

THE CARPET INDEX: RETHINKING THE ORIENTAL CARPET IN EARLY RENAISSANCE PAINTINGS

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Since the beginning of Carpet Studies as a discipline in mid-19th-century Germany, specialists have claimed that eastern carpets — from their first appearance in European paintings in the mid-13th-century to the present day — must be understood as luxury items of Muslim manufacture. This widely repeated conventional wisdom, often called the Berlin School of thought, was formulated when Victoria still ruled the British Empire but unfortunately it has been rarely questioned since.¹ Most modern carpet specialists continue to hew to the Muslim-origin theory of the founders of the Berlin School, by insisting that if the carpet was to have any iconographical significance at all within a painterly Renaissance context, it was as a sign of heavenly comfort (since pile carpets were expensive and available only to the wealthy), and as a

marker of worldly honor (since it was made by religious rivals).²

Yet hundreds of paintings prominently feature the oriental carpet within a deeply Christian setting, where it is always depicted squarely under the feet of the Virgin and her saints. We western art historians have been taught (and we continue to teach our students) that every one of these Italian and Flemish religious paintings contains layer upon layer of iconographic meaning; that everything the painter included, from the indigo blue pigment for the Virgin's cloak (indicating her purity, and purchased at great cost, often specified in the contract), to the vase of roses or lilies depicted on the carpet in front of her, is imbued with deep theological meaning [Fig. 1]. Were the interpretation of the Berlin School to be right, the carpet then is the *only* item within a heavenly setting without any Christian significance or iconographic meaning. This hardly seems likely, and art historians specializing in the Renaissance have rarely addressed the problem. Most often we ignore the presence of the carpet altogether, leaving it to the scrutiny of a few carpet specialists interested in the development of classical Turkish patterns and motifs.

I became involved with this problem while writing a book chapter on the Council of Florence of 1439, and its impact on the art of the early Renaissance period. This famous Council, attended by prominent Christians from the entire known world — among them Latin, Coptic, Jacobite, Maronite, Armenian, and Greek Orthodox — sought to reconcile the eastern and western branches of Christianity in the face of militant Ot-



Fig. 1. *Dominico Ghirlandaio, Madonna Enthroned with Saints, ca. 1480, La Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.*

toman incursions into Asia Minor and the surrounding ancestral Christian lands.³ The delegates brought with them rare sacred books written in Aramaic (the language of Christ), Greek, Armenian, Coptic, and Syriac, many of which, given to the Pope, become the core of the emerging Vatican Library (Grafton 1993, Introduction). The Council took place over many months and involved long theological discussions and very difficult compromises. When it concluded with a Decree of Union in July 1439, all of the bells in Florence rang out and the Council was thought to be a triumphant success.

With historical hindsight, we know that the meeting failed to bring about the much-longed-for universal Christian unity, but in 1439 hopes ran high. In my chapter, I speculated that this conference with its desire for East-West religious union spawned a whole new genre of religious painting – the *sacra conversazione* or the “sacred conversation” -- where the Virgin is surrounded by her gently conversing saints [Fig. 1].⁴ I further proposed that Fra Angelico, a monk resident at the time in the Florentine convent of San Marco, painted the very first Italian *sacra conversazione* specifically for his fellow Dominicans there who had hosted the Council in Florence in 1439 [Fig. 2]. Fra Angelico depicted a heavenly gathering of saints under the benign gaze of the Virgin and, in this ground-breaking painting, he prominently included an oriental carpet beneath the Virgin’s feet.⁵

But the carpet itself gave me pause. Given my own expectations and academic training, this object ought to have been a luxurious pile carpet signifying status and wealth. Instead, Fra Angelico featured a simple flat-weave rug with crude, almost folkloric animal motifs. The depicted carpet was not luxurious by any stretch of the imagination. How could Fra Angelico have made such a mistake — and why was such a carpet even there?

