

'A very rare and fine work of art'

In the Boston Museum of Fine Arts there is an oriental carpet now believed to be a product of Moghul India of the early 17th century. In 1882 Morris examined this carpet and his opinion on it, in his letter to Mr. H.H. Richardson, now also at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, is given below. The carpet was presented to the Museum by Mrs Ames in the name of Frederick L. Ames in 1893. Its dimensions are: length 8ft. width 5ft 1in.

The carpet and the letter are reproduced by permission of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts through the kind assistance of Mr. Larry Salmon, its Curator of Textiles.

The Manor House
Kelmscott
Nr Lechlade.
July ~~12~~ 11th 1882

Dear Mr. Richardson

I got here too late for the post, last night; but hope that my letter will reach you in time.

I examined carefully Messrs. Durlacher & Marks' Carpet: it is a very rare and fine work of art: it belongs to the highest class of this kind of wares, of which necessarily very few specimens are left, and is a noble example of that class: I suppose it to be a work of about the middle of the 16th century; say 1540; but it might as well be earlier: it is in extraordinarily good condition, there is an unimportant mend or two in it, & the black, of which there is but a little, has been eaten down to the warp by the chemical action of its dye, as always happens when a carpet is of this age: the rest of the surface is just as it came from the loom, the colour of the carpet is as perfect as these things generally are; its design striking and original as a piece of drawing. The design is a most curious example of that mixture of Persian & Chinese that is found in the Persian art of the time of Shah Abbas the Great, when there was so much intercourse between the two countries by the overland caravan trade; and the carpet must

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be considered from the historical point of view as a most valuable specimen of this art; a very marked link between the design of the two peoples: as a curiosity I should say that is unique: I should add that its manufacture leaves nothing to be desired: Altogether it must rank very high among the half dozen of these splendid pieces which have been in the market of late years, and it seems to me simply invaluable.

Might I venture to suggest that some record of it should be made & if possible published for the benefit of students of art: some of the chromo-lithographers are so good nowadays that a reproduction of a good & careful drawing of it would be of great service to those who are interested in such matters.

I am Dear Mr. Richardson

Yours very truly

William Morris

H.H. Richardson, Esq^{re}



The 'very fine and rare work of art'