars see Persian (Achaemenid) work, pointing to horses that resemble the reliefs of Persepolis; others argue for Armenian or local origins. What is certain is that the technique of knotted pile was already fully mature.

Today the carpet is in the **State Hermitage Museum** in St Petersburg. [Read more](#)



The Pazyryk carpet, 4th–3rd century BC. Wool, knotted pile, c. 183 × 200 cm. State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. Image: Wikimedia Commons, public domain.

≈ 2,400
YEARS OLD

360,000
KNOTS PER M²

From fragments to manuscripts



Between Pazyryk and the great Persian carpets lie more than 1,500 years with very few survivors: wool is food for moths, and carpets were used until they wore out. A rare **two-faced fragment from the Seljuq period (1100s)** shows a stylised tulip on one side and winged ibexes on the other — the tulip, which bows its head in full bloom, stood for modesty before God.

Paintings fill the gap. In a **Shahnama (Book of Kings) frontispiece painted in Shiraz in 1444**, princes, falconers and guests sit on brightly patterned carpets in a flowering garden — proof of how central carpets were to court life.



Left: Two-faced carpet fragment, Iran (?), Seljuq period, 1100s. Cleveland Museum of Art 1966.132, CC0. **Right:** Royal Reception in a Landscape, Shahnama frontispiece, Shiraz, 1444. Cleveland Museum of Art 1956.10.a, CC0.

Safavid Persia, 1501–1722



The Ardabil Carpet, Iran, 1539–40. Wool pile on a silk foundation, 1,044 × 535.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (272-1893). Image: Wikimedia Commons, public domain.

Under the Safavid shahs, carpets became court art. Painters who designed book covers and tile panels also drew carpet patterns, and royal workshops turned them into wool and silk.

The Ardabil Carpet

Probably woven for the shrine of Sheikh Safi al-Din in Ardabil, the dynasty's ancestral home, it carries an inscription with a couplet by the poet Hafiz, the signature of **Maqsud of Kashan** and the date 946 AH (1539–40) — the earliest written date on any Persian carpet. With 300–350 knots per square inch (about 47–54 per cm²) it holds more than 25 million knots. When it came to London in 1893, the designer **William Morris** urged the museum to buy it, writing that "it has no counterpart". A smaller twin is in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. [V&A](#)

The Emperor's Carpet

One of a pair, said to have belonged to Tsar Peter the Great and, after 1698, to the Habsburg emperor Leopold I. Dragons, lions, antelopes, pheasants and ducks move through scrolling flowers, and a verse compares the carpet to the Garden of Paradise. [The Met, 43.121.1](#)

The Anhalt Carpet

Named after a former German princely owner, it has a rare yellow ground with peacocks among the arabesques — designs that match the tiles and book covers of the same period. [The Met, 46.128](#)



Left: The Emperor's Carpet, Iran, second half 16th century; silk warp and weft, wool pile; 759.5 × 339.1 cm. **Middle:** The Anhalt Medallion Carpet, Iran, probably first half 16th century; 792.5 × 419.1 cm. Both: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Open Access (public domain).

Why "asymmetric"?

All three carpets on this page use the asymmetric or "Persian" knot, which lets the weaver draw the curving lines of flowers and arabesques more smoothly than the symmetric knot. More on page 8.

On tables, in paintings, at royal courts



Hans Holbein the Younger, "The Ambassadors", 1533. Oil on oak. National Gallery, London. Image: Google Art Project via Wikimedia Commons, public domain. The upper shelf is covered with an Anatolian carpet.

In Renaissance Europe a carpet was far too precious for the floor. Merchants and princes laid them over tables and chests — and had themselves painted beside them.

So many carpets appear in paintings that art historians name whole types after painters. "Holbein carpets" take their name from Hans Holbein the Younger. "Lotto carpets" — woven in Ushak in western Turkey, with yellow leaf tracery on a red ground — are named after the Venetian painter Lorenzo Lotto (1480–1556), who painted them again and again.

These paintings help us date carpets: if a design appears in a painting of 1533, it existed by 1533.



