

TRC Newsletter

Summer 2012

The first half of 2012 has been a busy time. We have already had well over 800 visitors since January and many more are expected. The exhibition about headcoverings is proving very popular and this is one of the major reasons why it has been extended until the end of August (see below).

The other reason why the headgear exhibition has been extended is because the proposed Van Gerwen textile exhibition has been postponed until next year. This is because more items have recently been added to the planned exhibition and all of these pieces need to be catalogued and described first. It promises to be an intriguing exhibition. The sheer opportunity of seeing 16th to early 19th centuries textiles and 18th century garments at such close quarters will be worth waiting a little longer for!



Group of 'Red Hats' from The Hague visiting the TRC's exhibition about headgear.

The May intensive textile course has taken place and as per usual it was fun and very tiring at the same time (see below). Please note that a majority of the places for the October 2012 session are already booked, so if you would like to take part it is advisable to contact the TRC as soon as possible.

All being well, in the September 2012 issue of Dutch *Elle* there will be an article about the TRC. We were visited by the Dutch journalist, Merel Dem, who had great fun trying on the replica Salt dress (3m by 3m in size), as well as seeing the headgear exhibition, looking at the depots and talking to TRC volunteers. As soon as the article is out we will send digital copies around. The fame of the TRC is spreading!

TRC closed during July

Every year the TRC shuts its doors for July and 2012 is no different. The TRC is closed to the public from Monday 2nd July 2012. It will be open again on Monday, 30th July 2012.

Cover Your Head!

January 2012 saw the opening of the TRC's latest exhibition *Cover Your Head!* The exhibition was created with the help of the Ambassadors' Spouses Association (ASA, The Hague). Various embassies kindly provided headgear and complete outfits.

For various technical reasons and the fact there are many people who would still like to see the exhibition, it has been decided to extend the display until the 23th August 2012.

The exhibition can be visited during the opening hours of the TRC. Entrance is free, but donations are encouraged and welcomed!

Guided tours: During the period of the exhibition every Wednesday and Thursday afternoon. You do not need to register in advance, but advised especially if you are coming with a group of friends. The guided tours last from 14.00 until about 15.30 and cost € 7.50 per person.



A Well-Dressed Foot!



Well, we started with the head and the next exhibition will look at the feet. This forthcoming exhibition is based on one that the TRC presented at Leiden city hall in 2009. The new TRC version, however, is considerably larger and more thought provoking.

Detail from a Vietnamese shoe dating from the early 20th century (TRC collection).

The TRC Gallery version will include a wide range of footwear for men, women and children from throughout the world, including Afghanistan, Canada, China, France, India, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Turkey, Vietnam, and many other lands. On display, among other things, will be cloth, felt, leather and plastic boots, shoes and slippers, including forms as varied as (smelly) goat leather boots from Afghanistan and delicate lotus shoes from China (9 cm in length for an adult woman). There will also be footwear of a variety of forms (what exactly is the difference between a pair of boots, sandals, shoes, slippers and mules?), occupations, decorative techniques, as well as various times of a person's life, from babyhood, via marriage to an (American) pair of satin shoes meant for burial purposes! In addition, there is a section devoted to various types of hosiery (socks, stockings, tights, garters and suspenders), as well as henna patterns for the feet and, of course, foot jewellery. Over 150 examples of footwear will be on display.

Thanks to the Department of Monuments and Archaeology, Leiden Council (*Afdeling Monumenten & Archeologie Gemeente Leiden*), there is a rare chance to see footwear from various archaeological sources in the Leiden region. These shoes date from the Roman to the medieval periods and include baby, child and adult versions.

The exhibition opens on the 5th September and will run until the 17th January 2013.

As with other TRC exhibitions, *A Well-Dressed Foot!* can be visited during the opening hours of the TRC, namely, 10.00 until 16.00, on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Entrance is free, but donations are most welcome!

Guided tours: During the period of the exhibition every Wednesday and Thursday afternoon. You do not need to register in advance but are advised to do so, especially if you are coming with a group. The guided tours last from 14.00 until 15.00 and cost €8.50 per person.

May 2012 intensive textile course

The TRC's intensive textile course was held again on the 14th - 18th May and was fully booked with participants coming from as far apart as China, England, India, Netherlands and Sweden. The course is a mixture of theoretical and practical elements, with an emphasis on trying out the various techniques, on holding and examining fibres, textiles and finished items in order to learn and understand what is happening and why various combinations take place. The aim is to make textiles less 'frightening' and allow people to look at a textile from virtually any historical period or culture and be able to understand it.



Participants working on group of textiles during the TRC intensive textile course (May 2012).

