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Welcome, [Filiberto Boncompagni](#).
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[March 9th, 2011, 07:04 PM](#)

#1

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 5

[What are those?](#)

Dear Pierre,

First thing to clarify: what we are going to discuss here is, obviously, about knotted rugs or carpets – using the terms "rug" or "carpet" as synonyms.

A carpet is a floor-covering textile.

Not all the carpets are knotted: besides the flat weaves there were also embroidered carpets.

Not all the floor-covering textiles should be interpreted as carpets: rich textiles have always been used to honor important personages so we shouldn't wonder if a brocaded silk is used as a floor-covering prop in a painting that portrays saints or royals.

The first problem in trying to identify knotted rugs, especially in early paintings, is to distinguish them from other kinds of textile.

The first two paintings do not look as knotted carpets. The first one is surely of Byzantine iconography. Plate 162 of Gantzhorn's book (1) shows a Chasuble of Pope Boniface VIII with a very similar design. I searched the web for more information and it seem that the fabric was called "sciamito", a medieval fabric of particular structure suitable for lavish embroidery. Produced originally in the geographic area of the Middle East (Syria, Iran, Byzantium) has spread later in the Mediterranean areas subject to Islam. This particular item, embroidered with a technique "opus ciprense" (I would translate it as "in the Cyprus way") was probably made a Palermo. Here's a detail of it:



see detail from the fresco for comparison:



Information and image from:

http://www.alessandrojazeolla.info/_Illustrazioni/img_galleria/ANAG/ANAG.htm

Plate 162 of Gantzhorn's has also some similarities to the second painting, *The Armenian Royal Family*:



This one is in Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution, New York. It was made in Spain, 11th-12th century

Link:

<http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/view/objects/asitem/id/11374>

Unfortunately I have to go. Tomorrow I'll be able to post more on the subject.

Regards,

Filiberto

(1) Wolkmar Gantzhorn *Oriental Carpets*

Quoting a reviewer on Amazon: "a mildly goofy interpretation that claims Armenian Christian origin for oriental carpets, ill organized, with excruciating page layout, but the sources consulted and the rich illustration make an interesting read and as well an incredible bargain"



[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009

Posts: 1



Hi Filiberto,

Well, yes indeed, especially in these very early paintings, it is sometimes difficult to tell,(without being able to give a close look to the original), whether the painter represented a textile, decorated tiles (ubiquitous in Renaissance painting) or a proper rug. I suppose that the curvilinear design of the motifs in the first two «rugs» brings water to your mill and speaks perhaps for a brocade or a velvet. On the byzantine origin of the motif (with deep Roman roots) we agree.

There are many other puzzling questions for which I would love to get an answer or a creative hypothesis:

I find it very hard to see in the type 2 and 3 «animal rugs» the work of urban workshops (naive motifs, low knot density, no borders) and fail to identify any obvious Islamic influence in the motifs which could just as well have been the work of Jerome Bosch's six years old son.

I have a special liking for Fabriano's forked-tail, squinting alien below:



How could these spontaneous, naive motifs have appealed to the urbanized, sophisticated, at times even a trifle effete political elite of 13th-14th century Middle East, be it Kurd (Ajjubid), Turkish (Seljuk), Turco-Mongol (Ilkanide, Timuride), Armenian or even to the rude Mamluk leaders? What about the stark contrast with other contemporaneous rugs like the extant ones shown at the end of the essay or like most fragments attributed to the Seljuks?

Would a tribal or village origin for «type 2 and 3» not seem more likely? Could the motifs give us any clue about the people who wove these rugs? How did these surprisingly «un-commercial» carpets end up in Italy (woven in villages near one of Venice's Middle East trading posts?).

Why did a fair number of painters (or their patrons) appreciate this style so much and prefer it to more sophisticated contemporaneous rugs?