Left: Turkish carpet with the Lotto pattern, Ushak, 1600–1650. Wool, symmetric knot, 172 × 104 cm. Cleveland Museum of Art 2015.61, CC0. **Right:** Royal carpet with silk and metal thread, Isfahan, 1600–1625. Silk pile, gilt and silver thread, 236 × 144 cm. Cleveland Museum of Art 1926.533, CC0.

The "Polish" carpets that were Persian

Around 1600 the workshops of Isfahan and Kashan wove silk carpets brocaded with gold and silver thread for the Safavid court and as gifts for European rulers. In 1601–02 the Polish king Sigismund III Vasa even ordered carpets with his coat of arms from Kashan.

When one of these carpets was shown in the Polish section of the Paris World Fair in 1878, visitors took it for Polish work. The name "Polonaise carpets" stuck — although every one of them was woven in Iran.

[Cleveland Museum of Art](#)



How a carpet is made

*A hand-knotted carpet has three parts: the **warp** (vertical threads stretched on the loom, which end as the fringes), the **weft** (horizontal threads that lock each row) and the **pile** (the knots that make the soft surface you see).*



Carpet weaving in Mahan, Kerman province, Iran, 2007. Photo: Fulvio Spada, [CC BY-SA 2.0](#), via Wikimedia Commons.



Knotting at the loom, Iran, 2014. Photo: Fatemeh Ahmadi, [CC BY-SA 3.0](#), via Wikimedia Commons.

Six steps from fleece to floor

1 Wool & silk

Fleece is washed, carded and spun — by hand for the best pieces. Silk is reeled from cocoons.

2 Dyeing

Yarn is dyed in batches with plant, insect or synthetic dyes, then dried in the sun.

3 The design

Village weavers often work from memory; city workshops follow a *naqsbeh*, a squared paper drawing where one square is one knot.

4 Knotting

Each knot is tied around warp threads and cut with a small knife. After every row one or more wefts are passed and beaten down with a heavy comb.

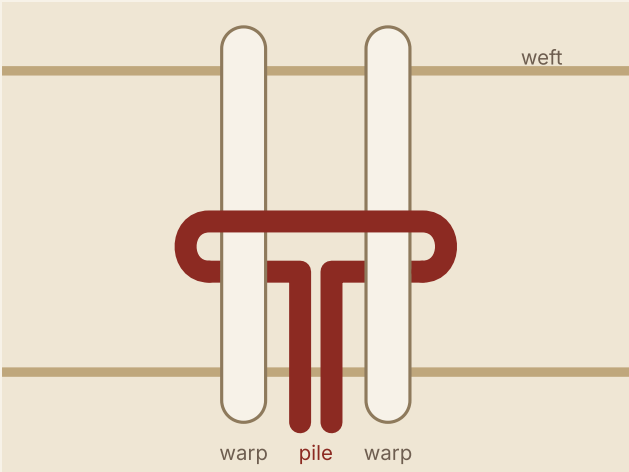
5 Time

A skilled weaver ties several thousand knots a day — about 10,000 when working fast. A large, fine silk carpet can take a team several years.

6 Finishing

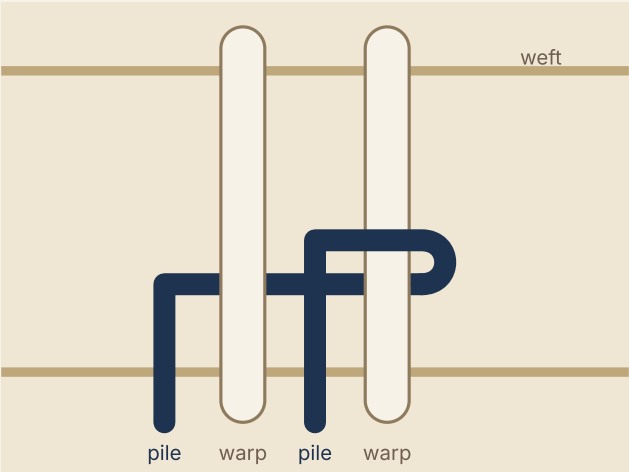
The carpet is cut from the loom, sheared to an even pile, washed, stretched and dried. The warp ends are finished as fringes.

