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 **Update of 'The Swedish Connection'**

Welcome, [Filiberto Boncompagni2](#).

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 February 24th, 2021,
12:06 PM

#21

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 115



Post 3 and last.

Notes:

(1) Gloria Gonick. Early Carpets and Tapestries on the Eastern Silk Road.

(2) H.T. Zurndorfer. The resistant Fiber: the pre-modern history of cotton in China.

<https://www.lse.ac.uk/Economic-History/Assets/Documents/Research/GEHN/Helsinki/HELSINKIZurndorfer.pdf>

Zurndorfer claims that in Yuan's times, all Cotton production came from the southern half of China (or, according to other sources, from oases in the western Takla Makan). Gansu was not mentioned as a source. Later dynasties introduced the cultivation of cotton in the Yellow River area too.

(3) The author seems to neglect the fact that the only Uyghur stronghold left during the Yuan period, the Kingdom of Qocho / Idiqt, was situated in the western and central part of the Takla Makan and the Tien Shan range. Some Uyghurs were already islamized, as for example Kubilay's finance minister Amir Ahmad Banakati, most were still Buddhists or adepts of Tengrism. Of course, a diaspora of former Uyghurs surely was dispersed through the whole Empire, like administrators of the Yuan Empire but perhaps also smaller tribal units, such as these 'Monguors' settled in Gansu. However, I fail to see what makes the Monguors better candidates for the weaving of the Gion rugs as any other Uyghur- or, for that matter, as any other rug-weaving Turkic population.

(4) Contrary to Mrs Gonic's belief, the Uyghur never were victimized by Subotei, (Gengis Khan's gifted general and strategist) nor, for that matter, by his colleagues, nor by the subsequent Mongol dynasties which ruled

Asia.

The Uyghur women were never *'taken as mates'* nor were the Uyghur men taken captive because *'they were the ones weaving carpets'* (see 4.1) and because *'Mongols used lots of pile rugs but did not want to weave them'*.

The less juicy historical facts are that the wise and prudent Uyghurs of the Kingdom of Qocho (aka Idiquts) were the first large Turkic group which voluntarily fought under Genghis Khan's Tughs.

In 1209 they repelled the Merkits, a Mongol tribe hostile to Genghis Khan who just had trounced them, and they joined his armies. They reaped the benefits of this alliance during the whole Yuan dynasty: Because of this early, voluntary submission to Genghis Khan, the Uyghurs who served the Mongols in China from the first generation, were highly valued for their military, linguistic, and administrative skills, and were appointed to important civil and military positions right away.

They were grouped, together with selected other people from Central- and Western Asia, into the administrative category called 'Semu' which was viewed as being just below the Mongols themselves, and above a third group of less trusted people who lived in northern China at the time of the Mongol conquest and had the bad idea to fight against them (Ethnic Chinese, Jurchens, Khitans,..), as well as recently conquered Koreans). The most recently defeated Chinese (of the Southern Han dynasty) were part of the last category, deemed particularly suspect by the Yuan dynasty. (8)

The 'Semu' were especially important because the ruling Mongol caste was unable to provide the number of intellectuals needed for the administration and they did not trust the competent but grumpy Han Chinese elite.

(4.1) It is probably true that the 14th century Uyghur males were weaving carpets. When Hans Bidder visited the western Takla Makan, they still did. (H. Bidder 'Carpets from Eastern Turkestan')

(5) It is true, as claimed by the author, that Buddhism and Manicheism did convert Turko-mongols individuals and even whole clans of the successive Turko-Mongol coalitions which ruled over most of Asia (a few tribes remained Buddhist to this day), and that the Tibetan form of Buddhism was particularly successful (probably because it allowed an easier syncretism with the Turko-mongols' still dominant creed: a mix of Animism and Tengrism).

It is absolutely **not true** that Genghis Khan and his Mongols, as a group, adopted Buddhism. The Mongols themselves had no unique religious identity, and the Mongol nation was a fairly secular multi-ethnic meritocracy from the time of Genghis Khan and for a long time after him. Religion and race never were key parameters for them.