Regards
Pierre



March 10th, 2011, 11:48 AM

#3

[Filiberto](#)

[Boncompagni](#)

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008

Location: Cyprus

Posts: 5

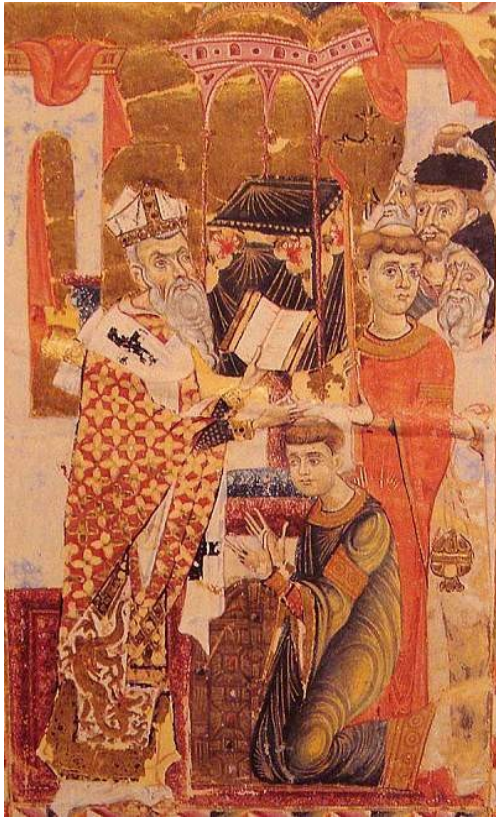


Wait, Pierre. Before going further I'd like to elaborate on my post of yesterday.

You presented two depictions: a fresco from a church in Bulgaria (ca. 1258) and an illumination from an Armenian manuscript (ca.1250) located in Jerusalem.

I produced two textiles with motifs very close to the paintings. Pope Boniface VIII was elected in 1294 and died in 1303 so his chasuble should have made (in Sicily or Cyprus) in that period. The "samite" fabric of Spain instead is at least a century older than the illumination. It is probably of Muslim manufacture.

Looking for rugs in Armenian miniatures I found this one:



The Armenian Archbishop Jean of Cilicia, 1287.

That should be a rug. Nothing useful, though, apart for a detail that has nothing to do with rugs: it's the classical Chinese dragon-with-flamed-pearl on the Archbishop garment that is quite surprising.



A Chinese textile used for an Armenian Archbishop's clothes.

This reminds us once more how textiles and motifs - especially the luxury ones - traveled freely and were used even in spite of their different religious origin.

Regards,

Filiberto



March 11th, 2011, 03:30 PM

#4

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 5



As we saw in the thread "A contribution to the discussion of animal rugs" (by the way, excellent work, guys) the use of *zoomorphic repertory on several forms of mediums* was quite widespread in East and West. But there was a change in Europe:

Quote:

Beyond these loans of Eastern bestiary, a double evolution occurred in the Middle Age. The bestiary grows with several newcomers (the siren-fish, the unicorn). The medieval animal is initially perceived with its symbolic and allegorical dimension. This symbolic system can be profane: the Middle Age

sees a growing importance of the heraldic animal, (like the three passing leopards on the coat of arms of English kings), for example. But the medieval bestiary is mainly a Christian bestiary *et cetera*

These representations became stylized heraldic designs. The use of coat of arms actually became fashionable: it spread from lords and knights to ecclesiastical dignities, burghers and commoners. It wasn't limited to persons either, because it was adopted by states, towns, cities, even districts (at least in Italy) and as corporate logos for guilds.

Hence, in my opinion, the style of *some* of the rugs in "animal paintings" is so European that makes me think they were of western production.

It could be the case of Benozzo Gozzoli's Annunciation (FIG 20)



so close to the Spanish Alpujarra rug:



An excellent channel for Spanish rugs in Italy was the Spanish court of Naples and its relations to the other Italian courts, often by marriage – like with the Sforza of Milan, the Gonzaga of Mantua and the D'Este of Ferrara.

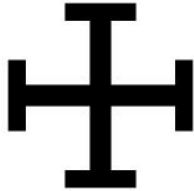
Also rugs like FG11:



let me highly suspicious.

At first I thought that Gaddi's representation of the rug wasn't credible. The fringe was on the wrong side but, given the direction of the composition, it appears to be a rug that has been cut – unless the non-visible part was rolled behind the counter. And there are visible rows of knots, so, it's a believable and coherent representation of a knotted rug.

