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The Swedish connection

Welcome, [Filiberto Boncompagni](#).
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Virtual Show and Tell Just what the title says it is.

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January 9th, 2017, 08:07 PM

#21

[Martin Andersen](#)
 Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
 Posts: 102

Thanks Filiberto

A small digression but then I actually have the courage to suggest that Steve Hofmann's/Marla Mallett's "Mystery Rug" perhaps could be a late (late because Marla Mallett writes synthetic colors) Norwegian pillow cover. The overall "Anatolian-esqe" layout, the checker-bord border, the outer black framing (the pillows back?) - and the techical woven structure fits 😊

I can't find a fit for the mayor border in the Norwegian material, but if the pillow is 20th c, then we are in a timeframe where the weaver might have been consciously aware of the connection to the oriental rugs, and may have elaborated further along this.



Marla Mallets mystery rug



Norwegian pillow covers



I might of course be totally wrong, but the Norwegian/Swedish material seems to be kind of out of the radar, even for many hardcore ruggies 😊
 best Martin

Last edited by Martin Andersen; January 9th, 2017 at 08:21 PM.

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January 9th, 2017, 09:04 PM

#22

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)
 Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
 Location: Cyprus
 Posts: 96



Quote:

The overall "Anatolian-esqe" layout

Well, actually it's a copy of a Caucasian motif "a simplified design with a Lesghi-type star in the center", as Marla points out. Also the border is Caucasian-esque.

By the way, according to Wendel Swan, who presented a poster session on the Lesghi star at ICOC in Milan in 1999, the Lesghi star is not found in rugs or textiles predating 1850.

Regards,
 Filiberto

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January 9th, 2017, 09:13 PM

#23

[Martin Andersen](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 102January 9th,
2017, 09:37 PM[Martin Andersen](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 102

Ok Filiberto, no woven structure points to me 😊
best Martin

#24 

I just found this one dated early 18th.c by Nationalmuseet in Oslo, to me rather amazing:



Its of course the same basic motif as the 1670 sample, but it has a diagonal division in red/dark blue which makes the layout even more gul-like.

Apart from the Turkmen guls I suppose the only other comparable material with diagonal gul-like division would be something like the few Anatolian small pattern Holbein rugs?



best Martin

Last edited by Martin Andersen; January 9th, 2017 at 09:42 PM.



January 10th, 2017, 09:32 AM

#25

[Martin Andersen](#)
Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 102



I have found a few b/w photos of the backs of some of the Norwegian "Halvfloss" pillow covers on the museums digital page (which cross covers a lot of both Swedish and Norwegian museums) <https://dm4.digitaltmuseum.no/> Unfortunately the photos of the backs aren't neither really sharp or in highresolution, but here a sample:



I am aware that a lot of similarities in patterns of textiles can be derived from simple geometry combined with the technical aspects of the weave (as like going for a circle and ending up in an octagone, or an 8-pointed star is a lot more likely than say a 5-pointed in the weaved symmetry of weft and trend)

And calling the very varied Scandinavian material "Anatolian-esque", "Caucasian-esque" (or whatever down south-east 😊) is of course a kind of an interpretation, but to me there sure seems to be striking aesthetically resemblances in big chunks of the material.

It may be a freak coincidence that one of the very very few surviving Anatolian 14th.c rugs has survived in Sweden. But we know both the Swedes and Norwegians imported silk as early as the 9th.c probably both from trade routes to Byzans and to the Caspian Sea (and very likely beyond). Personally I see absolutely no reason why Norse tradesmen or plundering Vikings shouldn't continuously have imported huge loads of precious pile rugs - pile rugs certainly making a lot more sense in the Scandinavian climate than the silk.

The Norse tradesmen are thought to have traded heavy stuff like skins, honey, slaves and amber from Scandinavia, this means that their returning ship loads surely have had cargo space for much more than tiny pieces of silk and silver coins on their return 😊

best Martin

Last edited by Martin Andersen; January 10th, 2017 at 10:09 AM.