My puzzlement over the inclusion of this rustic item in such a significant painting began an almost decade-long quest to rethink the role of the oriental carpet within Renaissance paintings. For an art historian specializing in east-west artistic exchange, the premise of the Muslim-made carpet included as a mere status symbol and/or a trophy perch for the Virgin quickly became intellectually unsatisfying, particularly after finding so many instances, such as the Fra Angelico altarpiece, where the old Berlin School theory simply did not apply. I

decided to start fresh by compiling and researching a *catalogue raisonné*, a visual database of all Renaissance paintings that contained oriental carpets. This database, called the Carpet Index, has been online since 2008.⁶ While still a work in progress, the Carpet Index has grown to over 800 images related to oriental carpets in Western art from around 1190 to 1800, with research essays, source material, and sets and collections of images. The research possibilities from this concentrated gathering of material are vast for oriental carpet enthusiasts. At the Index’s core is a workable collection of about 350 paintings dated between 1250 and 1550. This core has allowed me to re-assess conventional wisdom concerning the inclusion of the oriental carpet in early Renaissance paintings, and propose some controversial new conclusions.

The examination of hundreds of examples arranged in chronological order made it clear that the Victorian-era theory as to the purpose of the carpet in these paintings was seriously flawed. Within this time frame (ca. 1250–1500), *the carpet did not once signify domestic comfort, luxury, or status*. Instead, in over two-thirds of the paintings, it clearly delineated the Precinct of the Virgin, with the carpet conspicuously placed as holy ground beneath Mary’s feet in her role as Mother Church. The carpet appeared in paintings large and small, created for public or private devotion, for guilds or merchants in disparate municipalities and regions, but invariably it marked holy ground beneath the Virgin and her saints.

By extension, the marking of the holy ground of Mother Church is further seen in Renaissance depic-



Fig. 2. Fra Angelico, *San Marco Altarpiece*, ca. 1439, Museo San Marco, Florence.

tions of the rituals surrounding the Seven Sacraments of the Latin church: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist (celebrating the Mass), almsgiving (the repentant giving of charity), ordination into holy orders, marriage, and last rites (including Christian burial). A large subsection of the Carpet Index paintings is devoted to depicting these rituals, especially the most public sacraments of marriage, the giving of charity, and funeral scenes where again, the carpet signifies holy ground.

The surprises of the Carpet Index data did not stop with the discovery of iconographic and sacramental meaning. Not only did the eastern carpet mark holy ground, but within another subsection of the Index, certain recognizable carpets appeared multiple times, often over several centuries. Interestingly, these repeating carpets are among the oldest depicted. These were not the sumptuous pile carpets of later fame but plain utilitarian flat-weaves, often with crude animal imagery, very similar to the San Marco carpet by Fra Angelico of 1439 [Fig. 2 above]. Despite their lack of luxury, the rude carpets were repeated in paintings large and small, all dedicated to the Virgin: one distinctive carpet in Florence repeats at least 9 times from 1250 to 1472 [Fig. 3]; an entirely different old rug appears over 18 times in Sienese paintings from 1300 to 1462, where it visibly ages and fragments [Fig. 4].

Clearly, there were problems with conventional wisdom. The most glaring gap in conventional carpet theory, however, is that specialists simply did not have — and never have had — an adequate explanation for the core problem: what is a Muslim carpet doing in a Christian painting in the first place? Indeed, the evidence indicates that the carpets which entered Europe and appeared in paintings before 1500 were *not* commercial items manufactured by Anatolian Muslims for luxury-loving western Christians. Instead, the new data in the Carpet Index point toward an eastern Christian origin for these carpets in Asia Minor and the Greater Armenian Highlands, and indicate that the carpets themselves held deep religious significance to those who brought them west. The simplest, most obvious answer in this Renaissance context is the best: These are Christian carpets that we are seeing in Christian paintings.

In particular, these new data call attention to one of the most long-lasting legacies of the Berlin School of thought: its bias against Christian participation in the art of carpet weaving, which has hobbled Carpet Studies from the beginning.⁷ As I was assembling the Carpet Index and beginning to conclude that the carpets in question were of Christian origin, I came upon Volkmar Gantzhorn's pioneering study that had earlier argued the case for Christian weavers, and

his work has solidified much of my own.⁸ The land mass that we call Asia Minor or Anatolia was populated by local Christians for almost a millennium before and another millennium after the arrival of the first followers of Mohammed in the 10th century.⁹ It is wishful thinking to insist that carpet weaving suddenly arrived and burgeoned on the Anatolian plateau *only* with the arrival of the late-coming nomadic Muslims from the east, and that somehow the inclusion of carpets in western Christian paintings before 1500 indicates an oddly benign trade relationship between bitter and

antagonistic religious rivals.