But the lack of borders, the heraldic stylization of the motifs, and especially the heraldic "Cross Potent"



(see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross_potent)

- or perhaps it's a version of the "Jerusalem Cross" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross_of_Jerusalem), makes me doubt of this being an Anatolian Seljuk rug.

I say Seljuk because it's commonly acknowledged that Anatolian rugs must have been Seljuk.

More on the subject after I read a John Mills' article Pierre promised to send me.

Regards,

Filiberto



March 12th, 2011, 02:57 PM

#5

[Marvin Amstey](#)
Members

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Fairport, NY
Posts: 5



Fringes "on the wrong side" are correct in rugs from Poatou and Sinkiang since they were woven with the warps horizontal - so to speak. Also the lozenges in the Gaddi rug could be taken from the coffered guls of East Turkestan rugs. Perhaps this is another example of the exchange of "art" East and West as in the archbishop's dragon.



March 13th, 2011, 11:00 AM

#6

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 5



Thanks, Marvin, for pointing out my somehow obscure phrasing. 😊

No, what I meant with "The fringe was on the wrong side but, given the direction of the composition, it appears to be a rug that has been cut" is this:

The fringe seemed to be on the wrong side because it's in what appears to us the *long* side of the rug. But the orientation of the animals is parallel with the fringe's side. As we can see in all the other examples shown in the salon (albeit in FIG 12 isn't clear), the animals are always parallel to the short side, as I would expect in any regular rug.

So, that isn't the long side but the short one: were every self-respectful fringe should be.
Regards,

Filiberto



March 13th, 2011, 12:40 PM

#7 □

Filiberto Boncompagni
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 5

Now, let's start what I hope will not be only a rambling.

It's generally assumed that the "animal carpets" visible in early European paintings were made in Konya under the Seljuks' rule.

I found some interesting observations in this article on "tea and carpets" blogspot:

<http://tea-and-carpets.blogspot.com/2009/05/were-animal-design-carpets-europes.html>

Quote:

One is that the first carpets to show up in the paintings are not the kinds of sumptuous and complicated court workshop carpets one generally associates with days gone by. Instead, almost all the carpets to appear in pictures before 1450 are of rather simple pieces with highly exotic animal motifs. They are rugs that – astonishingly – can remind a modern viewer of our own enthusiasm for ethno and tribal works today.

I would say that they appear quite like rustic product of cottage workshops.

Quote:

Rug scholar Nalan Turkmen dates the motifs' appearance in Anatolia to the early 14th century, after the fall of the Seljuks. He writes that the carpets "represent a new stage in Turkish carpet weaving which covers two hundred years from the early 14th century to the late 15th centuries" ("Tracing Central Asian Turkmen Carpet Designs Through Parallels With Anatolian Carpets," *Oriental Carpet and Textile Studies*, Volume V Part 1, 1999).

which means that, if I understand correctly *perhaps* they weren't made by the Seljuks but under the Ottomans. In the same article there is the reproduction of a fresco painted by Domenico di Bartolo in Siena in 1440.



The rug visible in it is obviously related to the famous Phoenix and dragon carpet (Anatolia first half or middle 15th century).



That Pierre hadn't included in the salon.

More on the Phoenix and dragon carpet later.

But if animal carpets appeared in Turkish carpets only in early 14th century, who had made this one?



Anonymous, Annunciation, 1252, Church of the Santissima Annunziata, Florence.

Regards,

Filiberto



March 13th, 2011, 01:16 PM

#8

[Steve Price](#)

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Posts: 72

Hi Filiberto

I would conclude that although the earliest extant Turkish animal carpet was woven in the 15th century, the painting in Florence demonstrates that animal carpets were being woven at least two centuries earlier. Turkey seems like the most likely origin, although that might not be the case.

Regards

Steve Price



March 13th, 2011, 01:18 PM

#9

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 1

Hi Marvin, Filiberto,

We seem to agree that at least some of these rugs were not woven according to pure Islamic canons. An influence of medieval Europe is a possibility and IMHO there is nothing terribly outlandish in Filiberto's hypothesis that Gaddi's rug, for example, could have been woven in Italy.

