Family Holdings: Turkish Flat Weaves from the Keith Achepohl Collection

Hallie Ford Museum of Art at Willamette University September 15 – December 23, 2012

Teachers Guide

This guide is to help teachers prepare students for a field trip to the exhibition, *Family Holdings: Turkish Flat Weaves from the Keith Achepohl Collection*; offer ways to lead their own tours; and propose ideas to reinforce the gallery experience and broaden curriculum concepts. Teachers, however, will need to consider the level and needs of their students in adapting these materials and lessons.

Goals

- To introduce students to the art of Turkish nomadic flat weaving
- To introduce students to the history and culture of the nomadic peoples of Turkey
- To explore the relationship between the lifeways and the arts of the nomadic peoples of Turkey

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the traditional techniques of Turkish nomadic weaving
- Identify the traditional forms of Turkish nomadic weaving (rugs, bags, etc.) and their uses
- Identify the variety of traditional symbols used in Turkish nomadic weaving
- Discuss the art of weaving in relation to the history and culture of the nomadic peoples of Turkey

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BACKGROUND

By John Olbrantz, Exhibition Curator and The Maribeth Collins Director Hallie Ford Museum of Art

For centuries, nomadic pastoralists have migrated throughout the Middle East and Central Asia in search of winter and summer pasture for their flocks of sheep and herds of goats. In Turkey the nomadic herders (yörük) move their flocks to the lush pastures by the coast during the winter months and back to the high mountain plateaus and valleys during the summer months when the sun and heat have withered the coastal vegetation. Sheep and goats provide food for the family as well as the raw fiber used by women to weave the kilims, bags, pillows, and wraps that have become the hallmarks of nomadic art.

The most common materials employed by nomadic weavers are wool and goat hair obtained from family livestock. Cotton, camel hair, and silk are often used in varying amounts to provide a contrast to the dyed wools and goat hair. In addition to packing and unpacking animals, setting up camp sites, and cooking, women play an active role in overseeing the grazing of the flocks and herds, milking the goats, sheering the sheep, and washing, carding, spinning, dyeing, and weaving the wool. Nomadic weavers use a bottom whorl drop spindle to spin their wool, vegetal or synthetic dyes to color it, and a back-strap loom to weave it.

Although a variety of weaving techniques are known to them, nomadic weavers use mostly flat weave techniques. These include kilim or tapestry weave and brocade weave. The kilim weave uses vertical warps (*atki*) and horizontal wefts (*çozgu*) that are tightly interwoven so that together the strands of the weave produce a flat surface with no pile. Brocade weave employs cicim, soumak, and zili techniques, and involves weft-wrapping that can take on the appearance of an embroidered stitch. The woven items produced by these various techniques are prized for their durability and strength and are highly favored by the nomads of Turkey.

The nomadic herders of Turkey live in black goat-hair tents and travel from winter to summer pastures utilizing camels, donkeys, and – in recent years – pickup trucks. Bound by tradition and necessity, nomadic weavers produce a wide variety of woven items intended to be used during these semiannual migrations. Rugs (*kilims*) cover the floors and walls of their tents, while pillows and cushions (*yastik*) provide comfortable seating for the occupants. When it is time to move to the next location, they load their personal belongings into saddlebags (*heybe*), storage bags (*çuval*), bedding bags (*hurç*), and a number of smaller bags (*torba*) intended to carry or store different commodities. When not on the move, these colorful bags and wraps are hung on the interior of their black goat hair tents.

Color, composition, and motif are characteristic features of the flat weave tradition. Indeed, they are part of the visual vocabulary necessary for tribal identification, and are used from one generation to the next with only slight variation. Color is often indicative of the region in which the flat weave was made, while compositional arrangement and design are often tied to specific regions and tribes. A wide variety of symbols appear in

Turkish flat weaves, reflecting the hopes, fears, dreams, and aspirations of the weavers who made them, ranging from a happy marriage and many children to protection from the evil eye and personal fulfillment. Scholar Ron Marchese summed it up best when he wrote, "The weaving tradition of Turkey is central to its culture. Bound up in color, pattern, and texture, it is a testament to the beliefs and values of its people."