The knot — and the numbers on the label



Symmetric knot

Also called Turkish or Ghiordes knot. The yarn runs across the front of two warp threads, loops around each, and both ends come up together between them. Firm and hard-wearing. Used in Turkey, the Caucasus, by Turkmen weavers and in Turkish and Kurdish areas of Iran — Heriz, Bijar, Hamadan, and many Tabriz carpets.



Asymmetric knot

Also called Persian or Senneh knot. The yarn wraps fully around one warp and only passes behind the other, so one end rises between the two warps and the other beside them. It allows finer, more curving drawing. Used in most of central and eastern Iran — Isfahan, Kashan, Qom, Nain, Kerman — and in India and Pakistan.

Schematic front views by Teppichbazar.at, simplified for clarity (knot open to the left shown).

Knot density: what the numbers mean

Knots per m² is the international measure: knots along 10 cm × knots across 10 cm × 100. As a guide, 100,000 knots/m² = 1,000 per dm² ≈ 65 per square inch.

Raj is the Persian trade measure: the number of knots along one *gereh*, about 7 cm. It is used above all for Tabriz and Qom carpets. 70 raj means 10 knots per centimetre — about one million knots per square metre if the density is the same in both directions.

La is used for Nain carpets: it counts the plies (strands) in each warp thread. Fewer plies mean a thinner warp and a finer carpet, so **4 La is finer than 6 La, and 6 La finer than 9 La.**

Density is a measure of fineness, not of beauty. A coarse Heriz or Gabbeh can be a masterpiece; a fine carpet with dull colours is not.

RAJ	KNOTS PER CM	≈ KNOTS PER M ²
30	4.3	184,000
40	5.7	327,000
50	7.1	510,000
60	8.6	735,000
70	10.0	1,000,000

Calculated as $(\text{raj} \div 7)^2 \times 10,000$, assuming equal density lengthwise and across. Real carpets vary. Reference: [Knot density](#).

For comparison

Pazyryk ≈ 360,000/m² · Ardabil ≈ 470,000–540,000/m² · a fine modern Qom silk of 70 raj ≈ 1,000,000/m².

Wool, silk and colour

Wool

The classic pile fibre: springy, warm, naturally dirt-repellent and long-lasting. Mountain sheep give lanolin-rich wool with a soft shine. *Kork* wool, from the neck and shoulders of the sheep, is especially fine and soft.

Silk

Silk is strong, very fine and reflects light, so the colours change as you walk around the carpet. It allows the highest knot densities, which is why the finest Qom, Isfahan and Kashan pieces are silk or wool with silk highlights. A silk foundation (warp) also makes a carpet thinner and more precise.

Cotton

Most city carpets have a cotton warp and weft: it is strong, does not stretch and keeps the carpet flat and straight. Nomadic rugs more often have a wool foundation.

"Art silk" is not silk

Viscose and mercerised cotton are sometimes sold as "silk". Ask for the material in writing; a reputable dealer will always tell you.



Dyed wool at a carpet workshop, Mahan, Iran, 2007. Photo: Fulvio Spada, [CC BY-SA 2.0](#), via Wikimedia Commons.

The natural dye palette

-  **Red** — madder root; carmine reds from insects such as cochineal
-  **Blue** — indigo
-  **Yellow** — dyer's weed, chamomile, onion skins, pomegranate rind
-  **Green** — indigo over-dyed with yellow
-  **Orange** — madder over-dyed with yellow
-  **Brown-black** — oak galls, acorns, sumac

Abrash — the beautiful imperfection

Look closely at an old village or nomad rug and you will often see bands where one colour changes shade — a red turning slightly darker, a blue becoming lighter. This is **abrash** (from the Turkish word for "speckled"). It appears when the weaver used up one batch of hand-dyed yarn and started a new one. Collectors see it as a mark of authenticity, not a flaw. [Source](#)

City carpets of Iran



NORTH-WEST IRAN · MOSTLY SYMMETRIC KNOT

Tabriz

One of the oldest and most important weaving cities, and a great market for the whole region. Tabriz produces almost every style — medallions, hunting scenes, vases, pictorial carpets — usually measured in raj (often 40–70). Many Safavid court carpets are attributed to Tabriz.

