Connected Transoceanic Histories of Printed Cottons

The Metamorphosis from *Kalamkari* to *Sits*

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Cover image: Hindeloopen women wearing *Klederdracht*, Circa 1924. (Source: Fries Museum)

Abstract

This thesis is set in the realm of textile history, and explores the connections between Golconda *Kalamkari* from the South-eastern coast of India and *Sits*/Chintz from Europe in order to establish the social and political connections that interplayed between them. It establishes that the *Sits* consumed in the Dutch Republic from the 17th century onwards is a descendant of the Indian *Kalamkari*. This thesis combines extensive archival research of preserved textile fragments and pre-existent but scattered academic literature in the fields of colonial studies, post-colonial studies, textile history, fashion design and even architecture to establish a comprehensive picture of *Kalamkari*'s transformation into *Sits* by the means of the Connected Histories framework. This thesis consists of four chapters that have been divided thematically to address each aspect of the research question with the aim of establishing the role of painted cotton textiles in the colonial trade, its domestic significance in India, its European reception, and the role of mercantilism and consumer preferences in its adoption into usage among nobility and later, common people alike in the Dutch Republic.

Ultimately, this thesis can be viewed as a comprehensive work that collates various fragmented aspects of colonial era textile history under one topical study, hence providing for various points of views of stakeholders who shaped the era of trade, social consumption and political rule from the mid-17th century to early 19th century.

Key Words: *Kalamkari*, Indian Cottons, *Sits*, Textile History, VOC, Connected Histories, Botanical Designs, Floral Design, Dutch Textiles, British Textiles

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1. Introduction

Printed and painted cotton textiles gained immense popularity in Europe following the gradual expansion of trade routes with India in the 17th century onwards. One such type of cotton, Calico, in its original usage is a term used to describe woven unbleached cotton textiles. It is naturally off-white in color, and was rather inexpensive in its basic form due to its unfinished texture. Ideal for absorbing dyes, Calico's patterned iteration, the Chintz (*Sits* in Dutch) – identifiable for its intricately painted and printed floral motifs, became a coveted textile among the gentry across European cities from the 16th Century, later trickling down to common classes by the mid-18th century.[1]

The term Chintz is derived from the Sanskritic root word *Chitr* – directly translating to 'picture' referring to the illustrated nature of this textile. The earliest iteration of *Sits* is derived from the *Kalamkari* fabric of Masulipatnam and Golconda along the Coromandel Coast. Regions in proximation of the Southeastern coast of India i.e. the Coromandel Coast were renowned for its hand-painted cottons. Called *Kalamkari*, their intricate motifs have come to be considered the posted child of the finest Indian textile art. The term *Kalamkari* translates to 'the art of the pen' since its craftsmen painted in the detail by hand using a bamboo pen.[2] The Dutch *Sits* is an evolved version of the Golconda *Kalamkari*, a printed and painted variety of cotton textile whose floral motifs in reds, yellows, browns and blues first caught fancy of the European traders visiting Indian port cities in the 1500s.

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[1] Maxine Berg, "'The Merest Shadows of a Commodity': Indian Muslins for European Markets 1750–1800," in *Goods from the East, 1600–1800: Trading Eurasia*, ed. Maxine Berg et al., Europe's Asian Centuries (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 119–34, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137403940_8.

[2] Soma Ghosh, "Retracing *Kalamkari*'s Journey: From Classic to a Contemporary Textile Art," *The Chitrolekha Journal on Art and Design* 2, no. 2 (2018): 5–29.

There is early evidence of printed cottons - referred to as "Callicowte Clothe" being gifted and traded among royalty and nobility like the French in Marseilles, the Belgians in Antwerp, the Dutch in Amersfoort, the British in Southampton and other such European Entrepot cities predating large scale Dutch and British commercial ventures.[3] While *Sits* is a hyper-generalized term that refers to any variety of Indian cottons whose prints were botanical in nature, examining samples of Dutch *Sits*, both manufactured in Coromandel and the Netherlands displays great similarities with *Kalamkari*, a theory that concurs with VOC strongholds and Dutch import records.[4]

This thesis will use two terms to refer to the aforementioned floral printed cotton textile:

Kalamkari– Cloth made in India in its pre-colonial iteration, essentially produced for the domestic market prior to Dutch and English commissioning.

***Sits* (Chintz in the English Context)**– Cloth produced in India as per European commissions for export, and those produced in Europe that replicated these designs.

Adding to the existing body of knowledge on *Kalamkari* and *Sits* was deemed necessary for several reasons; for one, it is one of the farthest-reaching examples of entrenchment of a foreign object and aesthetic in European consumption

[3] James Gairdner and R H Brodie, eds., "Henry VIII: February 1541, 1-10," in *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 16-1540-1541* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1898), http://www.british-history.ac.uk/letters-papers-hen8/vol16/pp229-246; Olivier Raveux, "Fashion and Consumption of Painted and Printed Calicoes in the Mediterranean during the Later Seventeenth Century: The Case of Chintz Quilts and Banyans in Marseilles," *Textile History* 45, no. 1 (May 1, 2014): 49–67, https://doi.org/10.1179/0040496914Z.00000000037.

[4] Om Prakash, trans., "A List of Clothes and Other Items Required from the Coast of Coromandel Annually for the Moluccas, Amboina, Banda, Java, Patani, Sian and the Netherlands. Prepared at Jakarta, 16 July 1619.," in *The Dutch Factories in India 1624-1627: A Collection of Dutch East India Company Documents Pertaining to India*, vol. 2 (1984: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, n.d.), 101–3.

culture, with the first imports of *Sits* being as far back as early 1500s.[5] It is in some sense a precursor to the currently relevant discourse of cultural appropriation, appreciation and readaptation of art and culture in a transoceanic manner. In case of the Dutch Republic, the Indian *Kalamkari* was first was greatly favoured by European traders and gentry for its vibrancy and variety that was hitherto unknown in Europe. Eventually, as demands rose and stipulated requirements changed, the fabric's identity as Chintz or *Sits* as understood by the West overtook its identity as *Kalamkari*, and underwent various design changes. As time passed and the textile became increasingly affordable to the common folk, its standing in the society changed from being a conspicuous product to an integral part of traditional garbs including the traditional Dutch costume, *Klederdracht*. The changes made by its introduction to the Dutch fashion sphere, and its journey as a 'global' product vis a vis its highly localized origin is the focus of this research.

1.1 Research Questions

Sits found mass popularity in the Dutch Republic following its abundant supply in the late 17th century onwards due to its variety in aesthetic as opposed to the admittedly monotonous patterns offered by wools and linens.[6] Observing samples of Indian made *Sits* from the 17th Century shows varied design sensibilities with Arab, Persian and Hindu influences. Of the various types of Chintz exported to Europe, the ones inspired by the floral *Kalamkari* from the

[5] Olivier Raveux, "The Orient and the Dawn of Western Industrialization: Armenian Calico Printers from Constantinople in Marseilles (1669–1686)," in *Goods from the East, 1600–1800: Trading Eurasia*, ed. Maxine Berg et al., Europe's Asian Centuries (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 77–91.; Maxine Berg, "Introduction," in *Goods from the East, 1600–1800: Trading Eurasia*, ed. Maxine Berg et al., Europe's Asian Centuries (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 1–6.

[6] Beverly Lemire and Giorgio Riello, "East & West: Textiles and Fashion in Early Modern Europe," *Journal of Social History* 41, no. 4 (2008): 887–916.

Coromandel Coast found great popularity in the Dutch Republic.[7] Further, the Dutch East Indian Company (VOC) and the British East India Company (EIC) had begun commissioning designs for exporting into Netherlands in the mid-1600s when the textile was still in the process of gaining momentum.[8] As result, the *Sits* that were consumed at the peak of its popularity were largely variations of *Kalamkari* featuring Dutch and English-commissioned designs.

Hence in the process, *Kalamkari*, a south Indian cotton with nomadic origins and Islamic patronage, travelled intercontinentally in the days preceding globalization as we know it today, and integrated itself into the wardrobes and homes of European men and women in a manner that intertwined culture, society, trade and imperialism. All these cumulative factors lead us to the following research question:

What influenced the Golconda *Kalamkari* in the process of its evolution into *Sits* for European markets?

It is already well known that the *Sits* that was popularized as 'Indian' in textile history was not authentically Indian to begin with. Arab and Persian influence as result of Islamic patronage is considered a cornerstone of the floral aesthetic adopted by the Golconda *Kalamkari* in India, as will be elaborated in Chapter 3.[9] Evidence from existing literature also suggests that migrant Armenian workmen and merchants played a critical role in bringing technical knowledge of Calico printing to Europe- first to Marseilles, and then to the rest of Europe including Amersfoort.[10] Due to their historical trade and settlement relations

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[7] Sinnappah Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies, and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast, 1650-1740* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986).
[8] Beverly Lemire, "Revising the Historical Narrative: India, Europe and the Cotton Trade, 1300-1800," in *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 205–226.
[9] Ghosh, "Retracing *Kalamkari*'s Journey: From Classic to a Contemporary Textile Art," 5–29.
[10] Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 1-28; Raveux, "Fashion and Consumption of Painted and Printed Calicoes in the Mediterranean during the Later Seventeenth Century," 49-67.

with the Ottoman Empire and Gujarat on the Indian west coast, they are assumed to have had access to India or Indian merchants to learn the skill. While all this information exists independently, my thesis will attempt to compile it into a cohesive story by answering the following sub-questions:

1. How did the VOC's trade network with Asia draw its attention to *Kalamkari*?
2. Why did the Golconda *Kalamkari* style become popular over other varieties of Indian cottons exported to the Dutch Republic?
3. What cultural influences played a role in the perception of this textile by the Dutch?
4. How did the preference for *Sits* influence cotton textile market opportunities in the Dutch Republic?

By tracing the fabric's journey as Golconda *Kalamkari* from India to the Dutch *Sits* across the late 17th and 18th centuries, this thesis focuses on the various socio-economic and political factors that led to this particular style of textile gaining prominence over the rest. Despite its identity as an Indian fabric, its inspiration is diverse, and is almost symbolic of 'the Orient' as a whole. Upon its popularity in the Dutch Republic and the rest of Europe, and subsequent domestic production, printed designs and patterns further evolved. These patterns were apparently more up to date with the consumer preferences of the times than the ones imported from India were.[11] While initially considered a coveted item of luxury, *Sits*' trickle down into the common peoples' homes and wardrobes was as result of affordability of mass imports and the novel machine-made cloth.[12] The Indian identity associated with the cloth, its rich historical influences, its significance as a product of one of the richest colonies of Europe and the social identity building around the fabric as a symbol of transoceanic

[11] Raveux, "The Orient and the Dawn of Western Industrialization," 77–91.
[12] Chloe Wigston Smith, "'Callico Madams': Servants, Consumption, and the Calico Crisis," *Eighteenth Century Life - Duke University Press* 31 (2007): 29–55.

movement of culture as part of material consumption is presented over the course of this thesis.

1.2 Theoretical Concepts

This thesis' research is primarily grounded in understanding how *Kalamkari* from Coromandel, an innately Indian product with Persian and Arabic design influences travelled to Europe- first to Portugal and then the rest of Europe, and managed to integrate itself as part of the tradition of the place. Superficially speaking, this topic carries the potential to be studied via the comparative histories' methodology due to the range of existing dichotomies– East and West, Europe and Asia, the first users of *Kalamkari* vis a vis the Dutch users of *Sits*, etc. This methodology has been considered unsuitable for my research due to the fact that its practice of compartmentalizing aspects of histories and analyzing it against each other is counterproductive for the process of tracing the journey of an object. Studies of colonialism and its products from a subaltern perspective, especially in the realm of post-colonial studies, been largely marked with the creation of dichotomies and vilification of the European Empire, and laying the umbrella categorization of Orientalism over every aspect of the colonies' products that found its way to Europe. Orientalism is commonly referred to as a "political doctrine"[13] that propagated the idea that the West was superior to the East. Simultaneously, it also argues that despite this strict dichotomy created between the two geographical entities, the constant appropriation, exploitation and misrepresentation of the East as a means of voyeuristic and exoticized social apparatus was prevalent in the 'Occident', or the West. For this, I think it is important to first demolish the idea of history being specific to spatial boundaries. Further, the narrative of the West versus East also needs to be reconsidered. While exoticizing of the East was a

[13] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, First edition. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

definitive and widespread practice in Europe, its dissection will not be focus here.

