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Welcome, [Filiberto Boncompagni](#).
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April 12th, 2011, 06:30 PM

#1

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 43

[The So-Called Leaf and Wineglass Border](#)

As we have seen in the "Crivelli" rug thread, a 1519 painting shows what I presume to be the early depiction of the "leaf and calyx" (or "wineglass") border. I remember that Wendel Swan wrote a paper on the subject and here is what he said about it in an old discussion on Turkotek:

http://www.turkotek.com/salon_00119/s119_t2.htm

If you want to read the whole thread, you will learn that at the time there was a vigorous battle between Baluch-o-philes and the rest of the Rugdom 🌐 but, for the sake of brevity, here are Wendel's words:

Posted by Wendel Swan on 07-16-2007 09:10 PM:

Quote:

Hi Pat,

I believe that the primary border has been mentioned several times here on Turkotek.



At the 8th ICOC in Philadelphia in 1996, I presented a paper entitled "The So-Called Leaf and Wineglass Border in Anatolian and Caucasian Rugs" in which I demonstrated (well, at least I think I did) that the "leaf and wineglass" border represents neither a wineglass nor a leaf, but results from the process of halving this border or others similar to it. I illustrated the point with other rugs using this border type, including one in which three of the borders are complete (as here) and one is halved. There are several other points of correspondence as well.

The term "leaf and wineglass" is an unfortunate example of a pattern being named according to representations that Western eyes think they are seeing – but aren't there at all.

That paper was published in *Oriental Carpet and Textile Studies*, Volume 5, Part 1. I've had been tell me that they disagree with my analysis, even though they haven't read the paper or viewed any of the 36 illustrations. It apparently still doesn't seem odd to them that Muslims would adorn rugs with representations of a wine glass. They hold to the belief that it must be a wine glass because that is what it is called. Years ago the wineglass was sometimes called a tuning fork, almost equally absurd.

Others, including one who posts here prominently, routinely say that it serves no purpose to discuss or propose anything about design evolution because it simply cannot be proven.

Wendel

I fully agree with Wendel on the fact that the "wineglass" is an inappropriate term but for convenience I'll use it to identify the border in question.

The problem perhaps is another one and it is contained in this phrase: the border "*results from the process of halving this border or others similar to it*".

Phrase that is better illustrated by this scan from Peter F. Stone (1)



Motif A-12 Bergama Border



Top Half of Motif A-12 Bergama Border



Motif C-63 Kazak Leaf and Calyx Border

As far as early surviving rugs, the 15th c. Batari-Crivelli fragment



seems to confirm Wendel's hypothesis. What about paintings?

In Pierre's database there are around 600 paintings. I say "around" considering that some are double, some others are cropped details and I do not want to count them. 🤖

The first one with the "leaf and calyx", in chronological order, is the 1519 painting of the Dutch Jacob Cornelisz van Oostanen, already presented in the "Crivelli" thread:



The second one is the 1535 painting of "Jesus in the house of Marta" by Vasco Fernandes (c.1475-c.1542), better known as Grão Vasco, one of the main Portuguese Renaissance painters. For economy of server space, I'll present only the relevant detail of the image:



The Portuguese is a "double" border, like in the Batari-Crivelli.

The third one is a Portrait of a Young Nobleman, circa 1545 (LACMA, Los Angeles) Veneto-Lombard School:



The outer border seems to be a variation of the Caucasian "reciprocal" border of the Dutch painting.

The fourth and last is a 1540-1560 portrait of King Henry VIII by an unknown artist after Holbein (Petworth House).



That's all: four paintings, all situated in the first half of the 16th century, all from different countries - Netherlands, Portugal, Italy and England. To find more borders like these in paintings, you'll have to wait until the 19th century with the "discovery" of Caucasian rugs in the West.

