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Welcome, [Filiberto Boncompagni](#).

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#61

 May 2nd, 2012, 03:44 AM

[Jeff Sun](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 2



Pierre-

Great pictures! Especially the one in Figure 2. Note the large repair of the dragon in the lower right. This is the ancient type of dragon style, with an organic, vegetal look.... And yes, I would say the first piece does look rather like a felt appliqué piece, but it too has a curvilinearity, a vegetal nature in the way the "T"s sprout out of the center "lotus". The influence of China is strong.

Which should not be too Surprising. The Chinese influence on Tibetan and Xinjiang rugs can also be seen. Some would say that this is the nature of things: that the centers of commerce, whether Beijing, Bokhara or Tehran, set the fashion and create innovations. The nomads and village weavers follow and imitate.

It would be more instructive to see the back of the pieces, of course. A Tibetan piece could be immediately ID'd...and a Mongolian piece would take only a little more effort.

Regarding "Palace" rugs. While Forbidden City, much like Versaille or Tokapi is an enormous place, one must wonder if making rugs for the Palace really absorbed all the "royal" weavers time...or if they made some other pieces on the sly.

Often in China, craftsman would produce pieces for the palace in place of taxes....which means the rest of the time they were doing...what?

Probably making something more practical for the commoner. This still goes on.

Well, when I was in Khotan a few years back, one workshop was making traditional "pomegranate" rugs on one loom...and floor mats for cars on another. Finally in a different room, on an enormous loom probably 30 meters in length they were weaving a rug...in one color...by hand...for a hotel lobby.

OK....we have drifted a long way from the original conversation, but nonetheless I find the discourse fascinating. Shall we continue until Steve kicks us off..or finds the conversation a new home?

Last edited by Jeff Sun; May 2nd, 2012 at 04:05 AM.



 August
3rd, 2012,
11:12 AM

#62

[George](#)

[Potter](#)

Members

Join Date:
Nov 2009
Posts: 2



Pierre,

There seems to be another example from Gentile da Fabriano of the three legged alien posted earlier that shows what should have been in the damaged panel, image below:



George



August 3rd, 2012, 05:55 PM

#63

[George Potter](#)

Members

Join Date: Nov 2009
Posts: 2



Pierre,

I must add that the image is from HALI. In the article, John Mills, wrote that the Vatican painting, earlier in this thread, is apparently a copy of the one just posted. Source: HALI, January 1997, Issue 90, page 62, title: In Sainly Company by John Mills.

George



August 4th, 2012, 09:08 AM

#64

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 51



Hi George,
Very interesting indeed.
Did John Mills suggest a possible origin for the rug?
Regards
Pierre



August 4th, 2012, 11:16 AM

#65

[George Potter](#)

Members

Join Date: Nov 2009
Posts: 2



Pierre,

Mills wrote:

Quote:

A quite different kind of rug, possibly Anatolian, is depicted here. In the Vatican version the rug is almost identical, though one of the compartments is damaged. The "animaloid" forms do not exactly resemble those on any known rug, but some interesting parallels are drawn by Michael Franses in a footnote in the Matthiessen catalogue.

George



August 5th, 2012, 12:53 PM

#66

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 51



Hi Jeff,

I do apologize for my indecently late answer to your last post. I believed that I already answered it,

discovering my error only a few days ago. Old age, I guess!!

Yes, indeed, we drifted far from the original topic, but neither Steve nor Filiberto have raised the red card, so far. They are rather tolerant people 😊. With hindsight we should perhaps have started a new thread.

I fully agree with your views. Imperial workshops must have worked for the elite and not only for the Emperor's residences.

The following examples of Timurid- and Il-khanid dragons, show (again) the very strong Chinese influence on Persian art, at least from the Mongol conquest onwards.

In FIG 1 and 2 the dragon is not airborne, as in most later Chinese representations, but is very similar to examples from the Song dynasty.

However, I wonder whether the concept of a **hero fighting and slaying the dragon** is truly Chinese (1) or was not rather based on Turko-Mongol mythology. For Chinese tradition the dragon was supposed to be beneficial, not hostile. Do you agree?

(1) *Contrary to the fight of the phoenix and dragon.*



FIG 1. Il-khanid period. 1341. Shiraz school. Bahram gur slays the dragon. Freer Sackler



FIG 2. Timurid period 1420-1450 . Herat school. Warrior slaying a dragon.



FIG 3. Timurid period 1420-1450. Cover of Ulugh Bey's wooden box.