For these purposes, this thesis studies the simultaneous emergence of the exports of the textile to its social integration through the lens of connected histories. Focusing my interpretation of the terms 'connected histories', 'shared histories' and 'global histories' from the works *From Tagus to the Ganges: Explorations in Connected History* by Sanjay Subrahmanyam and its extended commentary *Global History, Connected Histories: A Shift of Historiographical Scale* by Caroline Douki and Philippe Minard, my research aims to explore the circularity of Chintz from a common Indian textile, its evolution as the recipient of various cultural influences, its reception in foreign lands and further to a common item of tradition in the Dutch Republic and beyond.

Academic texts exploring the nature of connected histories in the colonial context are scarce; in order to explore an innovative avenue in the field of colonial history, textile history and cross-cultural hybridization, this thesis adopts the Material Culture theory and methodology in order to study pieces of *Kalamkari* and *Sits* preserved in museums and open source private collections in order to visually ascertain and present the influences and changes adapted by the textile as it absorbed various cultural influences over the course of the 17th and 18th Centuries.

1.2.1 Connected Histories

This thesis aims to create a parallel narrative along the lines of Sanjay Subrahmanyam's Connected Histories theory. A "specific implement of the global approach,"[14] this theory proposes that history be examined as a

[14] Caroline Douki and Philippe Minard, "Global History, Connected Histories: A Shift of Historiographical Scale?," *Revue Dhistoire Moderne et Contemporaine* No 54-4bis, no. 5 (December 12, 2007): 7–21.

comprehensive entity from a macro perspective by erasing the importance of imperialist (or nationalist) borders, and observing a cultural phenomenon as a whole. Subrahmanyam is of the opinion that instead of assigning the circumstance surrounding the "meeting of two fixed, stable, and pre-existent cultures to produce an intermediate one,"[15] it is more apt to define cultural history through examining the web of connections, both fraught by violence and acculturation that shaped societies over time. He uses several examples featuring the intermingling of the Mughal, Ottoman, Chinese, Javanese, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and English imperial and commercial forces to elaborate on the idea that the developments that took place socially, culturally and/or economically across geographically separate places are not independent of each other, but instead is as result of the constant interconnectedness through the "arenas of circulation"[16] i.e., imperialism, trade, religion or even literature and art.

Applying this thought to my research, one can indeed observe *Kalamkari* and *Sits* under the purvey of connected histories. Its circulation from the southeast of India to Europe, and eventually its widespread acceptance and usage in the Dutch Republic can be considered the result of trade, imperialism and culture, with each element falling into place in a manner that facilitated this movement successfully. As will be explained below, *Kalamkari* itself is not an 'purely' Indian product, with the presumption that anything whose origin can be historicized withing the geographical boundaries of India as 'purely' Indian; *Kalamkari* is heavily influenced by Persian and Arab aesthetic, and this in turn underwent change over time as result of factors including imperial patronage from the Deccan Sultanate, Islamic influences, etc., both factors that align with Subrahmanyam's "arenas of circulation."[17] When this in turn reached Europe, it

[15] Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "On the Window That Was India," in *From Tagus to the Ganges: Explorations in Connected History* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012): 12.
[16] Subrahmanyam: 9.
[17] Subrahmanyam, 9.

underwent further modifications, giving rise to Chintz/*Sits* that then captured the Western imagination.[18]

The aim of studying colonial history and its products through the connected histories framework is not to justify it or to present the consequences of colonialism in favorable light; no theoretical modification is going to change the truth that colonialism was indeed an exploitative entity whose several adverse issues plague post-colonial economies to this day. Rather, it aims to create a holistic understanding of shared global practices, both cultural and consumptive that transcends geographical bounds. Placing it in the scope of this thesis means that instead of focusing on *Sits* as a purely 'Oriental' product of colonialism and adopting the narration of lost cultures and appropriated signifiers, I have assigned *Sits* as the protagonist of its journey as a well-integrated product two cross-continental societies. This thesis hopes to retell the story of *Sits* as a product of connected trade and cultural histories in the global history context, and not an Orientalist product of colonialism alone.

1.2.2 Material Culture Theory

The study of artifacts and objects of a particular time period in order to ascertain its role as a tool in the socio-cultural map of its era can be referred to as material culture.[19] Material culture theory is based on the interlinkages between people and things they consumed, and is used to ascertain their social norms in this case by the use of the object i.e. the textile itself, as a source of study.

While admittedly an abstract mode of study due to the unregulated avenues of interpretation presented by inference from material object, for the purpose of

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[18] J. Burton-Page, "Review: Origins of Chintz; with a Catalogue of Indo-European Cotton-Paintings in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 35, no. 3 (October 1972): 647–48.

[19] Jules David Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, no. 1 (1982): 1–19.

this thesis, the scope of this study was focused on the nature of prints and final uses of the *Sits* textile. The textile carries a certain associative value with the past; be it its origin steeped in folklore, or its eventual usage as a product of the colony in the Dutch textile culture part of the *Klederdracht*. As elaborated below, the advent of *Indoiserie* boosted *Sits'* popularity in Europe, and this consumption was quite cross cultural and multipurpose in nature.[20] This will sure have an interesting story to tell in terms of the evolution of its "contextual identity"[21] from a south Indian cotton textile to the most favored style of cotton fabric in the Netherlands.[22] This story has been unfolded through my research with the aid of material culture theory. This thesis reimagines the journey of *Sits* from a nomadic Indian art form specific to the Golconda and Masulipatnam regions of the Coromandel, to a commonly prevailing component of the Dutch costuming tradition.[23] Several textile fragments and preserved items are interwoven through the course of the thesis to supplement my study about *Kalamkari* and *Sits*. Pieces of *Kalamkari*, early European imports of *Sits* as well as associated textiles including Persian carpets, Turkish upholstery, European bedcovers and British embroidery work have been studies to establish possible sources of influence betwixt the textile designs that resulted in the continued acceptance of *Sits* in the Dutch Republic and Europe in general.

While connected histories and material culture analysis are the foundational aspects of this thesis, it has to be noted that the body of content is not oft juxtaposed with theories regarding the same. The intention of this is to create a holistic story of the textiles' socio-political context without theory-heavy

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[20] Beverly Lemire, "Domesticating the Exotic: Floral Culture and the East India Calico Trade with England, c. 1600–1800," *Textile: Cloth and Culture* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 2003): 64–85.
[21] Nicholas Thomas, "Material Culture and Colonial Power: Ethnological Collecting and the Establishment of Colonial Rule in Fiji," *Man* 24, no. 1 (1989): 41–56, https://doi.org/10.2307/2802546.
[22] Lemire, "Domesticating the Exotic."
[23] Chris Nierstrasz, "The Consumption of Textiles: Return Cargoes and Variety," in *Rivalry for Trade in Tea and Textiles: The English and Dutch East India Companies (1700–1800)*, ed. Chris Nierstrasz, Europe's Asian Centuries (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 154–89, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137486530_6.

interruptions. Furthermore, neither material culture nor connected histories are formalized historical theories in the same manner as comparative history or Orientalism theory for example. As result it was decided that it made for better content if it was only implied across the body of study that both these frameworks are being implemented.

1.3 Sources

This thesis has employed several primary and secondary sources for research purposes. There is no dearth of work published in this field due to the extensive volume of background literature in the fields of colonial trade, Calico and *Sits* consumption and observations of its assimilation as a cultural product in the lives of the Dutch people. Translated publications of collections of VOC correspondences and archive images form the largest bulk of material used for the study, including books, journal articles, research papers, conference papers, among others. For the study of material goods, textile artefacts from the digitized collections of the Rijksmuseum, Fries Museum, MET Museum, British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum and the Royal Ontario Museum. While Indian museums including the Salar Jung Museum, Calico Museum and the National Museums do possess considerable *Kalamkari* and *Sits* collections, their collections are not digitized, hence making it impossible for me to study preserved samples of textiles from India itself. All the Indian-origin textiles studied in this thesis are from European and American museums, which makes it an unfortunate limitation since it is possible that I have missed critical resources due to inaccessibility of images as result of the COVID crisis. Similarly, some textiles have been replaced with either contemporary reproductions or pieces from a later time period than intended due to the unavailability of adequately preserved *Kalamkari* textiles from the 17th Century or earlier on open-source platforms. Of course, due diligence in the form of

cross-referencing these sample with textile history literature as well as personal observations have been made to eliminate error and false claims.

Another primary resource that has helped me explore the nature of linkages between the Netherlands and India through the VOC are the existing correspondences by Dutch East India Company officials detailing their local observations, trade policies and invoices meant for the India producers. The collected volume of translated letters from VOC officials namely '*The Dutch Factories in India: A Collection of Dutch East India Company Documents Pertaining to India. Volume II (1624–1627)'* by Om Prakash has been studied to fulfil this need. The text contains detailed information including price lists and description of cloth types, trade networks, prevalent colonial opinions and market observations. A conscious attempt was made to create the best possible balance of Western and Indian voices through these sources for a balanced yet adequately critical historiographical knowledge.

1.4 Methodology

My thesis has adopted the qualitative research methodologies of thematic analysis and material culture as a "methodological approach"[24] over the course of study. I will be thematically analyzing textiles and texts in order to establish the shared history of *Kalamkari* and *Sits*. In the present day, both fabrics carry vastly different identities; but they take root from a common space. Using the connected histories theory to create bridges between my primary and secondary texts detailing the trade landscape of the Coromandel Coast, the VOC's Indian presence, its implications on the textile trade, Dutch reception of Indian cottons and its popularization will be the course of action. My aim is not to study production and consumption trends quantitatively, but to ascertain the collective

[24] Giorgio Riello, "Introduction: Global Cotton and Global History," in *Cotton: The Fabric That Made the Modern World* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1–16.

social thought in the form of design influences as a reflection of consumer preferences behind this transoceanic journey through the research of historical context of the time.

Material culture analysis has been applied for the examination of *Kalamkari* and *Sits* samples manufactured in India and in the Europe. The aim of utilizing this method is to study the "objects as evidence of human practices and in the cultural contexts in which those practices emerged."[25]

The selected material samples span across four categories- *Kalamkari* produced in Masulipatnam/ Coromandel Coast and Gujarat; *Sits* produced in the Coromandel post 1600s as commissioned by the VOC; *Sits* locally produced in Europe post 1700s; Textiles from external cultures that were possible sources of influence for *Kalamkari* and *Sits.* Visually analyzing these artefacts has been conducted keeping in mind the elements of design motifs, pattern colors and cloth background colors. The aim of this methodology is to present the design influences of *Kalamkari*, and establish its connection with the Dutch *Sits* in a manner that allows for me to reassert the idea that its has indeed evolved from the former. Further, it will also allow me to sufficiently display the changes undergone by the textile over time as result of commissioned designs, consumer preferences and change in manufacturing technologies.

The biggest challenge while adopting qualitative methodology has been the difficulty in accessing required resources due to the restrictions imposed by COVID-19. Historiographical research can be better substantiated by in-person access to records, which was prevented due to travel regulations. In the case of images of aforementioned textiles, I had to settle for the limited number of digitized images of artefacts from the aforementioned museums and archives- all of which are European and American. There is a dearth in digitized textile

[25] Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, "Introduction," in *The Global Lives of Things: The Material Culture of Connections in the Early Modern World* (Routledge, 2015), 11.

collections from the 16th to 18th centuries among Indian museums, which forced me to substitute several key textile samples with contemporary examples as per availability.

Linguistic barriers have been a constant hurdle for me to pass. Due to most important literature on VOC as well as primary sources being in the old Dutch language, it has presented me with difficulties in gathering alternative sources in the English language. Further, several texts for reference, especially publications from India have been out of print, and the current restrictions have made it difficult for me to seek preserved copies of the same.