From our collection: [Tabriz, wool and silk, 410 × 300 cm](#)



CENTRAL IRAN · ASYMMETRIC KNOT

Isfahan

Shah Abbas I made Isfahan his capital in 1598 and set up court workshops there. Modern Isfahan carpets are among the finest in Iran: very fine wool, often on a silk foundation, with balanced medallion designs in ivory, blue and soft reds.

From our collection: [Isfahan, wool and silk, 315 × 425 cm](#)



CENTRAL IRAN · ASYMMETRIC KNOT

Nain

A small desert town that turned to carpet weaving in the 20th century and quickly became famous for very fine work: ivory and light-blue grounds, delicate floral medallions and outlines picked out in silk. Quality is graded in La — 4 La, 6 La, 9 La.

From our collection: [Nain 4 La, silk, 216 × 312 cm](#)



CENTRAL IRAN · ASYMMETRIC KNOT

Qom (Ghom)

Qom became a weaving centre in the 20th century and is today the name most associated with **pure silk** carpets — silk pile on a silk foundation, often 60–70 raj and more. Workshops and master designers sign their best pieces, such as the Erami family.

From our collection: [Hossein Erami Qom silk "Golfarang", 393 × 300 cm, 65.9 raj](#)

Kashan, Kerman, Heriz and the nomads



CENTRAL IRAN · ASYMMETRIC KNOT · UNESCO 2010

Kashan

Home of Maqsum, who signed the Ardabil Carpet, and of Safavid silk carpets for the court and for Europe. Classic Kashans have a deep red or navy field with a medallion and dense palmette flowers (the "Shah Abbasi" motif). Kashan's weaving skills are on UNESCO's heritage list.

From our collection: [Kashan, wool, 293 × 460 cm](#)



SOUTH-EAST IRAN · ASYMMETRIC KNOT

Kerman

Known for soft wool, refined colours and some of the most elaborate *boteh* (paisley) designs. In the Safavid period Kerman wove the "vase-technique" carpets with large, free-floating flowers, like the 17th-century piece shown here.

Carpet, probably Kerman, 17th century. Cleveland Museum of Art 1922.349, CC0.



NORTH-WEST IRAN · SYMMETRIC KNOT

Heriz

Villages near Tabriz weave bold, geometric carpets with a large angular medallion, usually in brick red, ivory and blue. Coarser than city carpets but extremely durable — the classic carpet for a living room that is really lived in. Higher grades are traded as *Serapi*.

From our collection: [antique Heriz, wool, 547 × 330 cm](#)



FARS PROVINCE · NOMADIC · UNESCO 2010

Gabbeh and the Qashqai

The Qashqai and Luri nomads of Fars weave on horizontal ground looms that can be packed up and moved. A *Gabbeh* has a thick, soft pile, few knots and wide open fields of colour with small animals or symbols — modern in look, ancient in origin. The weaving skills of Fars are on UNESCO's heritage list.

From our collection: [Gabbeh, wool, 200 × 290 cm](#)

The wider carpet belt

Knotted carpets are woven in a broad belt from Morocco to China. Four traditions every carpet lover should recognise:



Prayer rug, Daghestan, 19th century. Cleveland Museum of Art 1945.166, CC0.

Caucasus

Between the Black and Caspian Seas: bold geometric medallions, stars and hooks in strong reds and blues, symmetric knot. Kazak, Shirvan, Kuba and Daghestan are famous names.



Turkmen main carpet, Yomud tribe, mid-1850s. Cleveland Museum of Art 2010.190, CC0.

Turkmen

Woven by women of nomadic tribes — Tekke, Yomud, Saryk, Salor. Rows of lobed *guls*, tribal emblems, on deep red grounds. Main carpets furnished the round tent (yurt).



Kilim, Anatolia, late 19th–early 20th century. Cleveland Museum of Art 1961.388, CC0.

Anatolia

Turkey's tradition of Ushak, Lotto and Holbein carpets, and of the flat-woven *kilim* — a carpet without pile, woven in tapestry technique, often with a niche motif.



Pashmina carpet with millefleurs design, Kashmir, early 1600s. Cleveland Museum of Art 1936.17, CC0.

India

The Mughal emperors brought Persian weavers to India. Kashmir carpets of the 1600s used *pashmina* goat wool and a "millefleurs" (thousand flowers) design.

