

TRC Newsletter

August-December 2011

The summer months are supposed to be quiet, but quite a bit seems to have been happening at the TRC, Leiden. We have had numerous visitors, organised various publications, as well as laying the plans for a wide range of future activities.

“The Spinning World” **(25th August – 22nd December 2011)**

The TRC’s new exhibition “The Spinning World” is about handspinning, using both spindles and whorls, as well as spindle wheels and spinning wheels, from throughout the world.

*Ramallah shepherd spinning with a drop spindle
(c. 1919; Library of Congress photographic
archive)*

The exhibition is being presented by the TRC in conjunction with the Leiden Archaeological Centre (Leiden Council), and with the help of the National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden (RMO). The exhibition is, to a great extent, organised by one of the TRC volunteers, Koen Berghuijs (Dept. of Archaeology, Leiden University).

The ‘Spinning World’ will be officially opened at 17.00 h. on the 25th August, by Leiden Alderman, Jan-Jaap de Haan. The exhibition will run until the 22nd December 2011. The dates have been extended because of a generous grant from *Fonds 1818*, which means that some unusual and intriguing items of spinning equipment could be included in the exhibition, making it even more worthwhile to visit.

Objects on display in the exhibition include ancient spinning equipment from Afghanistan and Palestine. Thanks to the RMO, Leiden, it will also be possible to see examples of spinning whorls from the ancient city of Troy. More ‘recent’ whorls from the Leiden region dating from the Iron Age, as well as the Roman and the Medieval period will also be on display. In addition, there will be a wide range of modern spindles and whorls from around the world, plus a range of European distaffs, including an intriguing L-shaped version from Russia.

Spindle and spinning wheels, including a Great Wheel, charkas (both the traditional spindle wheel and a Gandhi style box charka) from India, Burmese wheels, and various forms of European spinning wheels will be on view.



The exhibition will emphasise the spinning equipment used for cotton, linen, silk and wool, but other fibres, such as alpaca, banana, buffalo, maize, ramie, soya and yak will also be on display. It is going to be a very interactive exhibition, constantly challenging the visitors to try out some handspinning themselves – both spindle and wheel forms using modern equipment (not the archaeological artifacts !). The exhibition is suitable for total beginners and more experienced spinners who want to see and try different fibres and equipment.

Guided tours, the chance to try various forms of hand spinning, plus actual lessons in handspinning using cotton, flax, silk and wool will be on offer. More details about all the associated activities will follow shortly.

The objects on display in the exhibition include numerous items from the TRC's own collection, from the Leiden Archaeological Centre and the National Museum of Antiquities, as well as from a number of pieces that were either loaned or donated by various private individuals. In addition, a number of different companies helped with the finding of suitable spinning equipment and fibres. In particular, the Dutch spinning and weaving firm of Louët (www.louet.nl) kindly donated equipment and expertise, Invaluable help was also extended by *Ancient Arts Fibre Crafts* (www.ancientartsfibre.com), *Jim Leslie Designs* (galoot@shaw.ca), *Scottish Fibres* (www.scottishfibres.co.uk) and *Wild Fibres* (www.wildfibres.co.uk). Information and actual examples of Russian and Hungarian distaffs came via *John Cornall Antiques* (www.johncornallantiques.com). The company of *Buffalo Wool Co.* (www.thebuffalowoolco.com) unexpectedly donated a range of bison fibres and photographs. Finally, the Indian firm of *eTrade Enterprises* (www.etradinglines.com) helped with cotton fibres and Indian spindle wheels (see below).

A big thanks is due to everyone who has so kindly offered help!!

Cheongsam exhibition

The *Cheongsam!* exhibition will be closing on Wednesday, 17th August. So this is your last chance to see how this intriguing garment has changed over the last 100 years. The *cheongsam* clearly shows how Chinese and Western styles, materials and designs can be integrated to produce something very different.

TRC exhibition in Jordan

The Textile Research Centre recently had great success in Amman, Jordan with an exhibition about Dutch lace caps and Jordanian/Palestinian embroidered headgear. The exhibition was held as part of the May Holland Festival organized by the Dutch Embassy, Amman, at the request of the Ambassador, H.E. Joanne van der Vliet.

The basic idea behind the exhibition was that women in numerous cultures are required to cover their heads and hair, but there are many ways of doing this.

The next TRC exhibition

Plans are already being prepared for the next TRC exhibition in Leiden, which will open in January 2011. The proposed exhibition is about women's headcoverings from around the world and will be 'divided' into two sections. Firstly, there will be a series of Dutch lace caps including all of the main forms worn in the Netherlands during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The second section will display various forms of women's headcoverings from around the world, including Europe, the Middle East, India, Mongolia, Burma, China, and South America.