The Turkish flat weaves on view belong to Keith Achepohl, an artist and professor emeritus from the University of Iowa who currently lives in Eugene, Oregon. An avid and enthusiastic collector, he made his first trip to Turkey in the early 1960s and has revisited the country on numerous occasions ever since, building one of the finest private collections of its kind in the United States. Achepohl has always wanted to see his Turkish flat weaves collection used to promote visual literacy and cross-cultural appreciation and understanding, and the current exhibition is a step in that direction.

BEFORE THE MUSEUM VISIT

- If possible, visit the exhibition on your own beforehand.
- Use the image and suggested discussion and activities to introduce students to the art of Turkish flat weaves.
- Make sure students are aware of gallery etiquette.



Kilim/Rug

Turkey, Northwest Anatolia, Bergama 19th century
Wool on wool
Weave: Kilim weave
80 x 55"
Collection of Keith Achepohl, Eugene, Oregon

Photography by Frank Miller

Kilims/rugs were used to cover the floors and walls of tents, or to cover items within the tent. This finely woven example was probably a dowry piece – created by a mother or daughter to be part of the daughter's wealth and belongings brought to her marriage. This is further suggested by the excellent condition of the rug, which tells us that it was a special piece rather than an every day item that would have experienced regular wear.

This kilim/rug was woven with a regular kilim flat weave or tapestry technique where the wefts are passed over and under each of the warps to create a tightly woven flat surface with no pile. The designs are created by the "slit weave" technique (see page 26) which features discontinuous wefts of different colors being woven back and forth in the design areas, instead of being carried directly across the woven surface, as in ordinary cloth weaves. This technique creates spaces between the background and the design (detail 1), but they are hardly noticeable due to the tightness of the weave.

The composition of the kilim/rug features the hallmarks of traditional Turkish nomadic weaving with its bright natural dyes, variety of color combinations and broken symmetry. Note the variegation in some of the colors used; this is called "abrash" (pronounced **a.brazh**) and is a result of using fibers that were dyed with natural dyes at different times. Since the weaving process would often be interrupted and weavers would return to it when time allowed, it was common to use different batches of fiber in one piece.

In a testament to the weaver's skills and imagination, and to the charm of Turkish nomadic weaving in general, the designs and color combinations were created as she wove and not copied from a pattern or planned ahead in great detail. Note the ram's horn pattern on the upper right – the top was left off as the weaver ran out of room.

The motifs and symbols found here may reflect the hopes and dreams of a potential bride for a happy, prosperous and secure marriage with many children. They include the *koçhboynuzu* or "ram's horn" (detail 2), which symbolizes male fertility, heroism and power, surrounding the *göz* or "eye," which provides protection from the evil eye; the *bukaği* or "fetter" (detail 3), which signifies the continuation of the family, bonds of love, and the hope that they will always remain together; the *haç*or "cross" (detail 4), which is used against the power of the evil eye by dividing it into four separate pieces. Other symbols include variations of the *kurt ağzi* or "wolf's mouth (detail 4) and *kurt izi* or "wolf's track" (detail 4), both of which provide protection from wolves who prey upon livestock.



Koçboynuzu, "ram's horn" symbolizes male fertility, heroism, and power



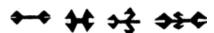
provides protection against the evil eye



Haç "cross" provides protection from the evil eye by dividing it into four pieces



Bukaği, "fetter" signifies the continuation of the family, bonds of love, and the hope that they will always remain together





kurt ağzi, "wolf's mouth" kurt iz, "wolf's track" both provide protection from wolves who prey upon the livestock of nomadic groups

Looking at Turkish Flat Weaves: Kilim/Rug

- Describe what you see here.
- How has the artist used the <u>elements of art</u> (lines, color, shape, form, texture, space, etc.) and the <u>principals of art</u> (the way it is organized, i.e., pattern, contrast, balance, proportion, unity, rhythm, variety, emphasis)?
- Describe the form of the object. What might it have been used for?
- Discuss the overall composition. How has the artist created balance and unity while using variety?
- Describe the colors and color combinations. Do these look like natural or commercial dyes, or both? If natural, what might the weaver have used to dye the threads?
- Discuss the symbols the artist used. Is there a dominant motif or symbol? Are there secondary motifs or symbols? What is the visual or metaphorical relationship between each symbol and what it symbolizes? Does the symbol resemble the source (e.g. "ram's horns)? How has the artist stylized this?
- Discuss the *Kilim/Rug* as a dowry piece a young woman brings to a marriage. Do the symbols used support this theme? If so, how?