My work, however, takes us beyond Gantzhorn's initial observations of the possibility of Christian weavers in Asia Minor: I advocate that we view the depictions in European paintings as historical markers in themselves. As such, I suggest that many of the carpets that we observe in early Renaissance paintings were actual revered relics brought by small groups of Eastern Christians — Syrians, Greeks, Georgians, but



Fig. 3. Fra Bartolomeo, *Miraculous Annunciation*, 1252, *Santissima Annunziata*, Florence.

Fig. 4. Sano di Pietro, *The Betrothal of the Virgin*, ca. 1446, *Musei Vaticani*.



especially Armenians — fleeing westward in advance of Mamluk, Mongol, and Ottoman incursions into their ancestral lands. Thus the aging carpets shown over centuries in Florentine and Sienese paintings can be seen anew as relics, historical objects of great veneration brought from the Christian East.¹⁰ Their repetition in paintings before 1500 implies that these carpets were recognizable entities within their new European communities and of great importance to the émigrés. Indeed, fragments of carpets which closely match the oldest depicted ones, came onto the art market in the 19th century from church treasuries in Italy, apparently after being preserved there for centuries.¹¹

Art historians have been largely blind to indicators of significant colonies of eastern Christians migrating to the west in the early modern period.¹² Yet, archival documentation and various historical studies confirm that, beginning after the first Crusade (and certainly by 1100), trade, social relations and intermarriage developed among the Crusaders and various groups of eastern Christians who supported the European venture to return the Holy Land to Christian control (Runciman 1994, p. 29 and *passim*).¹³ Western relations with Byzantium and Greek Orthodoxy were decidedly less friendly than most art historians propose, and cultural relations were severely strained after the Crusaders sacked Constantinople in 1204. During this same period, however, Crusader relations remained warm with the other eastern Christian groups who supported them against the Byzantines: notably the Armenians, the Georgians, and the Syrian Christians who had long chafed under Byzantine domination. Beginning with the first Crusade (1096–99), and certainly after the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin in 1187, successive small waves of Armenians and other eastern Christians with family and business ties to the west left to pursue business opportunities on the Italian peninsula along the pilgrimage roads to Rome that led directly through Tuscany.

During the chaos and uncertainty that followed the fall of the Crusader kingdoms at the end of the 13th century, a new group of Armenian refugees began to arrive in Italy — these were artists and craftsmen from Armenian Cilicia, whose livelihoods were threatened by new *aniconic* Sunni overlords.¹⁴ The artists and craftsmen were helped by the newly-emergent Franciscans and Dominicans, whose missionaries were also being forced out of the Outremer and who were returning home to Tuscany after the fall of Acre in

1291. This symbiosis between the Latin mendicant orders and the Cilician artists, I suggest, is reflected in the decoration programs in the newly built churches in Florence and Siena.¹⁵

My primary example for this demographic shift is a flat-weave rug with folkloric motifs that first appeared in the west in a painting around 1300 [Fig. 4]. My research indicates that the carpet represents an already revered Christian rug that was spirited away to the west by a family of Cilician Armenians seeking safety when the Holy Land fell to Muslim forces in 1291. Helped by the Franciscans, the family fled to a new life in Italy, specifically coming to rest within the pilgrimage road city of Siena. There the precious relic carpet was well-known within the assimilating Armenian community, reverently depicted in the Sienese *contado* over 18 times in large altarpieces, frescoes, and small devotional triptychs. The last time it was painted was in 1462 (where it appeared to be in tatters) when the Sienese Pope Pius II commissioned its inclusion in a painting for his new cathedral in the southern Tuscan town of Pienza [Fig. 5].¹⁶

Like the Sienese relic carpet itself, arguably the small but significant Armenian migrations into the Italian peninsula have been hiding in plain sight for many centuries. One intriguing but ignored signal of this demographic shift (and this applies to other eastern Christian groups as well) is that, beginning in the 13th century each new wave of refugees brought with it their own patron saints. These saints were then added to locally venerated ones on the Italian peninsula as the newcomers acclimated to their new surroundings. In Tuscany specifically, we should look at the emerging veneration of Armenian national saints — Bartolomeo, Taddeo, Gregorio, and lesser-known Armenian martyrs such as S. Miniato, S. Biagio, S. Vittorio — who began to have established churches from the 13th century onward. As an example, the Armenian patron saint Bartolomeo was added to the patron saints of Siena by 1215 (just a decade after the fall of Constantinople), and later the Cilician martyr Vittorio was added in 1308 (about a decade and a half after the fall of Acre. See Norman 1999, pp. 35–36). The civic presence of these foreign saints would suggest an influx of merchants and craftsmen from the Greater Armenian Highlands and the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia.¹⁷ In the same vein, other Eastern Christian populations in Italy would be indicated by churches and chapels dedicated to Syrian, Greek, and Georgian saints. This

movement of small groups of eastern Christians over several centuries is not merely theoretical or based on the visual evidence of the painted carpets and/or the ethnicity of imported saints: a DNA study from 2005 found that up to



