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 **The Swedish connection**

Welcome, [Filliberto Boncompagni](#).

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Virtual Show and Tell Just what the title says it is.

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 January 14th, 2017, 09:24 PM

#41

[Wendel Swan](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
 Posts: 2

 Similar and related agedynas

Hello Pierre and all,

Pierre, the agedyna with stars you posted is in the Hemslöjdens Collections in Sweden, published by Lilli Zickerman, dated 1801 (you seem to have read 1803) and is from the Skitts District in Skane, the southernmost tip of Sweden. Here is a similar example from my collection that is signed and dated 1799. The border is called vigg (lightning), but there are lots of interesting things going on within that border.



I would caution against trying to be too specific in tracing the adopting and incorporation of diverse cultural motifs into Swedish folk weavings. There is absolutely no question that this happened, but there are too many gaps in our evidence to establish even vague timelines or origins. Swedish textiles are never strictly copies of other rugs or textiles. They may mimic motifs, borders and patterns, but they are not copies as we think of that term. They are invariably distinctly Swedish.

Eight pointed stars are ubiquitous in textiles from various times and places. Large 8-pointed stars are more commonly found in Swedish rollakan (double interlock) structure than in others. Here is an agedyna (carriage cushion cover) with 8-pointed stars in a 2-1-2-1-2 pattern, similar to the arrangement in my Dazkiri yastik on the right. Both are circa 1800. This type of tile arrangement is truly ancient. By the way, my 21-star agedyna is

completely intact, including the original goose down stuffing.



While the 2-1-2-1-2 format might be virtually identical in many respects, one would never mistake the agedyna for a Turkish yastik or other Turkish weaving. You'll notice that Swedish folk weavings often have no circumferential borders, but when borders are found, there are much less complex than their Middle Eastern counterparts.

Wendel



January 14th, 2017, 10:38 PM

#42

[Rich Larkin](#)

Members

Join Date: Jun 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 157



Hi Wendel,

Quote:

"...I've encountered reluctance from some rug societies to presentation about Swedish material because it seems too esoteric."

I find that extraordinary. What are they thinking? On their own merits, the colors and textures are outstanding. Plus, there is the intriguing matter of connection to eastern traditions, as proposed so interestingly here by Martin and others.

Can you supply (to Filiberto or Steve for posting) images of the early Swedish embroidery implementing Marby-style iconography or the ca. 1800 pillow with the Turkoman gul? It is a very tantalizing reference. In any event, thanks for the contributions to this thread.

BTW, I attended your excellent presentation at NERS last September, but had to leave early (and reluctantly) on account of my companion's sudden illness. Did you provide examples for handling and inspection by the group on that occasion?

Rich



January 14th, 2017, 10:42 PM

#43

[Martin Andersen](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 111



Hi All

I agree with Wendel that we most likely certainly not are seeing direct copies of extant oriental rugs in the extant Swedish and Norwegian material, and I believe Pierre see it the same way.

But what we must somehow be seeing are copies of copies of older probably now gone rugs - from a connections which runs at least back 600 years (I would say much more). And a connection which probably was cut at some point well before 1670, at least the oriental rugtypes that seems to be connected to the Scandinavian are rugtypes of which there are no record at all in Europa between say 16th and late 19th.c. And some of them like the Turkmen rugs there are as far as I know no record of

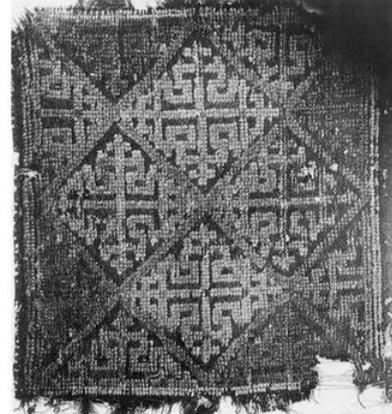
at all in Europe before late 19th.c

Both Central Asian and the Scandinavian traditions are *very* conservative, adapting changes *very* slowly. Directly comparing the material, of course with caution and reservations, may bring interesting light to both traditions 😊

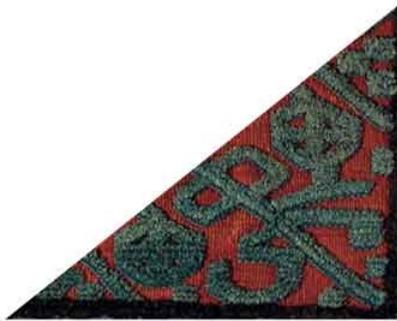
I know that the extant Kyrgyz material is not very old max mid-19th. But when looking at it, both the felts, the reeds, the rugs and the embroideries, it is hard not to think that it could represent millenium old nomadic aesthetics of the steppe. Both Turkic and probably also other ethnicities (the resemblance to the crosses in the Pazyryk felts borders attest to that)



Here a comparison between some Kyrgyz felts and some Norwegian pillows. Kyrgyz left, Norwegian right:



The crosses on the Norwegian pillows could of course be said to be simple crosses or perhaps even Christian crosses, but something else is also going on, note the the corners of the Norwegian pillow, not just random fillings or repeton of the center. Kyrgyz left, Norwegian right:



And this comparison I suppose kind of speak for itself. Kyrgyz left, Norwegian right:



As you know Pierre I am very amazed by the Kyrgyz Kaikalak ornament rug you found:



To me it looks like what could be seen as a kind of blueprint on what could be the formal genesis of important aspects of the Turkmen gul, contained in the simplicity of the reversal of a few elements within the same single rug.

What we see in the Kyrgyz "gul" is not a reduction of design elements from the Turkmen gul (generating a stylized simpler version), on the contrary we see the outer shape plus some important aspects of the Turkmen's guls ornamentations being generated by a simple twist and inversion of the Kyrgyz Kaikalak pattern.

