



View from the Fringe

Newsletter of the New England Rug Society



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www.ne-rugsociety.org

February Meeting: Lauren Whitley at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

NERS member Lauren Whitley, curator in the Textile and Fashion Arts Department of the MFA, will lead NERS members on a special tour of the much-touted American Wing of the museum, showing us textiles on display in twenty of the new galleries: pre-conquest Andean weaving, Navajo blankets, colonial Boston needlework, nineteenth-century quilts, and modernist furnishing fabrics. In addition, we will view four important Caucasian rugs on exhibition in the upper colonnade area of the museum.

Those attending should park in the surface lot nearest the Fenway, off Museum Road. If this lot is full, park in the garage opposite. For directions and rates see www.mfa.org/visit/getting-here/parking. Museum parking is expensive, so carpooling is highly advised!

Use the Fenway Entrance of the museum (between the giant baby-head sculptures!), where Julia will distribute tickets to those who are not MFA members. MFA members should get their free-with-membership tickets at the ticket-sales counter. Plan to gather in the Sharf Information Center, just beyond the ticketing area, before 7:00 p.m. Lauren will meet us there at 7:00 and begin the tour.

In the event of a large crowd, we will split into two groups, with Lauren leading half of us at a time through

the American Wing galleries and Julia stationed at the carpet display. The Textile and Fashion Arts Department will host a coffee-and-pastries reception in their office area following the tour.

All who plan to attend MUST contact Julia at juliabailey@rcn.com or (only if you don't use email) 781-254-7677 by Friday, January 21.

February Meeting Details

Date: February 4

Time: 7:00 PM tour begins!

Place: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Directions: www.mfa.org/visit/getting-here

Parking: Off Museum Road: surface lot nearest the Fenway Entrance of the museum.

Entry: Fenway Entrance.

Admission: MFA members should get their admission tickets from ticket sales. Julia will distribute tickets to NERS attendees who are not MFA members.

Gathering point: Sharf Information Center, just beyond ticketing area of the Fenway Entrance.

March Meeting: Richard Laursen on

Color and Age: What Can Dye Analysis Tell Us about Uzbek Suzanis?

Our March speaker will address some common textile mysteries familiar to all of us: what is the source of a dye used in a textile? How can we determine whether a dye is synthetic or natural? If it is synthetic, what could it tell us about the textile's age?

Richard Laursen, a retired Boston University chemistry professor, will discuss these questions in his audience-friendly talk on Uzbek suzanis, illustrated with photographs from his travels in Western China and Uzbekistan, and the textiles he saw there.

Richard first became interested in dye analysis of textiles when he visited Western China where he saw the famous mummies and textiles that had been buried

for 3,000 years. Upon returning to Boston, he adapted techniques of analytical chemistry to identify the plants used for making the dyes in those ancient textiles. Later he used these same techniques to differentiate between natural and synthetic dyes he found in suzanis in Uzbekistan museum collections.

Our March NERS meeting will be held at a new location, the UNA Senior Living Community in Somerville just, behind 405 Alewife Brook Parkway. If you use Mapquest or another GPS system, enter **1 Capen Court, Somerville, MA 02144** to get directions.

See details on page 6.



November Meeting: Stefano Ionescu on Tuduc Fakes Reviewed by Jim Adelson

On November 5th, Stefano Ionescu spoke to our group about the acts and skills of the famed Romanian rug forger, Teodor Tuduc. Stefano has just published a book titled *Handbook of Fakes by Tuduc*, and he shared some of the main themes and examples during the course of his talk.

Tuduc lived a long and colorful life, from 1888 to 1983. He was already working in the rug trade in Budapest by 1910, building up both his knowledge and his skills. In 1914 there was a major exhibition of Turkish Rugs from Transylvania. The catalog from this exhibition was a fruitful source of models and inspirations for fakes.

After World War I, Tuduc moved back to Bucharest. At the time, Bucharest was a main trading point on the route from Istanbul to Europe. Tuduc was a genius as a restorer, and during this period, fragments were easily available to work with.

Stefano showed a picture of the workshop that Tuduc operated from 1931 to 1945. According to Tuduc's license, there were four looms in the workshop. Stefano estimates that, based on four looms, perhaps 150 to 250 fakes were made during this period.