Claiming a strong influence of Manicheism in the Gion rug motifs, at the time of the Yuan dynasty is an obvious anachronism. After a persecution in the mid 9th century, under the Tang Dynasty, Manicheism had all but disappeared in all of northern China. According to Marco Polo and Chinese sources, there were merely pockets of Manicheans left in Southern China. (9)

(6) When describing the rug pictured in FIG 6, the author writes (page 88) *'...the dark animals run on a light gold ground (of the rugs), which*

identifies the weavers or their clients as supporter of the recently empowered Yellow Sect in this part of China (Meaning the Tibetan Buddhism)...'.
Now, I may have severe sight problems, but to me the color of the ground seems a bit far from a yellow. In another part of the text, for a similar brown the author claims that some yellows turned brown with age. This could hardly be the case, as all natural yellow colors lose color strength under exposure, they usually turn to paler yellows. Even the few natural yellows, like Cotinus coggygia, which indeed turns brownish under light exposure, are losing saturation and lead therefore to pale browns and beige, certainly not to saturated browns like those of the Gion rugs. It is impossible that the ground of this rug once featured a '..light gold-yellow shade...' People familiar with Chinese roll-painting will probably suggest that the palette of browns featured in the Gion rugs is quite consistent with Chinese taste.

(7) Book of Omens.The 'Irk Bitig'. Ca. 9th Century CE.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irk_Bitig

(8)
Yuri Bregel. An Historical Atlas of Central Asia. 17. p.34.
About History of the Uyghur

About the Semu caste in the Yuan dynasty: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semu>

(9) The World of Kubilay Khan. Ch.1 p. 34 & Ch. 4 p.122



Last edited by Pierre Galafassi; February 24th, 2021 at 12:25 PM.



February 25th, 2021,
12:38 PM

#22

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 150



Hi Pierre,

I find the Turkic Orkhon Alphabet (previously unknown to me) ipothesis rather fascinating, and plausible too.
I still believe that the 'pregnant animal' rugs and the 'Gion Matsuri rugs' were woven by different groups - BUT **Turkic** groups anyway - using exactly the same border.

It is quite possible that this border isn't derived from a Kufic script but from a Turkic script, why not?
Or, as you say, it could be 'a Qaghan brandishing two Tugs 'instead.
Ultimately we'll never know... 🤔
Filiberto

P.S. -I had to look on Wikipedia for the meaning Khagan or Qaghan:
is a title of imperial rank in the Turkic, Mongolic and some other languages, equal to the status of emperor and someone who rules a khaganate (empire)...
It may also be translated as 'Khan of Khans'



February 26th, 2021,
08:06 AM

#23

[Martin Andersen](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 105



Gentlemen, thanks for continuing the dive into all of this fascinating material.

I have been off the Silk Road/Silk Roads for a while, just took a look back and it is dizzyingly complex what we have been around. We really should compile some kind of compressed text summing up the most valid and interesting stuff (as should you two regarding rugs in the paintings 😊)

Right now I don't have much to add. I of course still think that we are basically looking at the traces of early intercultural exchanges along the trade and migration routes between Asia and Europe in the scope of hundreds even thousands of years- no wonder it's complex.

And Pierre, thanks for (amongst *a lot* of other observations) the much better reproductions of the Gion rugs, the Japanese are rather sparse with information on them.

One small add I have: Earlier I used this plate as an illustration regarding the calligraphy "Al-Mulk" The Kingdom:



Bahman Bonakdar have since provided me with a photo of the dish's backside:



His description here:

Spain, Cordoba; 10th century H: 2.6; Diam: 21.9 cm. The finest pottery from the Spanish Umayyad Caliphate is painted in copper green and manganese on a white slip under a transparent glaze. The motifs most often consist of green palmettes or Kufi inscriptions contoured in manganese. The most common inscription is the one found here: al-mulk, for ?royal power [is God?s].? It is unusual that the dish is also decorated on the back, with two confronted lions around something that resembles a lamp.

