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December
10th, 2011,
08:19 PM

#1

[Yohann
Gissinger](#)
Members

 **Palmettes arabesques in a rug**

Hello to all,

Join Date: Jul
2008
Location: France
Posts: 5

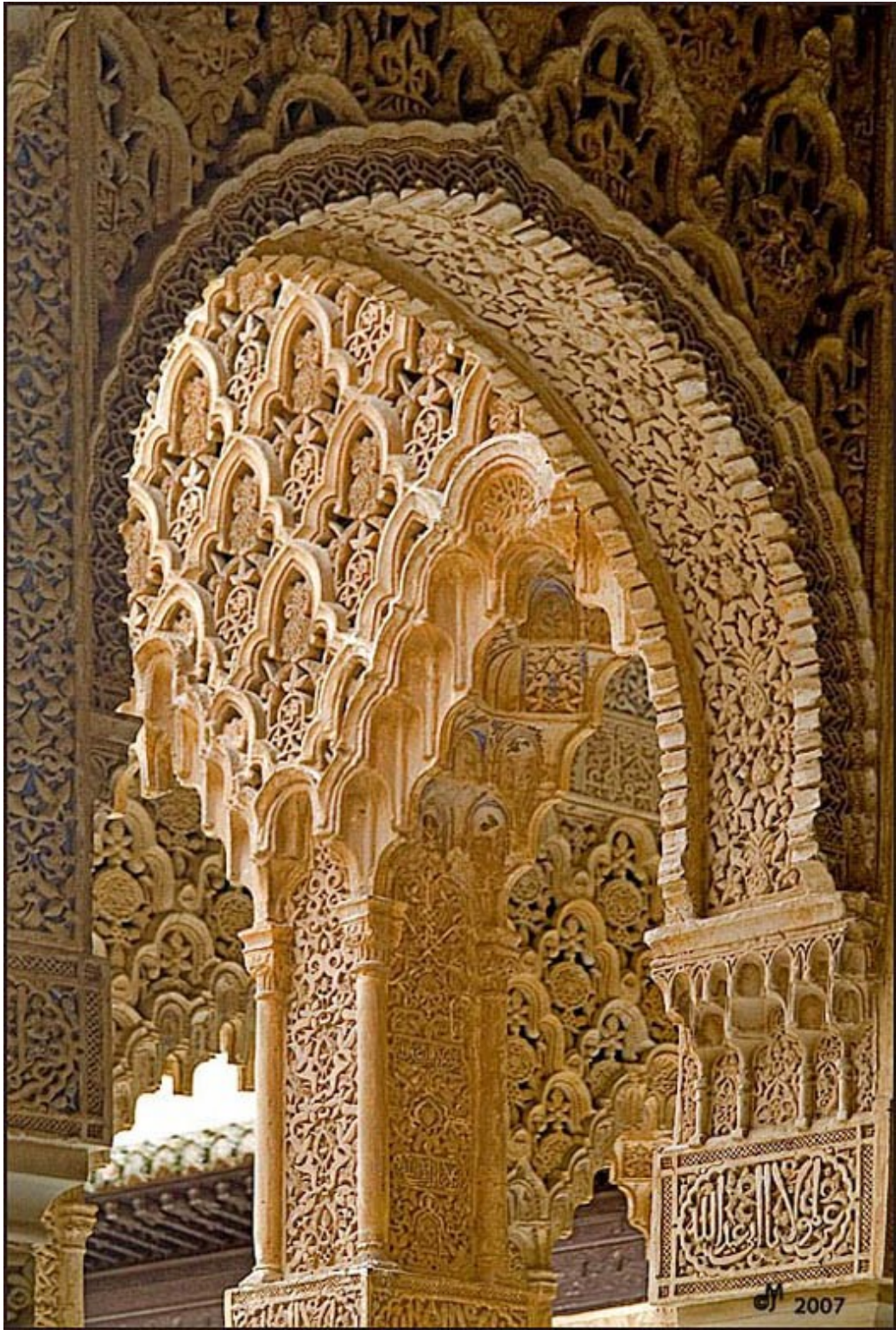


Pierre, the field design of the rug represented fig.69 reminds me some architectural ornamentation and tiles* forms and colors (*once again 😊) we

can find in the Alhambra Palace in Granada (Spain). The repetitive ornamentation in the field has some outlines evocating a repeated simplified palmette.

Unfortunately, I didn't find any picture of a similar rug, but there's no doubt this representation match perfectly with the "spanish" islamic/muslim taste of this period.

To illustate my thought, please, have a look at the following pictures taken in the Alhambra palace.





and also have a look at the following links

-About the palmette design:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palmette>

-About the typical colors and visual effect of the tiles on the Alhambra walls, in a similar style to the rug illustrated fig.69:

<http://www.google.fr/search?q=alhambra+tiles&hl=fr&client=firefox-a&hs=GBm&rls=org.mozilla:fr:official&prmd=imvns&tbn=isch&tbo=u&>

source=univ&sa=X&ei=ypLjTpzXIpC7hAff44XWAQ&ved=0CCYQsAQ&biw=1600&bih=749



You can also have a look at:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alhambra>

Best regards,
Y😊

Last edited by Yohann Gissing; December 11th, 2011 at 02:38 AM.



December
11th, 2011,
10:50 AM

#2

[Pierre Galafassi](#)
Members

Join Date: Oct
2009
Posts: 17



Hi Yohann,

Interesting analogy, yes.