1.5 Research Gaps and Innovative Aspects

Colonial history is already a well-researched avenue of study; it is unlikely to add new information to the melee through a Master's thesis. Instead, what could be done was to entirely reshape the perception of history by retelling it from a different perspective. This thesis heavily relies of existing literature to portray an image of the past. Works by several renowned historians including Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Giorgio Riello, Beverly Lemire, Sinappah Arasaratnam, Om Prakash, Olivier Raveaux, Chris Nierstrasz, Prasannan Parthasarathi, Maxine Berg, Ilja van Damme, Shakuntala Ramani among others have been studied in order to construct a comprehensive picture of the circumstances surrounding the VOC's entry to India, their trade decisions, the introduction of *Sits* in Europe, its design influences- both Asian and European, and its consequences of the European *Sits* printing innovations in the 18th century onwards. Western accounts of colonial history is often Euro-centric, with cultural influences from India being portrayed as a singular source of inspiration. Textile history oft talks of the 'Indian-inspired' floral motifs in Chintz; this statement banks on the assumption that all of the Indian sub-continent produced a singular product. Over the course of this study, this assumption has been overturned. India is not

a sole source of origin in history. By pulling the lens back to look at the period from the 16th Century, India and its goods of consumption are also in fact an amalgamation of various transoceanic cultures predating colonial presence. Persian, Javanese, Mongolian (Mughal), Chinese and Japanese trade networks played a crucial role in the development of the quintessential 'Indian' design in the first place. By studying this through the Connected Histories framework, the idea that colonial history is not linear or bilateral, but is a complex network of multicultural, political and economic exchanges are revealed. This revelation, when contextualised to Indian cottons and *Kalamkari* textiles specifically, opens an avenue for discussion in a manner not done previously in the field of textile history.

1.6 Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured in a manner that can provide adequate historical context to the VOC's attraction to the East as a profitable source of spices, textiles, ceramics, metals and tea, and the East's response to the same. The first chapter *Establishment of the VOC trading posts in India: Coromandel Coast as the textile stronghold* details the VOC intentions behind discovering and establishing themselves in the Indian peninsula's important coastal regions like the Coromandel Coast. For their settlement, they had to reach agreements between the reigning Indian kings of the region. The political landscape of the time that led up to these agreements are also discussed. This chapter also details the reasons behind the VOC's choice of port cities, and their significance in facilitating cotton textile trade between India, Java, Europe and later even Africa.

The next chapter '*Kalamkari Cottons: History and Identity'* reels back temporally in order to study the cultural context of religion and identity politics surrounding *Kalamkari*'s inception as an art form and later as a textile design.

Its Hindu origins, its eventual Islamic patronage and its consequences of the textile's design and its role in India's medieval and early modern textile export markets are elucidated by the means of relevant photographs of textile fragments and artefacts of the time as available on open-source GLAM platforms. The aim of this chapter is to supplement the largely Eurocentric narrative of colonial era textile trade with the Indian perspective of this textile's place in the pre-colonial social landscape, and how it was influenced by the colonial onset and export agenda.

Both these chapters serve as foundation the next chapter *Sits in Europe: Design Influences and Multiculturality* which in essence, is the focal point of my research. This chapter studies the various design influences embedded into the *Kalamkari* production culture in Golconda, and the inspirational contexts behind these motifs. Photographs of preserved textile samples from the 16th to 18th centuries are studied by establishing linkages between textiles and art forms from the Persian Safavid Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the Mughal Empire, and the Stewart and Victorian era British design sensibilities. While material culture analysis is exercised in both the previous chapters, this unit concentrates the majority of this methodology's application. At this point of *Kalamkari*'s journey, it has already absorbed hybridised design elements from various cultures to manifest as the European *Sits*. European mercantilism then took it upon themselves to adopt, innovate and rebrand these textiles as their own in order to capture the domestic market instead of shipping bullion to India.

The final chapter titled *Europe's Sits Ownership* finally explains Europe's response to the import of *Sits* by the VOC and the EIC, and the steps taken by both entrepreneurs and the government to acknowledge this supply. European production, and the importance of skilled migrant labour in the development of this industry is also explained. Through the process of analysing cultural artefacts of transoceanic societies in this manner, this thesis concludes on the note of the significance of west Asian cultures- specifically Persian and Turkish

in shaping the *Sits*' aesthetic, and the East-West connectivity that resulted in the creation of *Sits* as it is known to this day.

2. Establishment of the VOC Trading Posts in India: Coromandel Coast as the Textile Centre

Before one can dive into the socio-economic and cultural intricacies of Indian printed cottons- *Kalamkari* or *Sits* specifically, it is important to contextualise the prevalent commercial landscape its trade and dissemination took place in. As it widely known, European imperialist forces and their trading companies were the catalysts for introducing goods and cultural practices from the east into the Western societies. The Portuguese arrival in India in the late 15th century set precedent for the longest, most profitable commercial and political expansion of European imperial power eastward. Spices, tea, textiles, metal ores and ceramics were few among the many expensive wares traded between India, China, Japan, Java and Europe from the 16th to the early 20th centuries that created the colonial era as it is known today. This chapter will introduce the agent of trade that made cotton textiles' arrival and integration in the European, and specifically the Dutch consumer conscience possible. By answering the question of how the VOC's trade network with Asia drew its attention to *Kalamkari*, the VOC's arrival in India and the circumstances surrounding the identification of Golconda *Kalamkari* as an apt product for European export has been studied.

2.1 The First European Voyage to Asia- Portuguese Entry to India

The establishment of *Carreira de India* or the Indian sea route from Europe via the Cape of Good Hope (present-day South Africa) by the Portuguese in 1498 set the precedent for economic, social and political developments that would

change the face of trade and maritime history.[26] A Portuguese explorer and nobleman by the name of Vaso da Gama and his crew became the first Europeans to sail to India in May 1498. His arrival at *Kappad*, in the present-day city of Kozhikode (also known as Calicut) in the south Indian state of Kerala was initially not well received due to the disadvantageous trade position of the Portuguese– they had nothing to offer that attracted the reigning *Zamorin* dynasty of the region, whereas they sought prized spices like clove and pepper to take back to Europe.[27] This retribution is often ignored from the annals of history, especially by the European chroniclers like João de Barros of the time, for it would have interrupted the Eurocentric narrative by of their superiority and dominance vis a vis the natives.[28]

Applying the connected histories framework to the oncoming retelling of the establishment of European colonialism is possible only by pointing out that while the Portuguese were militaristically superior, the *Zamorin* and later the Vijayanagara dynasties were also well equipped in this regard. The reason the Portuguese did not find accommodation for trade from the *Zamorins* initially can be credited to the formers' inadequate understanding of the prevalent diplomatic niceties, which involved bearing valuable gifts for the court. Gifting the court with textiles or cattle were perhaps acceptable in Portugal, as in the case of Indian printed cottons in the royal court of Lisbon; but this was insufficient in Indian courts, who were accustomed to gold, silver and ivory gifted in exchange of major favours like that of establishing a trading post in their region.[29] A cultural difference of the time was viewed as a core inadequacy

[26] Maria João Ferreira, "Asian Textiles in the Carreira Da Índia: Portuguese Trade, Consumption and Taste, 1500–1700," *Textile History* 46, no. 2 (July 3, 2015), https://doi.org/10.1080/00404969.2015.1121663: 147–68.
[27] Glenn Joseph Ames, *Vasco Da Gama: Renaissance Crusader* (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2005), 50.
[28] Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "On Indian Views of the Portuguese in Asia, 1500-1700," in *From Tagus to the Ganges: Explorations in Connected History* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 23; Ferreira, "Asian Textiles in the Carreira Da Índia," 150.
[29] Zoltán Biedermann, "Diplomatic Ivories: Sri Lankan Caskets and the Portuguese-Asian Exchange in the Sixteenth Century," in *Global Gifts: The Material Culture of Diplomacy in*

at the hands of the Portuguese by the dominant trader community of *Mappilas* in Calicut, immortalized through their observatory chronicles as in the case of the *Tohfut ul-Mujahideen,* a chronicle written by an observer Zain al Din (whose occupation or motives behind the maintenance of these chronicles are unclear). The chronicle details the Portuguese arrival in Calicut, and speculated their ability to conduct serious trade.[30] Native opinions of the Europeans like these were underrepresented until the mid-20th century, with even late 19th century historians like David Lopes, who translated *Tohfut* first expressing his bias and derision in his annotations.[31] The study of both sides of the coin would provide a better, and a likelier picture of the happening of the era and its future precedents, as in the case of Subramanyam's work on connected histories aims to do.

Regardless, this successful voyage was now proof that India indeed existed, and riches could be brought from it. Several Portuguese *Armadas* or fleets followed eastwards from Europe then onwards, eventually also travelling farther than India to discover Malacca (in present-day Malaysia) in 1509, and then conquering it through militaristic force by 1511.[32] From here, they were systematically able to establish their control over regions of the Indonesian archipelago and trade for spices. Their Indian presence, fraught with great violence against local kingdoms had created for themselves territories along the east and west peninsular coasts to trade in textiles, dyes, spices and even drugs with the Java archipelago and Portugal itself.

Early Modern Eurasia, ed. Zoltán Biedermann, Anne Gerritsen, and Giorgio Riello, Studies in Comparative World History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 93, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108233880.

[30] Shaykh Zainuddin Makhdum, *Tuhfat Al Mujahidin: A Historical Epic of the Sixteenth Century*, trans. S. Muhammad Husayn Nainar (Madras, India: Islamic Book Trust, 1942); Subrahmanyam, "On Indian Views of the Portuguese in Asia, 1500-1700," 30–33.

[31] al-Ma'barī Zain al-Dīn, *Historia dos Portugueses no Malabar*, trans. David Lopes (Lisbon, Portugal: Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa, 1898).

[32] D. R. Sar Desai, "The Portuguese Administration in Malacca, 1511-1641," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 10, no. 3 (1969): 503.

This is an important aspect of their trade that will be repetitively revisited along the course of contextualizing European colonization and imperialism in Asia, since they were, for all intents and purposes, the pioneers. Close to a century later, other European trade forces with imperial backing made its way to India, and were able to capitalize on their resources successfully. Private Dutch merchants made their first voyage towards Asia in 1595 with the hope of joining the extremely lucrative spice trade with the Indonesian archipelago, which was then under Portuguese – who controlled both the region, as well as the sea route from continental Europe leading to it.[33] Their arrival in Bantam, Java was met with furore from both the local leadership as well as the Portuguese, who helped incite violence against the Dutch crew. While this specific voyage itself was not the most successful and cost the Dutch explorers several lives, they did return with small quantities of pepper, mace and nutmeg – most of which was acquired by raiding ships sailing out of different Spice Islands of the region.[34]

2.2 India as a Potential Dutch Stronghold

The Dutch trading firms were quick to realize that private expeditions were unadvisable due to the advantages possessed by the Javanese, and the Portuguese, so they decided to band together such that their union "…served to bundle socio-economic interests in Asia and the Atlantic into a single enterprise, thus avoiding, on the one hand, competition between Dutch subjects overseas and in the domestic markets and, on the other hand, sustaining social cohesion in matters of trade."[35] As result, the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*

[33] George Masselman, *The Cradle of Colonialism* (Bloomsbury, London: Yale University Press, 1963), 62–66.
[34] Masselman, 96.
[35] Cátia Antunes, "Birthing Empire: The States General and the Chartering of the VOC and the WIC," in *The Dutch Republic between Ideas and Practice, 1600–2000*, ed. René Koekkoek, Anne-Isabelle Richard, and Arthur Weststeijn, Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies Series (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 21, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-27516-7_2.

(VOC) also known as the Dutch East India Company was a trade mega-entity established of the incorporation of several independent Dutch trading companies in the early 17th Century. It is credited as being the world's first and largest joint stock company, and had various stakeholders across the Dutch Republic and its holdings in Asia and Africa.[36] Though established as a trading company with the goal of exploring, creating and expanding transoceanic networks, the VOC along with its English counterpart the British East India Company (EIC) grew to be an all-pervasive entity that gave them powers to "conduct diplomacy, raise armies and seize territorial possessions."[37]

The VOC according to Karl Marx was a parasitic iteration of colonial capitalism, since it only planted itself into Eastern societies for capital gain, unlike the British who disassembled the social fabric of its colonies to its likings.[38] This conception of the VOC can only be applied to its presence in India, since the VOC held more unilateral powers in regions like the Java, Batavia, etc. Another salient feature of the VOC was its role as an active precursor to intra-Asiatic trade beyond networks between Asia and Europe alone.[39] Their role in establishing maritime networks between India, Africa and the South and Southeast Asia has resulted in material and cultural exchanges whose relics carry to the present day.[40] This was a unique characteristic of the

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[36] Adam Clulow and Tristan Mostert, "Introduction: The Companies in Asia," in *The Dutch and English East India Companies*, ed. Adam Clulow and Tristan Mostert, Diplomacy, Trade and Violence in Early Modern Asia (Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 13–22, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv9hvqf2.5.

