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1994

## Ottoman Silks and Their Legacy

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Mott, Diane, "Ottoman Silks and Their Legacy" (1994). *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings*. 1049.  
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## OTTOMAN SILKS AND THEIR LEGACY (abstract only)

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During the late Middle Ages and the early Renaissance, luxury silks of Asia that had for centuries trickled into Europe began to enter in large numbers, fueling an appetite for the rich and exotic that was to have a lasting effect on Western textile design. In turn, expanded trade with the Levant carried Western designs and advances in weaving eastward. The Ottoman Empire, standing at the thresholds of Europe and Asia, was perfectly poised to transmit these East-West currents. Weavers in manufactories in the successive Ottoman capitals of Bursa and Istanbul, the western outposts of the Asiatic silk routes, absorbed the many influences that passed their way, stamped them with their own bold aesthetic and favored motifs, and spun them out again in all directions. This new, distinctly Ottoman style was to have a recurring influence on textile design.

This paper will examine some of the crosscurrents at work in Ottoman textile design and their transformation under the Ottoman aesthetic. It will trace influences that traveled outward from Turkey's major weaving centers to affect not only the aristocratic textile arts of both Europe and Asia, but those of humbler folk, who adapted court styles to their own carpets, flat weaves, and embroideries. Time will also be given to the legacy of Ottoman textiles in the more recent past, when they have been reinterpreted by some of the great names in textile and fashion history, among them William Morris and Mario Fortuny.