January 10th, 2017, 12:08 PM

#26

[Martin Andersen](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 102



Sorry for keep on posting, but I doo find this very fascinating 😊

Take a look at this comparison between the Norwegian pillow cover tree and the Saryk, Salor and Ersari guls:



Please note the protruding branches on the Norwegian trees, and please note that *they all have 3 leaves on them*. To me this is a rather astonishing resemblance in minute details to the Turkmen guls.

If the Turkmen guls should be understood as a highly formalized tree-motif (and I certainly think it should) then the Norwegian clear rendering of this motif as a clear figurative tree to me suggest that the Norwegian motif took a starting point in a older version of the gul configuration.

That is to say, the Norse tree-motif could perhaps give us an indirect view of a very old version of the Turkmen gul.

best Martin

Last edited by Martin Andersen; January 10th, 2017 at 02:12 PM.

[Edit](#) [Quote](#) [Reply](#)



January 10th, 2017, 03:06 PM

#27

Filiberto Boncompagni
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 96

Hi Martin,

Quote:

Sorry for keep on posting

No need to apologize, your research is interesting and convincing. Especially the "tree leaves" detail.
Regards,

Filiberto

[Edit](#) [Quote](#) [Reply](#)



January 11th, 2017, 10:28 AM

#28

Pierre Galafassi

Dear All,

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 110

The following type of Scandinavian weavings have now surfaced too.



Martin's data-mining has shown that a pretty large number of similar artifacts are still extant. Many are Swedish, a few are apparently Norwegian.

Several pieces are dated. The oldest from 1669, the others are from the 18th and 19th century.

IMHO These "Bäckahesten", as Martin calls them, have some very interesting characteristics, which support the theory of a Scandinavian borrowing of Western- / Central Asian motifs, at some time in the past.

(in a future post, I shall propose a Schnapps Idea about when this could possibly have happened)

During more than 2 centuries, the "Bäckahesten" featured identical layouts and motifs, both strongly reminiscent of Central Asian carpets and silks.

A. The rows of octagonal frames.

The frame itself being filled with little animalistic or geometric motifs (mainly birds) and containing either a mythical animal (mainly a horse, sometimes a deer...) or a floral motif.

B. The presence in most weavings of a kind of «secondary gul», separating the octogones.

A diamond which imitates very well one of the most frequent Western- / Central Asian motifs, the Kyrgyz- or Uzbek «kaikalak», or the Yomud Dyrnak gul, a secondary gul used too by the Yomud (FIG 6) Also found on some Anatolian rugs, (FIG 7) . The so-called Yüncü (FIG 8) being the most notorious fans of the motif.



FIG 4 Khirgiz chavadan 19th 20th century..ANBE1



FIG 5 Yomud Dyrnak gul 18th century.



FIG 6 Yomud tauk nusga gul with «kaikalac» minor gul. 18th century.



FIG 7 Turkish. Anatolia. Late animal rug. 16th century? BER.



FIG 8. Turkish. Yüncü. 17th century (?).THC3



January 11th,
2017, 08:33 PM

#29 □

[Martin Andersen](#)
Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 102



Hi Pierre and all

I suddenly think this thread has the potential of getting rather long and interesting 😊

Must admit I now feel a bit sorry about the title of this thread. After looking more into the Norwegian material I must say that it as a minimum is as interesting, or even more interesting, than the Swedish. I suppose I wrote "Swedish connection" because of the Överhogdals Tapestry and the probably simplified notion that only the Swedish vikings went east/south (and the Danes and Norwegian traveling west/south).

Looking into Norwegian weave an aspect of consistent continuum strikes me (or repetitive stubbornness if you like 😊). It is of course interesting because it might sustain that the Norwegian weavings could represent a tradition going back in time, perhaps way beyond the extant 1669 dated samples.