The course will be held again between the 15th and 19th October. For further information please contact the TRC at info@trc-leiden.nl

Some recent donations to the TRC collection

The TRC collection has grown rapidly over the last few months thanks to various generous donations from private individuals. Many of the pieces come from Asia, notably Indonesia and China, as well as various Dutch lace caps, Western garments from the early 1950s, and a small collection of woolen threads that came from various defunct Leiden wool factories. These will help to build up the 'Leiden' aspect of the TRC's collection.

During the first week of June the TRC has acquired a collection of embroidered dresses and other items (both hand and machine forms) of various styles that were not in the collection. Various items were produced by the *Neksha Harazi* group, Yemen. This donation means that the TRC collection is one of the most comprehensive Yemeni embroidery collections in Europe. These and garments already in the TRC collection will form the basis of an exhibition about Yemeni embroidery to be held in the spring of 2014.

This donation was made possible thanks to the work and efforts of the Alburai family (*Neksha Harazi*, al-Hajjarah) and Mrs. Alison Elliott, Wales. As well as financial support from various TRC friends.

During the next six months we have no doubt that many more and equally interesting items will be added to the TRC collection.



Detail from a modern hand-embroidered belt for a man's dagger, Yemen, which is now in the TRC collection.

Object of the Month



In April 2012 the TRC started its 'Object of the Month' series, which includes items such as for instance wooden block prints, individual garments or complete outfits. The 'object' will be on display in the TRC workroom for one month as well as appearing on the TRC website. The first two 'objects' were a man's felt coat from Afghanistan and a bridal outfit from India. These were described by the TRC's two interns, Mr. Kyle Harris and Ms. Angelika Karakonstanti (see below) respectively. Other items to be included in this section will be a sewing basket from Jordan (June), a paisley block from India, an outfit from Middle Egypt that was made especially for the TRC and the embroidered belt featured above. Each 'object' will be described by different TRC volunteers and reflect their personal interests.

Object of the Month for June 2012, a southern Syrian sewing basket (TRC collection).

Internships at the TRC

The TRC regularly accepts students as interns at the TRC. To date most interns have been from Leiden University, notably from the departments of archaeology, anthropology and art history, but other departments are also showing an interest in sending their students to the TRC at the Hogewoerd! The period of work varies from a few weeks to three months. Interns are involved in a wide range of activities and learn about the practical aspects of running a small research institute/museum, which has exhibition capabilities. Currently at the TRC are two interns, Mr.

Kayle Harris (USA) and Ms. Angelika Karakonstanti (Greece), who are MA students from the Museum Studies course, Art History Department, Leiden University.

Some on-going research

As noted earlier, the Van Gerwen gift of textiles is currently being documented and researched. This work is being carried out by Mrs. Caroline J. Brasjen-Mudde. The collection includes a range of different types of velvets, woven silk (drawloom and jacquard forms), as well as some painted and embroidered pieces. Many of the pieces have never been displayed to the public and will be of great interest to all those interested in textile history and technology. Mrs. Brasjen-Mudde is hard at work preparing a catalogue and exhibition about these and related textiles, both of which should be available by the spring of 2013.

Mr. Koen Berghuijs (Dept of Archaeology, Leiden University) is starting work on the identification of archaeological textiles and their fibres, using various staining and microscopic techniques. This is part of the TRC's on-going plan to build up this aspect of textile research at its premises on the Hogewoerd. It is the intention that the results of the staining tests will be published in 2013. Mr. Berghuijs is also working with Dr. Olivier Nieuwenhuyse (Leiden University), on a group of textiles and related items that are impressed on pot sherds from various archaeological sites in Syria and Iraq.

Just recently a contract was signed between Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood and Berg Publishers, London (part of the Bloomsbury Press), for the publication of *The Berg Encyclopaedia of Embroidery from the Arab World*. It is the intention to have the manuscript ready by the summer of 2013 and published in the spring of 2014. The book will look at the past, present and future of embroidery in this vast region. The embroidered dresses from Yemen and especially gold thread embroidery from the *Neksha Haraz* workshop in al-Hajjarah, Yemen, which is mentioned above, will be included in this publication, as well as numerous other items from throughout the Arab world. Many of these embroidered textiles and garments are part of the TRC's collection.

Supporting the TRC's growth!

All of the TRC's varied work, especially the production of its varied exhibitions, could not take place without the help of financial donations. We would like to ask everyone for help, whether through a personal contribution in the TRC's donation box, or via its bank account. Donations, for example, can be made over to the TRC ING bank account 2982359 in the name of the Textile Research Centre, Leiden.

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

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