

DATING AND PROGRESSION OF EARLY CARPETS I

I believe that, by and large, the earliest carpets are the best. This follows simply from the fact that the greatest religious periods were a very long time ago. During those periods people had a concrete and realistic idea of unity and how to produce it. But the further we came from the high religious times, the more distorted and watered-down the real understanding of unity became. So the later the carpets are, the more we find examples which are mechanical copies of older carpets, but which no longer have real substance in them.

I am not expressing a romantic feeling that something is good just because it is old. It simply happened that the interval between the great religious periods and the present has been much more dilute in its understanding of unity. *If, as I believe, we are once again on the verge of a great religious period, then we may soon see the artifacts of the 21st or 22nd centuries once again containing true unity in its deepest form. At that stage, it will be clear that the phenomenon of unity is simply a structural fact — and has nothing to do with age or being old.*

Within the framework of this view, dates are rather important. The rugs that I regard as significant happen in many cases to be among the very oldest that exist — not because age is by itself important, but because the earlier rugs have more complex, more powerful, and more profound symmetry structures contained within them.

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