Tuduc's audacity and fraud extended beyond the creation of the rugs themselves. Emil Schmutzler had published a book entitled *Altorientalische Teppiche in Siebenbürgen* in 1933. Tuduc followed this up by creating his own book titled *Antike Orientteppiche aus Siebenbürgen*. Tuduc created a completely fictitious author for his book, with the scholarly sounding name of Prof. Dr. Otto Ernst. The book touted an association with the famous Black Church; this association was completely fabricated. And Tuduc also included pictures of pieces he'd created in the book, to give them more legitimacy and desirability. According to Stefano, the entire purpose of the book was to enable the profitable sale of his forgeries. Stefano commented "someone who is doing a book of fakes is capable of anything."

Stefano illustrated a number of Tuduc fakes, pointing out their sources. He started with a Holbein-pattern rug. This example picked up details from the major border of the first rug that had appeared in the 1914

catalog. In another example, Stefano showed another Holbein rug that had also been exhibited in Budapest in 1914, and a Tuduc fake of the rug that is currently part of the collection at the Nickel Arts Museum in Calgary. In talking about this pair, Stefano outlined a couple of characteristics of Tuduc fakes. First, all of the fakes are complete rugs, although Tuduc sometimes expended effort to create the appearance of wear. Second, Tuduc rugs have perfect corner resolution, where the originals are almost never perfectly resolved in the corners. Unfortunately, there is no specific structural marker that identifies a Tuduc rug—Tuduc was too good and too varied in his use of structures and wools to provide a giveaway of this kind. He did, however, use synthetic dyes in many cases.

Tuduc worked with a number of different designs. Stefano showed an example of a Lotto carpet that Tuduc had used as a basis for several copies with different variations of armorial crests from a Genoese noble family. At least one such example was included in Tuduc's book, to give more credibility to such carpets.

Tuduc's skill as a restorer sometimes gave him unique access. Stefano mentioned a genuine antique rug with the *çintamani* design in the museum in Bucharest on which Tuduc had done restoration work. Tuduc then proceeded to create fakes with the *çintamani* design, based on that example, and also on another one published in 1909 by Neugebauer and Orendi in their book *Handbuch der orientalischen Teppichkunde*. One of the Tuduc fakes using the *Çintamani* design is now part of the collection at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.

The so-called bird rug design is perhaps the one most closely associated with Tuduc. Stefano showed an example of a "bird" rug published in the 1914 catalog, from the Lutheran Church in Biertan in Transylvania. He then showed a Tuduc piece with the same design, which famed collector Joseph McMullan acquired and then donated to the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Regarding this rug, Stefano commented that Tuduc was so skilled that he even wove in "old" repairs.

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November Meeting

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Tuduc made a number of fakes based on various prayer rug designs. Stefano showed an example of a double-niche prayer rug that had been published in the 1914 catalog, and then copied by Tuduc. In another piece, Tuduc took a column-rug field from one piece and combined it with the major border from a different rug. In yet another case, Tuduc had done the restoration on a genuine rug that was published in Schmutzler's book, but then proceeded to make a copy of the rug as well.

Stefano made clear that not all of the Tuduc fakes are likely to have been produced by Tuduc personally.

He had other weavers employed in his workshop to produce so many pieces. Also, some of these people spun off to do their own work.

Tuduc's creative if deceitful tactics didn't stop with the weaving, either. He used similar techniques to sell his rugs, including planting his rugs in the castles of impoverished noblemen, to give a background and provenance to the rugs. He also shipped rugs to Istanbul and Egypt to sell there, further from their Romanian origin.

Our thanks to Stefano Ionescu for his glimpses into the world of the superbly talented if less than honest Teodor Tuduc!

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Top left: Details of authentic "bird" rug, Lutheran Church, Biertan, Romania; and Tuduc copy at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY



Bottom left: Lotto rug, workshop of Tuduc; typical Tuduc with borders showing corner resolution, which does not occur on Anatolian rugs.

Published as authentic in *Antike Orienteppiche aus Siebenbürgen*, authored under the fictitious name of Prof. Dr. Otto Ernst



Top right: Detail of authentic çintamani design rug

Bottom right: çintamani design rug, workshop of Tuduc, Brukenthal Museum, Sibiu, Romania





November Meeting

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Top left: Double-niche
“Transylvanian”
rug, Western
Anatolia, early
17th c. Exhibited
in Budapest in
1914. Museum
of Applied Arts,
Budapest.

Top right:
Workshop of
Tuduc. Private
collection,
Budapest.



