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 **Are the «large holbein» rugs Spanish or Anatolian?**

Welcome, [Filiberto Boncompagni](#).

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 December 11th, 2011,  
08:50 PM

# 1

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009  
Posts: 22

 **Are the «large holbein» rugs Spanish or Anatolian?**

Hi all,

Ethnocentrism is endemic in Rugdom. This being said, one should perhaps not dismiss, a priori, C. Partearroyo Lacaba's claim (1) that the well known «large holbein» pattern was as Spanish as paella or the Great Sinking Armada.

Until recently it was assumed that the pattern had an Anatolian origin and was merely copied by Alcaraz weavers. However, C. Partearroyo Lacaba notes that there are significantly more extant «large Holbein rugs» woven with Spanish knots than with symmetrical ones and that Spanish rugs show more variants of the basic octagonal motif than their Turkish cousins.

Without interfering in this potential Hispano-Turkish war, one could add that both, motifs and palette of the Spanish «large Holbein» rugs, have a certain originality and do not look like mere copies.

(See FIG 56 in Essay, and FIG 1,2,& 3 below.)



Source MIAQ



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(1) *C. Partearroyo Lacaba Alfombras Españolas page 6*



December 12th, 2011,  
10:04 AM

#2

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)  
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008  
Location: Cyprus  
Posts: 22

Why not?

Even Franses, in the already mentioned article (see the para-Mamluks thread) says that

*"The oldest surviving Spanish carpets with Turkish designs are attributed to the second or third quarters of the 15th century, but examples must have reached Spain by the 13th*

**or 14th, as many Spanish 'copies' present an earlier version of Turkish designs than any surviving Anatolian rug."** (the emphasis is mine).

Could it be that those Spanish 'copies' were the originals and the copies were Turkish instead?

Besides, is there any proof of this kind of design being of Turkish origin?

Regards,

Filiberto



December 12th, 2011,  
06:12 PM

#3

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009  
Posts: 22



Hi Filiberto,

As you may guess, I don't know.

The higher number of Spanish extant "large holbein" is no proof of the original patent held by Al Andalus. So many other reasons may explain this difference, starting with a significant superiority of the productivity of Turkish moths.

However, the theory of an influence of Al Andalus weavers on Anatolian ones does not seem too harebrained, especially if we believe twelfth century arab travelers (like Al-Saqundi, see main essay) who claimed that Spain was a high quality rug producer and a very successful exporter.

Best regards  
Pierre



January 17th, 2012, 01:12  
PM

#4

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009  
Posts: 22



Hi all,

Yohann has recently drawn my attention to a very interesting paper by M.S. Dimand («Two fifteenth Century hispano-moresque Rugs», published by the MET Art

Bulletin). Dimand discusses, next to other Spanish rug types, the large Holbein carpets and joins forces with the partisans of an Anatolian origin of the motif. Unfortunately, he does stop short of sharing any conclusive evidence with us.  
(The highlights in following citation are mine).

«...Actually, these Anatolian **precursors** were admired in Europe well before Holbein's Period as we know from their appearance in Europe in paintings by Italian, Flemish and Spanish masters of the fifteenth century..».  
«...In the McIlhenny Collection in Philadelphia Museum of Art is an important Anatolian rug the closest known **prototype** of the third variety of Spanish Holbein....»  
«..Although the field patterns of the Anatolian rugs, as represented in the paintings, are similar in many ways to those of the Spanish rugs, certain details of the ornament, including the different borders **make their Turkish origin a certainty...»**

Besides, Dimand mentions a typical border motif of Al Andalus production, called the «scorpion», which is found in many Spanish «Holbein» rugs (FIG.) and also states that «..The Spanish large Holbein rugs all show a field divided into large squares enclosing octagons, with spandrels of the squares filled with either a checkerboard pattern or interlacing....»



Best regards  
Pierre



[Filiberto](#)  
[Boncompagni](#)

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008  
Location: Cyprus  
Posts: 22



Hi Pierre,

Quote:

Unfortunately, he does stop short of sharing any conclusive evidence with us.

Nothing new under the sun.

In the Middle Ages scholars used the expression "*ipse dixit*" (he himself said so) to assert un-proved statements based on Aristotle authority.

It has been always easier to rest on somebody else's authority or common, wide-accepted assumptions, than take the trouble to prove one's statements.

Only difference is that today they don't even bother to say

"*ipse dicebat*" (they say so).



Regards,

Filiberto



January 17th, 2012, 03:49 PM

#6

[Steve Price](#)

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008  
Posts: 69



Hi People

The central intellectual event of the Renaissance was that the tradition of testing truth by citing authority (scholasticism) changed to evidence-based tests. Scholasticism still has a powerful (some might say, dominating) influence in Rugdom, as well as in a few other fields.

Regards

Steve Price



## [Yohann Gissinger](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008  
Location: France  
Posts: 6



Hello to all,

To read the entire Dimand's article follow the link:  
<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/bibliography/?id=12813>  
and click on PDF, this will lead you to the free version of this article.

All the best,  
Y😊



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3. Geometric Rugs in Early Renaissance Paintings

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