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Welcome, [Filiberto Boncompagni](#).
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April 6th,
2013, 05:18
AM

#1

[Chuck Wagner](#)
Members

[Painting in Houston MFA](#)

Hi all,

Join Date:
May 2008
Posts: 5

The Houston (Texas) Museum of Fine Arts allows photography in the permanent exhibits. While wandering the galleries a couple weeks ago, I came upon this painting:



This is a work probably already known to Filiberto - I haven't found a prior reference to it in the TurkoArchives (but I haven't searched exhaustively). Painted and signed by Bartolomeo Bettera (Italian, 1639 - c. 1688), and entitled Still Life With Musical Instruments & dated in the 1680's.

The colors used for the carpet are oddly dark and a bit grim, but it's still a nice piece of work and worthy of note. Observe the carpet border at the far right.

From the side and at a distance, it looks like a blue ground color - up close it is a dull gray-blue, and the gloss finish makes it difficult to evaluate.

Here's a closeup. There is quite a bit of vertical relief to the paint in the carpet - a grid of raised squares (visible in the closeup); lots of texture - and the glossy finish which I presume is egg white.



Regards
Chuck Wagner



April 6th, 2013, 09:49 AM

#2

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 71



Thank you Chuck,

In Pierre's database there are four similar painting by the same author. Three of them show the same "small pattern Holbein" rug. Now we can add the Huston version to the collection.



Filiberto



April 6th, 2013, 06:23 PM

#3

[Pierre Galafassi](#)
Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 60



Hi Chuck,

Indeed, a beautiful, very late example of «small Holbein» rug. 🍷🙄🍷

After the middle of the seventeenth century, Italian painters very seldom featured rugs in their paintings and when they did, they hardly bothered with details (Only a

few Dutch «genre» and «interior» painters still used rugs at the time).

Bettera was an exception. He was perhaps a true ruggie since, as Filiberto mentions, most of his beautiful still-life-with-musical-instruments paintings feature a rug. In our shared databank, all but one illustrated rugs are from the «small Holbein» type, while the last one features imbricated lozenges, a design which origin is not clear to me (Anatolia?, western Persia?) (FIG 1).



FIG 1.

Indeed Chuck, the border of the Houston rug is interesting: A «double leaf-and-wineglass» border of the type discussed in Filiberto's thread :

<http://www.turkotek.com/VB37/showthread.php?t=989>.

Quite odd, since «small Holbein» rugs came, in nearly all cases, with a «kufik» border instead. One of the paintings in the data bank shared with Filiberto, shows the same border again, in details. (FIG 2). Which supports his opinion that Bettera used the same small pattern Holbein rug in his paintings.



FIG 2.

Your excellent close-up, Chuck, shows that the rug pile was severely down. Several of the other Bettera paintings also show this pile wearing. One can suppose that the rug(s) were in the family (or in the family of his rich friend and patron) since a long time and therefore were not necessarily examples of seventeenth century weaving.
Best regards
Pierre



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