[37] Clulow and Mostert, 17.

[38] Tonio Andrade, "The Dutch East India Company in Global History: A Historiographical Reconnaissance," in *The Dutch and English East India Companies*, ed. Adam Clulow and Tristan Mostert, Diplomacy, Trade and Violence in Early Modern Asia (Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 239–56. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv9hvqf2.14; Ben Fowkes and Fred Moseley, "The Transformation of Commodity Capital and Money Capital into Commodity-Dealing Capital and Money-Dealing Capital or into Merchant's Capital," *Marx's Economic Manuscript of 1864-1865*, January 1, 2016, 376–443, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004304550_006.

[39] Andrade, "The Dutch East India Company in Global History," 239–56.

[40] Om Prakash, "The Dutch and the Indian Ocean Textile Trade," in *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200-1850*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 145.

VOC that made it different from its European contemporaries like the British, Portuguese, French and Danish. While the Portuguese had conducted some amount of trade within Asia – specifically between regions in present-day India, Japan, Macau and Malaysia, its support from their Crown was limited and was largely helmed by private merchants.[41] The VOC on the other hand, had large corporations of mercantile interests backing these expeditions and networks both militaristically and financially.[42] The VOC's first Asian foray was into Java for the procurement of spices, where it quickly overthrew the Portuguese power in Malacca and established their own *Factorij* trading post backed by agreements with the *Johars* or the local rulers of State.[43] The Indian operations of the VOC and the EIC heavily overlapped especially in the 17th and early 18th centuries, with them engaged in competitive struggles of territories, trade posts, production centers and port cities.[44]

2.2.1 VOC's Presence in India

The VOC first arrived in India in 1605, and unlike popular belief, did not explore India for its spice. In reality, the VOC's first foray into India was to seek goods to trade with the Southeast Asian archipelago of Sumatra and Moluccas in the present-day Indonesia. Until the mid-1600s, textiles constituted less than fifteen percent of total sales; this of course grew rapidly to 40 percent by the turn of the century.[45] The Europeans did not possess any tradeable goods that captured the Asian interests since European wools and linens did not hold

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[41] Ferreira, "Asian Textiles in the Carreira Da Índia," 155–58.
[42] Andrade, "The Dutch East India Company in Global History," 239–56.
[43] Biedermann, "Diplomatic Ivories: Sri Lankan Caskets and the Portuguese-Asian Exchange in the Sixteenth Century," 88–118.
[44] Martha Chaiklin, "Surat and Bombay: Ivory and Commercial Networks in Western India," in *The Dutch and English East India Companies*, ed. Adam Clulow and Tristan Mostert, Diplomacy, Trade and Violence in Early Modern Asia (Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 101–24, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv9hvqf2.9; Clulow and Mostert, "Introduction."
[45] Femme S. Gaastra, "The Textile Trade of the VOC the Dutch Response to the English Challenge," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 19, no. sup001 (January 1, 1996): 87, https://doi.org/10.1080/00856409608723273.

any interest in the tropical archipelago. The prevalent prejudice against enrichening foreign forces through the expenditure of Dutch bullion (gold reserves) meant that they had to develop interim barter-based networks; in this case, selling Indian textiles in Southeast Asia in exchange for spices left them with a surplus which could in turn be reinvested in textile production in India.[46]

This was not a novel idea, but only a continuation of the trade practices observed by the Portuguese, who in turn followed the pre-existing channels between Indian kingdoms, China and Java predating the European onset.[47] By capturing this trade monopoly, the VOC could maximize profits while spending as little Dutch gold reserves as possible.[48] It is interesting to note that despite such efforts, the VOC remained the largest exporter of silver among the European forces stationed in India, with 80,000 Guilder (88.15 Million adjusted for inflation to 2016 levels) being sent to India by the Dutch at its peak in 1866, most of which was to import cottons in return.[49] The active promotion of trade with colonies among the Dutch meant that Asian goods were largely welcomed into the country. Unlike the British, the Dutch did not question the economic and consumerist benefits of Asian trade.[50] Further, the appeal of Indian textiles had already reached European courts, with the Portuguese having gifted Indian cottons to nobility upon their return from Malabar in the south in the 1500s.[51]

Albeit, Chris Nierstrasz emphasizes in his book *Rivalry for trade in tea and textiles* that the demand for Indian textiles among the European East Indian

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[46] P. E. Roberts, review of *Review of From Akbar to Aurangzeb. A Study in Economic History*, by W. H. Moreland, *The English Historical Review* 39, no. 155 (1924): 434–37; Chris Nierstrasz, "Imperfect Monopolies," in *Rivalry for Trade in Tea and Textiles: The English and Dutch East India Companies (1700–1800)*, ed. Chris Nierstrasz, Europe's Asian Centuries (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 20–49, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137486530_1.
[47] Ferreira, "Asian Textiles in the Carreira Da Índia," 150–54.
[48] Prakash, 2.
[49] Nierstrasz, "Imperfect Monopolies," 27.
[50] Nierstrasz, 26–31.
[51] Lemire, "Revising the Historical Narrative: India, Europe and the Cotton Trade, 1300-1800," 208.

Companies were not to feed finery and luxurious consumption alone.[52] As mentioned above, the Indonesian archipelago, who the Dutch depended on for their spices like pepper and mace, accepted only Indian cotton textiles as a suitable good for exchanging spices with.[53] Despite this potential demand from the European markets, the VOC's primary aim through the control of the Coromandel Coast was to supply inexpensive printed and painted cottons to the East- specifically Java and its adjacent archipelago for spice trade. This way, they could intermediate the exchange of cottons made in west and south India with Java, who in turn sold spices that were shipped back to Europe, as well as traded in exchange for tea from China.[54]

To optimize their reach to the farthest corners of their global domains, the VOC established its strongholds strategically in each periphery of the Indian peninsula: Coromandel– In the southeast; Surat– In the west; Bengal– In the east; Malabar– In the southwest and Ceylon– In the south.

Of the above, Coromandel and Surat remained their biggest trading posts (termed *factorij* or factory), from which they exported cotton textiles to the Southeast Asia, Africa and the Netherlands. Coromandel was their earliest trading point, with the first factory established in 1605 to serve as a point of consolidation of wares gathered from inland regions. The following map details all of VOC's inland and seaside strongholds on peninsular India in the 1600s.

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[52] Chris Nierstrasz, "Introduction," in *Rivalry for Trade in Tea and Textiles: The English and Dutch East India Companies (1700–1800)*, ed. Chris Nierstrasz, Europe's Asian Centuries (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 1–19, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137486530_1.
[53] Prakash, *The Dutch Factories in India 1624-1627*, 287; Astrid Friis, "Dutch-Aiatic Trade in the 17th and 18th Centuries," *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 7, no. 2 (July 1, 1959): 181–85, https://doi.org/10.1080/03585522.1959.10411417.
[54] Chris Nierstrasz, "Rivalry for Tea: Empires and Private Trade," in *Rivalry for Trade in Tea and Textiles: The English and Dutch East India Companies (1700–1800)*, ed. Chris Nierstrasz, Europe's Asian Centuries (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 54–86, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137486530_1.

Figure 1. Om Prakash, Map of Important Trading Centres in Asia in the 17th Century (1984). From the Dutch Factories in India 1617-1623 [55]

As can be seen in this map, the VOC held considerable sway over the Indian subcontinent, especially concentrating their power along the coast for maritime trade. Despite its several factories in India, this thesis will direct its focus primarily on the Coromandel Coast, for it was the trading post responsible for the export of *Kalamkari* and eventually its derivative of floral *Sits* to the Europe.

2.2.2 Indian Empires as an Enabler of VOC Expansion

The Vijayanagara Empire of Coromandel in the early 17th Century granted heavy concessions to conduct trade to the Dutch during a period of heavy domestic economic decline caused by the impending fall of the Hindu-led reigning monarchy. The Vijayanagara Empire, in its heyday, was one that possessed policies to actively encourage export trade as a means of political and cultural alliances, enriching local trader guilds and farmers in the process.[56] An

[55] Prakash, *The Dutch Factories in India 1624-1627*, 1.
[56] Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 241–53; Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies, and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast, 1650-1740*, 39.

agricultural and textile production stronghold since the 12th Century, they gradually found their own influence diminishing at the hands of well-connected, large trading communities from other kingdoms.

It a last-ditch attempt to both boost the economy, and to access the Europeans' considerable naval power for their protection, they furnished the Dutch with concessions that heavily discounted their import duties to just 2.5 percent.[57] The Vijayanagara Empire's stronghold on Coromandel was annexed by the Golconda Sultanate (also known as the Deccan Sultanate) in 1646, effectively dispersing the large kingdom's southern territory into smaller fiefdoms, and the north, including the coast, falling under the rule of the Islamic Golconda Sultanates.[58] These new rulers were keen on improving and maintaining trade relations and political alliances both domestically and across the oceans, forging ties with neighbouring kingdoms as well as the Dutch. The Dutch continued to receive the same favourable treatment under the new rulers too. Following renegotiation of tax and duties, the Dutch could now lease entire villages to work exclusively for them to grow rice, wash and bleach textiles, pack spices and conduct other labour-intensive jobs.[59] The Golconda rulers also were able to regain several key ports along the Coromandel Coast that was previously under the Portuguese like the San Thome and Fort St. George, which were important collection points for textiles from inland Kanchipuram (which produced fine silks), and Vellore; albeit, these regions were later occupied by the Dutch.[60]

During the Golconda rule, the Dutch were also able to strengthen their hold on the port city of Masulipatnam (In the present-day state of Andhra Pradesh)- arguably the most important port on the Coromandel Coast. Later, the VOC

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[57] Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies, and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast, 1650-1740*, 65–66.
[58] Arasaratnam, 40.
[59] Arasaratnam, 66–69.
[60] Arasaratnam, 42–55.

security in Masulipatnam came into danger due to the siege of Golconda by the Mughals in 1687; while this resulted in the Mughals' victory upon the surrender of the Deccan Sultanate, it did not ultimately jeopardize the VOC since the Europeans had already established trade relations with the Mughals under Emperor Aurangazeb in their northern strongholds of Delhi, Agra and Lahore.[61] The south-eastern coastal belt remained under the European purveyance, with the Coromandel Coast housing 46 European trading seaports and inland river ports in total.[62] Of this, 16 belonged to the VOC, and the remaining to the EIC and few even the Portuguese. The 16 Dutch Coromandel factories or trading posts dealt with the collection, processing and reexport preparation of cotton and silk textiles from inland production centres like Golconda, Pedana, Srikalahasti, Tanjore and Madura among others, as well as spices from the Indonesian archipelago for whom Masulipatnam served as an Entrepot.[63]

A letter of correspondence between Jan Pieterszoon Coen - the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies directed towards the Directors of VOC in Amsterdam dated 5th August 1619 effectively summarizes the complex, barter based intra-Asian trade network established under his regime:

> Textiles from Gujarat could be bartered against pepper and gold on the coast of Sumatra; with the rials and clothes from the coast could be procured the pepper from Bantam; against sandalwood and rials one could get the Chinese goods and gold; silver could be obtained from Japan against the Chinese goods; the clothes from the coast of Coromandel would be exchanged against spices, Chinese wares and Chinese gold; the clothes from Surat could be used to buy spices, other goods and the rials of eight; the rials of eight from Arabia could be exchanged against spices and other goods.[64]

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[61] John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 54, 225.
[62] Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies, and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast, 1650-1740*, 11,21.
[63] Arasaratnam, 151.
[64] Prakash, *The Dutch Factories in India 1624-1627*, 111–12; A rial of eight could be converted to approximately 2.22 Rupees.

The path dependencies presented by this complex network coupled with the Golconda patronage of cotton textile production in terms of aesthetic were likely the very reasons *Kalamkari*, and later *Sits* internationalised in the manner it did. The intermeshing of social, political, economic and cultural factors is evident in the case of this trade network, whose influence shaped consumption references in places miles away from its point of origin.