Suggested Discussion and Activities

- Discuss the title of the exhibition "Family Holdings," which refers both to the idea that: 1) these pieces belonged to and were often handed down within one family; and 2) many of these pieces were used to hold items important to a family: grain, salt, spindles, rolling pins, etc.
- Discuss the pieces as objects of communication in a society that has no written literature. How do the artists communicate ideas and feelings through their work?
- The traditional art of Turkish nomadic weaving, indeed the nomadic way of life, is disappearing. The people are more semi-nomadic, and many choose to live in villages away from the traditional way of life. Techniques and family designs are no longer passed down from mother to daughter as children are required by the state to attend school and young adults may move away. The invention of convenient and colorful aniline dyes in the late 19th century for the most part replaced the use of natural dyes, while tin and plastic have replaced the woven containers that once graced the tents. Without this necessity, the time-consuming art of weaving is increasingly lost.
 - Discuss the affect of modernization and technology on traditional arts such as Turkish nomadic weaving. Can you think of examples from your own culture? Can you find examples of how these traditional arts are being preserved (or revived) today?
- Weavers create designs that are in part determined by the grid formed by the warp (vertical) and weft (horizontal) strands. Using the lesson plan on page 10,
 Designing a Graphed Pattern, by art educator Sonia Allen, translate an irregular, round or curved object onto the grid design.

Make Natural Dyes

Create your own dyes from plant materials such as onion skins, beets, coffee, etc. using simple techniques similar to those used by nomadic Turkish weavers. To dye eggs, go to www.marthastewart.com/268125/natural-egg-dyeing-techniques. To dye cotton material, go to http://tlc.howstuffworks.com/family/nature-craft-activities-for-kids4.htm.

The Tales of Hoja

Read the tales of Nassreddin Hoja, a man who most likely lived in Anatolia in the 13th century and was known as a teacher, philosopher, and wise man, as well as a trickster and a fool. His funny stories and anecdotes reveal human frailties and foibles, and the hope and humor to be found in the realities of daily life.

Singh, Rina. *Nearly Nonsense: Hoja Tales from Turkey*. Illustrated by Farida Zaman. Tundra Books, Toronto, 2011. (Available through Chemeketa Cooperative Regional Library Service)

http://www.silk-road.com/folklore/nasreddin.html

http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/199705/tales.of.the.hoja.htm

AT THE MUSEUM

- Review with students what is expected their task and museum behavior.
- Be selective don't try to look at or talk about everything in the exhibition.
- Focus on the works of art. Encourage students to look closely at each work of art and consider the same discussion strategies they used with the *Kilim/Rug* in the classroom.
 - Describe what you see here.
 - How has the artist used the <u>elements of art</u> (lines, color, shape, form, texture, space, etc.) and the <u>principals of art</u> (the way it is organized, i.e., pattern, contrast, balance, proportion, unity, rhythm, variety, emphasis)?
- Describe the form of the object. What might it have been used for?
- Discuss the overall composition (note especially the use of broken symmetry and of positive and negative space). How has the artist created balance and unity while using variety?
- Describe the colors and color combinations. Do these look like natural or commercial dyes? Why do you say that? If natural, what might the weaver have used to dye the threads?
- Is there a dominant motif? Are there secondary motifs? Using the symbol guide on page 22 (remember that there are many variations of a symbol and what you find may not be an exact match), what symbols has the artist used? What is the visual or metaphorical relationship between each symbol and what it symbolizes? Does the symbol resemble the source (e.g. "ram's horns)? How has the artist stylized this?
- Can you find themes, or an overall theme, in the meanings of the symbols used? Do they relate to the use of the object, and if so, how?
- Using the Weaving Terms and Techniques guide on page 26, can you identify at least one of the techniques used in the piece? (Hint: the label can help you). Remember not to touch the artwork as you study it.