Here the Tree-motif, my absolute favorite Norwegian type right now. To the left a sample collected by the museum 1890s, I suppose colors, wear and look could place it late or mid-19th(?). to the right the 1670 sample. Perhaps representing 200 years of continuum of layout:



And here a peculiarly example of a very local continuum - from one pillow to another. When looking at a weave like this I would think I was looking at a rather "freehand" improvisation of a model. Weft and weave on the go introducing slight imbalances in proportions and symmetries:



But then take a look at this almost identical weave. For example the slightly distorted symmetry of the main medallions match almost perfectly, and so does a lot of details that I would have thought were freehand improvisations:



I am rather baffled by it, but perhaps there are some technical aspect of copying I simply don't understand. At first I thought it was the same pillow, perhaps different years of photos (to my excuse I have to add I first looked at small reproduction photos). Secondly it thought it was perhaps back and front of the same pillow (where some strange aspects of slit tapestry could introduce minor color changes), but no it is 2 different pillows (I have found a photo of the back of one of them). And of course the different signatures in the center also shows its 2 different pillows, and so does zooming in on them.



Meticulously copying skewed details like for example the off-set stem and leaves on the lower flower to me seems almost an absurde level of faithfulness to the model. Well as I said I am kind of baffled, both pillows were collected by the museum in late 19th.c so we are hardly in the territory of a master-forgery, which probably would financially be a terrible waste of talent. Perhaps there have been a printed model which included the mistakes? But doesn't that also sounds strange? This is folk-art probably made for the home of weaver, not products for any kind of mass-marked. The museum dates both samples to 1690-1710.

Perhaps the Norwegian weavers in some local isolated localities (of which Norway has a lot) were almost as boring pedantic as the Turkmen regarding preserving patterns and motifs from generation to generation?

best Martin

Last edited by Martin Andersen; January 11th, 2017 at 10:18 PM.



January 13th,
2017, 10:31 AM

#30

[Martin Andersen](#)
Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 102

Here the Norwegian pillow covers I have found, organized according to layout. The 100 pieces here does not number vise represent a totally representative cross section average of the Norwegian pillow design. I have had the focus of this thread while looking around on the net the for them. And I have not for example looked into the huge chunks of freehand embroidery pillows.

I have probably had an obvious preference for certain motifs which I have found relevant for this thread, especially the "Livets træ" (Norwegian for "Tree of life") and the "Bäckhästen" motif. I am bit uncertain if "Bäckhästen" is actually the Norwegian name or a local Swedish name recently borrowed from the Akdyna tradition. The Norwegian and Swedish versions are very similar, but there are some differences.

"Bäckhästen" is a mythological figure from the northern folklore, in Sweden also known as "Näck" in Norwegian "Nøkk" (and in Danish "Nøkken"), an interesting strange fellow in itself [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neck_\(water_spirit\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neck_(water_spirit))

A lot of these layouts may be very local traditions, a Norwegian with an interest in this may be able to pinpoint them to specific inlets and their small villages of which Norway have a strong tradition of local folkish identity.