Fig. 5. Detail of carpet in painting commissioned in 1462 by Pope Pius II for the new cathedral in the southern Tuscan town of Pienza.

10% of randomly tested Italian men show the unusual "G-marker" on their Y-chromosome, which indicates Armenian, Georgian, or other Caucasian background in their male line.¹⁸

Conclusions: three new theories

Working from a database of over 800 paintings in the Carpet Index, it is now possible to re-assess some of the core tenets of the discipline of Carpet Studies. To be fair, before the advent of the internet, so much of this new information was not readily available to the early Victorian specialists in the field. Yet, intuitive and brilliant scholars in the early 20th century such as Fredrik R. Martin, and in the 1980s such as John Mills in England and Volkmar Gantzhorn in Germany, grasped the potential of a more diversified ethnic and religious approach to this subject and attempted at that time to balance the record by including the presumption of Christian weavers in Asia Minor.¹⁹ Yet, my own generation of American carpet specialists has been largely content to follow the traditional Muslim-origin view. As a fresh counterpoint to tradition, however, I offer three new theories derived from the data in the Carpet Index.

First, the oriental carpets' presence in European paintings before 1500 indicates that some of them were religious relics brought to the west by eastern Christians fleeing Muslim incursions into their ancestral lands in Asia Minor. Within this context, their presence in early Renaissance paintings is not and never has been an indication of benevolent commerce between religious enemies.²⁰

Second, I am certain that the carpet in early Renaissance paintings has significant Christian symbolic meaning, marking holy ground beneath Mother Church; it has particular additional meaning in images related to the Seven Sacraments of the Latin church, particularly in relation to marriage, the giving of alms, and funerals. We can understand these carpets in paintings as public declarations of fidelity to the Latin church of newly-arrived eastern Christians, indicating a willingness to conform to and assimilate within the Latin church.

Third, and possibly most important, carpets in early Renaissance paintings can now be understood as visual markers of a demographic shift across the Mediterranean basin. Westward migrations of small communities of eastern Christians occurred over several centuries, as families of merchants, painters and craftsmen from Cilicia and the Armenian Highlands resettled in the hill towns of Italy along the pilgrimage roads to Rome. They brought their relic carpets with them and, over time as they assimilated into the sacraments of the Latin Church, the paintings with car-

pets became proud, familial reminders of their eastern past.

Marking a demographic shift, the carpet restores a forgotten legacy

As such, this re-examination of the oriental carpet opens a whole new window onto life and art in the early Renaissance. By the time of the Reformation, these assimilated groups of Armenians, Greeks, Georgians, and Syrians were no longer distinguishable from their European co-religionists, and with the Reformation accusing the Latin Church of Mariolatry, the eastern carpet ceased to be an attribute of the Virgin as Mother Church. By 1520 the oriental carpet was well on its way to becoming a coveted commercial good, and the Golden Age of the Muslim carpet mass-produced for domestic consumption in Europe truly began.²¹

Adding to the pioneering ideas of Volkmar Gantzhorn, the data collected in the Carpet Index supports the role of the Christian carpet in early Renaissance paintings. It restores to the Armenians, the Greeks, the Syrians and the Georgians an art form that they certainly have always shared with non-Christians in Asia Minor. Yet modern politics and national interests have excluded eastern Christians from this artistic legacy for over 150 years. Dismissed by the discipline of Carpet Studies, and ignored by academics, nevertheless the vibrant and significant contribution by eastern Christians to the art and communal life of the early Renaissance shines forth in hundreds of paintings, where their luminous carpets mark their faith, and their life, in their new lands.

