

TURKISH KILIMS

These weaves were constructed with two sets of threads by crossing them at 90-degree angles. In these weaves the perpendicular threads are called the warp and the horizontal threads the weft. This technique was first used for making cloth, but at the same time it set the foundation for weaving kilims. All of these productions are referred to as "flat weaves" Wooden or metal combs were used to push the weft down, so these weaves are called "combed weaves".

The etymological root the word "kilim" is not known exactly but it has been seen in the Turkish language since the 13th century. The word "kilim" is misused in other languages to refer to all flat weaves other than rugs. However, the word "kilim" is only a name for a weaving technique. Among kilims there are different makes, including "cicim", "zili" and "sumak". For centuries, these different designs were traditionally passed down from mother to daughter. Turkey is the only country in the world that has preserved all the different techniques.

These weaves are made by tribe members or by villagers for daily needs. They are named after tribes, families, villages and towns that they are made in, or even after the motifs used on them. The Yoruks and Turkomans have also placed their tribal signatures among the patterns, making these weaves cultural objects as well. According to the latest research, these motifs reflect all the rich cultural heritage of Anatolia, and for that reason each motif is a symbol or interoperation of the values that were created by people from different cultures.

The common aspect of kilims is the technical manner in which they are produced, which influences the shapes of the patterns. For this reason, the motifs were strongly stylized and were changed into geometrical forms.

Kilims are made in different colors, designs, and compositions and it is possible to find them in various sizes. In different parts of Turkey, kilims are woven with several different combinations of materials, such as all wool, wool and cotton, or all silk.

This group of weaves is often used in contemporary decorations in various locations, making them at the same time valuable objects in the field of art. For this reason, it is also proper to talk about the art of kilims in Anatolia as an art which is distinct from the art of rug-making.

The Kilim is a truly remarkable tradition maintained by women of Anatolia for hundreds of generations, dating back nine thousand years. Turkish mothers and daughters maintained this mysterious tradition for the last thousand years as Turkish tribes settled in Anatolia and intermingled with the local population.

The oldest record of kilims comes from Catal Hoyuk Neolithic pottery circa 7000 BC, the oldest settlement ever to have been discovered. It is located south east of Konya in the middle of the Anatolian region. The excavations to date (only 3% of the town) not only found carbonized fabric but also fragments of kilims painted on the walls of the houses. The majority of them represent geometric and stylized forms that are similar or identical to other historical to contemporary designs.