2.3 The VOC's Product of Interest: Cotton Textiles

Even prior to organized trade channels creating exclusive textile trade routes between India and Europe, Indian cottons like the Calico and Muslin had an appreciative following in different parts of the world. These textiles replaced other local fabrics in places like Turkey, Persia, China and even Japan as far back as 1200s onwards.[65] This fact lends credibility to the Persian and Arab influences found in *Kalamkari*, given that it is likely traders were privy to commodities of faraway places even in those days. This long-distance trade was a signifier beyond its commercial aspect alone; it was a means of social language creation- one that dictated forthcoming preferences, tastes and sensibilities due to the innate human nature of the fascination with the unfamiliar. This trade also created advantageous path dependencies for the colonial traders that conducted trade in the following centuries since they placed their economic agenda in a pre-established trade practice of the exchange of goods.

Post-colonial studies often emphasise the role of fine cottons and silks exported from India; while this thesis is also admittedly doing the same, the role of coarse cottons in building the trade volume of VOC needs to be addressed. The Dutch played an important role in supplying coarse cottons (termed 'Guinea cloth') to

[65] Prasannan Parthasarathi, "Cotton Textiles in the Indian Subcontinent, 1200-1800," in *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200-1850*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 17–42.

clothe their slaves in the Americas and the Africa, hence creating a large surplus which could then be invested to procure fine, printed cottons to export to the Netherlands and further eastwards.[66] An annual procurement list of cottons produced in Surat and Coromandel for re-export to other factories from 1623 shows that the trade volume was centred on coarse and blank cottons.[67] After dissecting the varieties of textiles mentioned in the list, the number of exported 'pieces' were analysed. Pieces here refer to one bale of long cloth, estimated to be 37 yards or approximately 34 metres long. Of the annual exports the year, 198,100 out of 217,300 pieces of cotton textiles i.e. 91% of the total textiles produced for export were low to medium quality cottons. Further, the mass of coloured Calicoes exported to Europe by both the VOC and the EIC were not floral *Sits*, but cloth of more ordinary varieties of colourful, striped and checked cotton, including the predecessor of the modern Gingham.[68] Also manufactured in Coromandel, this cloth was cheaper compared to painted and printed cottons, and were exported to the Southeast Asian archipelago, Africa and Americas by the VOC.[69]

2.3.1 The African Example

The VOC exported large quantities of printed and painted cottons from Surat, their western Indian stronghold to their domains in Africa, hence sowing seeds of iconography and aesthetic in textiles that would eventually come to dominate

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[66] Om Prakash, "A List of Goods to Be Supplied Annually from Coromandel from Holland and the Archipelago. Sent from Jacarta in December 1617.," in *The Dutch Factories in India 1624-1627: A Collection of Dutch East India Company Documents Pertaining to India*, vol. 2 (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1984), 53–54; Gaastra, "The Textile Trade of the VOC the Dutch Response to the English Challenge."

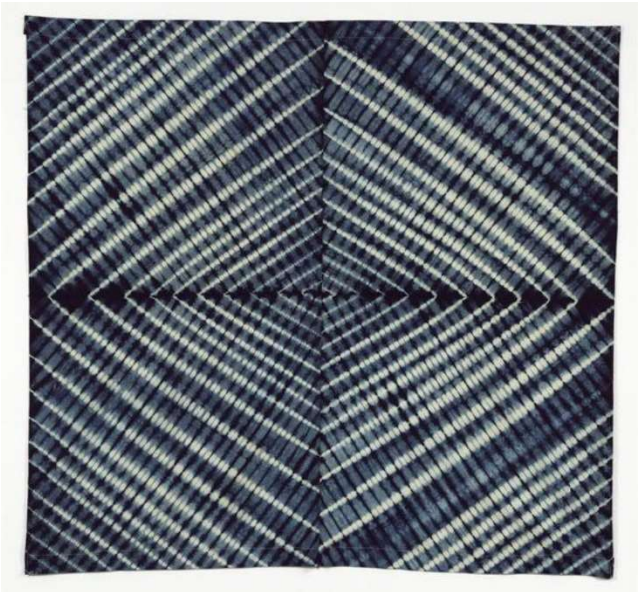
[67] Om Prakash, trans., "An Estimate Procured at Batavia by Antonio van Dieman of the Textiles Procured in Surat and the Neighbouring Areas That Could Be Sold Annually in the Southern Factories, 1 August 1623.," in *The Dutch Factories in India 1624-1627: A Collection of Dutch East India Company Documents Pertaining to India*, vol. 2 (1984: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, n.d.), 265–68.

[68] Prakash, *The Dutch Factories in India 1624-1627*, 41–42.

[69] Prakash, "A List of Goods to Be Supplied Annually from Coromandel from Holland and the Archipelago. Sent from Jacarta in December 1617."

their textile preferences to this day.[70] The following textiles establish this intercultural design adaptation practices clearly. Though not *Kalamkari*, the following images of cotton textiles are an accurate indicator of the VOC's role in bridging transoceanic cultures as result of their trade practices.

Figure 2. Leheriya Odhani, Tie-dyed cotton textile. Made in Bharatpur, India ca. 1800s. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O470630/bandanna



[70] Nierstrasz, "Rivalry for Textiles": 124-153.

Figure 3. Adire textile, Tie-dyed cotton textile (possibly a headscarf). Made in Ibadan, Nigeria ca. 1960s. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O147385/textile-unknown/.

The above images portray the close semblance shared by these two traditional textiles despite their different continents, cultures and societies of origin. The first image is that of an *Odhani* or a fabric worn over the upper bodies of women among certain cultures of present-day Rajasthan and Gujarat in India. Made of coarse cotton tied into specific patterns and then dyed, this print called *Leheriya* is a ubiquitous presence in Rajasthani costumery. The picture below is that of an *Adire* from Nigeria in Africa, a style of tie-dye and resist printing carried out among the Yoruba community that involves applying wax resists to undyed areas of the cloth, preparing designs by strategically tying the fabric into patterns and boiling it in dyes like indigo.[71] Both the above samples are of relatively recent times because of practical restraints as result of museum closures and scarcity of digitized fragments of older textiles in these categories. The similarity between *Leheriya* and *Adire* is evident to a layman's eye; one can of course argue that tie-dye is an extremely common method of textile decoration. Could this not be a mere coincidence?

The connected histories theory can be aptly applied here to state the exchange of influences due to the cross-border movements of people and goods, which took along with it cultures and practices that embedded itself in new societies and provided means to create novel signifiers.[72] There exists material proof in the form of fabric fragments that western India undertook cotton textile trade with continental Africa, especially with Egypt as far back in the 10th century through the Red Sea trade route between the Indian Chalukya dynasty and

[71] "V&A · Adire – 'tied and Dyed' Indigo Textiles," Victoria and Albert Museum, accessed April 13, 2021, https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/adire-tied-and-dyed-indigo-textiles.
[72] Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *From Tagus to the Ganges: Explorations in Connected History* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 14–15.

Egyptian Fatimid dynasty.[73] The onset of colonial rule only magnified the frequency and volume of this trade in the later centuries, due to their vested interests in both the regions in India and the East Africa. In this case, Surat was the largest exporter of cotton textiles– both plain and printed, to Africa under the helm of the VOC in the 17th and 18th centuries. The VOC also preferred to procure its coarser white Calicoes to send to Africa from Coromandel.[74] A large percentage of this cloth were coarse cottons, for it was sold in Africa for the VOC's indentured labourers and slaves to purchase. Though not many pieces of the original Surat cloth transported to Africa survives, the above samples, though of recent times, adequately portray the assimilation of pattern and aesthetic over time as result of the acculturation of a foreign object in the society. Further, the *Adire* pattern is estimated to have been integrated into the Yoruba textile decoration practice only in the 18th century – coinciding with the large-scale arrival of Surat cottons in Africa. Textiles produced in the Indian subcontinent's western regions of Sanganer, Burhanpur, Ahmedabad, Baroch, Cambay and Agra among others were collected first in intermediate factories or trading posts, and then further collectivized in Surat – the main port of embarkment of textiles to East Africa.[75] Surat was an important center for colored and printed Calicoes, and exported large quantities of it to both Britain and the Netherlands.

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[73] R. Mahalakshmi, "Chalukya Dynasty," 2016, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118455074.wbeoe404; Ruth Barnes, "Early Indian Textiles in Egypt," in *The Cloth That Changed the World: India's Painted and Printed Cottons*, ed. Sarah Fee (New Haven, Canada: Yale University Press, 2020), 52.

[74] Prakash, *The Dutch Factories in India 1624-1627*, 21–22; Nierstrasz, "Rivalry for Textiles," 169.

[75] Ghulam A. Nadri, "The English and Dutch East India Companies and Indian Merchants in Surat in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Interdependence, Competition and Contestation," in *The Dutch and English East India Companies*, ed. Adam Clulow and Tristan Mostert, Diplomacy, Trade and Violence in Early Modern Asia (Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 130, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv9hvqf2.10; Barnes, "Early Indian Textiles in Egypt," 51–52.

2.3.2 Gujarat's Block Printed Cottons

As will be seen ahead, the printed Calicoes or *Sits* from Surat were usually of the block printed variety, similar to *Kalamkari* in aesthetic but different in motifs and method of production.[76] Coromandel, Gujarat and Bengal were the major centres of cotton textile production in India, with the former two known for their vibrantly printed and painted low to mid-level quality cottons, and the latter known for its fine cottons– popularly known as the Dacca Muslin. India's vast size meant that the region was exporting multitudes of varieties of cottons depending on geographical specialties. Of these, the printed and painted cottons of Coromandel, Bengal and Gujarat were the most widely exported. Like Surat in the West, Masulipatnam played a critical role as a major Dutch port since its proximity to Golconda, Pedana and Srikalahasti – three of Coromandel Coast's biggest painted and printed cotton textile producers Their nature as bustling port cities aided this manufacturing industry, giving them the competitive advantage of quicker exports vis à vis fabric traveling from inland production centers.

Interestingly, large quantities of the printed cottons produced in Surat was transported to Java for further sale in the Spice Islands, and those produced in the Coromandel being sent to Africa despite the geographical proximity being in inverse; Surat on the west coast of India was closer to continental Africa and Coromandel on the east coast was closer to the Islands.[77] This signifies the quick market study conducted by the VOC within a decade of the 1600s to understand market demands. Java had preferences for the more intricate, closely spaced block prints offered by Gujarati and Rajasthani producers from western India like *Gamthi* and *Ajrakh*, as seen in the below Figure.

[76] Nierstrasz, "Rivalry for Textiles," 159.
[77] Prakash, "The Dutch and the Indian Ocean Textile Trade," 150.

Figure 4. Long cloth, Block-printed cotton textile. Made in Gujarat, India for the Javanese market, 1680-1760. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O39197/long-cloth-unknown/.

This image is of a part of a 'piece good' or 'long cloth'- a term used to refer to bales of printed or plain textiles that was cut into smaller pieces as per customer specifications at the point of sale.[78] This piece has also come from one such bale, whose entire length would have featured this print. Metadata on this artefact as per the Victoria and Albert Museum states that this piece was manufactured in Gujarat for the Javanese market and was collected from Sulawesi in present-day Indonesia.[79] Though unclear in this picture, the bottom right features the seal of VOC, indicating that it was produced under their behest for export. As

[78] Merriam Webster Dictionary, "Definition of PIECE GOODS" (Merriam-Webster, 2021), https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/piece+goods.
[79] Victoria and Albert Museum, "Long Cloth | Unknown | V&A Explore the Collections," Victoria and Albert Museum: Explore the Collections, accessed April 16, 2021, /item/O3/O39/O391/O3919/O39197/.

mentioned above, this pattern shares likeliness with a style of Gujarati block print called *Gamthi*, commonly known as *Ajrakh* (an umbrella term for block printed motifs in present day usage) as one can see from the following contemporary example.

Figure 5. Khatri, Abdul Jabbar. Gamthi/Ajrakh piece good, Resist-dyed and block printed cotton textile. Made in Kutch, India, 2020. Courtesy of Ajio, Mumbai, India. https://www.ajio.com/indie-picks-handblock-print-jahin-gamthi-ajrak-cotton-fabric/p/460355750001.

