

From: XXXX
Sent: Tuesday, 5 July 2011 7:59 PM
To: 'Murphy, Damian'
Subject: RE: PERSIAN RUG

Hi Damian,

I am afraid I'm unable to help you translate this rug because it has no Persian/Dari or Pushto writing. Some of the writing seems to be nothing but gibberish! Upon a quick search on google I was able to find variations of this rug on many websites. What was even more interesting is that there seems to be a genre of "Afghan War Rugs" amongst the rug world to which this rug belongs.

The documentary in this link <http://weavinghavocfilm.blogspot.com/2010/03/weaving-havoc-story.html> would be a good place to start if someone (without any preconceived prejudices) wanted to understand why Afghans would weave a war scene on a rug. And I can assure you that their intentions would have nothing to do with a hatred for the west, nor war and killing. On the contrary more than anything it is a form of storytelling which would seem strange in the western context, however in the war torn Afghan context such forms of storytelling have been part of everyday life. And since Afghanistan has known nothing but war and destruction for more than 30 years - it is understandable why there are so many variations of "War Rugs" out there. Then again it is the market in the west for authentic rugs that drives a lot of rug designs.

It is a shame that thousands of years of arts and crafts in the culturally rich Afghanistan have been reduced to this, but it comes as no surprise.

Then there is this site <http://www.warrug.com/pages/rugs/sold/> which shows how the same rug design has been copied over and over again, each time the design seems to alter slightly. At this point it is important to note that most rug weavers in Afghanistan are rural children with no education, let alone being able to correctly recreate English letters/words. And my guess would be that the incomprehensible writing on your rug is most likely a spelling mistake by the weaver as he/she was trying to copy the original design...which was most likely a copy. So like Chinese whispers the story of the rug seems to be diluted to the point where it shows both images of war and peace at the same time.

And finally I came across this site <http://www.newsworks.org/index.php/art-entertainment-sports/item/18648-afghan-rugs>. Could it be that you have a piece of art worthy of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology?

On a serious note I don't see any sense in showing this rug to people just to get a reaction for the sake of filling a few minutes on a tv program. Therefore I would like to decline your offer of appearing on your show.

I am not a journalist and within an hour I was able to uncover a lot of info that can help explain why such rugs exist. However I'm sure that someone with a thirst for investigative journalism, and serious interests in iconography, would go a long way with the puzzles you find on this rug. That should make a captivating story!

I hope that helps.

Kind Regards
XXXX

From: Murphy, Damian
Sent: Tuesday, 5 July 2011 6:25 PM
To: XXXX
Subject: PERSIAN RUG

Hello XXXX ..

The image is attached. Let me know what you think and I'll ring you in the morning.

Thanks for your help on this one.

Cheers,

Damian Murphy

A Current Affair

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