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Notes

1. The perception that Muslim weavers in Turkey/Anatolia and Persia were and always have been the only source of carpets found in European paintings was formulated by the German founders of Carpet Studies in the late 19th century, including Wilhelm von Bode, who largely based their observations on the then-50-year-old Turkish commercial carpet industry. A prime advocate of Muslim origin theory was the mid-20th century specialist Kurt Erdmann. For his views on carpet-weaving as a uniquely Muslim craft, see Erdmann 1970 and the work of his student Friedrich Spuhler, both of whom expanded upon the observations of von Bode (see Spuhler 1987, Introduction, pp. 9-16).

2. See Mack 2002 and Denny 2002 (also Tom Verde's 2010 interview with Walter Denny). Spallanzani 2007 is the most thorough and interesting of the current traditionalists, as he delves into actual Florentine archival sources and inventories for his information, rather than relying on older German secondary sources.

3. The Dominicans had considerable contact with the Armenian *Unitores* in the Greater Armenian Highlands, who were pro-Latin and at odds with the Armenian Orthodox Church. For Latin Christians in the Armenian province of Nachivan, see Leonertz 1934 and Oudenrijn 1936. Atamiam 1984, an unpublished Ph.D. thesis that has contributed greatly to my forthcoming work, is a thorough and illuminating work on the later Dominicans in Armenia.

4. I theorize that the bearded saints in Fra Angelico's painting very likely represent the delegates of several eastern denominations, i.e., Greek Orthodox and Armenian Orthodox, while the clean-shaven saints represent the Latin delegates, all conversing in new-found harmony around Mother Church.

5. It can be argued that the Flemish artist Jan van Eyck painted the very first of this genre in his *Madonna and Cannon van der Paele*, dated 1436, which pre-dated the Council of Florence by several years. The carpet contained in Jan's work also repeats itself 5 times over a century in Bruges, last seen in 1526. This Flemish relic carpet is discussed in the series of online lectures on "Re-Thinking the Oriental Carpet in Early Renaissance Paintings," being filmed in the fall of 2014. Contact the author for more information.

6. Between 2008 and 2013, the Carpet Index was accessible online to a small group of critics and friends. It was released to the general public in February 2013, at a meeting sponsored by the Armenian Rugs Society in Laguna Beach, California. The Carpet Index and the essays in *Circa 1440* are found online on *flickr* at <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/26911776@N06/collections/72157632803028991/>>, the direct link to the images being <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/26911776@N06/sets/72157605221104561/>>.

7. See Erdmann 1970. Erdmann was adamantly against the idea of Christian weavers. His explanation of the presence of animal carpets found in early Renaissance paintings is firmly traditional (pp. 18–19): “After 1500 no such animal carpets seem to have been represented in a European painting and we may therefore assume that, in the course of the 15th c., their production came to an end. The reasons for this are not difficult to guess. In this group we are dealing undoubtedly with Anatolian products. In the 13th and 14th centuries Anatolia was ruled by the Turkish Seljuks who took kindly to the representation of figures in their art. In the 15th century, the Ottomans, who were also Turks, became the rulers and to a great extent dispensed with figures. This was certainly on religious grounds because according to strict Muslim teaching the representation of men or animals is forbidden...”

8. Volkmar Gantzhorn’s original work from the 1980s, establishing the concept of the Christian carpet, is now over 30 years old and new research has revealed some flaws in his theories. Nevertheless, his pioneering work on the Christian carpet has no match in modern Carpet Studies.

9. Beginning with the arrival of the nomadic Seljuks who formed the Sultanate of Rum (Rome) in central Anatolia in 1060. The Seljuks were Oghuz Turks who originated on the Kazakh steppes of Turkestan north of the Caspian and Aral Seas. They converted to Sunni Islam around 985, and in the 11th century began their migrations west into Asia Minor.

10. It is possible that the Sieneese repeating carpet was believed to have been an actual item in the Virgin’s home at the time of the Annunciation. As such, it might have been brought out on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, and displayed during popular re-enactments of the holy event.

11. See von Bode 1892. Wilhelm von Bode, the illustrious scholar and collector who directed the Berlin Museums before WWI, collected the famous Dragon Carpet fragment in the 1880s that was said to have come on the art market from a church treasury in Umbria, Italy. It is possible that the Dragon Carpet fragment is the actual relic carpet depicted in Florentine paintings; even if it is not, my research convinces me of its Armenian origin.

