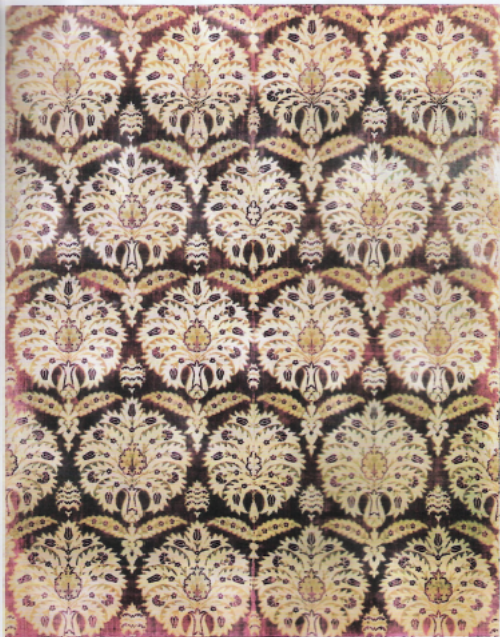




1 Catma Ivoiled silk velvet with gold thread panel, Turkey, Bursa or Istanbul, ca. 1800. 1.25 x 1.60m (4'1" x 5'3"). Private collection, France

2 Iznik fritware tile with underglaze painted decoration on an opaque white glaze, Turkey, ca. 1575. 33 x 36cm (13" x 14"). Private collection, France



A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

A brief exhibition in Paris revealed how French collectors developed a taste for antique Ottoman art through the 20th century.

THIS VERY BRIEF EXHIBITION was held at Galerie Charpentier, Sotheby's Paris headquarters, for just six days (19-23 September 2011), timed to coincide with the presence in the city of the world's leading experts on Ottoman art who were attending the 14th International Congress of Turkish Art hosted by the Collège de France from 19-21 September.

Thanks to the generous support of anonymous lenders, Sotheby's sponsorship, and the hard work of Frédéric Hitzel, Eric Grunberg, Nicholas Shaw and Alexis Renard, visitors could see almost a hundred of the best pieces

of Ottoman art in France, all of which would not normally be on public view.

The brief texts in the accompanying catalogue reveal how appreciation of Turkish art developed into connoisseurship over the course of the 20th century. In the late 19th century and the early 20th, Turkish art had been regarded as an insignificant aspect of Oriental art, and it was even being debated whether there was such a thing as Turkish art. Indeed a review in a Paris journal of the first exhibition of Muslim art at the Palais des Champs-Élysées echoed the widely held belief

that all Middle Eastern art was derived from Arab and thence Egyptian art.

This exhibition was thus not only a chance to show how appreciation has advanced since then, but also to reveal the treasures that French collectors acquired over the course of the 20th century, when Paris became the centre of the art trade and the special relationship between France and Turkey allowed for increased travel to Istanbul at time of heightened fascination with 'Orientalist' culture. At the centre of the market were celebrated dealers such as Dikran Kelekian and Hakky Bey, whose apartment is shown in all its 'orientalist' splendour in an archival picture in the catalogue.

As one might rightly expect, the textile content of the show was particularly strong, although the lack of any carpets and rugs was a little surprising.

TURKOPHILIA REVEALED
Sotheby's Paris, Galerie Charpentier
6 rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, Paris
19 - 23 September 2011