As for the origin of the "leaf and calyx" from cutting in half the "double" , or "primary" border, it's questionable: it could be the other way around too. Rather a matter of hen and egg, I'm afraid.
What the paintings show is only that in the first half of the 16th century the two borders coexisted happily.
Regards,

Filiberto



April 14th, 2011,
01:16 PM

#2

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 43



I said about the Italian painting above that "the outer border seems to be a variation of the Caucasian 'reciprocal' border of the Dutch painting".



It's actually more close to the outer border of the Berlin rug:



Even the palette is the same.

Regards,

Filiberto



February 29th, 2012,
01:38 PM

#3

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 26



Hi Filiberto,

I have recently "met" two extant rugs which feature the «leaf and wineglass» border. Both are **given as 15th century**.



Anatolia, fragment, 15th century. Kirchheim



Konya, fragment from a rug covering Alaeddin's tomb. 15th century. TIAM.

I have no idea on what base these age guesstimates have been done, but the archaic-looking motifs are not incompatible with such an old age, are they?

Thus, assuming the age has been correctly assessed, these «leaf and wineglass» borders would be older than the ones featured by Renaissance painters and **roughly contemporary** with the «double leaf and wineglass» or "Konya" border of the Crivelli rug.

These extant rugs seem to justify your doubts: The «single leaf and wineglass» motif

does not necessarily derivate from the «double» one. 🙄🙄🙄



February 29th, 2012,
03:55 PM

#4

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)
Administrator



Hi Pierre,

Good work. In lack of a suitable wine-glass smiley I'll have to resort to this one: 🍷🍷🍷



February 29th, 2012,
04:49 PM

#5

[Pierre Galafassi](#)
Members



Hi Filiberto,

I am not aware of solid clues for the attribution of the «leaf and wineglass» border motif to Anatolia, more precisely to Konya.

But is there any strong reason against the hypothesis that the cradle of this motif was southern Caucasus and that the few older (15th century) extant rugs carrying it were also woven there?

a) As your research has shown Filiberto, after the first quarter of the sixteenth century and until the re-discovery of the Caucasus rugs by European collectors towards the end of the 18th century, European painters stopped using rugs featuring this border as studio props.

b) Extant rugs featuring the leaf and wineglass border, dated between the 16th and the 18th century are very seldom too.

c) Every lover of Caucasian rugs knows that this motif has been extremely popular for local weavers (especially so-called Kazak-, Gendje- and some Karabagh- or Armenian-carpets) during the past two centuries.

d) It is unlikely that the motif could have been imported in the Caucasus for base commercial reasons, since extant rugs dated from the 17th-18th century, thus largely pre-Kustar, already did feature this border motif.



FIG.1. «Karabagh» 17th century. Sarre.



FIG 2. « Kazak?» with blossom pattern, 17th century. Fritz Nagel catal. 286



FIG 3. «Kazak?» 17th-18th century. Kirchheim
(I take no responsibility, nor abuse, because of the proposed origins 🤔)

e) The fact that one of the extant 15th century rugs was found in a Konya mausoleum is not necessarily any proof that it was woven there, is it?

If all these extant and painted rugs were actually woven in southern Caucasus, the lack of painted evidence and / or of extant rug from the early 16th century to the 18th century could reasonably be explained by purely political reasons:

Trebizond (South-west of the Caucasus on the Black Sea) was an important port of call for ships of Venice and Genoa. Until the end of the Ilkanid domination (and of their Pax Mongolica) it was the main terminal of the Silk Road as well. If Caucasian rugs ever were shipped to Europe, it was probably through this commercial trading city populated mainly by Greeks, Armenian, Jews and Georgians.

After the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453 this traffic was made increasingly difficult by the Sultan and his growing navy, until Trebizond fell too in 1462. Making these rugs scarce on European markets.



Best regards
Pierre

February 29th, 2012,
05:00 PM

#6

Filiberto
Boncompagni
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 43



Absolutely. As a Caucasomaniac, I couldn't have explained it better myself.

I henceforth name you Honorary Member of the Caucasomaniac Sect.



Regards,

Filiberto



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2. Animals in Paintings

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