Technically, early Spanish-Muslim pottery reflects an eastern tradition, but its decoration bears the greatest similarities to contemporary pieces from North Africa.

The "...resembles a lamp" I would say is perhaps a bit incorrect, it is rather clearly a Tug.

To me it is astonishing to see what I see as plain up visual translation between literate kufic and illiterate pictogram between front and back of the dish.

This translation is directly on par with the Khwarezm silver coin I also used earlier trying to make my point. The center kufic text on the right "Al-sultan":



I find it very plausible that what we are seeing in the kufic borders, be it the Animal rugs or the Gion rugs, is related to this, the notion of Kingdom/Sovereign both earthly and heavenly being exchanged or shared between the Islamic and the Turkic/Mongol cultures.

My favorite version (for pure aesthetically reasons) is still the simple, strong and clear Seljuk border:



Well I am repeating myself, sorry. Still dizzy, probably just trying to find some firm ground to stand on for myself 😊

all the best
Martin

Last edited by Martin Andersen; February 26th, 2021 at 09:15 AM.



February 26th, 2021,
08:40 AM

#24

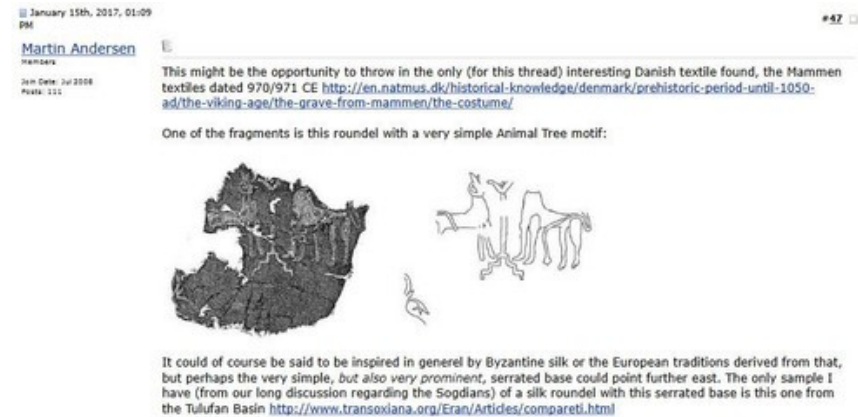
Martin Andersen

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 105



Just a small link back in our thread, connecting the Bonakdars dish with the glorious Scandinavia.
And sorry can't find the original photo so you get it kind of intertextually, hope it is readable, otherwise it is post #47 in the old thread.



The base of the Confronted Animal motif is the same on the Mammen roundel as on the dish. Connecting Denmark, Spain, the Sogdians and the Tulufan Basin 😊

Best Martin



February 26th, 2021,
10:12 AM

#25

Martin Andersen

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 105



And would be nice with a sound-minded Mongolian-/Turkic-/Chinese-reading participant in this.
There is a lot of new age Tengrism going on the web, this might be a result of it. But interesting, and mostly for the fun of it, it would take only a few connecting strokes of a pen to turn the upside down Tengri into Allah 😊 :



On this site some historic info on the Tug in the version of Genghis Khan, the Great State White Banner :
<http://hubert-herald.nl/Mongol.htm>



Not sure if it can be ultimately verified, but I feel rather sure the trident in itself in Turkic/Mongolian historical context have had the double connotation of earthly and divine sovereignty.

best Martin



February 26th, 2021,
12:17 PM

#26

[Martin Andersen](#)
Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 105

Excuse me for one more probably slightly repetitive digression. The Gokturk general Kul Tigin AD 684–731 posted on the linked webpage has a bird in trident form on his headdress:



Makes be think of the central motif of the fantastic funeral silk banner of Lady Dai, Han 2nd century B.C.E.