From our collection: Kazak

Kazak-style carpets are still woven today in the same spirit — long, lustrous wool pile, large geometric medallions and strong colours. They suit modern and rustic rooms alike.

Kazak, wool, 363 × 466 cm



Motifs and their meaning

Many carpet designs grew out of the Persian garden — the enclosed paradise, pairi-daēza in Old Iranian, from which our word "paradise" comes. Here are the motifs you will meet most often.

Toranj — the medallion. The large central motif, often star- or lobed-shaped. Below it hang pendants; above and below may sit smaller cartouches.

Boteh — the paisley. A teardrop shape with a bent tip, read as a flame, a cypress or a seed. Typical of Kerman and Seraband carpets.

Shah Abbasi — the palmette. Large, many-petalled flowers linked by scrolling stems; a hallmark of Kashan, Isfahan and Nain.

Mihrab — the prayer niche. An arch at one end of a prayer rug, pointing toward Mecca when the rug is laid out for prayer.

Gul — the tribal emblem. The lobed octagons of Turkmen rugs. Each tribe had its own version, like a family crest.

Animals and hunts. Lions, deer, birds and dragons in a garden or hunting scene — a world in harmony, as on the Emperor's and Anhalt carpets.

Lachak — the corners. Quarter-medallions in the four corners. A "Lachak-Toranj" design combines both and echoes the decorated book covers of Safavid Persia.

Herati — the fish pattern. A small diamond surrounded by four curved leaves, repeated all over the field. Named after the city of Herat.

Islimi — the arabesque. Endless spiralling tendrils, symbolising infinity and the unity of creation.

Tree of life. A single tree rising through the field, linking earth and heaven — common in prayer rugs and garden designs.

Cloud band. A wavy ribbon borrowed from Chinese art, seen in many Safavid carpets, including the Emperor's Carpet.

Vase. A flower-filled vase repeated or placed at the centre; the classic "Zil-e Soltan" design shows vases and birds.



Toranj and lachak — medallion and corners. Isfahan, Teppichbazar.at collection.



Guls — Turkmen main carpet, Saryk tribe, 1870s. Cleveland Museum of Art 2006.201, CC0.



Palmettes and arabesques — carpet, Herat, 1500s. Cleveland Museum of Art 1962.263, CC0.

A note on symbols

Meanings differ by region and weaver, and many motifs were simply beautiful forms passed from mother to daughter. Treat symbolic readings as tradition, not as a code.

The most valuable carpet ever sold



The Clark "Sickle-Leaf" carpet, vine scroll and palmette design, probably Kerman, Iran, 17th century. Image: Sotheby's, via [Wikimedia Commons](#), public domain.

On 5 June 2013, after a bidding battle of about ten minutes, an anonymous telephone bidder bought a 17th-century Persian carpet at Sotheby's in New York for US\$ 33,765,000.

The carpet was woven in Safavid Iran, probably in Kerman, in the so-called "vase technique". Its red field is filled with scrolling vines, palmettes and long, curved leaves — the "sickle leaves" that give it its name.

It came from the collection of **William A. Clark** (1839–1925), copper industrialist and US senator from Montana, who bequeathed his art to the **Corcoran Gallery of Art** in Washington, D.C. The Corcoran sold it in 2013. The price was more than three times the previous auction record for any carpet.

\$33.8 m

SOTHEBY'S NEW YORK, 2013

3.5×

THE PREVIOUS RECORD

Why so much?

Safavid carpets of this quality almost never come to market — nearly all are in museums. When one does, museums and the great collectors compete for it. Condition, provenance (who owned it), rarity of design and sheer beauty decide the price.

Sources: [Associated Press / CSMonitor, 6 June 2013](#) · [Sotheby's, lot 12](#) · [Jozan auction archive](#). Price includes buyer's premium.

Records number two and three



The Béhague "Vase" carpet, Kerman, Iran, c. 1625–1675. Museum of Islamic Art, Doha. Image via [Wikimedia Commons](#), public domain.

