

The Ottomans | Exporting Luxury

‘Among the most eminent woven goods exported by the Ottomans were carpets.’

Textiles were a vital part of the Ottoman economy, particularly since the Ottoman domains included substantial portions of the ancient silk-trade route. Their importance only increased as their value was appreciated in Europe and elsewhere. Among the most eminent woven goods exported by the Ottomans were carpets whose beautiful designs and outstanding quality made them popular with the wealthy classes of Europe. Evidence of this can be seen in European paintings contemporary to the classical Ottoman period. Artists such as Hans Holbein and Lorenzo Lotto depicted wealthy or noble individuals (including King Henry VIII of England) surrounded by symbols of prosperity and luxury, including carpets with distinctly Ottoman designs. Such carpets are now known as ‘Holbein’ and ‘Lotto’ carpets.



Name:

Rug

Dynasty:

Hegira 1023–43 / AD 1614–33 Ottoman

Details:

Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities (Medelhavsmuseet)
Stockholm, Sweden

Justification:

The coat of arms on this rug is evidence that it was made for a European archbishop.



Name:

Carpet

Dynasty:

Hegira 11th century / AD 17th century Ottoman

Details:

National Museums of Scotland (NMS)
Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom

Justification:

Carpets with similar patterns appear in the paintings of Lorenzo Lotto.



Name:

Uşak carpet (Bergama)

Dynasty:

Hegira 10th / AD 16th century Ottoman

Details:

Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

Justification:

The painter Hans Holbein depicted carpets like this in his portraits.



Name:

Carpet

Dynasty:

Hegira 10th / AD 16th century Ottoman

Details:

Victoria and Albert Museum
London, England, United Kingdom

Justification:

The intricate patterns found in Ottoman carpets appealed to European buyers; the style of this particular carpet is known as a Medallion-Ushak.



Name:

Brocade

Dynasty:

Hegira 9th–10th centuries / AD 15th–16th centuries Ottoman

Details:

Museum of National Antiquities
Stockholm, Sweden

Justification:

Many Swedish ecclesiastical garments were made partially from fabrics imported from Persia and Turkey.



Name:

Embroidery

Dynasty:

Hegira 11th century / AD 17th century Ottoman

Details:

Burrell Collection, Glasgow Museums
Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom

Justification:

Many similar types of embroidery were influenced by the brocades and velvets that were designed and made for the Ottoman court.