This textile was produced by block print artisan Mr. Abdul Jabbar Khatri for a major textile retailer in India. Though for sale in the contemporary market, he is internationally acclaimed for his efforts to revive and promote *Ajrakh* and its traditional mode of production using natural dyes and hand-printing.[80] The Gujarati printed cottons in general were marked by repetitive, closely situated prints of flowers or small animals, and were printed on medium to fine quality cloth since it was usually used as a fashion textile in the Indonesian

[80] Abdul Jabbar Khatri, Ajrakh Producer: Abdul Jabbar Khatri, interview by Europe's Asian Centuries: Trading Eurasia 1600-1830, Hindi, August 11, 2012, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/ghcc/eac/oralhistoryproject/resources/abduljabbarkhatri/.

archipelago.[81] This style of printed cottons were exported to the Dutch Republic in the 1600s, especially for use as bedsheets as in the case of the below image.

Figure 6. Sits Bedspread, Resist dyed and block printed Cotton textile with hand-painted details. Made in Gujarat, India ca. 1600s. Courtesy of Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.51783.

As it will be seen in the upcoming chapter, floral *Sits* was first introduced in the Europe as a drapery and furnishing textile. The above Figure for example, is a fragment from a bedspread collected from Bentveld, Leiden, in the Netherlands. Estimated to be from the 1600s, this bedspread shares similar characteristics with the above two examples of Gujarati prints, with the additional hand painted work, as was a common practice in both Coromandel and Gujarat to create finer details in the textile. These designs witnessed changes over time, adapting to European preferences and trends by integrating native British and some Dutch

[81] Prakash, *The Dutch Factories in India 1624-1627*, 21–22, 291.

aesthetic choices both in the form of commissions to India, and later through local production.[82]

2.4 Conclusion

The European descent into Asia by the means of the revolutionary Cape route- the *Carreira de India* was a milestone that changed the face of trade forever. The Dutch VOC and the British EIC soon after marked their presence in India, claiming important coastal seaports as nodes for conducting further inland trade in textiles and spices. The Indian subcontinent during the advent of Europeans was a collective of several different kingdoms with various socio-cultural circumstances across Hindu and Muslim dynasties of Vijayanagara, Nayaka, Mughal and the Qutb Shahis. Their trade relations with the Europeans lay the foundations for the colonial rule that India would witness for the next 250 years. Unlike popular belief, the first set of *Farmans* or agreements between the VOC were made on the terms of the Indian dynasties like the Mughals and the Vijayanagara as a means to secure military prowess in the face of contingent political strife from neighbouring kingdoms. The VOC took internal disquiet into advantage and struck agreements with the Vijayanagara kings and later their successors the Qutb Shahis of Golconda and the Mughals to maintain control of the trading ports including Masulipatnam on the south-eastern strip of Coromandel Coast- a vital port for the export of printed cotton textiles called *Kalamkari* to Java's archipelago of Spice Islands as currency for acquiring spices that were later sold in India and Europe. The examples of Adire in Africa and the block printed Javanese cloth are presented as visual proof of the cross-cultural manifestations of coloured cottons from India that were an early example of cultural assimilation through textile design as result of cross-cultural

[82] Deborah Metsger, "The Flowers of Indo-European Chintz," in *The Cloth That Changed the World: India's Painted and Printed Cottons*, ed. Sarah Fee (New Haven, Canada: Yale University Press, 2020), 150–55.

historical connectivity. This chapter establishes that colourful cotton textiles like *Kalamkari* were not a prioritised commodity for the VOC when it first established itself in the East, but was only a mode of exchange to acquire spices. By the mid-17th century, its potential as a coveted object in Europe had been identified, and exports commenced.

3. *Kalamkari* Cottons: History and Identity

Following the observation of samples of Indian *Kalamkari* and European *Sits*, and given the intertwined trade history mentioned in the previous chapter, it is possible to establish connection between the two textiles. The connections wrought by the European occupation in Asia has already been established, and so has their attraction to cotton textiles- both as a medium of exchange in the spice trade as well as a novel textile to export to Europe. Now, it is time to establish the journey of the textile itself, as the title of this thesis suggests. The transoceanic movement of *Kalamkari* resulted in hybridization through the fusion of multicultural design elements that ultimately resulted in the creation of *Sits* as it is identified in Europe to this day. The textile was equally impactful in its move both eastward and westward as already established, but this thesis will only focus on *Kalamkari*'s transformative journey as the result of western influences- both near west (Persian and Turkish), and far west (British, Portuguese and Dutch). Prior to acknowledging transoceanic influences though, it is important to first establish the domestic history of the *Kalamkari* textile. Its history is deeply rooted in folk tradition and temple practices. Various socio-political influences including religion and reigning monarchy were integral in shaping the floral iteration of *Kalamkari* that first caught fancy of the European trading parties in India, and specifically the Coromandel Coast. This chapter aims to answer the question of why the *Kalamkari* style of *Sits* became popular over other varieties of Indian cottons exported to the Netherlands.

3.1 Basics of *Kalamkari* Production

Kalamkari textiles were made from hand-painting vegetable and mineral based dyes on softened cotton fabrics through a 23-step process.[83] The natural pigments used to print and paint on Indian cottons yielded yellow, red, maroon, blue, black, purple and magenta colors, all extracted from plants like madder, indigo and turmeric.[84] While most of these plants grew indigenously to the Indian subcontinent, the Madder plant, which when boiled expelled the vibrant reds iconic to *Kalamkaris* and Indian *Sits* was a native of the Ottoman Empire. While there are no written records evidencing its entry into India, it can be safely assumed that Turkish, Persian or Egyptian traders were responsible for introducing this plant and its dye-making potential to Indian textile artisans. Metal oxides like iron or aluminum oxides and other mineral compounds were then combined with these dyes to create a chemical reaction that would then help pigments permanently stain the textile.

Specialized Indian artisans possessed a wide range of pigments that were used to add color to cottons and silks. The process of creation *Kalamkari* and later *Sits* was a complex one, for it required several painstaking steps to achieve fade-resistant colors in intricate patterns. During the long process, plain, unbleached white Calico cloth was first subject to several stages of washing, bleaching, and sun-drying to ensure it was sufficiently prepared for taking on dyes. Water resistant substances like wax was applied to the cloth in places that was not meant to be dyed, then applied a solution of metal oxide and boiled in a vat of

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[83] Parul Bhatnagar, "*Kalamkari*," in *Decorative Design History In Indian Textiles & Costumes* (Chandigarh: Abhishek Publications, 2005), 1–4.

[84] Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 17–23; Himanshu Prabha Ray, "Warp and Weft: Producing, Trading and Consuming Indian Textiles Across the Seas (First–Thirteenth Centuries CE)," in *Textile Trades, Consumer Cultures, and the Material Worlds of the Indian Ocean: An Ocean of Cloth*, ed. Pedro Machado, Sarah Fee, and Gwyn Campbell, Palgrave Series in Indian Ocean World Studies (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 295, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-58265-8_1; Sarah Fee, ed., *The Cloth That Changed the World: India's Painted and Printed Cottons* (New Haven, Canada: Yale University Press, 2020), 6.

natural dyes several times until the depth of color was achieved. The process of alternatively applying resistant wax and re-dyeing was carried out multiple times on each textile to accommodate several colors on it.[85] Known for its superior colour fastening abilities and its intricate patterning, this practice was carried out by several different schools of art, depending on its place of origin.

3.2 Srikalahasti *Kalamkari*

The birth of the artform later now known as *Kalamkari* was in a distinctly Hindu environment. As result, it should have, given the times and the social norms, *Kalamkari* was governed by religious limitations. Some of the best surviving works of *Kalamkari* from early and mid-17th century depict scenes of Gods, kings and wars are from the Nayaka dynasty from the southeast of India.[86] The Srikalahasti school of *Kalamkari* painting, assumed to have been the center of production of most Hindu temple style motifs allude to stories from mythologies like the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* like as if it were a medium of storytelling. It has two possible sources of origin. For one, it is assumed to be a descendant of temple sculptures and murals from the Nayaka era as well as its preceding Pallava and Pandya Empires from as far back as 700 AD.[87] Its permanence was later innovated upon through the creation of textile art that was portable, and could be hung up during temple festivals or celebrations as opposed to the immovability of the mural and sculpture. It has also been speculated that this specific style of art has tribal or folk origins of nomadic storytellers who moved place to place across the Nayaka and Vijayanagara Empires dispersing Hindu mythologies using these printed textiles as an ancient form of visual storyboards

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[85] Fee, *The Cloth That Changed the World*, 8; Mattiebelle Gittinger and Caroline Kastle McEuen, *Master Dyers to the World: Technique and Trade in Early Indian Dyed Cotton Textiles* (Washington, D.C: Textile Museum, 1982), 21.
[86] Fee, *The Cloth That Changed the World*, 42; Ray, "Introduction," 1–10.
[87] Shakuntala Ramani, *Kalamkari and Traditional Design Heritage of India* (New Delhi: Wisdom Tree, 2007), 13.

to illustrate their narration.[88] Called *Chitrakatha* (*Chitra*- picture and *Katha*- story) literally translating to 'the story of pictures', this practice was important in maintaining oral traditions of Hindu mythology alive. It was also practiced in other Indian cultures, with the *Madhubhani* paintings of Bihar being the most famous of its kind.[89]

The evolution from this design style from a décor textile to fashion textile was organic, with textual evidence from the medieval period suggesting that prints akin to *Kalamkari* have been worn by nobility, courtesans and their attendants from the early period of the Vijayanagara Empire.[90] Here it is necessary to interject that the prints on these textiles could be referring to any variety of painted or block printed textile and not *Kalamkari* specifically since no material evidence of these clothes have survived the time. Complex social and caste systems prevalent in India meant that there were rules and regulations akin to sumptuary laws that were to be abided Hindus and Buddhists of various Indian and Indo-adjacent Empires.[91] For example, the Brahmins, or the priest caste were not allowed to wear garments made of printed textiles or those dyed in dark colours. As result, the production of such textiles, which could be consumed by the trading and nobility classes, lay in the hands of 'lower' castes.[92]

Temples in the Nakaya Empire- the region bordering the Vijayanagara Empire that later comprised of the southern half of the Dutch Coromandel, have temple remains whose walls and ceilings are adorned with imagery of Gods, Goddesses, flora and fauna in patterns similar to *Kalamkari* from the 17th Century. Interestingly, such art forms do not make an appearance in temples or on textiles prior to the 16th Century, which suggests that it was either an evolved form of art from a predecessor whose evidence did not survive the time, or that

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[88] Bhatnagar, "*Kalamkari*," 20.
[89] Ramani, *Kalamkari and Traditional Design Heritage of India*, 10–11.
[90] Ramani, 36–49.
[91] Sylvia Fraser-Lu, "Emulating the Celestials: The Walter's Parabik on Burmese Sumptuary Laws," *The Journal of the Walters Art Museum* 73 (2018): 10–24.
[92] Ray, "Introduction," 291.

it was a largely folk based tradition that socially elevated itself to being a religious art form in the later years only. Keeping the Coromandel Coast in focus, the Nayaka and Vijayanagara Empires patronized Hinduism inspired *Kalamkari* art forms, as seen from textiles produced in towns like Srikalahasti and its southern districts; The Golconda and Mughal dynasties, who patronised Islam-inspired iconography and aesthetic from Masulipatnam and its neighbouring villages, are perhaps the biggest schools of *Kalamkari* concentration, at least as per surviving evidence of textiles from these regions.

Figure 7. Temple Cloth. Hand-painted cotton textile depicting a Hindu religious procession. Made in Madhurai, India ca. 1700s. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O130708/temple-cloth-unknown.

The above Figure is that of a ceremonial cloth (assumedly used to cover a tray of offerings to the God) that was collected from a temple from Madhurai in present-day Tamil Nadu in India from the 1700s. Madhurai was an important

inland textile center from the pre-colonial era, producing for the Vijayanagara and Nayaka dynasties for temple and decorative usage.[93]

The large pre-colonial trade history of Indian cotton textile producers meant that they were already accustomed to producing for diverse market needs. Motifs, prints and patterns were drawn as per commissioned requirements of its market destination.[94] This assumption of course stems from the studies of regional edicts and records for unfortunately, there exists no surviving cotton textile depicting the same. Though from a later era, the following piece for textile from the 16th or the 17th century is a fragment of an 18-feet long textile most likely used as a wall hanging or as a banner in Jain temples in Southeast Asia. Produced in India, its intended market is not known due to it being previously part of a private collection. This garment features distinctly Jain iconography (possibly for the Thai market) in the form of worshippers or 'divine subjects', but also incorporates elements of native, Coromandel style of border printing and floral backgrounds, which is in turn influenced from the Mughal and Persian carpet making designs as mentioned above.