It is of course always problematic to fantasize about non-extant rugs, but I personally think we here may get a view way back to a possible very similar but much older model before all with these three 17-19th.c versions:



All the best
Martin



January 15th, 2017, 02:18
AM

#44

[Martin Andersen](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 111

Hi Chuck

The question of what version came first "the lifelike rendering, or the dumbed-down" is of course a complex one, I would personally as I tried to verbalize in the previous post probably need a mixed earlier version including a clear figurative tree which could develop into, or "branch out to" 😊 both the Norwegian "Tree of life" and the Turkmen gul.

We are in a timeframe where the clear figurative element could perhaps have been derived from the Sogdian/Sasanian silk, this is a line of thought that would involve the in itself rather complex migration of the "Animal tree motif".

The tapestry from Wikinger Museum Foteviken I am afraid is a very free and playfull recent work loosely inspired by the Bayeux Tapestry

All the best Martin

Last edited by Martin Andersen; January 15th, 2017 at 02:31 AM.



January 15th, 2017, 08:55
AM

#45

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 115

Dear all,

The thread is more and more fun!

Any influence of medieval / early Renaissance western / central Asia rugs on Scandinavian weavers is only a hypothesis, of course. However, the tsunami of material which Martin has already presented to us and now the precious support of Wendel Swan, an expert in the matter, makes it a very reasonable and credible one.

Thus, let's, for the sake of the discussion, assume such an influence.
But when and how did it happen?

The problem is the time interval between the oldest extant Scandinavian folks art (roughly 1660, so far) and their most recent supposed Asian models:

Let's focus first on the animal-in-an-octagon model:

The animalistic Asian tradition, as we all know, is deeply rooted in millenaries of artifacts, going back to the bronze age or older, strong in settled empires and (even more) in ethnic groups of the steppe: Indo-European (from Scythians to Sarmatians to Alani etc..) or Turkic ones (including those who already dominated the western- / central steppe when the first Viking tourists appeared there, around 862 AD: Khazars, Bulgars, Petchenegues,..).

Variants with animals inscribed in roundels, octagons or in other geometric frames, had an extraordinary success between the 6th century AD and the 14th century AD. The Sogdians (6th-8th AD) and the Byzantines were probably the trendsetters, but this formula met with a durable success just about everywhere: from Tang China to medieval and early Renaissance in Europe, from Al-Andalus to Egypt, on various substrates: silk of course, but also, wool, including rugs, linen, marble etc.....).

Judging from occidental paintings, oriental miniatures and extant carpets, oriental rugs with (quite realistic- or mythical) animal motifs in a geometric frame, were woven from at least 1200 until roughly 1450 AD. However, we should not at all exclude the possibility that this type of rugs was already woven long before 1200 or still after 1450, they certainly look like mature designs, not like recent experiments!
For a number of reasons which we can quite easily imagine, no earlier rug might have survived or none was lucky enough to be immortalized by painters/miniaturists.

The European elites kept buying other classy, non animalistic rugs with geometric motifs («Holbein» , «Memling», «Lotto» types etc..) during a couple of centuries.
However, the rich and famous completely lost any interest for rugs before 1700. The Last Mohicans being the Dutch upper class. In all of Europe, including I suppose in Scandinavia, the 18th and 19th centuries were a barren desert as far as oriental rugs were concerned.

It was only towards the end of the nineteen century, especially after the Russian conquest of the Caucasus and Turkestan (3), that some Europeans became again aware of rugs. After the first World War, the number of born-again ruggies grew rapidly thanks to Sarre's, Jacoby's, Grotte-Hasenbalg's, Trenkwald's fine books.
However, even at this late date, except for the Marby rug, none of the sumptuous rugs, like the one below had yet been discovered.

FIG 1



In the meanwhile, since at least the 17th century, Scandinavian weavers were busily weaving their own interpretation of these rugs, «unknown in Europe».

If the resemblance was not only a mere coincidence, which it probably was'nt,...

Either, the models were shipped in fair numbers to Scandinavia before the end of the 15th century, while they were still woven in Asia, and, as Wendel suggests, some of the female weavers were shipped North too (1). But then, the weaving of Swedish and Norwegian «copies» should have started about 200 years earlier than the oldest extant pieces.

As Martin rightly mentioned, there is a proven continuity in the motifs of at least 200 years from 1670 to 1900. Why not imagine then, as he suggests, that this tradition started 200, 300 or even 400 years earlier than the older extant Scandinavian «copies» known today?

The shortage of older extant pieces being due, for example, to the work-ethics of Scandinavian moths and fungi, to the lousiness of the Scandinavian climate, to the linen sometimes used instead of wool (2), to the weaving techniques used, or to the hard usages (fishermen's protections, uuh? Wendel) to which these weavings were exposed.

Or the models were still woven in Asia by the 16th or even 17th century, and a number of them (and/or their female weavers) were shipped to Scandinavia, while the rest of the European ruggies, and their painters, never got a chance to see and appreciate them.

This, of course would give us a hint about where these Asian weavers were living. A place to which the Viking and later the Rus, had easy access and commercial contacts, but which was not or not anymore visited by other European traders, or plunderers.



FIG 2 Map of the area of interest for this thread.

Throughout the whole window of opportunity, from at least 1200 AD to 1450 AD there was certainly no shortage of states which could be credible origins for the models. Rugdom hardly ever paid any attention to most of them, so far.

Neither among extant rugs, nor in occidental paintings, nor in western- and Central Asian miniatures was it ever possible to clearly identify rugs / kilims woven by any of the semi-settled Nomads who during this long period fought for leadership in the Steppes North of the Aral- Caspian and Black Seas. To name just a few who managed to establish reasonably stable and sophisticated states/nations: Alani, Khazars, Bulgars, Petchenegues, Oghuz and later the Golden Horde.