Orcagna's rug below (1367, Calling of St Matthew, Uffizi, Florence), while more sophisticated than Gaddi's rug, could also be suspected of strong European or Byzantine influence, with its heraldic eagles sprayed all over both



field and border.

When the first animal rugs appeared in paintings during the 13th century there was no shortage of places where «exchanges of art» between Islam and medieval Europe could have taken place peacefully, in particular Norman and Hohenstaufen Sicily (where symbiosis was much favored by the local Kings), and of course Al Andalus.

Besides, let's not forget that at that time a large chunk of Anatolia was still not ruled by Moslems, but by the Latin empire (followed in 1268 by the last phase of the Byzantine empire), the remains of Great Armenia (still including part of Cilicia) and by the byzantine "Empire" of Nicae. The population was still mainly Christian (Greek orthodox, Armenian etc..). Even in Seljuk and Mameluk territory, the authorities had no particular urge for converting the still very large non-Moslem minorities, who contributed a large percentage of the tax money and provided slaves (including soldiers).



Even though several Turkish-, Armenian- and Persian- rug experts and writers have concocted creative theories, trying to make us believe that their favorite ethnic group was the sole inventor of piled rugs (and the weaver of the Pazyryk carpet to boot), there is really no reason to believe that Greek, Coptic or Druze populations, to name just a few, were never involved in carpet weaving.

About the theory that the sophisticated "pregnant animals" rugs were not woven before Ottoman rule, I share Filiberto's scepticism. Just give a look to the border of the Kirchheim rug (main essay). Does it not ring a clear (seljuk) bell?

Best regards
Pierre



March 13th, 2011, 06:32 PM

#10

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 5



Hi Pierre,

Quote:

there is nothing terribly outlandish in Filiberto's hypothesis that Gaddi's rug, for example, could have been woven in Italy

There's only a drawback: the only historical sources mentioning local production of knotted carpets are related to the 15th and 16th centuries.
Let's make other hypothesis:

A) They were made locally but they weren't knotted – especially the ones without typical "oriental" borders. Perhaps they were appliqué, patchworks or quilts. By the way, did you know that quilted objects were relatively rare in Europe until approximately the 12th century, when quilted bedding and other items appeared after the return of the Crusaders from the Middle East?

B) Speaking of Crusaders, Knights and heraldry... perfect candidates for exporting the fashion of geometrical heraldic motifs to the Middle East, aren't they? And these knotted carpets with animals could have been made anywhere under the influence and contact of Crusaders... Which means (have a look at the map above) at least Anatolia, Syria and Palestine. The know-how was there: knotted-pile carpets have probably been made in the Levant and Anatolia since the second millennium BC or before. Anyway, well before the arrival of the Seljuks.

Regards,

Filiberto



March 14th, 2011, 03:09 PM

#11

[Yohann Gissinger](#)
Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Location: France
Posts: 0

The aliens sources

Pierre,

I have to offer you the spanish textile hypothesis as aliens source:

Spain was the first country in Europe to develop silk production. The Arabs introduced sericulture (the production of the raw material) and silk-weaving to Spain. Sericulture was established by the 9th century in Al Andalus (Andalusia today) and by the 10th century the production of silk worms had become significant. Silk-weaving developed in particular in Almeria, Cordoba, Granada, Malaga, Lorca and Murcia.
The silks made there were desirable luxury products worn by royalty in the northern Christian provinces. A few garments of such silks survive because their owners followed the custom of being dressed in finery for their burial (e.g. in the Monastery of Las Huelgas, Burgos).



1200-1400 Spain



13th_14th c. Germany_spain?

Could Spain have also produced rugs with such designs?

Regards,
Yohann

Source: V&A Museum

Last edited by Yohann Gissinger; March 17th, 2011 at 12:52 AM.