[93] Ray, 290.
[94] Fee, *The Cloth That Changed the World*, 1–31.

Figure 8. Painted textile depicting celestial musicians. Resist dyed and hand-painted cotton textile. Made Madhurai, India ca. 1500-1600s. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/73824?searchField=All&sortBy=R.

Traditional *Kalamkaris*- both of the Golconda and the Srikalahasti/Madhurai variety often had darkly dyed backgrounds for more distinctive visibility of the patterns. In the above cases, resists like wax were most likely first applied to the areas featuring the patterns of the Gods and their chariots; then, the pre-treated cloth was dipped and soaked in a madder root extract that dyed cottons in a vibrant, long-lasting shade of red. Following this, the details were painted by hand including bamboos soaked in black dyes. As one can see from the almost story-like imagery portrayed on the textile, detailing of characters and humanoid motifs were an important aspect of the Hindu-patronized *Kalamkari* culture, perhaps alluding to the common practice of idol worship conducted by

the Hindus. Another important aspect of these designs was the non-repetitive nature of its motifs; due to the hand-painted nature of detailing, there was no consistency in the repeated motifs like the peacocks on the top border for example- where each motif is distinctly drawn. While this can be dismissed as a natural consequence of handiwork, it is a critical factor that one can point out while speculating why exactly this style of painting is not commonly found in European Chintz/*Sits*. As seen in the previous chapter, textiles produced for export- both to Java and the Europe were often long cloth i.e. a big bale of textile that featured uniformly dispersed patterns such that it could be cut into smaller dimensions as per customer needs at the point of final sale. For such fabric to be tailored into outfits like gowns or coats, one would need the motifs to be regularly spaced, uniform in appearance and continuously patterned with no distinct divisions in motif change. From the above Figure, one can see that the Hindu style of *Kalamkari* fails on almost every single one of these counts. This could perhaps be a reason the Srikalahasti/Madhurai variety of *Kalamkari* did not find itself being exported abroad unless it was for exceptional, commemorative pieces that required detailing and story-telling through textile art, like the following commemorative piece commissioned by the British East India Company to mark their victory over the French East India Company in Pondicherry in 1690.[95]

[95] "Hanging Depicting a European Conflict in South India | Indian, Coromandel Coast, for British Market," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 18, 2021, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/21466.

Figure 9. Hanging depicting a European conflict in South India. Resist applied and hand painted cotton textile. Made in Madhurai, near Coromandel Coast, India ca.1760s. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/21466?searchField=All&sortBy=Relevance&ft=indian+cotton+thai&offset=0&rpp=20&pos=3.

3.3 Golconda *Kalamkari*

Though used as a term to collectively address south Indian painted cottons, these textiles were referred to as '*Kalamkari*' only in the 17th century onwards, sharing the moniker with similarly produced designs from Persia (present day Iran). This was due to its patronage by the Golconda Sultanate, who were of Persian descent and maintained close trade and diplomatic relations with the Safavid dynasty of Iran.

The variety that is the focus of my research is the Masulipatnam *Kalamkari*– better known as Golconda *Kalamkari* that flourished under the patronage of the

Deccan Sultanate in the early 17th century onwards.[96] While the other schools of *Kalamkari* will be mentioned, the designs of Golconda *Kalamkari* form the focal point of this thesis due to its predominance of floral and botanical motifs, which are later reflected in European *Sits* textiles. Widely considered by textile historians as the source of the finest Indian *Sits* or Chintz, it possessed heavy Persian influences over the motifs of Golconda *Kalamkari* due both the Islamic presence, and the trade relations with Turkey and Persia, to whom this cloth was supplied for use in décor and costumery.[97] Further, Masulipatnam and its neighbouring town of Pulicat were among the first strongholds of the VOC, and provided a convenient port for the export of this cloth to Europe.[98] These designs primarily consisted of floral motifs and appealed universally, perhaps the reason it caught European attention.

Figure 10. Floor covering. Resist dyed and hand painted cotton textile. Made in Golconda, India ca. 1630-40. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O74057/floorspread/unknown.

[96] Ghosh, "Retracing *Kalamkari*'s Journey: From Classic to a Contemporary Textile Art," 8.
[97] Ghosh, 7; Rosemary Crill, *Chintz: Indian Textiles for the West* (Harry N. Abrams, 2008), 10.
[98] Philippus Baldaeus, *A True and Exact Description of the Most Celebrated East-India Coasts of Malabar and Coromandel and Also of the Isle of Ceylon*, trans. Awnsham Churchill (Asian Educational Services, 1703).

The above Figure is that of a floor covering (not a carpet)- the difference being that carpets were usually woven with wool or silk and featured self-contained designs where as a floor covering like this one was made of blank cotton that was treated and painted like any other *Kalamkari*. According to its metadata, it was collected from Amberpur in present-day Rajasthan, but was manufactured on the Coromandel Coast.[99] This floor spread is a work reflective of the heavily Persia-inspired motif style adopted by the Golconda school of *Kalamkari*. Its most salient features were that floral motifs were featured predominantly, and were usually not connotative to a religion. In this case for example, even though the textile was produced by the Muslim Golconda artisans, it was ultimately used in the Amber Palace of a Hindu king. It was not a commissioned piece; this excludes the possibility that it was created with a conscientious intention of excluding religious motifs for the particular piece alone. Further, observing the style of pattern making on this textile, its difference in scope for foreign adaptation vis a vis the temple cloth becomes evident. The spacing of motifs are such that it could be translated onto a long-cloth, providing continuously occurring motifs whose cutting would not distort its aesthetic value. The nature of motifs was also more universally appealing; flowers are largely culture-neutral, and was less likely to cause furor among the Christian European population unlike the idol-like Figures, which could possibly have raised questions about promotion of "ugly", "vulgar" and even religiously divisive imagery.[100] Further, the VOC played a hand in proliferating the Coromandel *Sits*, i.e. *Kalamkari* specifically because of its own placement in India. Other coastal cotton textile producers like Bengal and Surat were also a strong hold of the British EIC, whereas the VOC held better sway in southern Coromandel,

[99] Victoria and Albert Museum, "Floorspread | V&A Explore The Collections," Victoria and Albert Museum: Explore the Collections, accessed April 19, 2021, /item/O7/O74/O740/O7405/O74057/.

[100] Smith, "Project MUSE - 'Callico Madams,'" 40; Lou Taylor, "The Indo-Chinese Influence on British Chintz Design," *Newsletter (Museum Ethnographers Group)*, no. 6 (1978): 11; Philip Sykas, "Refashioning Indian Chintz in the European Manner," in *The Cloth That Changed the World: India's Painted and Printed Cottons*, ed. Sarah Fee (New Haven, Canada: Yale University Press, 2020), 204.

where the biggest producers of painted and printed colored cloth were situated.[101]

Due to these reasons, it is likely that the initial imports of floral Indian textiles that first reached European consumption sphere- in Portugal, Britain and the Dutch Republic was the Persian inspired floral motifs Golconda *Kalamkari*. In the following chapter, the importance of floral imagery in the prevalence of *Sits* in Europe will be presented in detail. Furthermore, very few textile fragments from the 16th and 17th centuries have survived the course of time. Due to is regular usage by its owners and the lack of maintenance has resulted in most pieces of *Kalamkari* from the era to disintegrate. As result, the images of surviving pieces used to study in this thesis are from the 18th and the 19th centuries, but produced in traditional villages using original methods.

3.4 Conclusion

The *Kalamkari* of Golconda can be credited as the first prototype of *Sits* ever exported to the Europe from Masulipatnam, and Nizampet, and featured variations in motifs due to the simultaneous presence of the Islamic Mughal and the Hindu Vijayanagara influences to design.[102] Similarly, calicoes produced in Gujarat were block printed or tie dyed, and hence vastly different from those from Coromandel. The nuances of these differences are reflected in its manifestation in European fashion, as will be explained in further sections. The VOC played a hand in proliferating the Coromandel *Sits*, i.e. *Kalamkari* specifically also because of its own placement in India. Other coastal cotton textile producers like Bengal and Surat were also a strong hold of the British

[101] Prakash, "A List of Clothes and Other Items Required from the Coast of Coromandel Annually for the Moluccas, Amboina, Banda, Java, Patani, Sian and the Netherlands. Prepared at Jakarta, 16 July 1619."; Nierstrasz, "The Consumption of Textiles."
[102] Seema Singh, "Golconda Chintz: Manufacture and Trade in The 17th Century," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 49 (1988): 301–5.

EIC, whereas the VOC held better sway in Southern Coromandel, where the biggest produces of painted and printed colored cloth were situated.[103]

It could be mere fortuitousness that *Sits* as a general category featured more universally identifiable patterns and prints and there was willingness to accept and even imitate them as it did not bend the Christian sensibilities of its consumers.[104] The attractiveness towards *Sits* was also fueled by its vibrant dyes. Indian cottons were unparalleled in the brightness and fastness i.e. the ability of the fabric to hold the dye despite washes.[105] European textile makers had lacked the know-how to actualize this. Moreover, European design making relied on weaving designs into the textiles, and hence the vast possibility of design changes made possible by the printing techniques of Indian Calicoes were infinite.[106] As result, these customizable floral textiles offered by Golconda became the popularized variety of export to Europe from the 17th century onwards.

[103] Prakash, "A List of Clothes and Other Items Required from the Coast of Coromandel Annually for the Moluccas, Amboina, Banda, Java, Patani, Sian and the Netherlands. Prepared at Jakarta, 16 July 1619."; Nierstrasz, "The Consumption of Textiles."
[104] Lemire, "Domesticating the Exotic," 18.
[105] Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", 25.
[106] Lemire and Riello, "East & West: Textiles and Fashion in Early Modern Europe," 892-893.

4. *Sits* in Europe: Design Influences and Multiculturality

It is possible to create a comprehensive picture of how exactly *Sits* grew in popularity in the Europe with the help of data and academic works already undertaken by colonial and textile historians. The inadequacy of surviving records from the 15th and 16th centuries regarding trade and local sales of printed and painted Indian cottons in Europe makes studying it a more subjective practice that involves creating linkages based on the parallelly occurring events across the ocean over the centuries. The term *Sits* or Chintz was used as an umbrella category of printed and painted patterns on medium to fine quality cotton, and in reality, featured several different production styles from different parts of India. Depending on the nearest port of export, these fabrics were lumped into one category for the ease of documentation perhaps, or because the Company did not care for the local variations. It was only post 1750s that documents of the EIC and the VOC recorded colored Indian textiles in detailed categories.[107] Despite this practice, the perception of all the textiles as 'Chintz' or '*Sits*' was already born in the minds of its consumers, which did not change in usage.

4.1 Entry of *Sits* into Europe

Importing Indian textiles created opportunities for presenting sartorial novelty in courts for the nobility and courtiers who were the first patrons of the textile. The first oncoming of fine printed and painted Indian cottons in Europe was as gifts for the royalty and nobility by Portuguese and French traders from Gujarat

[107] Crill, *Chintz*, 8.

in the 1500s.[108] As mentioned in the Chapter 2, the discovery of *Carreira da India* by Vasco da Gama in 1498 revolutionized the culture of trade permanently. Within few years, printed Indian cottons by the name of *Pintado* was already in circulation in Portugal and beyond. Totaling to more than 60% of cargo volumes of both the Crown and private merchants, printed Indian cottons were shipped to Lisbon, which remained the biggest port of entry for printed cottons to Europe throughout the 1500s.[109] *Pintado*– translating to 'spotted' or 'variegated', first referred to only those textiles that featured motifs that were painted with a free hand.[110] As trade volumes grew and the India-based merchandisers diversified their textile procurement, it became the umbrella term used to refer to all printed and painted Indian cottons for the coming century, until the Dutch and British in India popularized the usage of the term *Sits* or Chintz, also sharing the same meaning, but with Indian etymology. *Pintadoes* were generally textiles of high quality, and were considered an 'exotic' good, often gifted either as a souvenir from India, or for use as drapery or fashion textile among the elite.