2 · The Béhague carpet — £6.2 million

At Christie's in London in April 2010 this 17th-century Kerman carpet was estimated at £200,000–300,000. Bidding passed the then auction record for a carpet at £2.4 million and the record for any Islamic work of art at £3.5 million, and ended at **£6,201,250 (about US\$ 9.6 million)**. It had belonged to the Paris collector **Comtesse Martine de Béhague** (1870–1939) and is now in the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha. Its design of palmettes and lancet leaves is seen as an early form of the *berati* pattern found in countless Persian carpets today. [Artfix Daily, April 2010](#)

3 · The Vanderbilt carpet — £4.8 million

A North Indian "star-lattice" carpet with a *millefleurs* (thousand flowers) design, late 17th to early 18th century, 3.84 × 4.11 m, once owned by the Vanderbilt family. Christie's London sold it on 8 October 2013 for **£4,786,500 (US\$ 7,687,120)** — more than double its high estimate. [HALI](#)



Millefleurs "star-lattice" carpet, Mughal India, 17th–early 18th century. Image: Christie's, via [Wikimedia Commons](#), public domain.

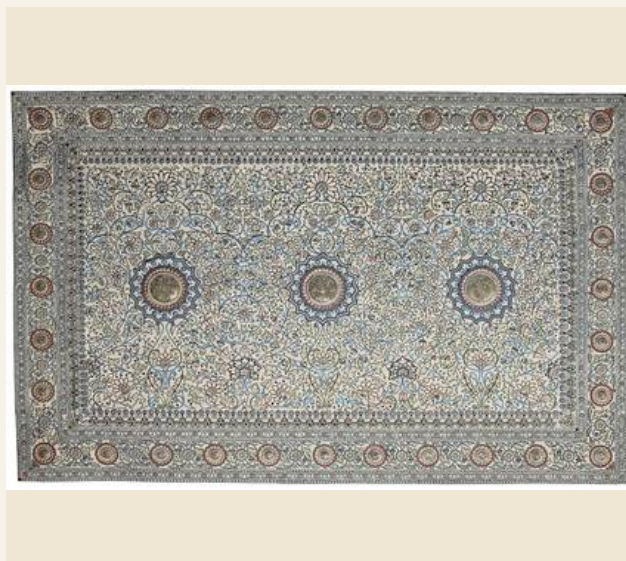
Two Kerman carpets at the top

Both of the two highest prices ever paid for a carpet went to 17th-century carpets from Kerman — the same city whose soft wool and refined colours we described on page 11.

Silk, gold and pearls



The Adolphe von Rothschild "Polonaise" carpet, silk and metal thread, probably Isfahan, early 17th century. Sold at Christie's London, 31 March 2022, for £2,322,000. Image: Christie's, via [Wikimedia Commons](#), public domain.



The Pearl Carpet of Baroda, India, c. 1865–70. Made for the Maharaja of Baroda; deerskin and silk set with more than 1.5 million natural pearls and precious stones — not knotted, but the most famous "carpet" of jewels. Sold at Sotheby's Doha in 2009 for US\$ 5.5 million; now National Museum of Qatar. Image via [Wikimedia Commons](#), public domain.

Selected auction results

CARPET	SALE	PRICE
Clark "Sickle-Leaf" carpet, Kerman, 17th c.	Sotheby's New York, 2013	US\$ 33,765,000
Béhague "Vase" carpet, Kerman, 17th c.	Christie's London, 2010	£ 6,201,250 (≈ US\$ 9.6 m)
Vanderbilt star-lattice carpet, North India	Christie's London, 2013	£ 4,786,500 (US\$ 7.69 m)
Pearl Carpet of Baroda (pearls, not knotted)	Sotheby's Doha, 2009	US\$ 5,500,000
Pommersfelden "Polonaise" rug, Isfahan	Christie's London, 2019	£ 3,895,000 (US\$ 5.08 m)
Doris Duke "Polonaise" rug, Isfahan	Christie's New York, 2008	US\$ 4,450,500
Adolphe von Rothschild "Polonaise", Isfahan	Christie's London, 2022	£ 2,322,000 (US\$ 3.05 m)

Prices as reported, including buyer's premium, in the currency of the sale; not adjusted for inflation. Sources: [HALI — Polonaise auction prices](#) · [HALI — Vanderbilt](#) · [Artfix Daily](#) · [AP / CSMonitor](#) · [Pearl Carpet of Baroda](#) · [Jozan](#).

