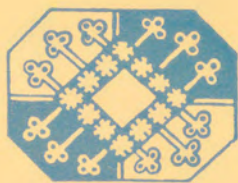


*exhibition of*

# PERSIAN RUGS



AFGHANISTAN



BOUKHARA



TURKESTAN, CAUCASUS  
ASIA-MINOR



SCORPION



CAMEL



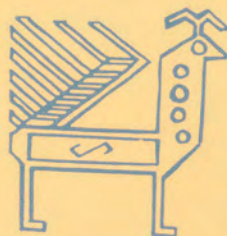
DOG



ROOSTER



DOVE



PEACOCK



POMEGRANATE



TREE OF LIFE



POMEGRANATE



CARNATIONS



KASHMIR

QUEENSLAND NATIONAL ART GALLERY • *March 26.—April 27, 1958*

This exhibition of Persian Rugs (the term "Persian rugs" is loosely used to include Afghan, Turkeston and rugs from Asia Minor) is a selection from a large private collection in Adelaide and the Trustees of the Queensland National Art Gallery are most grateful to the generous owner, who wishes to remain anonymous, for making the rugs available. The Queensland National Art Gallery is especially fortunate in the help it receives from persons outside this State and this country.

It is impossible, in the space of a short foreword, to say very much about the history, symbolism and making of Persian rugs but a few words may be a guide to appreciation. Orientals do not consider rugs as a mere furnishing accessory, but as an important element of both private, family and tribal life.

The designs are intricate and symbolic. The symbols are used as decorative elements not only to affirm their tribal origin, but also to increase the more or less magical power of the rugs. Certain designs, which at first appear to be nothing but geometrical combinations, have a definite ornamental purpose and magical power of their own. Travellers from the East mention that Arabian, Persian and Turkish nomads have two bitter enemies—scorpions and tarentulas—and in order to break their spell, many rugs have a central design or repeated designs representing lozenges and octogons with hooks and small lateral triangles. Also magical and symbolical are the CAMEL, representative of the wealth of nomads, omen of happiness and riches for both manufacturer and buyer; the DOG, which drives away all undesirables, including witches and illness from the dwelling where the rug is used; the PEACOCK, sacred in Persia and China; the DOVE, considered everywhere as a good omen—a messenger of love, therefore of peace; the ROOSTER, herald of glory and victory, who drives away the night, propitious to robbers and ill omened magicians.

Other natural designs—geometrically set from the start for technical reasons—also have a definite symbolical meaning for Orientals. THE TREE OF LIFE, symbol of eternity after death and the insignia of supreme divinities; cemetery CYPRESS TREES, sign of survival in after life; POMEGRANATES in bloom, or opened to show their seeds, representing abundance and riches; SUNFLOWER SEEDS with a similar meaning; CARNATIONS (front view or section) a favourite symbol of happiness.

The colours of the rugs also have archaic significance.

*golden yellow*: Power, grandeur, riches; rugs for palaces and mosques; often denotes Chinese influence.

*white*: Purity, light, peace.

*red*: Happiness, joy.

*black*: Destruction, revolt.

*green*: Spring, rebirth, renewal; garments worn in Paradise, colour adopted by the descendants of the Prophet and Mekka pilgrims.

*sky blue*: Adopted by the Byzantine Emperors; national colour in Persia; however, considered as mourning colour throughout the Orient.

*purple*: (Deep violet or light). Distinctive of Kings.

Many other colours are used also, earth brown, camel-hair, creamy-white, goat hair, etc., for background and relief colours.

Every workshop relied on their professional dyers, who "knew secrets." Among the rich tribes and large caravans it was mostly the old women who concocted vegetable dyes and treated the cottons, wools, and silks appropriately.

The history and manufacture of the rugs is too involved to enter into here but it is necessary to say that the rugs are made by hand on a loom and consist of woof and warp threads. The woof and warp are then woven and knotted. The number, fineness and type of knot, help to determine both its origin and value.

It is hoped that this exhibition will stimulate interest in Persian rugs in Brisbane for in both America and Europe, Oriental rugs are keenly collected and have become treasured heirlooms.

# Catalogue of Rugs

1. **Shervan:** Gold, 55" x 37".
2. **Taskent:** Blue, with "Tree of Life", 70" x 49".  
(“The Tree of Life” design plays an important part in Persian Rugs. Persia is a very hot and dry country so that where trees are found there is usually water, fruit, and shelter for the birds, whose eggs are also used with the water, fruit, etc., as a special blessing from God. In making this “Tree of Life” design they also pray the owner may receive all the blessing of his God.)
3. **Boukhara:** Camel sack, 47" x 26½".
4. **Tekka Boukhara:** Cushion.  
(Tekka means ancient or antique but the word is only used when referring to Boukhara carpets.)
5. **Keshan Prayer Rug:** Silk, fawn ground with wide green border, 63" x 44".
6. **Boukhara:** "Leopard" design, 109" x 59".
7. **Shervan:** Blue, 60¼" x 48".
8. **Shervan Prayer Rug:** Biscuit, 53" x 40½".
9. **Afghanistan:** Ivory (this colour is most unusual in Afghanistan Rugs), 87" x 44½",
10. **Baluchistan:** Black, 111" x 68".
11. **Baluchistan:** Black, 71" x 41½".
12. **Baluchistan:** Black, 61¾" x 37½".
13. **Shiraz:** "Persian garden" design, 59½" x 44".  
(It was in a rug of this type that the famous Queen of Egypt, Cleopatra, had herself wrapped when she first was taken into the presence of Caesar.)
14. **Royal Boukhara:** 110" x 83".
15. **Princess Boukhara:** "Anchor" design, 102" x 64".
16. **Taskent:** Biscuit, 100" x 44½".
17. **Shervan:** 52" x 35½".
18. **Shiraz:** Deep blue and green, 85" x 65½"