The bird on the funeral banner crowned with a cloudband trident, kind of suggesting that the trident in itself simply points to heaven, and doesn't need to have the weapon-like connotation of earthly sovereignty of the Tug.:



The falcon/owl bird form is also prominent in this Han dynasty tomb:



And remarkably similar in appearance jumping forward more than a thousand years to Genghis Mongolian passports:



(well birds don't change appearance unless evolution kicks in, but still stylistically similar...😊)

Best Martin

Last edited by Martin Andersen; February 26th, 2021 at 12:31 PM.



February 26th, 2021,
04:56 PM

#27



One more, sorry I should aim for better filled out posts like yours Pierre.

According to Dr. Jennifer N. McIntire Lady Dais banner depicts an entire cosmology which can be divided into realms like this:



heavenly realm

Lady Dai and
her attendants

body of Lady Dai
with mourners

underworld

This actually places the bird and the "trident" as the border between the living Lady Dai and the heavenly realm. The bird above the door in Han tomb posted earlier could also be seen as guardian to the threshold between life and the dead in the tomb. Certainly Genghis Mongolian passports are related to borders and passing them.

And well, our kufic borders are borders 😊... the rugs as minute territories of peace and contemplation guarded by sovereignty either earthly or divine? The Gion rugs main fields seem to depict heavenly themes, the same could in abstract geometric form be said about the Seljuk rugs. The animals in the Animal Rugs perhaps seems a bit harder to connect to

heavenly peace, but then again there are fierce dragons in Lady Dai's paradise.

Best Martin



February 26th, 2021,
08:00 PM

#28

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 115



Not sure if it can be ultimately verified, but I feel rather sure the trident in itself in Turkic/Mongolian historical context have had the double connotation of earthly and divine sovereignty.

I do share this view, Martin.

Some, more or less folk'neo-Tendristic' sites are propagating this idea on the Net too, but I was trying to find a more trustworthy source, which I seem to have found now, at least the names of the authors mentioned below are preceded by the magical Tamga. **Dr.** 😊

According to (**Dr.**) Isabelle Charleux, (1) Genghis Khan was immediately worshiped, after his death, by his descendants as a revered ancestor. The main 'ritual objects' in this worship were his 'Sulde tugs': these tugs, topped with a trident, **are embodying his 'Sulde' (2), his protective ancestral spirit/soul.**

During the Yuan dynasty, Emperor Qubilai, who used the cult of Genghis as a major source of his own legitimization, authorized this cult in Dadu (Beijing) and Shangdu. The rites in front of the Tugs and other relics of the great man, were performed every year by male and female shamans, who invited the ancestor's soul to take part in the sacrifice. The rites played an even larger role for the legitimation of the next Yuan Emperors

Even after the end of the Yuan Empire, the utilization of this strong symbol by later candidates to a top job in the Steppe, or in Turko-Mongol states in the West, was quite logical.

Dr. Nikolay N. Kradin. and Dr. Tatyana D. Skrynnikova fully confirm their French colleague's views (3).

We can make it therefore a Turkotek Dogma that these trident tugs woven in the 'pregnant animal rugs' and in the 'Gion rugs' were most probably a political statement of the weaving tribe, or at least of its ambitious leader at the time of their weaving.

Perhaps, this could explain why only 3 of the Gion rugs do carry this woven political pamphlet, (all others feature mundane, innocent Turkish and Chinese motifs only) and neither do all 'pregnant animal rugs' carry it. (4)

Perhaps weaving this Sule Tugs in one's tribal carpets was tantamount to claim the top job? Something similar to ordering that the Friday Prayer be made in one's name in Islamic States?

Notes:

(1) Isabelle Charleux. CNRS. 'Chingis Khan. Ancestor, Buddha or Shaman'.

<https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00613828/document>

(2) The software won't let me use the correct spelling for Sulde. (German Umlaut would come handy again). I implore G.K. Sule's pardon.

(3) Dr. Nikolay N. Kradin. Dr. Tatyana D. Skrynnikova 'Under the banner of Chinggis khan'

<https://scfh.ru/en/papers/under-the-banner-of-chinggis-khan/>

(4) It would be so nice to know whether these 3 Gion Rugs were woven during a different period, before or after the others.