March 14th, 2011, 03:20 PM

#12

[Yohann Gissinger](#)

the return of the aliens

Members

Pierre,

Join Date: Jul 2008
Location: France
Posts: 0

Your FIG 10: Fra Angelico, detail from Virgin and Child, 1438-1440, San Marco Museum, Florence with its strange animals looks like a zodiacal pavement to me have a look to this blog pic.3 the Canterbury medieval pavement:
<http://lenoxsthesaurus.blogspot.com/2011/01/canterbury-cathedral-3.html>

Regards,
Yohann



March 14th, 2011, 06:15 PM

#13

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)



Administrator

Right! It could be something like the mosaic floor of Siena Cathedral:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siena_Cathedral#Mosaic_floor

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 5

To tell the truth, my first impression was that it looks like inlay wood



Anyway, if it is a mosaic floor, it should still exist somewhere...

Regards,

Filiberto



March 14th, 2011, 07:10 PM

#14

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 5



I'm sorry Yohann...

If a mosaic floor of that design ever existed in Florence, it should have been recorded somehow, somewhere.

Indeed, I searched for reviews of Fra Angelico's painting: they all speak of "Oriental" or "Anatolian" or "Anatolian design" carpet. Someone mentions the zodiac motifs (Cancer and Pisces). I doubt in any case that an Anatolian rug could have zodiac motifs. Anatolian Armenian perhaps?

Regards,

Filiberto



March 14th, 2011, 08:17 PM

#15

[Yohann Gissinger](#)
Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Location: France
Posts: 0



Filiberto,

The same problem like in the tile hypothesis: no existing related example (on internet) on the Italian's churches grounds nowadays, but apparently zodiacal symbols in this case, it's not the classical bestiary.

All the best,
Yohann.



March 15th, 2011, 10:34 AM

#16

Filiberto
Boncompagni

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 5

 Gantzhorn

This is quite embarrassing... I haven't read Gantzhorn's book from beginning to the end. I had rather jumped through it erratically. Now, reading about Gaddi's painting (FIG 11), he says that, in his opinion, the "animal carpets" were related to the European fashion of heraldic which was exported by crusaders in Armenia Minor. I swear, if I had read that part I had completely forgotten about it.

Nothing new under the sun... Anyway, if for Armenia Minor he intended the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia he may have a point: it seems that the kingdom was "a strong ally of the European Crusaders..."

Commercial and military interactions with Europeans brought new Western influences to the Cilician Armenian society. Many aspects of Western European life were adopted by the nobility including chivalry, fashions in clothing, and the use of French titles, names, and language...

During the reign of King Levon (1198-1219), the economy of Cilician Armenia progressed greatly and became heavily integrated with Western Europe. He secured agreements with Pisa, Genoa, and Venice, as well as the French and the Catalans...

As French became the secondary language of Cilician nobility, the secondary language for Cilician commerce had become Italian due to the three Italian city-states' extensive involvement in Cilician economy...

Ayas, a major coastal city of the kingdom, had revitalized as a heart for East-to-West commerce during and after King Levon I's reign. This coastal city was a port and a market center, where spices, silk, cotton cloth, carpets and pearls from Asia, and finished cloth and metal products from the West were made available." (Quotes from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_Kingdom_of_Cilicia)

So, the possibility for animals carpets being made in Armenia – or in the commercial influence of Armenian merchants – is there.

But there is no proof.

Regards.

Filiberto



March 15th, 2011, 10:50 AM

#17

Pierre Galafassi

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 1



Hi Yohann,

You might be right, or not: these early borderless rugs can sometimes be confused with tiles and vice versa: Except for outdoor views, the ground of most Renaissance paintings is laid with tiles. They are much more frequent than rugs or precious textiles. Tiles are mostly undecorated or carry a simple geometrical design either strictly repeated or alternated. However, when researching paintings for future threads, I had sometimes a doubt and played their classification as "rugs" or "tiles", with heads or tails, especially in a few Spanish paintings.