For that matter, what do we know about the rugs woven by the first Turkic tribes identified in 944 as «Turkmen» by their contemporaries. (This branch of the Oghuz was signaled as meddling in steppe affairs between the Caspian Sea and the Volga River). (4).

The same can be said about the successive urbanized states taken over by Turkic nomads south of the steppe, after their victory over the Arab dynasties of Persia (Samanid), and later also in western Asia: Indeed, what do we know about the rugs woven by the Qarakhanids, first turkic owners, after 932 AD, of Transsoxiana (formerly Sogdia), historically one of the richest, more industrious province of the Persian Sassanian Empire? Or about the talent of the Great Seljuk Empire weavers? Of the Kwaresmians? Of the Akh-Koyunlu State in eastern Anatolia and north-western Iran ?

It seems to me extremely unlikely that all these people did not weave rugs. The example of the Timurid Empire should be telling: Their miniatures were full of beautiful rugs, mostly in «Small Holbein» style (5), but, according to experts, they left behind only a tiny extant fragment.

In the next post I'll endeavor to bring some more informations about these semi-nomad and urbanized states and about what is known about their dealing with the first waves of Vikings and later with the growing power of the Norse-ruled Rus States (mainly Kiev).

Notes

1. Wendel's suggestion is indeed comforted by some recent papers which claim that young Norse males were glad to raid neighbor countries also because of a structural deficit of potential wives and concubines in Scandinavia, due to a tendency by their elites to stock much more than their fair share of fair maids. OK, then their predilection for storming cloisters populated by male monks is perhaps a bit strange, but let's not nitpick over it.
<http://www.livescience.com/56786-vikings-raided-to-find-love.html>

2. Linen was apparently nearly as much in use as wool during the Viking period and probably beyond.
<http://idavoll.e-monsite.com/pages/vie-quotidienne/l-habillement-des-vikings.html>

3. Both the Yomud (after the fall of Khiva in 1873) and the Akhal Teke (after the storming of Geok Tepe in 1881) had to let the Russians take away most of their rugs and silver bling bling.
http://www.turkotek.com/salon_00132/salon.html

4. Imho the file below is an excellent timeline of events from the arrival in 862 of the first Vikings (near Lake Lagoda not far from modern St Petersburg) to about 1100. I'd be happy to mail my Pidgin English version to interested people. (The original Google translation from Bulgarian is not for faints of heart.)
http://s155239215.onlinehome.us/turkic/70_Dateline/72_Bulgars/bulgar_dateline_5_En.htm

5. <http://www.turkotek.com/VB37/showthread.php?t=1391>

Last edited by Pierre Galafassi; January 15th, 2017 at 09:16 AM.



January 15th, 2017, 10:11 AM

#46

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



The images in Wendel's post are now in place.
Regards,

Filiberto



January 15th, 2017, 01:09 PM

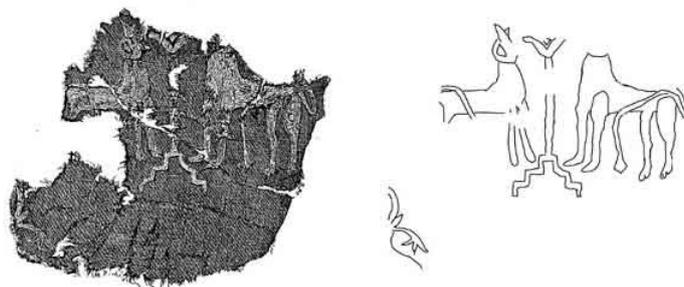
#47

[Martin Andersen](#)
Members



This might be the opportunity to throw in the only (for this thread) interesting Danish textile found, the Mammen textiles dated 970/971 CE <http://en.natmus.dk/historical-knowledge/denmark/prehistoric-period-until-1050-ad/the-viking-age/the-grave-from-mammen/the-costume/>

One of the fragments is this roundel with a very simple Animal Tree motif:



It could of course be said to be inspired in general by Byzantine silk or the European traditions derived from that, but perhaps the very simple, *but also very prominent*, serrated base could point further east. The only sample I have (from our long discussion regarding the Sogdians) of a silk roundel with this serrated base is this one from the Tulufan Basin <http://www.transoxiana.org/Eran/Articles/compareti.html>



The Volga route could for the Vikings have been a cheaper route for acces to the silk than the Byzantine European monopoly. The Oseberg silk that Chuck posted is also now thought to be imported from Persia or parts of it even from China <https://www.apollon.uio.no/english/vikings.html> (I suppose Tulufan Basin qualifies as China these days)

Of course my tunnelvision in this prefer the route over the Caspian Sea above the Black Sea route - as I would like to get the Vikings and perhaps the Oguz to have had a fair chance of meeting each other 😊

best Martin

Last edited by Martin Andersen; January 15th, 2017 at 01:17 PM.



January 16th, 2017, 12:19 PM

#48

[Pierre Galafassi](#)
Members



Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 115

[QUOTE=Martin Andersen;21583]Hi All

I agree with Wendel that we most likely certainly not are seeing direct copies of extant oriental rugs in the extant Swedish and Norwegian material, and I believe Pierre sees it the same way.

I agree, of course.



January 17th, 2017, 02:02 PM

#49

Jack Cassin
Guest

Posts: n/a



price:
your use of figs 5 and 6 in galafassi's post above, and on this page:
<http://www.turkotek.com/VB37/showthr...?t=3785&page=2>

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January 17th, 2017, 02:04 PM

#50

[Steve Price](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Posts: 78



Good Morning Jackass,

Your post properly identifies the source of the images in question and is the acknowledgement of their source. For full disclosure I add that the author of the article in which they appeared is Siawasch Azadi.

That should settle the matter.

