



Samarkand, Circa 1920

Ref: 26741

Size: 9' x 15'

Content: Wool

Collection: Antique

Hand-knotted in East Turkistan

Antique Khotan Carpet, 9' x 15' Late Nineteenth Century, East Turkestan (Xinjiang)

Once commonly attributed to the ancient Silk Road city of Samarkand, the antique carpets of East Turkestan (the modern Xinjiang Province of China) were far more likely produced in the oasis towns of Khotan, Yarkand, and Kashgar. It is now clear that it was in fact Khotan and the surrounding villages that likely produced most of the antique carpets of this type. But despite the illusory connection with Samarkand, Khotan rugs and carpets were nevertheless very much the products of the Silk Road, for they display a remarkable blend of Chinese, Central Asian, and Persian design elements, although these are always drawn together in a distinctive, harmonious style and palette. This striking example has what is perhaps the most original and distinctive Khotan field design - a complex pattern of parallel vertical flowering pomegranate trees in soft, variegated shades of orange set dramatically against a deep blue ground. The precise and controlled articulation of the compact design produces a lace-like lattice or trellis effect, especially in the smaller leafy floral detail. The main border has a classic Chinese 'cloud collar' design, set off by flanking vinescroll minor borders inspired from Persia. The inner borders of small volutes and diagonal, multicolor bands are reminiscent of Tibetan rugs, although these too are ultimately traceable to Chinese sources. But despite the various influences, it all comes together here as a masterful decorative synthesis of cosmopolitan Silk Road sophistication.