Your (superbly documented) hypothesis (in the new thread) about animal-decorated inlaid tiles is well worth considering. Filiberto's counter argument is valid too, especially coming from a pure bred Fiorentino 😊

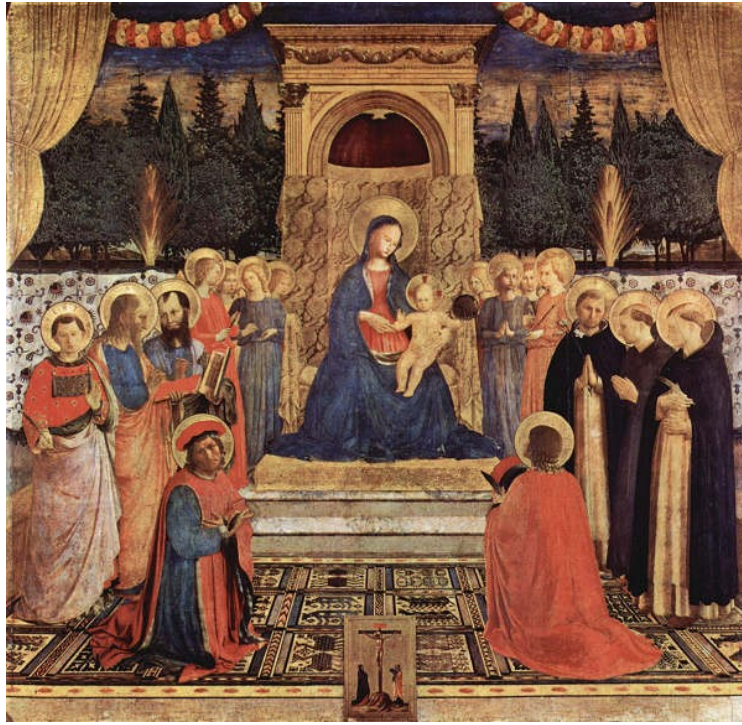


FIG. 1438-1440. Fra Angelico, Virgin and Child, S. Marco Museum, Florence.

Even the full picture of Fra Angelico's painting does not allow to be 100% sure. If it is a rug as I am still inclined to believe, (sheepishly following the opinion of a couple of art historians) it is indeed a huge one. There is what seems to be a rug border though (but yes it could also be part of a pattern of tiles).

Indeed , Al Andalus certainly has played an important role at the time, for all sorts of precious textile. And so did Sicily where King Roger, Frederick II and his son, in particular, favored production of silk textiles by their still mostly arabic and byzantine population. I have seen no mention of Sicilian rugs, so far, but...

Best regards
Pierre



March 15th, 2011, 11:11 AM

#18

[Pierre Galafassi](#)
Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 1

Hi all,

As already mentioned, it is rather puzzling that the spectacular extant rugs featuring an «animal-inside-another-animal», [illustrated in the essay: FIG 25 owned by MET and FIG 26 published by H. Kirchheim (1)], would never have caught the eye of any Renaissance painter. True, various sources (2) have mentioned a painting by Gregorio di Cecco (National Gallery, London), featuring such a rug, but the low-definition pictures available on the net did

not allow me to verify this information



Well, until I finally got the one below(a):
FIG a)



FIG b)



A comparison with the MET rug (b), allows to identify a similar «animal-inside-an-animal» motif. Both feature a wide open mouth and a raised paw. In the MET rug the "adult" beast raises a paw, while in di Cecco' rug the "baby" does it. Di Cecco's beasts seems to be spotted, a panther perhaps. The border is clearly visible and, imho, coherent with a Seljuk identification.

Thus, although the painting is dated from about 1410, the rug featured might be much older, perhaps even contemporaneous to both extant ones : The «Kirchheim rug» is dated by the C14 method between 1190 and 1300 and the MET rug between 1040 and 1290, with 95% confidence in both cases (3).

At any rate this seems to get rid of the shaky theory (mentioned earlier in this thread) that this particular type of animal rugs was not woven before the ottoman period. In 1300 the Ottoman still were only the rulers of a little Beylyk in northern / central Anatolia.

Kirchheim mentions an interesting anecdote about the relatively recent discovery of both extant rugs (4): Following the violent troubles during Tibet annexation by China, many monks emigrated, taking with them whichever precious objects they could save from the disaster, including both extant «animal-inside-an-animal» rugs. Wenzel (5) mentions as well some 13th-14th century anatolian silk and metal-thread brocades which followed the same route. All appeared on the market a few years later.