Steve Price



January 17th, 2017, 02:26 PM

#51

[Martin Andersen](#)
Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 111

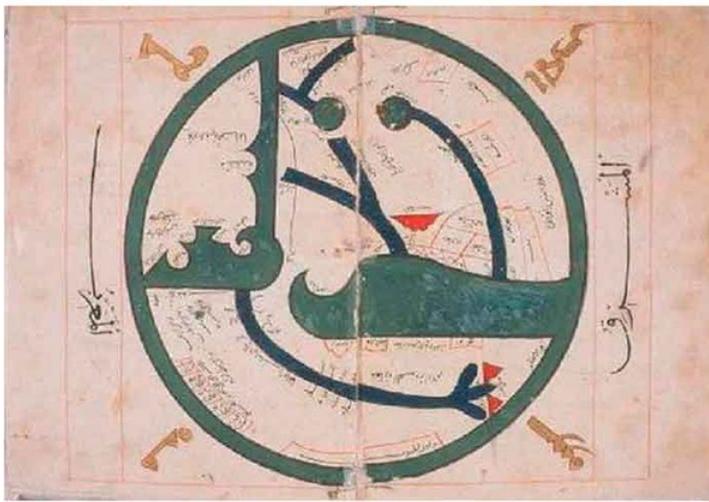
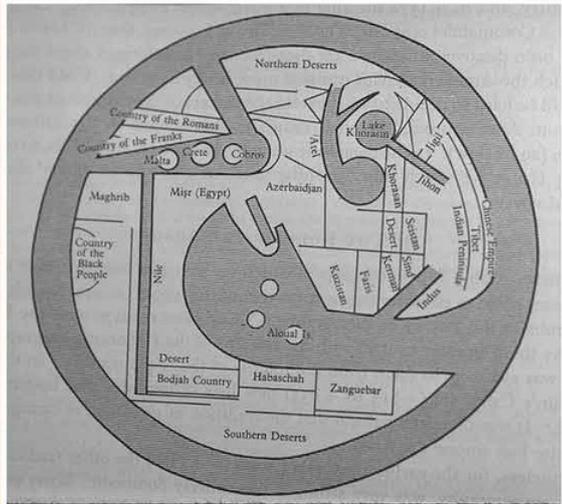
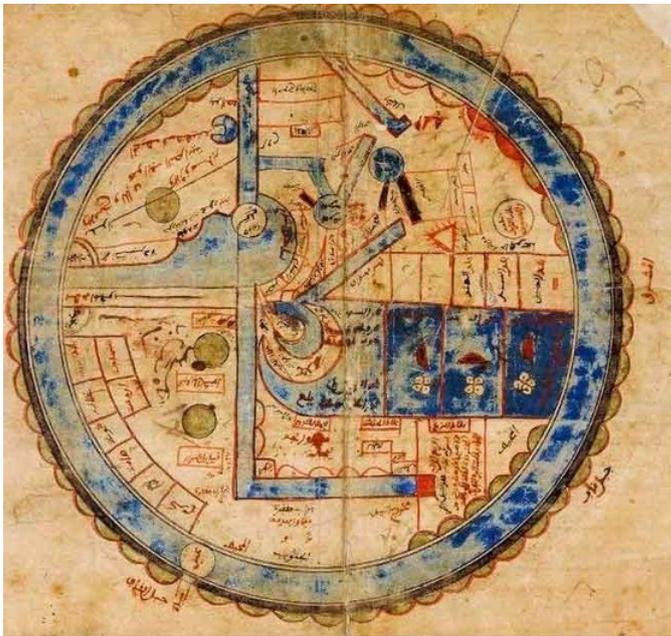
Hi All

It is rather interesting to look at the old Arabic maps regarding the possible connection to Scandinavia - and the one Turkic-centric world map sure in itself is fascinating

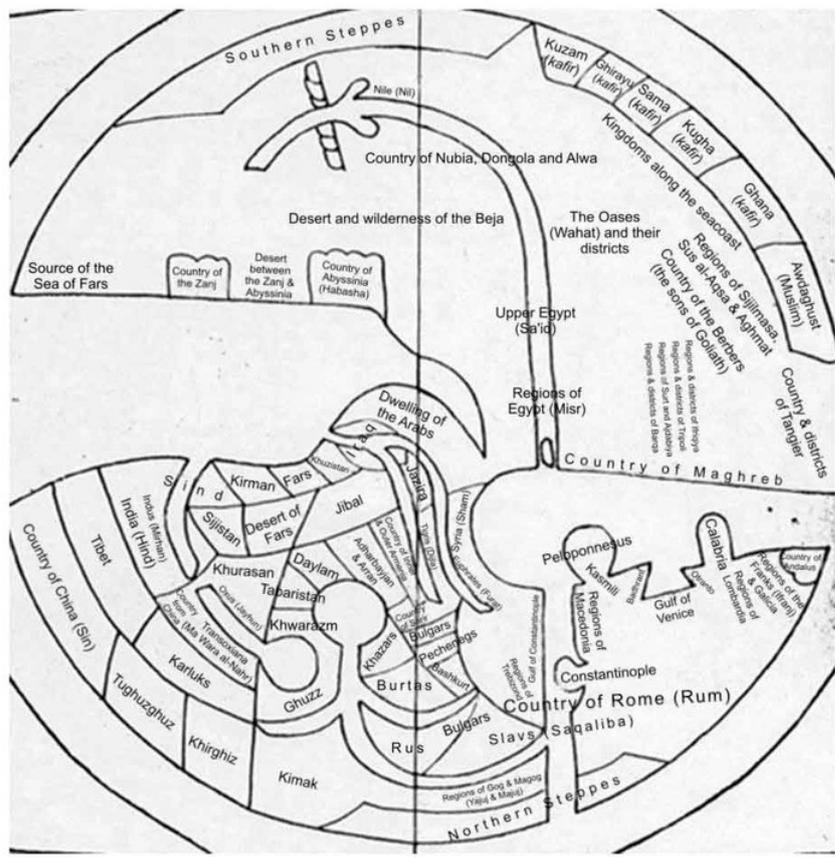
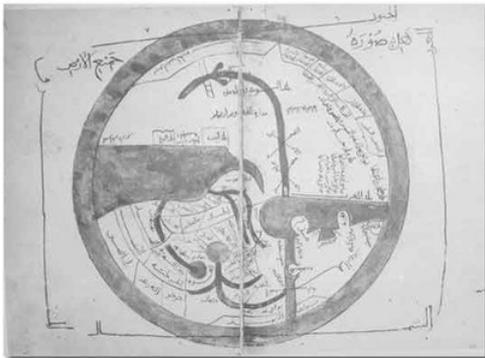
The oldest Arabic maps probably are more or less directly derived from Ptolemy's world map. And they are certainly not stingy with possible sea routes to Scandinavia (but on the other hand Scandinavia isn't really there 😊)