nor_01.jpg



nor_01b.jpg



nor_02.jpg



nor_03.jpg



nor_04.jpg



nor_05.jpg



nor_06.jpg



nor_07.jpg



nor_08.jpg



nor_09.jpg



nor_10.jpg



nor_11.jpg



nor_12.jpg



nor_13.jpg



nor_14.jpg



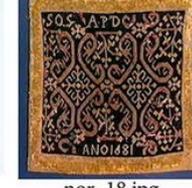
nor_15.jpg



nor_16.jpg



nor_17.jpg



nor_18.jpg



nor_19.jpg



nor_20.jpg



nor_21.jpg



nor_22.jpg



nor_22b.jpg



nor_23.jpg



nor_24.jpg



nor_25.jpg



nor_26.jpg



nor_27.jpg



nor_28.jpg



nor_29.jpg



nor_29b.jpg



nor_30.jpg



nor_31.jpg



nor_32.jpg



nor_33.jpg



nor_34.jpg



nor_35.jpg



nor_36.jpg



nor_37.jpg



nor_38.jpg



nor_39.jpg



nor_40.jpg



nor_41.jpg



nor_42.jpg



nor_43.jpg



nor_44.jpg



nor_45.jpg



nor_46.jpg



nor_47.jpg



nor_48.jpg



nor_49.jpg



nor_50.jpg



nor_51.jpg



nor_52.jpg



nor_53.jpg



nor_54.jpg



nor_55.jpg



nor_56.jpg



nor_57.jpg



nor_58.jpg



nor_59.jpg



nor_60.jpg



nor_61.jpg



nor_62.jpg



nor_63.jpg



nor_64.jpg



nor_64b.jpg



nor_65.jpg



nor_66.jpg



nor_67.jpg



nor_68.jpg



nor_69.jpg



nor_70.jpg



nor_71.jpg



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nor_88.jpg



nor_89.jpg



nor_90.jpg



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nor_94.jpg



nor_95.jpg



nor_96.jpg



nor_97.jpg



nor_98.jpg



nor_99.jpg



nor_100.jpg

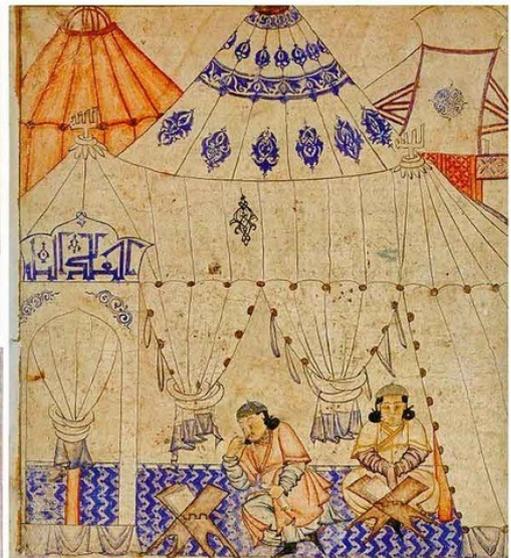
The last group is as far as I can see also a rather specific design group, and the layout has its own name "Lynild" ("lightning-fire"). I am aware that the serrated layout is very very simple and could be said to be totally derived from the technical aspects of the weave, but still. I could imagine lots of other simple geometric formations I dont see solidified into a specific Norwegian pattern group. So I include it here partly because of its resemblance to the Turkmen Ok-bosh format (it may also be relevant to compare it to certain Anatolian layouts) - or perhaps if one buys into the suggestion of this thread, one could

perhaps stretch it all the way back to the interesting 14th.c Ilkhanid rugs Pierre some time ago identified on a group of miniatures ☺

It is of course totally impossible to verify a connection between layouts as simple as these, but if one adds up the specificity of the correlation between the details in some of the other patterns between the Norwegian and the Central Asian, then I personally think the totality of the overall picture gets very interesting.



Yomud Ok Bosh



Ilkhanid 14th.c

Sorry for bombarding Turkotek with photos, but perhaps this small, probably slightly subjective, overview of the material could call for a point of view from Wendel Swan or Sonny Berntsson or others with specific interest in the Swedish/Norwegian.

Let me know if anyone would like to see higher resolution photos, I have it for most of these.

All the best
Martin

Last edited by Martin Andersen; January 13th, 2017 at 10:45 AM.



January 13th,
2017, 10:53 AM

#31 □

Filiberto Boncompagni
Administrator



Wow!

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 96

A quick "visual" observation:
Look especially at the first, nor30.jpg



nor_30.jpg



nor_31.jpg



nor_32.jpg



nor_33.jpg



nor_34.jpg



nor_35.jpg



nor_36.jpg



nor_37.jpg



nor_38.jpg



nor_39.jpg



nor_40.jpg



nor_41.jpg



nor_42.jpg

my Jaff bag:



And most of the other Norwegian pillow covers contains motifs similar to the Oriental weaving vocabulary!
Good job, Martin.