How they ended-up in tibetan monasteries in the first place is another fascinating question.

But Kirchheim has a credible theory about the highly surprising state of conservation of the rugs: The main sources of light inside the rooms of tibetan monasteries were candles made with the fat of Yaks. Their greasy smoke deposited a protective layer on the rugs (Se non é vero é ben trovato).

Regards
Pierre

Sources

- 1) H. Kirchheim, Orient Stars, page 15
- 2) See for example Heilbrunn's Timeline of Art, MET, New York.
- 3) H. Kirchheim, Orient Stars, page 374, note# 318
- 4) H. Kirchheim, Orient Stars, page 12
- 5) M. Wenzel, Turkish Textiles, 2002.

PM

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 5



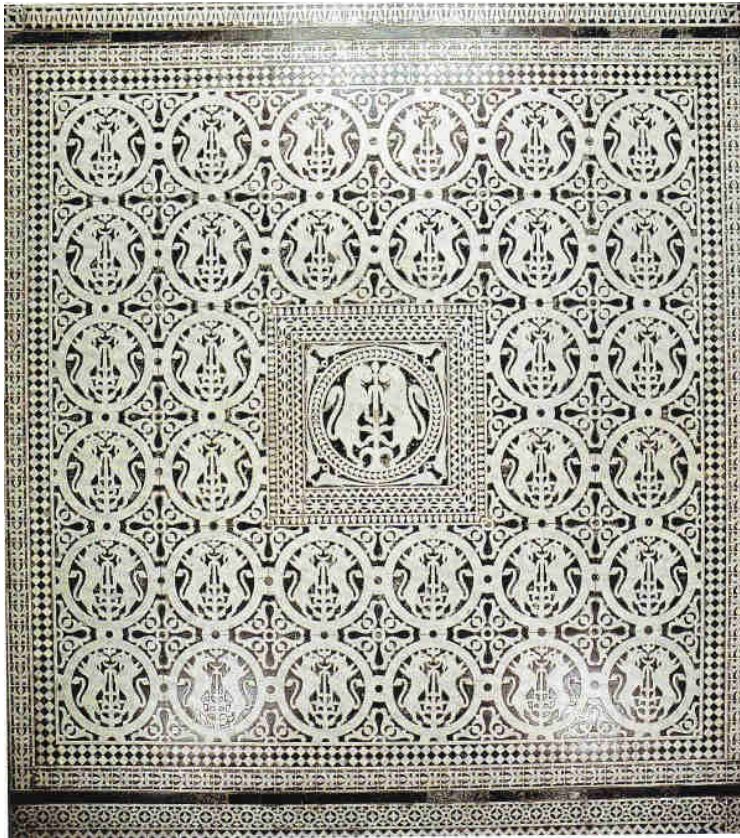
Pierre, excuse me if I continue my musing on Yohann's suggestion about FIG 10: Fra Angelico, detail from Virgin and Child.

Fra Angelico started the painting in his monastery in Fiesole, on the homonymous hill overlooking Florence. I couldn't find any mention of zodiac floors in Fiesole. The work was then finished in Florence.

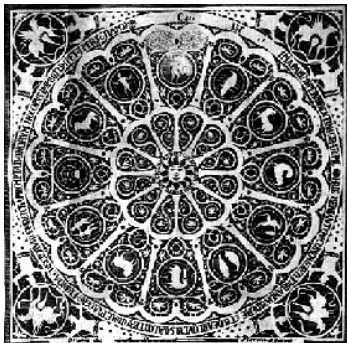
We do have in Florence inlaid marble floors (or *opus sectile*) with geometric and zoomorphic motifs. There are also two zodiac floors, both made by the same artists in the 13th century, one in S. Miniato al Monte. Here you can see the zodiac floor of the Romanesque basilica of San Miniato al Monte:



and another section of the floor in the same church. Both in white and green marble:



scans from the book "La pittura di pietra" (Painting in stone) by Ferdinando Rossi
And here is the other zodiac, from Florence Baptistery, quite similar, a bit more refined, and the only comprehensive image I found:



As for something vaguely similar to the inlaid tile technique, it didn't appear in Florence until 1548 into the Laurentian Library, according to the book above.