Bottom left:
Single-niche
“Transylvanian”
rug, Western
Anatolia, early
17th c. Exhibited
in Budapest in
1914.

Brukenthal
Museum, Sibiu,
Romania.

Bottom right:
Workshop of
Tuduc. Exhib-
ited at Sartirana
Textile Arts Fair,
2008



We Need Your Ideas for Future NERS Programs!

We need your help in planning the NERS 2011-2012 program.

— What program(s) did you especially enjoy in the last few years?

— What is your favorite part of the NERS meetings?

— Do you have suggestions for a speaker or topic for next year?

Please email us at: annierich@att.net or juliabailey@rcn.com or write a note to give us at the next meeting.

We are looking forward to your input,

Upcoming Rug Events

Future NERS 2010/11 Meetings:

Apr 15: Gary Lind-Sinanian on *Caspar Pilobosian's collection of Caucasian rugs* (ALMA, Watertown)

May 21: Picnic and Show & Tell (Gore Place, Waltham).

Auctions (major carpet sales in bold):

Grogan, Dedham, 2/13

Nagel, Stuttgart, 3/22

Christie's, London, 4/5

Skinner, Boston, 5/7.

Exhibitions and Fairs:

Carpets on view at the MFA: The Museum of Fine

Arts, Boston, is now exhibiting four important classical carpets from the Caucasus. Displayed in the upper colonnade area of the museum. Until April 2011.

Small weavings of South Persian nomads: On-line exhibition on the NERS website, consisting of the pieces from the Ann Nicholas & Rich Blumenthal collection shown at ACOR 8, Boston, 2006. Go to www.ne-rugsociety.org and click on *Gallery*.

Conferences:

ICOC 12, Stockholm, 6/16-19/2011. For information visit www.icoc2011stockholm.se. There will be pre- and post-conference tours to Copenhagen and St. Petersburg, respectively.

We welcome new members: Shawn Corrigan, Karen Phillips

Newsletter contributors and helpers: Yon Bard (editor), Jim Adelson, Julia Bailey, Dora Bard, Linda Hamilton, Ann Nicholas.

Comments/contributions/for sale ads to: Yonathan Bard, doryon@rcn.com

The New England Rug Society is an informal, non-profit organization of people interested in enriching their knowledge and appreciation of antique oriental rugs and textiles. Its meetings are held six to eight times a year. Annual membership dues are: Single \$45, Couple \$65, Supporting \$90, Patron \$120, Student \$25. Membership information or renewal forms can be obtained on our website www.ne-rugsociety.org, or by writing to **New England Rug Society, P.O. Box 290393, Charlestown, MA 02129**, calling Jim Sampson at 508-429-5512, or emailing him at jahome22@gmail.com.

NER 2010/11 Steering Committee:

Jim Adelson

Robert Alimi

Julia Bailey (co-chair)

Yonathan Bard

Linda Hamilton

Tom Hannaher

Mark Hopkins

Lloyd Kannenberg

Ann Nicholas (co-chair)

Gillian Richardson

Jim Sampson

Jeff Spurr



March Meeting Details

Date: Friday, March 11

Time: 7:30 PM

Place: **UNA Senior Living Community**, 405 Alewife Brook Parkway, Somerville.

The meeting room is in the first building. Ask for directions to the room at the reception desk

Non-members fee: \$10 fee

Directions: For GPS or Mapquest directions enter 1 Capen Court, Somerville, MA 02144.

From Rte. 2: Take Rte. 2 East to the exit for Rte. 3/Rte. 16 North near Cambridge. Proceed 1.5 miles following the signs for Rte. 16 to a roundabout. Take the first exit (Capen St.). Proceed a hundred feet and park in either parking lot to the right.

From Rte. 95 (128): Take the exit for Rte. 2 East and follow the directions above.

From Rte. 93N (coming from the south): Take exit 31, Rte. 16 Mystic Valley Parkway
Proceed 1.9 miles to the roundabout. Take the 3rd exit (Capen Street) and follow the directions above.

From Rte. 93S (coming from the north): Take exit 32 Rte. 60 toward Medford Square and Malden.
Proceed 0.2 miles to the roundabout and take the first exit toward Rte 60. Proceed 0.4 miles and merge with Mystic Valley Parkway toward Cambridge/Arlington. Proceed 1.2 miles to roundabout. Take 3rd exit (Capen Street) and follow the directions above.



New England Rugby Society

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