



N. VROUYR
ANNO 1917



Agra

Circa: circa 1900

Poona (Yeraoda jail ?), India

around 1900

Indian rugs produced during the second half of the 19th century are not a natural sequel to the Moghuls. There is not any direct link with village craftsmanship. The Moghul rugs, made in the court manufactories, already disappeared at the end of the 18th century.

The villagers were mostly making cotton flat weaves (dhurries). Very few knotted rugs were to be found on the marketplaces.

Only about a hundred years later, commercial motivations revived a production of hand knotted rugs. From 1860 on, the British rulers started to install looms in several jails (Agra, Amritsar, Poona, etc.) and prisoners were trained to become skilful weavers. It became obvious that it was easier to maintain discipline and order when the prisoners had a daily occupation.

Indian rugs were shown at international exhibitions in London and Chicago (1895). Around 1900 the

demand grew stronger, the production increased and inevitably quality became poorer.

This carpet is interesting because it is one of the few pieces in this family with a design inspired by the rugs of the Adraskand valley (Afghanistan), manufactured by the Timuri and Baluch tribes. Like most tribal rugs they were small. These Afghan goods reached India through the Sindh province. This piece was most probably made in Poona's Yeraoda jail. The jail was known for its excellent quality and it hardly produced more than 25 pieces in a whole year.