Best regards
Pierre



January 18th, 2013, 07:14 PM

#67

[Jeff Sun](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 2

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Pierre Galafassi**
Hi Jeff,

*The following examples of Timurid- and Il-khanid dragons, show (again) the very strong Chinese influence on Persian art, at least from the Mongol conquest onwards. In FIG 1 and 2 the dragon is not airborne, as in most later Chinese representations, but is very similar to examples from the Song dynasty. However, I wonder whether the concept of a **hero fighting and slaying the dragon** is truly Chinese (1) or was not rather based on Turko-Mongol mythology. For Chinese tradition the dragon was supposed to be beneficial, not hostile. Do you agree?*

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FIG 1. Il-khanid period. 1341. Shiraz school. Bahram gur slays the dragon. Freer Sackler



FIG 2. Timurid period 1420-1450 . Herat school. Warrior slaying a dragon.



FIG 3. Timurid period 1420-1450. Cover of Ulugh Bey's wooden box.

Wow Peter! Great post. I also apologize for my late reply.

There is no denying the East Asian influence in these photos, but it may have filtered through an 3rd party: Tibet or India.

In Figure 1 and 2 the dragon has an upturned elephant-like trunk. This is especially evident in Figure 2. This is a form of Tibetan dragon which is called a *Shalu*. It's face is similar to another mythological creature found in Indian and Tibetan art called a *Makara*. Although no-one can say for sure, my feeling is that the Shalu is a Tibetan synthesis of the classical Chinese dragon and the Indian *Makara*.

It's presence in Persian art *could* point to Mongol influence, as there was long an influence of Tibet on Mongolia via shared religion and constant pilgrimage between the two. However, I do not know whether large scale Mongol conversion to yellow-hat Buddhism predates their conquest of Persia or not.

Just another thing to think about, I guess.

The dragon in figure 3 is VERY Chinese, indeed.

And yes, I agree with you 100%. A hero fighting a dragon is not-Chinese as the dragon is a beneficent creature. Perhaps it is a Mongol influence. Perhaps the dragon is a later stand-in for some other earlier, but less popular, Persian mythological creature. I've read the Shahnameh from cover to cover and don't ever recall a dragon in all it's pages.

Last edited by Jeff Sun; January 19th, 2013 at 02:48 AM.



January 23rd, 2013, 06:59 AM

#68

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 51



Hi Jeff,

Your information about the possible influence of Tibetan- and Indian- dragons is interesting indeed! I believe I have seen similar hostile dragons in Seljuk miniatures, painted more than a century before the Il-khans. (I'll try to retrieve the miniatures). As you rightly mentioned in an earlier post, the silk road was active (on- and off), way before the Mongol onslaught on Persia. Though it was surely at its busiest during the Pax Mongolica and the Il-khanid rule.

If I remember well, both the pre-Gengis-Khan Turkik- and Mongolian people (which were anyway quite close and intermixed frequently) were animists, sharing Tengri, the Sky, as their main deity. Both shared as well a very tolerant attitude, even curiosity, towards other religions. Buddhism and Manichaeism, and to a lesser extent also Nestorianism, had some success in several tribes of these ethnic groups. Long before Islam made inroads in the region.

For example the Turkik population of the Tarim basin (Uyghur etc.. had long Buddhist- and Manichaeist periods, from which many traces have been found by archeology near the silk road. The Kalmiks Turko-Mongols were Buddhist of Tibetan obedience. So, there was no shortage of west-bound vehicles for Buddhist symbols even long before the Pax Mongolica.

By the way, going back to our focus (Rugs), of which we have a little bit drifted away in this thread, the Berlin Museum shows several fragments of Manichaeic rolls from the Tarim Basin (roughly 10th century), **featuring rugs**. FIG A. This brings some more water to Hans Bidder's mill, who always claimed that this area was one of the oldest «cradles» of rug weaving.

FIG A: Turfan, Manichean roll fragments, ca 900-1000. Berlin.



Regards
Pierre



January 24th, 2013, 04:55
AM

#69

[Jeff Sun](#)
Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 2

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Pierre Galafassi**

This brings some more water to Hans Bidder's mill, who always claimed that this area was one of the oldest «cradles» of rug weaving.

*Regards
Pierre*

There is a lot of credence to that. Many tufted fragments have come out of the Taklamakan desert, like the one below from the 4th century. As the driest place on earth, it is the perfect environment for preservation.



And let us not forget that the Altai mountains (and the Pazyryk rug), were not far off, in the grand scheme of things.

Perhaps, in a dusty ruin somewhere west of Lou-Lan there is the oldest rug yet, waiting to be found by some future Sven Hedin or Aurel Stein. If only that could be me! 🗺️



January 24th, 2013, 04:36 PM

#70

[Pierre Galafassi](#)
Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 51



I am very much looking forward to the Salon with which you will delight us as soon as you will find that rug!! 🍷🍷🍷

Pierre



January 24th, 2013, 05:16 PM

#71

[Steve Price](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Posts: 74



Hi Jeff

You can't catch fish unless you go fishing.

Best of luck!

Steve Price



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