Here turned upside down for european North/South:

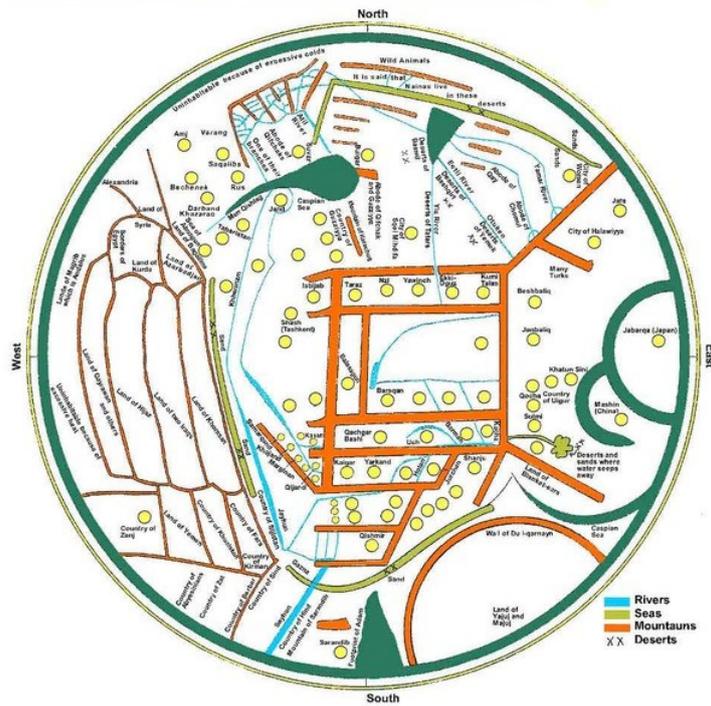
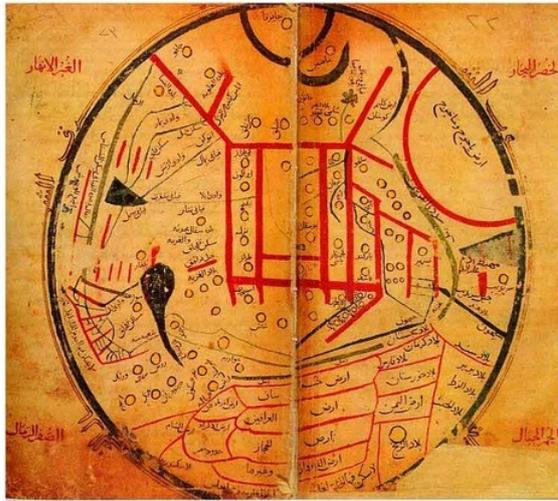
1. Fatimid dynasty 7th.c.
2. Abu Zaid Ahmed ibn Sahl al-Balkhi (850-934),



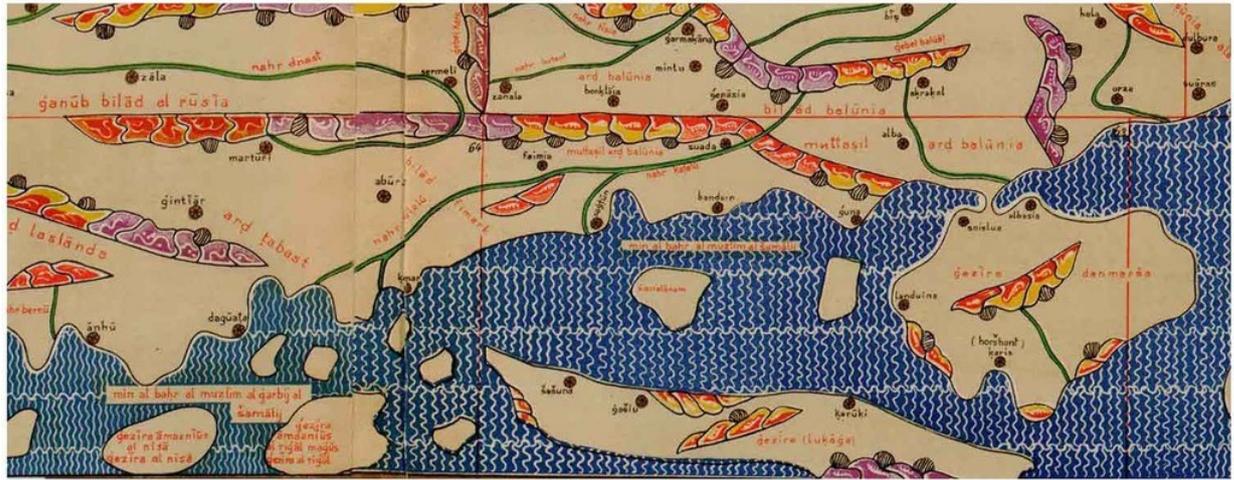
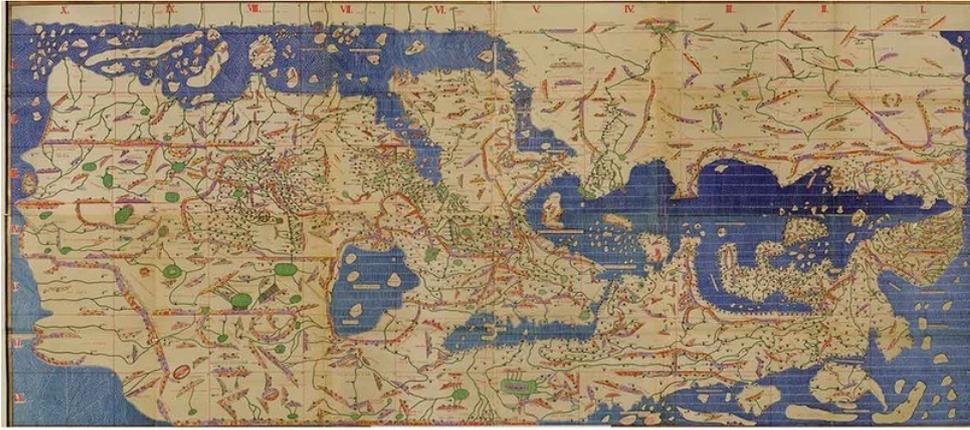
Here Ibn Hawqal. Date 980 A.D. (*not* turned upside down) its interesting to see, to put mildly, *very* broad river connections from the Caspian Sea through the Rus and the Slavs towards the Black sea or perhaps even northern Europe:



And here Mahmud Kashgari's "Turkic-centric" world map from around 1070s. Appropriately from a Turkic nomadic point of view the water-ways are kind of neglected in this map. But it is highly interesting that the Varang (the Vikings) *are placed rather correctly* north of the Rus. (I have given up identifying Byzans, Rome or the Franks, perhaps they were simply not worthy of mentioning from a turko-centric point of view. Kashgari's primary focus was apparently linguistic, plotting in Turkic speaking groups on the map)



In Al-Idrisi's more elaborated "Tabula Rogeriana" from 1154 we have a rather detailed mapping of Scandinavia - at least Denmark/Danmarska is quite good depicted. Norway ain't there but Sweden might be represented by the town Sasuna/ Saqto = Sigtuna. Here a version translated to latin characters in 1928, and a link to high-resolution http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/map_item.pl?data=/home/www/data/gmd/gmd3/g3200/g3200/ct001903.jp2&style=gmd&itemLink=r?ammem/gmd:@field%28NUMBER+@band%28g3200+ct001903%29%29&/gmd:@field%28NUMBER+@band%28g3200+ct001903%29%29&title=Weltkarte%20des%20Idrisi%20vom%20Jahr%201154%20n.%20Ch.,%20Charta%20Rogeriana%25 Here correctly represented according to Arabic tradition, south up:



best Martin

Last edited by Martin Andersen; January 17th, 2017 at 06:26 PM. Reason: Byzans and Rome weren't were I would like them on Mahmut Kashgari's map, "Bciöänäk" seems to be a Turkic tribe



January 17th, 2017, 03:58 PM

#52

[Martin Andersen](#)

Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 111



I just noted a minor but interesting detail of the Ibn Hawqal 980 A.D map. He defines a region as "Northern steppes", transgressing the sea-like river connection from the Caspian sea. He does not make anything similar elsewhere on the world map, perhaps this detail kind of articulates knowledge of a diverse traffic in the region, both by land and sea. All of it north of the "Regions of Gog & Magog" 😊



Last edited by Martin Andersen; January 17th, 2017 at 04:06 PM.



January 17th, 2017, 11:02 PM

#53

[Martin Andersen](#)

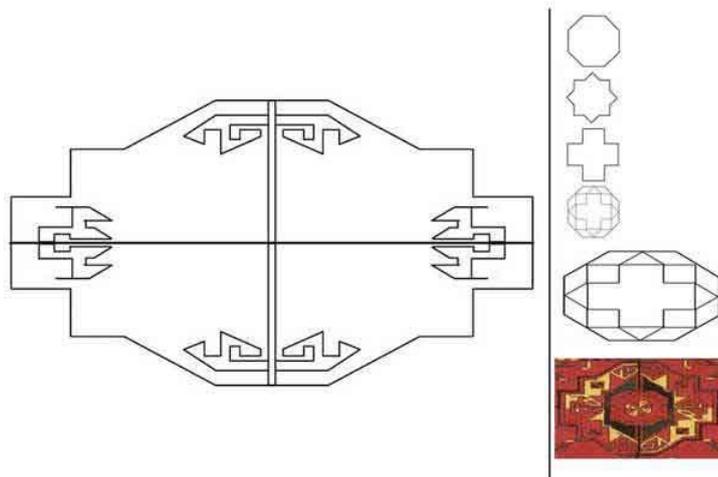
Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 111



Here a good text by Peter B Golden which clarifies Mahmut Kashgari's "Turko-centric" world map https://www.academia.edu/12226908/The_Turkic_World_in_Mahmud_Kashghari
And a quote specific regarding the area of interest for this thread:

"Going from the areas "opposite the Byzantine Empire"(Rûm),i.e. West to East, the tribes are arrayed as: Bächänäk (Pecheneg), north of "Darband Khaz-arân" and west of the Varangians (Warang, Варягъ/Варягъ), Şaqâliba (generally denoting the Slavs, but also a term for the northern peoples as a whole including Turks and Finno-Ugrians (Golden 1995a; Nazmi 1998, 74-76; 81-101) and Rûs/Русь(Rus'), a setting which accurately reflects the movement of the Pechenegs towards Danubian Europe following their defeat by the Rus' in 1036 (Golden 1992, 268-269). Curiously, the map depicts the Warang (at least those in the Rus' state), Şaqâliba and Rus' as distinct, when by this time, they were all part of the Rus' state with its capital in Kiev and Novgorod in the



It is also very interesting that this rather direct resemblance to the Turkmen gul has a completely different approach than the Norwegian version. It is to me obviously two distinctly different relations to the Turkmen gul, both versions pointing back towards older models of the Turkmen gul than the ones we have extant, the Swedish towards a model with clearer drawn birds, and the Norwegian towards a model with clearer drawn tree.