What this means for you

Record prices are paid for unique museum-quality antiques. But the same qualities that drive them — fine materials, natural colours, excellent condition and a clear history — are what make any hand-knotted carpet hold its value. Keep the invoice and certificate of your carpet: provenance matters.

Buying and caring for a carpet

Is it really hand-knotted?

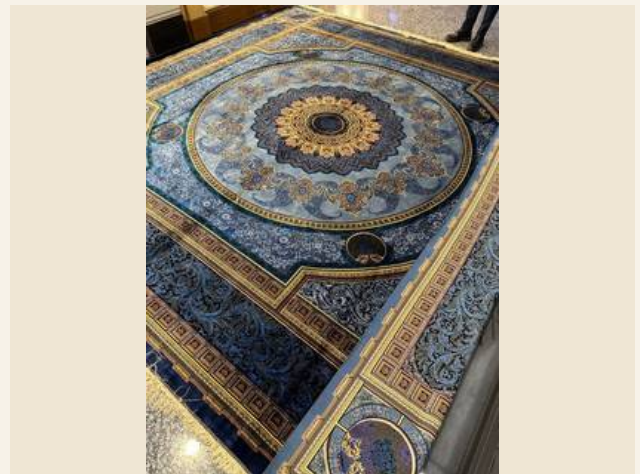
- ◆ **Turn it over.** On a hand-knotted carpet the design is clearly visible on the back, with tiny irregularities. Machine-made rugs look perfectly even; tufted rugs have a glued fabric backing.
- ◆ **Look at the fringes.** They are the ends of the warp threads and run through the whole carpet. Fringes sewn onto the ends are a sign of machine work.
- ◆ **Part the pile.** Fold the carpet against the pile: you should see rows of individual knots at the base.
- ◆ **Small irregularities are good.** Slightly uneven sides, abrash and tiny changes in the drawing show the human hand.

Before you buy

- ◆ Ask for the **origin, materials (pile and foundation), size and knot density** in writing.
- ◆ Choose size by the room: in a living room, the front feet of the sofa and chairs usually stand on the carpet; under a dining table, allow at least 60–70 cm around it so chairs stay on the carpet.
- ◆ For busy rooms choose wool with a medium pile (Heriz, Kazak, Bakhtiari); keep fine silk pieces for quieter rooms or walls.
- ◆ Buy what you love. A carpet will be with you for decades.

Care that lasts generations

- ◆ **Vacuum regularly** in the direction of the pile, with a plain nozzle or the brush switched off; keep the fringes away from the nozzle.
- ◆ **Turn the carpet** every 6–12 months so that sun and footsteps wear it evenly.
- ◆ **Spills:** act at once — blot (never rub) with a white cloth and a little cold water, from the edge inwards.
- ◆ **Moths** like dark, quiet places: check under sofas and beds, and air the carpet now and then.
- ◆ **Use an anti-slip underlay.** It protects the carpet and the floor and stops slipping.
- ◆ **Professional hand wash** every few years, depending on use. Never machine-wash or steam-clean a fine carpet.
- ◆ **Storage:** clean it first, roll it — never fold — and wrap it in breathable cotton, not plastic.



From our collection: Erami Qom silk "Seven Heavens", 398 × 395 cm, 71.8 raj.

We are here to help

Not sure about a carpet you own or one you are considering? Send us a few photos — front, back and a close-up of the fringe — and we will tell you what we see.

Find your carpet with us

Tell us what you are looking for — size, colours, style, budget — and our experts will suggest pieces from our collection, including rugs not yet online.

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E-mail office@teppichbazar.at

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Further reading: [V&A — The Ardabil Carpet · Persian carpet · Pazyryk carpet · Knot density · UNESCO: Fars, Kashan](#).

This booklet is free and may be shared unchanged. Information compiled with care in 2026; corrections are welcome at office@teppichbazar.at. Teppichbazar.at is a brand of Luxonaria GmbH, Vienna.

FROM OUR COLLECTION



Tabriz, wool & silk



Isfahan, wool & silk



Nain 4 La, silk



Kashan, wool