

COLOR

It must be understood, first, that the oldest carpets have the most beautiful and most brilliant colors. Although there are rare examples where age has faded the colors, most often the oldest carpets have the greatest brilliance and intensity. This happens quite simply because it is the makers of the oldest carpets who *cared* most about color. They took care that the colors were so well dyed and fixed that the colors have lasted for hundreds of years. And they chose the colors with such care that the brilliant light which the colors create shines out even when the carpet is worn or damaged in its wool.

It should be understood, second, that the concern for color was of such paramount importance that the master dyer was at least the equal, as a craftsman, to the master weaver. In the great period of rug weaving, the apprenticeship of a dyer lasted 15 years. At the end of this 15 years, the apprentice dyer was required to make a color which no one had ever seen before. Only then would he or she be recognized as a master dyer.

This gives some idea of the relative importance the craft of dyeing had in ancient Anatolian society. Simply stated, the dyer — the person responsible for the color in a carpet — was considered so important, and the subtlety of the art considered to be so great, that the training of a master dyer was equivalent to the seven years of training for a 20th-century theoretical physicist, *followed consecutively* by the full seven years of training for a 20th-century brain surgeon. This is almost unimaginable in our society today. It gives us a direct and concrete estimation of the way these people saw color and how important they thought it was.

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