Now, back to Fra Angelico's "carpet".

Every art historian I found mentioned that thing as a carpet.

However, Yohann is right, it doesn't look as a carpet.

If that was an inlaid floor, the memory of it had disappeared.

My explanation is that the good friar made it up. As an architectural element. It wouldn't certainly be the first time that a Renaissance painter put some invented architecture in his paintings.

Fra Angelico was also an illuminator. I bet he took inspiration for his "floor" by some medieval zodiacal illuminations.

Regards,

Filiberto



Hi all,

In the case of borderless, large rugs, one would often need a much closer view as the one given by the pictures published on the net or in art books, to eliminate the possibility that they are in fact tiles, reeds or textiles. I managed to select five views close enough to show clearly a very coarse rug structure, (Is this coarseness due to multiple wefts? To thick warps? Structure experts please comment.) See below detail views of:

FIG 1. T. Gaddi's «Calling of St Eloi», 1360, Prado, Madrid. (shown in the essay). Its pendant «St Eloi before King Clothaire» does also show rows of pile with the same orientation.



FIG 2. N. Buonaccorso's «Marriage of the Virgin», 1380. National Gallery. London. (shown in the essay)



FIG 3. Sassetta's «Virgin and Child», ca. 1433, Vatican.

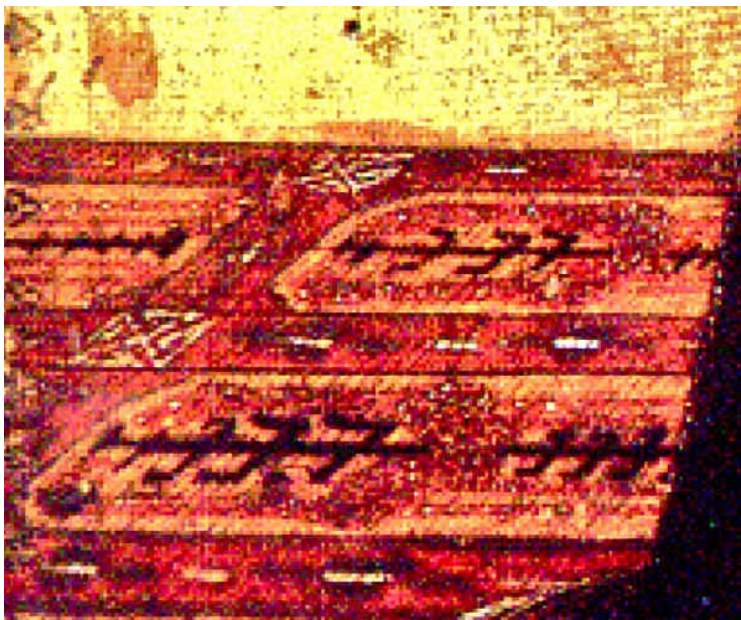


FIG 4. Sano di Pietro's «Virgin and Child», ca.1455, Duomo di Pienza.
The same rug is also featured in di Pietro's «Coronation of the Virgin», ca.1455, Yale University.
The bird might be an eagle. Note the chintamani-like spots.



FIG 5. Sano di Pietro's adoration of the Child, 1460-1470, Kress Collection.
Raptor, with long neck and asian swastika motif.



There is now little doubt left in my mind that most of these paintings with highly stylized, filiform or well-fed, animals inscribed in an octagon or rectangle, indeed feature (borderless) coarse rugs. A few paintings might show tiles with similar motifs.

OK, let's assume that the painters indeed intended to show rugs, but were they fully invented? Or did the painter use true models? In the second case who wove them? These are questions we can't answer. I do share Filiberto's, Yohann's and Marvin's opinion that they are perhaps the fruit of both European and Middle East influences. Whether they were made in Italy, El Andalus, Cilician Armenia, Byzantine Greece or Anatolia, Trebizond or other exotic places can only be a wild guess as long as no extant fragment will be found.

Best regards
Pierre


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