

ERON GILAMLARI FAQAT GILAM EMAS

ПЕРСИДСКИЕ КОВРЫ — ЭТО БОЛЬШЕ, ЧЕМ ПРОСТО КОВРЫ

PERSIAN CARPETS ARE MORE THAN CARPETS



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Abstract: *This article explores the historical, cultural, and artistic significance of Persian carpets. It examines the origins of carpet weaving from the time of the Achaemenid Empire and discusses the development of weaving materials, techniques, and dyeing traditions. Special attention is given to the Pazyryk Carpet as the oldest known pile-woven carpet. The article also analyzes the symbolic meanings reflected in Persian rug designs, including concepts of paradise and garden imagery. Furthermore, it highlights the social role of carpet weaving in the lives of Persian women and examines the modern perception of Persian rugs as cultural heritage, collectible art, and investment pieces.*

Keywords: *Persian carpets, Persian culture, Carpet weaving, Pazyryk Carpet, Textile art, Natural dyes, Persian women, Cultural heritage, Chaharbagh gardens, Collectible art*

Introduction

The history of Persian carpets dates back to 550 B.C., tracing their origins to the Achaemenid Empire. The first examples of carpets were woven from bamboo and plant stalks, lacking the beauty and comfort of Persian rugs we see today.

The world's oldest pile-woven carpet, known as the Pazyryk Carpet (Figure 1), was found in Siberia's Pazyryk Valley. Radiocarbon dating suggests its origin in the 5th century B.C., which makes it a remarkable artifact from the past.



Figure 1

Continuous refinements of materials and techniques led to huge changes in carpets. Nomadic tribes in Central Asia were among the first who started using wool fibers.

Persian carpets are not only a kind of furniture serving comfort at home. The fact that they are a pure form of art is obvious when looking at how they are produced. The carpets are woven using soft and durable natural products like wool, cotton, golden knits, and silk.

In the 19th century, aniline dyes were introduced. However, they were found harmful and unsuitable for production and were legally banned by the Persian government, which ordered dye houses using aniline to be burnt to the ground. These measures proved effective, and Persian weavers returned to using natural dyes until more reliable chrome dyes were introduced between the First and Second World Wars. Modern chrome dyes are extremely reliable, colour-fast, and made in a wide range of attractive colours and shades. Today's rug buyers can be assured that the colours will only improve with age.

Before knotting the rug, the design is formed in a life-sized paint-by-numbers pattern showing which colour of wool to use. However, rugs knitted in villages differ from their city counterparts because the designs are created randomly from the imagination of the weaver. This is the reason why village rugs have more “errors” than their city counterparts, and some collectors prefer tribal rugs to the uniform appeal of city systems.

Persian rugs were the center of life for Persian women and their families. The brightest memories of women were learning to weave colourful carpets from the elderly. The completed carpets, which could take years to finish, would become centerpieces of their new homes after marriage.

Persian rugs depict ornate designs full of trees, flowers, birds, and fish, which arose from the concept of heaven on Earth in the form of gardens. The word paradise is derived from the Avestan word *pari-daiza*, which directly translates to “walled garden.” Weavers of these rugs hoped to go on a “voyage to paradise” while never leaving their homes by incorporating elements of Chaharbagh gardens into their designs.



Figure 2

Contemporary designs of Persian rugs (Figure 2) use more pastel colours than older ones because today people want to spend time in peace. The significance of colours used in rugs here is unavoidable.

In late 2025, 53 million Persian rugs were taken to different parts of the world, generating a total export value of \$227 million.

From the 1970s to the 1990s, Persian rugs beautified Western homes as symbols of luxury and status. Today, the market is more specialized. Collectors, interior designers, and wealthy homeowners are especially attracted to them. Nowadays, they are viewed less as “ordinary home decoration” and more as investment pieces, cultural heritage, and collectible art.

Persian carpets are not merely decorative household objects but an important part of Persian cultural and artistic heritage. Their long history, unique weaving techniques, symbolic designs, and deep connection to family traditions demonstrate the cultural value of this art form. From ancient times to the modern world, Persian rugs have preserved their significance as symbols of beauty, craftsmanship, spirituality, and identity. Today, they continue to attract collectors, designers, and art enthusiasts around the world, proving that Persian carpets remain timeless works of art.

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