If you have examples of women's headcoverings from anywhere in the world which you would be willing to donate to the TRC, please contact Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood at info@trc-leiden.nl

TRC at the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam

Items from the TRC collection will be on display in the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, for an exhibition called *De Dood Leeft* ("Death Lives"). The TRC items include a mourning kimono from Japan, a mourning *chador* from Iran and a widow's sari from India. The exhibition will be on view from the 2nd November 2011 until 9th September 2012.

Encyclopaedia of Arab World Embroidery

In 2010 the TRC staged an exhibition about embroidery in the Arab World, which was accompanied by a book with the same title. Since then this project has developed and increased in size. In fact it has taken on another life. A considerably extended version of the book is currently being written by Mrs. Widad Kawar (Jordan), Mrs. Layla Pio (Iraq/Jordan) and Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, with the help of various specialists in the Arab world.

In August a contract will be signed with the English publishing house, Berg Publishers (a subsidiary of Bloomsbury Press, London), to produce an encyclopaedia of embroidery from the Arab World. This will be about 750 pages long and include numerous articles about embroidery from its earliest known origins in the Arab world to the present day. The book will contain some 500 illustrations, of which some 300 in full colour. There will also be individual chapters on the embroidery from all of the Arab countries. A limited number of volumes will be provided with a special dust jacket, decorated with hand embroidery stitched by Arab women in Jordan.

In addition, various museums are now interested in staging a large exhibition on this theme, which will include over 300 embroidered items from nearly all of the Arab countries, including Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Tunisia, Saudi

Arabia, Syria and Yemen. This exhibition will certainly be a feast for the eyes, while the sheer range of techniques involved will come as a surprise to many embroidery enthusiasts and specialists.

It is anticipated that both the encyclopaedia and the exhibition will be ready by the spring of 2014. Both projects involve a considerable undertaking for the TRC, but one that will make the TRC's embroidery collection, and the TRC's growing expertise, an important contribution towards the preservation of this area of (international) textile heritage.

TRC Mini-Publications

The TRC is regularly asked for copies of the information on its exhibition text boards. So a mini-publication series has been started. The titles currently available are *Badla; Cheongsam; Kangas van Oos- Afrika; Thob`Ubb; Mooi-Gekleed Afghanistan; Oya: Turkish kant* and *Prins voor een dag* (all in Dutch). These booklets are now available in the TRC shop, but not yet via the website shop. A publication containing all the English texts will be available later in this year.

Zambian School Uniforms

When the TRC moved into its present home on the Hogewoerd, Leiden, we were asked to help raise funds for 350 school uniforms for boys and girls in Itumbi village, Zambia.

€3 equals one child to school was a challenge that the TRC could not resist!

The money needed to buy the cloth and three sewing machines, to organise sewing lessons and the actual making of the uniforms was quickly raised, thanks to the generosity of the Rotary Club, Leiderdorp, several substantial private donations and numerous smaller ones. In January 2011 work commenced on production of the uniforms and we are delighted to announce that, so we heard, the children now have their uniforms and are attending their newly built school.

TRC Events

During the period of the spinning exhibition there will be regular activities, such as on every Wednesday afternoon, starting on Wednesday 31st August 2011. You do not need to register in advance.

14.00 - 15.00: guided tour of the exhibition (€ 7,50 per person)

15.00-16.00: spindle spinning lessons for beginners. These lessons will cost € 5,00 for adults and € 2,50 for children; spindles and fibres will be provided.

There will also be various workshops on Saturdays provided by specialists in spinning. Further details about these workshops will shortly be made available.

Question and Answer Day

Another date for the calendar is Saturday, 22nd October, 2011. The TRC will have an open house (from 10.00 until 16.00) with various specialists who are willing to answer questions about textiles and clothing from around the world. You can bring your own heirlooms ! Specialists who will be available include, among others, Els de Baan (European textiles and fashion), Anna Beerens (Japanese textiles and clothing), Rene Lughtigheid (conservation and storage), Paul Spijker (African textiles and clothing), and Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood (Middle Eastern textiles and dress). The sessions are free of charge, but only two items per person will be discussed.

Please note that the TRC will not be giving any valuations

Friends of the TRC

In order to make sure that all the activities of the TRC can take place we do need your support. All contributions are welcome. Donations can be made over to the TRC ING bank account 2982359 in the name of the Textile Research Centre, Leiden.

If you want to become a Friend of the TRC, please donate a minimum annual donation of €25, or €250 for life membership.

Please remember, the TRC is officially a so-called ANBI, so all financial donations are deductible for Dutch tax payers.

Textile Research Centre (TRC)
Hogewoerd 164, 2311 HW Leiden
T: 071-5134144; M: 06-28830428
Email: info@trc-leiden.nl
Website: www.trc-leiden.nl