Filiberto



January 13th, 2017, 12:12 PM

#32 □

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

Join Date: May 2008
 Location: Cyprus
 Posts: 96



For the moment, let's us consider only the Jaff similarity.

Since I do not think there is a direct connection between Jaff Kurds and Norwegians, it seems more logical that both tapped from the same, older, source.

I had a look at Peter F. Stone's guide to design, pattern and motif: the Jaff diamond derives from the Anatolian *kirkubadak* ("forty branches") that figures in the "Bergama Medallions" section of the book.

Still, it seems intriguing to find exactly the same layout of diamonds on 19th - early 20th century Jaff bags and on some Norwegian pillow covers of 17th -18th cent.

How do we explain that? 🤔

Regards,

Filiberto

P.S. - Of course the motif in Pierre's last picture (FIG 8. Turkish. Yüncü. 17th century (?).THC3) is a "kirkubadak"



January 13th, 2017, 12:32 PM

#33

[Martin Andersen](#)
 Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
 Posts: 102



Hi Filiberto

I think Pierre has taken a deep dive into the maps - and the historical sources 😊 I hope he will post a summarize of his findings.

Somehow all of this might give us a glimpse into some older non-extant shared rug types which must have floated around between Scandinavia and Central Asia/Anatolia.

Best Martin



January 13th, 2017, 02:56 PM

#34

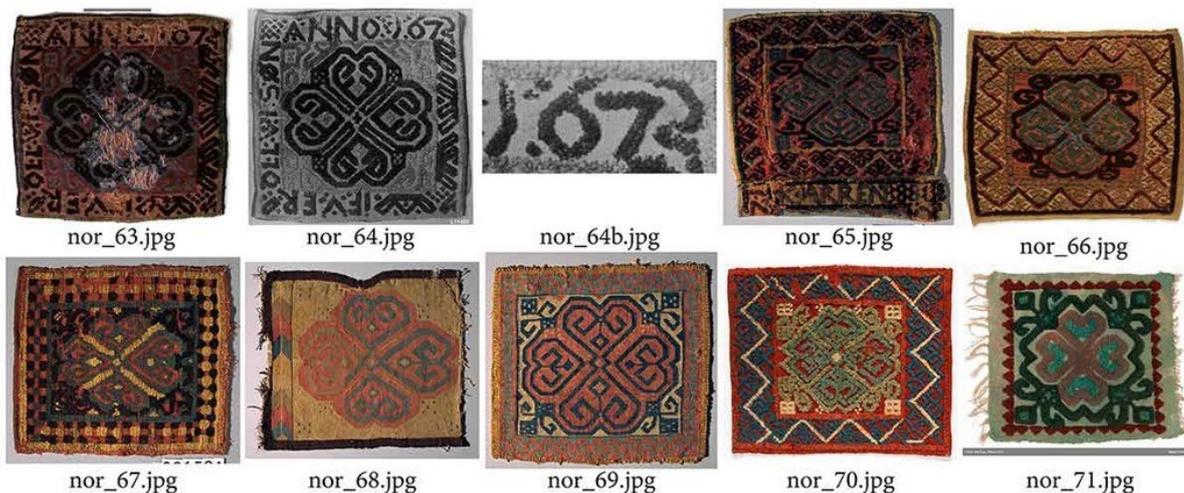
[Filiberto](#)
[Boncompagni](#)
 Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
 Location: Cyprus
 Posts: 96



I am still looking...