LESSON PLAN: DESIGNING A GRAPHED PATTERN

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Introduction

Graphed drawings can be patterns for many works of art: mosaics, weaving, needlework or collaged work. Graphed drawings can be used to enlarge a work of art. This project will take the student through the process of drafting a simplified drawing, reproducing it on graph paper, and modifying the drawing to fit the graph. The student will reproduce a drawing using either a light source or graphite transfer paper.

Lesson: Designing a Graphed Pattern

Goal: Student will transform a free-form drawing into a graphed pattern.

Objectives:

- 1. Student will create a simple line drawing of a familiar object.
- 2. Student will transfer the drawing to graph paper.
- 3. Student will modify and color code the pattern.

Supplies:

blank drawing or copy paper pencils, erasers, sharpeners colored pencils graph paper graphite transfer paper #4B graphite pencils to make homemade transfer paper simple, familiar objects, magazine pictures

Procedures:

- 1. Simple Drawing
 - a. Choose an object or a picture
 - b. On copy paper use pencil to make a line drawing of your choice. This is a brainstorming page. Try different views, arrangements and sizes. Stay simple.

2. Graphed Drawing

- a. Draw arrows to mark vertical and horizontal centers at the edges of the graph.
- b. Select one drawing to transfer to graph paper.
- c. Using pencil on graph paper, lightly draw the chosen design's shape, making sure to center the drawing according to the marked arrows.
- d. Include important interior lines. Keep details simple.
- e. Student may place graph paper over the draft drawing and trace it by holding both against a window or light box.
- f. Student may use transfer paper. *(See below: Homemade Transfer Paper.)
 - (1) Tape transfer paper (graphite side down) onto graph paper using drafting tape.
 - (2) Tape drawing over transfer paper using drafting tape.
 - (3) Trace the draft drawing with a sharp pencil; drawing will appear on graph paper.
 - (4) Lift one corner of transfer paper to check the transfer. Replace and retrace if needed.

- 3. Modification and Color
 - a. Adjust drawing to fit graph squares by erasing and re-drawing lines. Work lightly.
 - b. Smooth curves will change to stepped curves.
 - c. Add color with colored pencil.
 - d. Outline areas of different colors
 - e. The colored pattern will correspond to the medium of the finished artwork, e.g., tiles for mosaics, yarn for weaving, embroidery floss for needlework, papers for collage.
 - f. Older students may code each color with a symbol.
 - (1) Draw a key to show symbols and corresponding colors or materials.

*4. Homemade Transfer Paper

- a. Using a soft pencil (e.g., #4B) color one side of a piece of copy paper.
- b. Go over the whole page, making sure no areas of white remain.
- c. Wash hands before working with drawing.

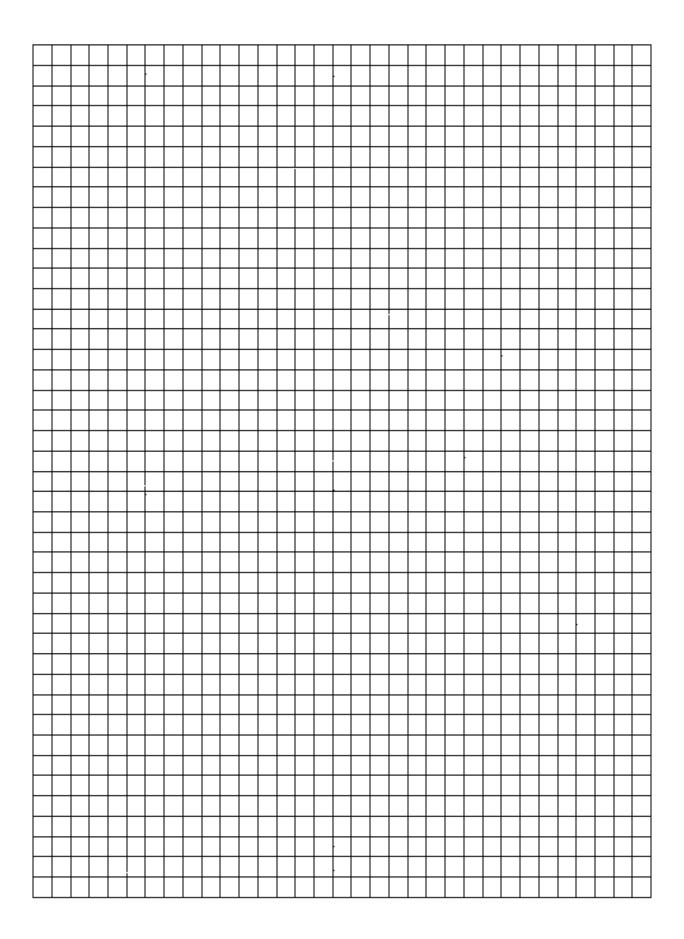
Extensions:

- 1. Transfer graphed design to watercolor paper or canvas. Paint according to the chart.
- 2. Use graphed design as a mosaic pattern. Use colored paper or tiles to represent the graph squares.
- 3. Enlarge the drawing onto another surface prepared with a lightly drawn larger grid. Copy the design square by square or line by line. Use math to figure out how much larger is your new drawing.
- 4. Create a collage picture. Assign different materials to the colors on the graph. Glue materials to a support base (mat board or cardboard) following the pattern.
- 5. Use graphed design as a reference for weaving on a hand loom.
- 6. Use graphed design as a cross-stitch pattern. Each square represents a stitch.
- 7. Investigate the use of cartoons in Renaissance art (e.g., Raphael's cartoons for tapestries for Sistine Chapel).
- 8. Research other ways artists use preparatory drawings.

APPLICABLE CORE STANDARDS per Common Core State Standards Initiative (http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards)

Mathematics

K.MD.1	4.6.1-3
K.MD.2	6.G3-4
K.G.1-4	6.G.3
K.G.6	7.G.1-2
1.G.1-3	
2.G.1-3	
3.MD.5-6	
4.MD.1-2	



PRONUNCIATION

Generally, Turkish is pronounced as it is written.

- a short "a" as in art or star
- e "eh" as in send or tell
- i "uh" as in fuss or plus
- u "oo" as in moo or blue
- g always hard as in "go"
- c like j in jam cicim juh.juhm, hayat ağaci ay.at aa.juh
- ç like ch in church Koçboynuzu koach.boy.noo.zoo haç hotch çengel chengel
- ş like sh in shall ask ve birleşim ahsk veh buhr.leh.shum
- ğ normally lengthens the preceding vowel but is itself not pronounced; *hayat ağaci* hayat aajuh *kurt ağazi* koort aazuh
- ö similar to *u* in *fur Göz* **gooz**
- ü the same as in German, or French "u" in tu *Türük* tyoor.yook

RESOURCE

Marchese, Ronald, Achepohl, Keith, & Subler, Craig Allen. Family Holdings, Turkish Nomadic Flatweaves. 1991. The University of Missouri-Kansas City

COMMON CURRICULUM GOALS

The suggested discussions and activities included in this packet can be used to support the Common Curriculum Goals developed by the Oregon Department of Education. For specific benchmarks for your grade level check with your school district or the Oregon Public Education Network (O.P.E.N.) www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?id=53

The Arts

Aesthetics and Criticism

- Use knowledge of technical, organizational and aesthetic elements to describe and analyze one's own art and the art of others.
- Respond to works of art, giving reasons for preferences.

Historical and Cultural Perspectives

- Identify both common and unique characteristics found in works of art from various time periods and cultures.
- Explain how a work of art reflects the artist's personal experience in a society or culture.

Social Sciences

Geography

- Compare and analyze physical (e.g. landforms, vegetation, wildlife, climate and natural hazards) and human (e.g. population, land use, language and religion) characteristics of places and regions.
- Understand why places and regions are important to human identity and serve as symbols to unify or fragment society.
- Understand how people and the environment are inter-related.

Language Arts

Speaking and Listening

- Communicate knowledge of the topic, including relevant examples, facts, anecdotes and details.
- Demonstrate effective listening strategies.