Similar arrangements of motifs can also be found in Roman and Byzantine mosaics, as in the following one (Roman Villa in Almenara de Adaja, Valladolid, Spain).



Byzantine and Sassanid mosaics were famous and one could well imagine that rug weavers, whatever their ethnical origin, would be keen to imitate their patterns. This could have been particularly true for nomads, such as the successive waves of Arab and Turkish conquerors.

Best regards
Pierre



December 11th, 2011,
01:44 PM

#3

[Yohann Gissinger](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Location: France
Posts: 5



Hello Pierre,

"...mosaic tilework is considered by many to be typical of Islamic or Arabic geometry. Its scale and the degree of accuracy found in shaping and cutting the tiles differs considerably with region and time. Found all around the Mediterranean basin from Moorish work in the west, to Syrian and Turkish work in the east and Egyptian work in the south, there is also tilework to be found in Persia, Iraq and the Indian sub-continent. As the geometry that underlies these patterns is universal, it is sometimes difficult to determine where an individual design might come from..." picked from: <http://catnaps.org/islamic/geometry.html>

I'm not an expert of "islamic" tiles, but like in a rug attribution process I'm referring to the palette and design of this rug representation (fig.69) to build my hypothesis.

Please, have a look on the web with a picture search engine and you will quickly see the particularism of the western "islamic" tiles decoration ("spanish") compared to some others. I think the range of colors is similar in this area: orange, yellow, blue, green, white, and black, whereas most of the other "islamic" tiles have a tighter range: white, blue and black in most of the cases.

In your example the palette is tight and looks like it results directly from clay (no addition of pigment?)...

Of course "it's just an uneducated guess"!

Amitiés,
Y 😊



December
12th, 2011,
09:40 AM

#4

[Pierre Galafassi](#)
Members

Join Date: Oct
2009
Posts: 17



Hi Yohann,

I do of course fully agree with you that tiles and mosaics were a very important art form of the Islamic civilization, and a very colorful one too. At least from the eight- or ninth century onward. And, yes my Roman example of fish scale mosaic features rather dull colors, probably made, as you suggest, with natural clays and no glazing. It was the motif analogy with the rug which seemed interesting to me.

My remark about the Sassanid- and Byzantine civilizations was merely making the point that they were the most likely «teachers» of the various technologies involved in tiles and mosaics and, perhaps, of some motifs as well, since I doubt that the Arab conquerors had any notion of these technologies when they sallied out of their barren peninsula. Nor, later, the Turco-Mongols waves.

Typically most of these conquerors had a policy of sparing the life of good artisans, even when their first attempts at Architecture were to build merry pyramids of severed heads in front of fallen cities. Centuries later Genghis Khan and even Timur religiously kept respecting both traditions.

To cite Wikipedia:

«... Artistically, the Sassanid period witnessed some of the highest

achievements of Persian civilization. Much of what later became known as Muslim culture, including architecture and writing, was originally drawn from Persian culture...»

As the Roman / Byzantine learned the hard way, the Sassanid were a technologically advanced civilization.

IMHO, the Islamic civilization was the true heir and a brilliant development of the Sassanid one.

Now for the other probable «teachers» of glass making, tile glazing and mosaics (perhaps of some motifs as well), one can have an idea of the Byzantine mastery of the technology and colors, giving a look for example to this twelfth century mosaic of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. For this technology their other creative heir was Venice.



Amitiés. 😊🍷😊

Pierre



December 15th, 2011, 11:53 AM

#5

[Pierre Galafassi](#)
Members



Hi Yohann,

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 17

There is perhaps a clue pointing at a western-, more precisely Spanish origin of this strange rug. A hypothesis which would contradict neither an

Islamic- nor a western influence.

Note the border of «stars» on a red background: There are a few paintings featuring a very similar border, where the painter's nationality and / or other motifs of the rug make a Spanish origin of the rug quite credible.

In particular the Spaniard J. Huguet (mid fifteenth century) used at least three different studio props, all featuring a star border on red background.

Fig 1: J. Huguet. Virgin and Child. Rug with «Cockerel motif». 1445. MNAC Barcelona.



Fig 2 and Fig 3: J. Huguet. Martyrdom of St Vincent. 1455-1460. MNAC Barcelona.





In a more recent painting (1615) by W. Larkin (already shown in a previous essay), we can notice in the background a rug featuring both a «star» main border and the undulating motif which, according to Onno Ydema, is an indication of gothic influence.

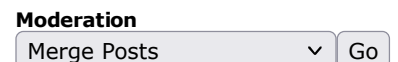
FIG 4: W. Larkin. Lady Dorothy Cary. Detail. 1615. Kenwood House.



Star borders, are apparently extremely rare in extant fourteenth to sixteenth century Anatolian rugs. Surprisingly so, given the frequency of all kind of star motifs in their field. The only other case of frequent use of «star borders» I am aware of, are nineteenth century Caucasian Tchelaberd and Chondsoresk rugs.

Sure this does not amount to a proof of the Spanish / Al Andalus origin of this puzzling «fish scale» or «palmette tile» rug, but it makes do, perhaps, for a credible theory.

Best regards
Pierre



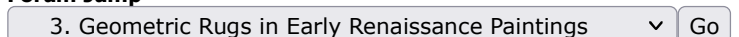
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