Among other designs, the most notable similarities - so far, after a rather superficial analysis. Motifs in:



with the "endless knot" rosette



and the classical Caucasian border in nor_81.jpg and nor_84.jpg and the following nor_88 and nor_89:



nor_88.jpg



nor_89.jpg



nor_90.jpg



nor_91.jpg

Filiberto



January 14th, 2017, 09:32 AM

#35

Wendel_Swan

Guest

Posts: n/a

very useful salon

Hello Martin,

Filiberto alerted me to this discussion about the Swedish connection, on which I have given more than a dozen lectures to various groups over the past several years, including to the New England Rug Society in September (see their website for a synopsis and images) and at the Stockholm ICOC in 2011. Unfortunately, at this point I'm afraid that my comments would be entirely out of sequence. Plus, I've forgotten how to submit images. So, I'll make just a few comments on your excellent post and some of the very informative responses.

There is unquestionably a Tent band

The carpet found in the Marby church was carbon dated to between 1300 and 1420 AD. An embroidered panel believed to be 16th Century was discovered in a nearby church with iconography essentially identical to the birds/tree in the Marby rug. However and whenever the Marby rug reached the church, it is clear that the Marby rug provided the inspiration for textiles woven in Sweden. However, that is merely one of many examples over centuries of a pattern making its way from south and east to Sweden.

Perhaps more significant is the fact the sumak wrapping was practiced in Sweden until somewhere around the 12th Century. Most readers would not suspect that there have been so many different structures in the Swedish repertoire. Sumak wrapping is not particularly widely known outside the Caucasus region. One must assume that the Rus (the older name for the Swedes) not only brought back textiles, but female weavers as well. Weaving is very traditional and structural varieties do not evolve in disparate areas quite spontaneously.

You showed a Buddha as an example of the various influences on the Rus. That Buddha from 6th Century India shares a shelf in the Historiska Museum in Stockholm with bronze work from 8th Century Ireland and a Coptic ladle. Significantly, all three were excavated from a single island village in Lake Malaren, just to the west of Stockholm

It's impossible to know exactly when motifs from Anatolia, Persia, the Caucasus and Central Asia found their way into Sweden, but it is unquestionable that they did. The similarity of the Överhogdal tapestries (800 and 1100 AD) to Turkmen tent bands cannot be coincidence, even though the Rus did not live in tents. I know of one Swedish cushion cover circa 1800 that clearly incorporates a Turkmen gul, but connections between Sweden and Central Asia are otherwise quite limited. Swedish folk weavings incorporate motifs from continental Europe as well, although they

remain distinctly Swedish.

Rya (pile) was not used on the floor in Sweden until just about 100 years ago. Previously, rya were bed covers or protection for fishermen. Some from circa 1800 greatly resemble Persian gabbehs.

The earliest dated Swedish cushion cover of which I am aware is a jynne that bears a date of 1680.

I think there is a great deal to be learned about weaving in general from Scandinavian textiles, but I've encountered reluctance from some rug societies to presentation about Swedish material because it seems too esoteric. Some only want to hear about what they already know about. I'm glad to see that some of the Turkotek readers took this discussion seriously, did some research and posted very useful information.

Wendel



January 14th, 2017, 09:39 AM

#36

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 96



Thank you Wendel.
I re-posted your post under your name and deleted the original "unregistered" one.
Regards,

Filiberto



January 14th, 2017, 11:35 AM

#37

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

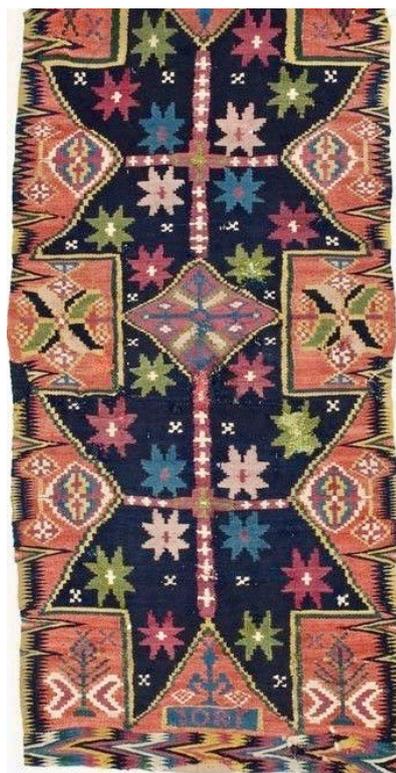
Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 110