Literature

• Listen to and read a variety of literary forms of varying complexity from a variety of cultures and time periods.

Mathematics

Geometry

- Properties and Relationships Analyze characteristics and properties of two- and threedimensional geometric shapes and develop mathematical arguments about geometric relationships.
- Modeling Use visualization, spatial reasoning, and geometric modeling to solve problems.
- Coordinate Geometry Specify locations and describe spatial relationships using coordinate geometry and other representational systems.
- Transformations and Symmetry Apply transformations and use symmetry to analyze mathematical situations.

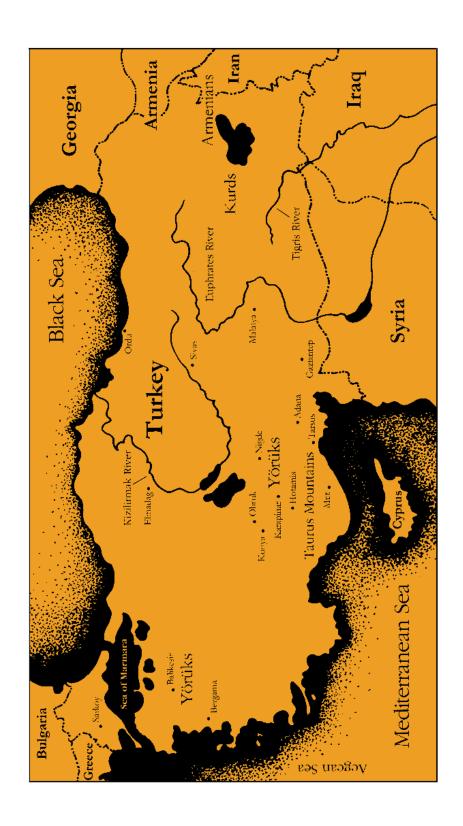












Map modified from Family Holdings: Turkish Nomadic Flatweaves (Marchese, R, et. al. 1991)

MOTIFS AND SYMBOLS

From Family Holdings: Turkish Nomadic Flatweaves (Marchese, R, et. al. 1991)

Although there are many regional variations in both design and intent, and current meanings may not represent original intent, many symbols are shared by a number of interrelated groups and there is some degree of uniformity.

Akreb

The akreb motif is used to provide protection from the scorpion. In addition, it is used to represent the dragon, the master of air and water, and the guardian of the tree of life.



Aşk ve birlşim

Known as the "yin-yang," the aşk ve birlşim motif signifies marriage and love as well as harmony between a man and a woman.



Rukaği

The bukaği motif signifies the continuation of the family, bonds of love, and the hope that they will always remain together.



Bereket

The bereket motif is a combination of the elibelinde and koçbuynuzu motifs and signifies fertility. It is usually associated with a number of symbols felt to protect the family from the evil eye and is usually found on woven items completed after marriage.



Canavar ayaği

The canavar ayaği or "monster foot" motif symbolizes the dragon, the master of air and water, and the guardian of the tree of life.



Çengel

The cengel or "hook" motif is one of the most common symbols found on Turkish flat weaves. It is used to provide protection from the evil eye.



Çiçek

The çiçek or "flower" motif represents roses, carnations, and tulips, and symbolizes the Garden of Eden. In addition, it signifies a wish for children.



El

The el or "hand" motif provides protection from the evil eye. It can symbolize fertility and motherhood and is usually represented in the abstract form of five dots or lines.



Elibelinde

The elibelinde or "hands on hips" motif represents motherhood and fertility. The motif is of ancient Anatolian origin and may have been initially associated with the mother goddess and fertility.



Göz.

The göz or "eye" motif provides protection from the evil eye.



Наç

The haç or "cross" motif provides protection from the evil eye by dividing it into four pieces.



Hayat ağaci

The hayat agaci or "tree of life" motif symbolizes immortality and the hope for life after death.



Koçboynuzu

The kocboynuzu or "ram's horn" motif symbolizes male fertility, heroism, and power.



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Kurt ağzi

The kurt ağzi or "wolf's mouth" motif provides protection against the wolves who prey upon the nomads' livestock.