12. An even earlier wave of eastern Christian migration came to the Italian peninsula in the 8th century, as Byzantine iconoclasts forced Armenians and other eastern Christians from the same areas to flee west carrying their precious art works and relics with them – hence the establishment of S. Gregorio Armeno in Naples, and the various relics of S. Bartolomeo that arrived in Rome during the same period.

13. Many intermarriages – both high and low – took place between Crusaders (and their non-soldier followers) and

Armenian and Syrian women. For instance, one of the most famous intermarriages was that of King Baldwin II of Jerusalem (r. 1118–31), who, when he was Count of Edessa, married a local Armenian princess, Morphia of Melitene (d. ca. 1127), and with her had their daughter Melisende (1105–61), who succeeded her father Baldwin as Queen of Jerusalem. See Runciman 1994, p. 29 and *passim*.

14. There is no explicit injunction against making images of living creatures in the Koran, but the various *Hadith* or sayings of the Prophet contain numerous warnings against it, including: “Those who paint pictures would be punished on the Day of Resurrection and it would be said to them: Breathe soul into what you have created.” (*Hadith, Sahih Muslim* vol.3, no. 5268); and “Narrated ‘Aisha [wife of the Prophet]: The Prophet entered upon me while there was a curtain having *pictures (of animals)* in the house. His face got red with anger, and then he got hold of the curtain and tore it into pieces. The Prophet said, ‘Such people as paint these pictures will receive the severest punishment on the Day of Resurrection.’” (*Bukhari* vol. 8, book 73, no.130). The Sunni tradition tends to be more *aniconic*, or against images, than the Shiite tradition embraced by the Persians. See *Islamic Figurative Art 2004–2014*.

15. Over the next few centuries (especially after the fall of Acre in 1291) the mendicant orders facilitated the resettlement and employment of the refugee Armenian artists from Cilicia (who were renowned in their homeland for the beauty of their manuscript illuminations and gold and silver liturgical objects) in decorating their vast new Tuscan churches. Settled with their extended families and workshops in towns in Tuscany all along the pilgrimage roads to Rome, but especially in conservative Siena, their evolving artistic output had a decidedly “Byzantine” flair.

16. It is even possible that the tattered relic fragment still exists, hidden away within the sealed and consecrated altar that Pius dedicated upon the completion of the church in the summer of 1462. The altar seal that Pius himself set has never been broken.

17. When hard documents are lacking, anthropologists and sociologists often use “anthroponymic data,” where ethnic names within a specific historical context often yield considerable demographic information. For instance, the popularity in Italy of S. Biagio (St. Blasius or St. Blaise, an Armenian bishop martyred in what is now Sivas, Turkey) would indicate a migration of Armenians from what is now northern Turkey or the Armenian Highlands. Over 80 Italian churches are dedicated to S. Biagio, more than half of them in Tuscany.

18. McDonald 2005 found that 7 to 11% of randomly tested Italian men had the distinctive Haplogroup “G” marker on their Y or male chromosome, which according to Wikipedia, is “most common in the Caucasus, the Iranian plateau, and Anatolia; in Europe mainly in Italy, Greece, northern Spain, the Tyrol, as well as Bohemia, Moravia; Britain and Norway at only 2%.” Although the sample of Italian men was small, the unusually high percentage with this marker indicates some eastern patrilineal descent.

19. The Belgian scholar Fredrik R. Martin, author of *A History of Oriental Carpets before 1800* (Vienna, 1908), concluded

that eastern Christian weavers had a place in the history of early Anatolian carpet production. His conclusions were roundly dismissed by the American scholar Arthur Upham Pope and other traditionalists, who argued for Muslim exclusivity.

20. See Spallanzani 2007, p. 18, for an overview of the mechanics of the late 15th century carpet trade in Florence. Spallanzani's archival work is a marvelous gift to carpet specialists: see especially documents 67b, 84, 88b, 98, and 127 that mention the merchants involved, some of whom (by their names) might have eastern Christian heritage.

21. Although, I contend that it retained much of its sacramental significance especially in Dutch Golden Age genre paintings. See my series of online lectures on "Re-Thinking the Oriental Carpet in Early Renaissance Paintings," Segment VI, The Sacramental Carpet," being filmed in the fall of 2014. Contact the author for more information. For a visual history of this era, and its sumptuous Persian and Turkish carpets, see Onno Ydema's work *Carpets and their Datings in Netherlandish Paintings, 1540-1700* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1991).