Norway 1670

Franses in the article describes the Swedish weaves relation to marriage, an aspect which certainly also is interesting in the Norwegian tradition (I will probably go into this topic later)

best Martin

Last edited by Martin Andersen; January 19th, 2017 at 07:01 PM.



January
19th, 2017,
09:24 PM

#55

[Martin Andersen](#)
Members

Join Date: Jul
2008
Posts: 111

Forgot a minor point: The corner fillings in Franses' 1758 Swedish piece could be seen as being reminiscences of a secondary gul layout. Especially in the vertical direction, half a ramshorn, and the strange but distinct small triangles could look like elements from some of the oldest known Turkmen secondary guls.



Last edited by Martin Andersen; January 20th, 2017 at 10:23 AM.



January 23rd, 2017, 07:13 AM

#56 □

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 115



Hi all,

Now that we can agree that there is a reasonable probability that western- and Central Asian rugs and textiles served as inspiration for the development of a long-lasting folk's art in Scandinavia, we could try to identify the route through which this transfer took place(1)

Novgorod comes to mind as by far the most likely distribution center:

Novgorod was the first Viking town of importance. A fully navigable route linked the city to the Baltic Sea (2). Southward, a lake, a navigable river and short land portages gave easy access to both the Volga (and to the Caspian Sea) or the Dniepr (and to the Black Sea).

FIG 1.



Novgorod was lucky enough to repulse episodic attacks from western neighbors (Poland, Lithuania, Teutonic Order,..), while the Mongols of the Golden Horde, surprisingly chose not to attack the city, perhaps fully satisfied with making it a vassal and a lucrative tributary. A golden-egg-hen status?

Novgorod was therefore spared the wanton destructions and massacres which ruined all other Rus cities between 1225 and 1241. Its commerce kept prospering.

At first they were a partner of the Scandinavian Visby Hansa, later entered a partnership with the Great Hansa of Lübeck. Foreign business people had their own district in Novgorod.

The 9th century Vikings and later the Norse-ruled and quick-expanding Rus Principalities had to deal with- and fight against two main states, both well organized and quite urbanized: The Khazars (capital Itil) and the Volga Bulgars (capitals Bolgar and Bilär).

The Khazars were mostly the losers, their State was eventually cancelled from the map and their territory fell to the Rus, to the Bulgars and to another Türkic newcomer in the area: the Kipchaks.

FIG 2.



The Volga Bulgars too were often raided by the Rus princes, won some and lost some more (3), at times they traded peacefully with the Rus and even formed temporary alliances with them. They were industrious people, famous for their silverware (4). At their peak they may have counted 30 cities. Like the Rus principalities they were beaten by the Mongols: by 1241 their main cities had been stormed and ruined and they were integrated in the Golden Horde, but they may have suffered comparatively less than the Rus (5). The Mongols established their summer capital near the ruins of Bolgar, keeping its name and the new city soon thrived. (6) (7) (8).

FIG 3



In short

- Central Asian artifacts had a long and dangerous journey to the mediterranean ports open to Occidental merchants.
- The northern route to Scandinavia, via Novgorod, was comparatively safer and easier, most of the time, during the period 1000 AD-1450 AD.

Who provided the models for the Scandinavian folk art rugs will surely remain a thick mystery. But hey! Why should that stop us from making some highly creative suggestions in next posts?

Notes.

(1) «Here this maniac comes again with his boring History!!» Well, sorry for that, guys, it's compulsive.

(2) Via Volkhov River, Lake Ladoga and the Neva.

(3) The Rus even took and pillaged their capital Bolgar once.

(4) Martin will report later about some interesting Bulgar artifacts which may be related to animal rugs.

(5) The Bulgar probably had enough common sense to know that they were no match for the Mongols. Their Khan tried to imitate part of his Eastern neighbors, the Kipchaks, offering in 1223 his alliance to Jochi, son of Genghiz Khan, but it was a bit too late.

The Bulgars did their best but were easily beaten twice the same year by the great Mongol strategist Sübötei, who, quite atypically, once let his ca. 30,000 prisoners walk home with their head still in the right place, in exchange for sheep.

(6) It is claimed that both Bulgar Batu (the new summer capital of the Golden Horde) and Sarai Batu, their winter capital, eventually reached populations of 600,000 inhabitants.

If true, this would easily have made them two of the largest cities of their time.

(7) As we know, even when the Mongols decided to exterminate an opponent, they often made exceptions for brilliant intellectuals, artists, artisans and even for famous warriors. One can therefore suppose that these categories were well represented in both cities and that these fellows came from various ethnic groups of central Asia, as well as from eastern Europe.

Besides, the Mongols were the hard core but a minority in the Golden Horde's army. The bulk of the army was

formed by various Turkic clans especially of the Kipschak, Couman and Oguz, (the latter being identified too as Turkmen, as Seljuks, as Pechenegs, etc..). They probably contributed their skills and arts (rugs?) to the Horde. (8) This post utilized many informations provided by an outstanding historical timeline /: http://s155239215.onlinehome.us/turkic/70_Dateline/72_Bulgars/bulgar_dateline_5_En.htm . Saint Wikipedia helped a bit too.