Kurt izi

The kurt izi or "wolf's track" motif provides protection against wolves.



Kuş

The kuş or "bird" motif has a number of meanings: good luck, bad luck, happiness, joy, love, the soul, women, longing, news, power, and strength.



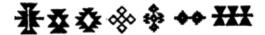
Muska

The muska or "amulet/charm" motif provides protection from the evil eye.



Nazarlik

The nazarlik or "evil eye" motif provides protection from the evil eye.



Pitrak

The pitrak or "burdock plant" motif provides protection from the evil eye, as well as signifying abundance and fertility.





Saçbaği

The saçbaği or "hair band" motif proclaims a desire to be married.







Su yolu

The su yolu or "water" motif signifies the importance of water to life.









Tabanca

The tabanca or "pistol" motif is associated with masculinity.



Tarak

The tarak or "comb" motif protects marriage and childbirth from the evil eye. In addition, it signifies a longing for marriage and happiness.



Yildiz,

The yildiz or "star" motif signifies happiness and fertility and is of ancient Anatolian origin.



WEAVING TERMS AND TECHNIQUES

Images from Family Holdings: Turkish Nomadic Flatweaves (Marchese, R, et. al. 1991)

Warp and Weft

The warp is the set of lengthwise strands that are held in tension on the loom; the weft is the strands that pass over and under each warp to produce the cloth.

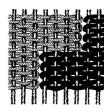
Kilim

Kilim is a flat weave or tapestry technique where the wefts are passed over and under each of the warps to create a tightly woven flat surface with no pile.



(Flat weave)

Designs are created by discontinuous wefts of different colors being woven back and forth in the design areas instead of being carried directly across the woven surface, as in ordinary cloth weaves. Owing to the nature of this technique, slits are normally left at the vertical boundaries of the adjacent colors. For this reason, most kilim weaves can be classified as "slit woven" weaves.



(Slit weave)



(Slit tapestry on a loom shows that wefts need not always be horizontal with this technique)

Tüylü

A variation of the kilim or flat weave is the *tüylü* weave. In Turkish, tüylü means "long haired." Tüylü is basically a kilim or a flat weave with tufts of wool, goat-hair yarn, or thin strips of cloth interwoven, using the Turkish knot to form tuft patterns on the underlying design. A variation of tüylü is the *filiki* weave in which the tuft patterns are even longer than in the tüylü weave.

Cicim

In cicim colored yarn is wrapped around at least two warps in the ground weave, giving the impression of a satin stitch. The weave usually features an over-three and-under-two technique until the motif or design is completed. Cicim is a strong and resilient flat weave technique and is often used for flour and grain sacks, pillows and cushions, saddlebags, food cloths, and other small, functional bags.



(Cicim)

Soumak

Soumak is the most durable flat weave technique. It usually consists of smooth surfaced yarn passed over four and under two warps. Soumak possesses great flexibility, creating a multidimensional impression of color and texture. A number of variants in the technique make it extremely versatile. Soumak is incredibly durable and is used for cradles, cushions, and saddlebags, among other functional containers.



(Soumak)

Zili

Similar to cicim, zili is composed of two, three, or five warps. Weft floats are normally wrapped over and under warp lines at a ratio of 2-to-1, 3-to-1, or 5-to-1. This provides uniformity on the panel face, which is broken by cordlike blocks of colored thread, which appear in vertical lines. Zili is a flat weave technique used to weave flour sacks, cushions, saddlebags, and a number of smaller bags for daily use.



(Zili)

Carpana

Card or tablet weaving is an essential part of the Turkish weaving tradition. It is often the first type of weaving a child learns because it does not require a loom. Yarn is run through holes in a number of cards, and is stretched and securely fastened to a peg in the ground. Weaving is done by moving the cards from back to front, or by turning them 90 degrees from bottom to top. Card weaving is used to produce belts, clasps, saddle ornaments, and bag holders and ties.

Keçe

Keçe or felt is a nonwoven cloth that is produced by matting, condensing, and pressing wool fibers together. It can be of any color and made into any shape or size. While some types of felt are very soft, others are tough enough to be formed into prayer rugs, floor coverings, and tents.