Dear All,

The following rug puzzled us (Martin and your servant) quite a bit:



It features, from top to bottom:

- 2 (indubitable) Pazyryk stars (5th century BCE, no less!),
- 2 (anemic) Chodor ertmen guls (19th century AD),
- 2 floral motifs obviously stolen from a 18th century AD Yomud elem with, in between,
- 1 little Salor homonculus (18th century, of course).

After a thorough analysis and quite a few drinks (Aquavit), we both can now confirm to you its Swedish origin. More precisely, it was woven in 1803 in the northeastern part of Sweden, (120.5 km North of the Arctic Circle) in Santa's workshop, based on an original idea of the boss following his 1802 visit to the ruins of Nineveh, and using a Turkmen sampler.

This post should give me a little more time for trying to identify possible dates and routes followed by Central Asian «models» of all these Scandinavian folks weavings. I'd better hurry up: Martin and his knout (knutpiska in Swedish) are

after me already. 🌩️🌂

Best regards
Pierre

PS. 1: I have already secured exclusivity of use for this beauty for a December 2017 post on Turkotek. Don't even think of stealing it mates!



January 14th, 2017, 12:38 PM

#38

[Martin Andersen](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 102



Wendel, thanks a lot for your input. Highly interesting, and I have read the likewise highly interesting New England Rug Society synopsis of your talk (here a direct link to it for others: <https://www.ne-rugsociety.org/newsletter/fringe-v24n2-11-2016.pdf>)

I am of course very curious of the two Swedish samples you mention in your post and would love to see photos of them:

1. *"An embroidered panel believed to be 16th Century was discovered in a nearby church with iconography essentially identical to the birds/tree in the Marby rug."*
2. *"I know of one Swedish cushion cover circa 1800 that clearly incorporates a Turkmen gul"*

Is there any chance you have photos of them you could send them to Filiberto for a post? Or perhaps links to them?

best Martin

(Pierre your "knutpiska", among the other stuff, literal almost made me fall of my chair 🤯 but I am back again 😊)

Last edited by Martin Andersen; January 14th, 2017 at 03:23 PM.



January 14th, 2017, 04:24 PM

#39

[Pierre](#)

[Galafassi](#)
Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 110



Dear all,

A group of weavings shown by Martin in post 16 was convincingly discussed as possibly being a Scandinavian interpretation of either an ancestor or a variation of some more recent Turkmen guls, They all show ram's horns looking inward instead of the outward-looking ones usually seen in Turkic-tribe's motifs.

The illustration below shows a recent (ca. 1900) Kyrgyz rug featuring two classical kaikalak motifs and a third one with the hooks looking inwards and reminiscent of Martin's Scandinavian group.



FIG 1. Kyrgyz Chavadan. Ca. 1900
Source: The Kyrgyz carpet. K.I. Antipina. Book 1, page 66.

Antipina's comment: «...A second feature is the drawing of the center *kaikalak*. Unlike the two end ones with the ram's horn emanating from a center diamond, it is closed and self contained like a *gol*...»

«Self contained, like a *gol*» , yes indeed, or like the 4 weavings in Martin's post # 16 .
Please note as well the floral / tree-like center of Scandinavian- and Kyrgyz guls.
FIG 2. Illustrations of post 16.



January 14th, 2017, 05:40 PM

#40

[Chuck Wagner](#)

Members

Join Date: May 2008
Posts: 99



Hi

Of course, one has to pose the question, which came first - the more lifelike rendering, or the dumbed-down version...??

Also, an interesting image on Wikipedia from the Schonen-Wikinger museum:



Regards
Chuck Wagner



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