January 25th, 2017, 08:40 AM

#57

[Pierre Galafassi](#)
Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 115

When could the shipping of «models» for Scandinavian folks art rugs have taken place?

The road from Novgorod to Scandinavia remained open, most of the time, even after 1478 when Ivan III Grand Prince of Moscow chose to put an end to what he probably saw as excessive independence, democracy and wealth and brutally annexed it. The city recovered with some difficulty from the sacking and then from yet another violent one, perpetrated a century later by Ivan IV the Terrible (1) but even then the links to northern Europe weren't entirely severed.

Thus, Central Asia artifacts, including rugs, may have trickled into Scandinavia during a long time in the period 1000 AD- 1450 AD.

Paradoxically, a very favorable period for a mass transfer to Scandinavia of Central Asian artifacts, silver and weavers, could have been during Rus' worst years ever: 1220-1241:

Supposing you were a wealthy Novgorod Boyar who in 1223 got news that the Mongols were at only 200 km from Novgorod and supposing you owned a ship or two, what would you have done? 

I would most certainly have taken my family (except my mother-in-law), my silver coins, my stock of precious furs and rugs (Swedish climate!), a number of paying passengers, and perhaps even some good looking weavers and would have taken an extended sabbatical in Sweden, knowing that neither the Mongols, nor their horses were good swimmers, nor did they care much for smoked herrings.

Note:

(1) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veliky_Novgorod



January 26th, 2017, 01:52 AM

#58

[Chuck Wagner](#)
Members

Join Date: May 2008
Posts: 95

Hi all,

I am still having a hard time getting my arms around the concept of a bunch of stick figures evolving to lifelike forms. Earlier, there was some mention, from Martin I believe, of a possible Sogdian and/or Persian source of common reference for both the Scandawegian and Central Asian material. That's something I would like to explore further, provided reference material is available to assist.

I need to re-read this thread from the beginning, I think, before I say too much and end up the fool; I'm afraid I have been distracted with preparation of some material which should show up on TT fairly soon (note to Martin; keep the animal-tree thought handy).

Anyway, it still seems reasonable to me that designs could have moved from north to south, as easily as the other way around.

Regards,
Chuck Wagner

p.s. Martin, I did realize the band was new and anomalous, but I thought it was interesting that it is placed in such a way, and I wonder if the museum had some historical evidentiary reason for doing so.



January 27th, 2017, 06:57 AM

#59

[Martin Andersen](#)
Members

Join Date: Jul 2008
Posts: 111

Hi Chuck

Sorry misunderstood you regarding the band in the Viking museum. The placement of the tapestry sure seems like a totally appropriate hanging. There are written sources (I think its in the Icelandic sagas) describing the halls of the Vikings adorned with woven storytelling. And I think the tradition could be said to have continued unbroken in Norway and Sweden with both printed Folkish and Christian story-telling tapestry and wall paintings, well into the 19th.c. (it from there on gets replaced with ordinary industrial produced wall-paper)

For me its no problem to imagine an iconographic design development going from simple to complex - and the other way around. Especially if one takes into account transitions between both cultures and the transference from different materials and techniques. In the rugs we know how much is happening when going from say slit-tapestry to pile weave. But even more happens in iconographic development/distortion in transferring an image from say

silver or bronze to a rug, or the other way around (and personally I certainly dont think the iconographics of the rugs should be seen as isolated cultural objects, they must have been natural parts of both broader cultural connections, and locally coherent aesthetic contexts)

best Martin

(will be back later with some comparisons, I am just diving in the deep ocean of the internet and Asia, fishing for relevant images for the geographical and historical setting Pierre has lined up - highly interesting to look into some "new" specific territories😊)

Last edited by Martin Andersen; January 27th, 2017 at 07:14 AM.



January 27th, 2017, 04:28 PM

#60 □

Pierre Galafassi

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 115



[QUOTE=Martin Andersen;21630]

For me its no problem to imagine an iconographic design development going from simple to complex - and the other way around. Especially if one takes into account transitions between both cultures and the transference from different materials and techniques.

Hi Chuck and Martin,

I could well imagine that during the period which we are discussing, politico-religious considerations may have significantly influenced the iconographic design development too:

The new guys on the block, mainly Turkic- and Mongol tribes, initially had all animist beliefs (tengrism & totemism) and a strong and millenary tradition for figurative animal representations in their art. These animals probably weren't only decorative but had as well religious and tribal importance.

All four major religions competed for converting these new potential customers to the right faith. The pragmatism and curiosity, typical of the Turkic and Mongol elites, indeed allowed several mass conversions. The Khazars for example adopted early on the Jewish faith. However, most of the time, Islam won this competition: It became for example the dominant faith among the Volga Bulgars, the Seljuks, and later in both Ilkhanid - and Golden Horde States.

It seems that, in general, the new religions were adopted by the ruling classes first and often imposed to the pleb afterwards.

Since Islam had a strong preference for aniconism, I would guess that the figurative representation of animals and their 'stench' of animism could have become unwelcome for many authorities and that ambitious, or prudent, chieftains would have motivated their tribe's weavers into passing from their figurative period to a more discrete geometric period in which one could still discover a bird, a goat or a dragon if one absolutely wanted to.

But go prove it!

*Nooo boss, this not a bird, see, it's just a hook and this surely can't be a goat: goats don't have two heads and no tail, do they?.

This could, perhaps, explain the Turkmen rug design in which one does not need a tunnel vision to discover animals everywhere.

It could as well be an explanation for the early disappearance of the beautiful rugs with figurative animal representations, except in some more permissive regions.

Just a thought

Kind regards

Pierre



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