Last edited by Pierre Galafassi; February 26th, 2021 at 08:11 PM.



February 27th, 2021,
10:33 AM

#29

[Martin Andersen](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 105



Pierre very efficient use of **color** for Dr. Tamga 😊. And very interesting with an official recorded Yuan curt cult connecting Tug and 'Sulde'.

I am probably stating the obvious but I find it totally fair to assign the Gion rugs to an urban environment around the Yuan curt. The motifs in the fields are very clearly drawing on painterly Chinese tradition, and the crudeness of our Tug Sulde Kufic border (**new name** 😊) connecting back to the Turkic/Mongol steppe.

I suppose that Yuan period Beijing was religious tolerant, and did contain an Islamic minority population (by their own will or imported), the border would also have made sense to them.

Again a very interesting cultural crossover in the rugs. Though aesthetically the result might be a bit so so, I suppose we are all in favor of the western Animal Rugs which seems like more coherent totalities, well that might just be taste.

Best Martin

Last edited by Martin Andersen; February 27th, 2021 at 11:08 AM.



February 27th, 2021,
12:19 PM

#30

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 115



Hi, Martin.

I 100% agree.

I am currently reading some papers about Turko-Mongol tamgas. Although much is flying far over my head, (including the specialized jargon), I am slowly getting the impression that the Homunculus in the border could indeed be a tribal- or more probably a Khan's personal tamga. None of those I have seen so far would make a credible model for the Homunculus, but quite many have a similar complexity. We'll see. Perhaps the bloke indeed did put his ID on the rugs.

One could even easily explain then why this spectacular border had such a limited life.

This discussion being a digression on your original thread about the (Central Asian-) origin of motifs in Swedish woven folk art, you will probably not mind a digression of the digression, do you? 😊

Looking for suitable Turko-mongol Tamgas and old Turkik alphabets, I accidentally stumbled over a paper about hoards of Central Asian- and Arab coins in Viking territory. Browsing through it i learned that
a) Silver coins of Volga Bulgar found in Sweden were over 10 times more frequent than in any other Nordic country, including Germany, Poland etc..
b) That many coins of apparent Arabian origin actually were fakes, minted by the Bulgars, probably on local silver.
This is IMHO a further little point in favor of the commercial importance of the Volga Bulgars, as posited in your thread.



February 27th, 2021,
12:26 PM

#31

[Martin Andersen](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 105



Hi Pierre - I was just about bringing back in a take on the Homunculus 😊 just looking around to find some better illustrations than the ones I have



February 27th, 2021,
02:58 PM

#32

[Martin Andersen](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 105



It might be a bit unfair to take a general look back west while you Pierre is heroically hunting for a specific Tamga for a specific Khan in the east (I am sure the literature on this is labyrinthine), but none of this is mutually exclusive. For me its the composite nature of it all that is fascinating.

Again nothing new in this, but I would say for me the knot is getting tighter. After establishing a firm connection between Tug and Sulde in Mongolian/Turkic ancestral cult legitimizing sovereignty, I think it is extra relevant to look at the possible anthropomorphic part of the Gion and Animal Rugs border, the Homunculus 😊

The lower part of the border, the two extruding lower "curves", have always kind of bothered me as they don't really fit to what I see as stylized kufic.



But if we go back to the Samanid and Seljuk (both dynasties of course of Turkic cultural origin) ceramics with the representation of a seated royal figure with folded legs on a throne is a very common motif. And the two "curves" fit as simplified folded legs or lower parts of the throne:

Samanid 10th.c.:



Seljuk 12th-13th. C, reverently flanked thrones:



And for sure it makes sense that both the Samanid and Seljuk must have been rather preoccupied with legitimizing their rule in Islamic Persia and Anatolia, merging themselves with the insignia of both the ancestral Tug and the Islamic notion of Al-mulk (the kingdom of god) makes a lot of sense.

Here a beautiful Seljuk lady with crossed legs and crowned with the compressed "Tug/Al-mulk" insignia (no lower curves needed in the insignia, the lady has them in real life 😊):



A highly condensed and composite motif, which in its own time and setting may have been plain and simple, understandable for both literates and illiterates, legitimizing the rulers sovereignty both by ancestry and divinity.

Of course the crown itself is older in Central Asia, but what the heck...the invading Turkic/Mongoilan tribes overtook and renewed it to their own needs.

Best Martin

Last edited by Martin Andersen; February 27th, 2021 at 03:35 PM.



February 27th, 2021,
04:13 PM

#33

[Martin Andersen](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 105



Quote:

Originally Posted by **Pierre Galafassi**

This discussion being a digression on your original thread about the (Central Asian-) origin of motifs in Swedish woven folk art, you will probably not mind a digression of the digression, do you? 😊

Certainly of course not!

(But I *could* be tempted to force track the thread back on topic going into the beautiful Central Asian-like Norwegian bridal crowns 😊, just kidding, though looking at the migrations of crowns sure could be fun.)



well they are really nice and over the top regal, the Norwegians sure have been good at sticking to tradition:



Last edited by Martin Andersen; February 27th, 2021 at 04:59 PM.



February 27th, 2021,
04:31 PM

#34

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 115



Hah Martin your post came very timely!

I was about to start a research about the average shoe sizes of Turko-mongol Qaghans in order to identify the homunculus (looks like a large size 12 at least)



Seriously, indeed the Qaghan surely was represented sitting cross-legged on a rug just like your well nourished Khatun.
Makes a lot of sense.



February 27th, 2021,
05:44 PM

#35

[Martin Andersen](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 105



no Pierre you can't leave this one hanging in the air - there has to be a mentioning of the long-footed Khan somewhere in your historical sources, could be an ancestor of mine, I use 12,5 😊😊😊



February 27th, 2021,
05:57 PM

#36

[Martin Andersen](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 105



But also seriously thanks Pierre. I have pondered on this here on Turkotek for more than 10 years now. Here a quote from 2010 :

"I of course don't think that every kufic or kufesque ornament on later rugs should be interpreted as forms of the word Allah, I am only looking for design development and stylistic connections, here in a rather large perspective with gaps of centuries. But basically I personally think that the Seljuks brought something with them on their way to Anatolien, and that this something was merged and transformed into what they meet on their way - in a give and take, like all moving cultures always have done. The rugs are traces of a gigantic transforming melting pot of cultures between east and west."



Personally I now think the riddle is qualified solved.

all the best
Martin



February 27th, 2021,
07:15 PM

#37

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

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 150



Hi Martin,

Personally I would prefer 'deeply explored'.



Filiberto



February 27th, 2021,
07:31 PM

#38

[Martin Andersen](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 105



Sure Filiberto, exploring while thinking loud along the road 😊 I am aware some of it have been farfetched and full of digressions, but Turkotek has been a great place to do it. The archive and the dialogs are unmatched online.

Best Martin



February 27th, 2021,
10:02 PM

#39



The next astonishingly beautiful (and for me indisputable 😊) development of our Tug/AI-mulk border, with all its connotations, can be followed in the Anatolian rugs.

First as main border in the Seljuk rugs, then as minor borders and then again growing in the mainborder, taking on complexity:



Then finally ending up as nothing less appropriate, and nothing more important, than the Anatolian prayer rug:



Even morphing into the full architectural image of mosque:



If one then add the red pelt (you know http://www.turkotek.com/misc_00140/pelt.html) I would say we have a dizzingly beautiful example of the complexity of Turkic-Islamic culture.

Best Martin

(well I am repetitive, but I think it's better than me getting lost in the Norwegian bridal crowns 😊)



March 1st, 2021, 03:39 PM

#40

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 115



Just being curious, is there an official dogma among the Turkomaniac Sectarians about these other funny homunculi found in old Turkmen rugs, especially in Salors?
Are they possibly anthropomorphic?







Let's hope we survive PHP
best
Pierre



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