The remaining artefacts of Dutch and European *Sits* are perhaps the largest testament to the transoceanic movement of micro-cultural characteristic both knowingly and unknowingly; unfortunately, the survival of cottons from these times are scarce, and its presence in digitized collections almost non-existent. The knowledge of their use has been obtained from translated studies of estate inventories of Portuguese nobility like the Duchess Beatriz of Beja-Viseu from 1506 (mother of Monarch João III of Portugal), which makes reference to her ownership of *Pintado* draperies.[111] The royal patronage of Indian printed cottons was indeed a trendsetter, for the power dynamics of conspicuous consumption

[108] Beverly Lemire, "Revising the Historical Narrative: India, Europe and the Cotton Trade, 1300-1800," in *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 205–226.
[109] Ferreira, "Asian Textiles in the Carreira Da Índia," 151.
[110] Prakash, *The Dutch Factories in India 1624-1627*, 21, 320.
[111] Ferreira, "Asian Textiles in the Carreira Da Índia," 158.

has always operated in a top to bottom hierarchy. In the mind of the public, if an object was worthy of royal attention, surely it was covetable to the rest also. The "social life" of *Pintado*s was determined in Portugal, and early the rest of Europe predating colonial dominance by the meaning making carried out by its royal and noble patronage[112] The perception of this textile changed over time across the continent in the later centuries due to the large-scale trade of *Sits* undertaken by the British and the Dutch. These changes in perception will be explored in a later section.

Upon analysis of various historiographical accounts of Indian cottons and their entry, popularity, perception and consumption in different European Empires in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, several different observations arise. First, as per common rhetoric of course, *Sits*/Chintz was imported into Europe as a luxury good; as in the case of Portugal, its trend trickled down from the nobility.[113] The most politically contested commodities in European societies were those goods imbued with an exotic allure: "the sensuous sheen and drape of the cloth… was an affront to the traditionalists."[114] The sensualizing of the exotic gained momentum in this era, with Chinese silks and Indian cottons occupying the place of pride as a material conquest of the faraway lands.[115] This fascination stemmed from the exotic nature of the goods made them covetable in the eyes of those who perhaps would never visit these far-away lands in their lifetime.[116] Even until the mid-1600s, printed Calicoes were still a rare object of fascination. It was not yet available in large quantities. Research by scholars like Beverly Lemire, Prasannan Parthasarathi and Giorgio Riello examining import and sale documents of Calicoes in this period prove that Indian manufactured *Sits* were

[112] Gerritsen and Riello, "Introduction," 19.
[113] Ferreira, "Asian Textiles in the Carreira Da Índia," 159.
[114] Lemire and Riello, 891.
[115] Maxine Berg, "Introduction," in *Goods from the East, 1600–1800: Trading Eurasia*, ed. Maxine Berg et al., Europe's Asian Centuries (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 1–6.
[116] Maxine Berg, "In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History and British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century," *Past & Present* Vol. 182 (February 1, 2004): 85–142.

expensive, and sold as a premium product in Europe, and was highly valued to the extent that it was often bequeathed to future generations in wills until the mid-1600s.[117] Bequeathing fashion fabrics may come off as an odd request in those times unless it were fine laces or silks. The fact that Indian cottons were held in such high regards is telling of their popularity.

4.2 Botanical Imagery

Europe, or at least the English and the Dutch had not been immediately accepting this foreign aesthetic as part of common consumptive practices, and had to be gradually introduced to the possibility of novel fashion.[118] It seemed a logical market decision on the part of the EIC and the VOC to market the textile through familiar motifs that could be identified by Europeans. Among the variety of patterns Indian artisans painted and printed onto cottons, flowers were a safe choice.[119] For one, flowers were largely culturally neutral; a universal symbol of aesthetic pleasure, its manifestation in fashion was such that people across religions could consume textiles featuring these designs. The turn of the 17th century in Europe was characterized by several religious changes like the Protestant Reformation in which clear distinctions between the practice of Christianity in the public and the private sphere were made.[120] As result, Europeans, especially in Britain and the Low Countries were now engaging in the consumption of floral motifs whose aesthetic value and "symbolism of the transience of earthly things" without the fear of frivolity.[121]

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[117] Lemire, "Domesticating the Exotic."
[118] Giorgio Riello, *Cotton: The Fabric That Made the Modern World* (Cambridge University Press, 2013): 115.
[119] Lemire, "Domesticating the Exotic," 68–71.
[120] Jack Goody, *The Culture of Flowers* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 170–200.
[121] Sykas, "Refashioning Indian Chintz in the European Manner," 204.

Europe's fascination with floral prints were also a direct consequence of the burgeoning popularity of engaging with flowers and plants in a domestic and social setting. Leisure gardens with rich, flowering plants were gaining popularity in England, and it was considered fashionable for the elite and educated to boast of owning them, as well as being seen in public with them.[122] Traders were bringing saplings from other parts of Europe to Britain, especially from the Mediterranean, and new flowers, colors and aesthetic sensibilities were entering the knowledge and consumption of the influential British- who were obviously the only social strata that had the time or access to enjoy such niceties. As time passed of course, the practice of appreciating flowers tricked down to common folks (as is the case of most cultural novelties or trends). At this point, one can without doubt state that the Dutch consumption of flowers also took a similar path. After all, the British and the Dutch were both equally well-connected through trade and political relations, and had similar bourgeois societies.[123]

In the elite European circles, social code directed that they dress in linens, silks and wool in public even into the early 1600s. As an alternative form of expressing their newfound liking for floral motifs, it was popular in the 16th and 17th centuries to decorate one's bedrooms and house wear with such patterns where it could be enjoyed privately. Bedspreads, wall hangings, bed curtains, robes, night hair caps, etc. featured floral embroidery- the most common means of textile decoration in Europe during the time.[124] Prior to the flood of colorful Indian cottons into Europe, Britain specifically engaged with embroidered linens for decorative purposes.

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[122] Goody, *The Culture of Flowers*, 200–214.
[123] Lemire, "Revising the Historical Narrative: India, Europe and the Cotton Trade, 1300-1800": 205-226.
[124] Rosemary Crill, "A Revolution in the Bedroom," in *The Cloth That Changed the World: India's Painted and Printed Cottons*, ed. Sarah Fee (New Haven, Canada: Yale University Press, 2020), 107–33.

4.2.1 Crewel Embroidery Work

The European familiarity with flowers especially in Britain, came from Crewel embroidery work practiced by women to adorn blankets, wall tapestries, curtains and fashion accessories.[125] A free-style embroidery method pioneered in Britain, it involved the combination of several different embroidery styles using woolen or strong silk yarn on linen or other stiff fabrics to produce different patterns.[126] Thought to have become a practice during the Elizabethan era (1550s to early 1600s) and later developed into a common hobby by the succeeding Stuart era of the 17th century, its patterns were usually created against white backgrounds due to the nature of undyed British linens (called Fustian, similar to modern day denim in texture and weight) used as the base fabric.[127] Flowers were the most commonly embroidered motifs, made by employing yarns of different colors and glazes. The following image is of one of the oldest surviving pieces of British Crewel work. Despite being digitized as a monochrome photograph, it was considered imperative to present this here in order to display what exactly traditional British Crewel (before Indian *Palampores* and motifs potentially penetrated the markets and design decisions).

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[125] Rosemary Crill, "A Revolution in the Bedroom," in *The Cloth That Changed the World: India's Painted and Printed Cottons*, ed. Sarah Fee (New Haven, Canada: Yale University Press, 2020): 109.
[126] Ann Pollard Rowe, "Crewel Embroidered Bed Hangings in Old and New England," *Boston Museum Bulletin* 71, no. 365/366 (1973): 105.
[127] Rowe, 105.

Figure 11. Coif. Silk embroidered linen hair cap. Made in Britain ca. 1575-1600s. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/228945?searchField=All&when=A.D.+14001600&where=England&what=Textiles&ao=on&showOnly=openAccess&ft=embroidery&offset=0&rpp=80&pos=8

The above Coif is a bonnet or a hair cap, worn by women to cover their heads while outdoors. Despite the handicap presented by the monochromatic image, it is easy to tell by the differences in shade that colorful threads have been used in the creation of the motifs. Given the finish, and the rather simple design sensibilities on the coif it is likely that it was produced domestically by someone with mediocre skills and/or training in Crewel work. As already mentioned above, this may not be the most intricate piece of British Crewel, but it's period of creation made it an important addition to this study. The following example, though from a slightly later period, is a better testament to the colorful designs produced using the Crewel embroidery method in Britain, with its vibrant botanical designs contrasting against white backgrounds, hence highlighting the design itself.

Figure 12. Bed Curtain. Linen-cotton twill textile with woolen embroidery. Made in England, 1690s-1700. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O77711/bed-curtain-unknown/.

The takeaway of this piece is that it is made on a white background, giving the design better opportunity to stand out, and are regularly spaced and not congested in appearance. The feature, as one will see in later images, is a characteristic of Europe commissioned Sits that sets it apart from traditional Indian Kalamkari, which tends to concentrate several intricate motifs into the body of the textile. The preference towards white spacing could also have been due to the newfound lenience towards relaxed or informalized domestic spheres in upper class British homes in the 17th century onwards.[128] The introduction of

[128] Beverly Lemire, "An Education in Comfort: Indian Textiles and the Remaking of English Homes over the Long Eighteenth Century," in *Selling Textiles in the Long Eighteenth Century: Comparative Perspectives from Western Europe*, ed. Jon Stobart and Bruno Blondé (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014), 13–29, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137295217_2.

light-colored floral décor and drapery by eschewing heavy brocades and silks can be understood as its direct consequence.

4.2.2 Persian Islamic Motifs

The Indian *Kalamkari*'s rather 'busy' design structure was in turn stemming from another source of origin altogether. The evolution of British textile decoration as the result of Indian influences is a widely studied field. What has not been done as frequently is to trace the design influences of the *Sits*' predecessor in itself; India is considered a unified source of origin, but where did India pick these influences from in the first place? Similarly, the aforementioned Crewel work can be oft associated with the rise of appreciation for botanical motifs as result of the flower garden culture in Europe, especially in Britain.

While flower gardens have experienced universal presence across global civilizations, one of the most famous societies that engaged in "exotic" botanical appreciation was that of the Mughals in India.[129] Mughal gardens are said to be the direct source of inspiration for the British gardens, with the hopes that they could recreate the organized, vivid recreational spaces for their elite.[130] Mughals were renowned for their flower gardens or *Bagh* (meaning garden in Indo-Persian), often created as imperial gifts to royal wives and used as a private space of recreation among the upper echelon of society.[131] These gardens were in turn were heavily inspired by Persian flower gardens called *Pairideaza* (coincidentally, also the root word for the English word 'paradise').[132] While not directly related to the Deccan Sultanate, their close trade and political relations

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[129] Lemire, "Domesticating the Exotic," 69.

[130] Julie Scott Meisami, "Allegorical Gardens in the Persian Poetic Tradition : Nezami, Rumi, Hafez," ed. Judith E. Tucker, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17, no. 2 (1985): 229–60; Lemire, "Domesticating the Exotic," 68–69.

[131] Abdul Rehman, "Changing Concepts of Garden Design in Lahore from Mughal to Contemporary Times," *Garden History* 37, no. 2 (2009): 205–8.

[132] Elizabeth B. Moynihan, *Paradise as a Garden : In Persia and Mughal India* (London, UK: Scholar Press, 1982), 2.

with the Mughals, coupled with European interaction with both the Mughals and the Deccan Sultanate meant that its journey as a source of inspiration had transoceanic visibilities.

Botanical imagery in Indian *Kalamkari* came from its Persian influences, further patronaged by the Golconda Sultanate and the Mughals due to the religious and socio-cultural similarities shared between them. Persian carpet making was a renowned art form in precolonial times. As Persian dynasties evolved, their perception of art too evolved, and their rugs- for whom master craftsmen were aplenty in central Iran, produced pieces reflective of changes. Older styles of Persian carpets featured uniform, geometrical prints.[133] The Safavid style created an elaborate style of carpet aesthetic to reflect the changes of their land, culture, economy and the Shia school of Islam flourished in late 15th century onwards.

Figure 13. The Emperor's Carpet. Hand-dyed, knotted and piled silk and wool carpet. Made in Iran ca. 1550s. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Institute of Art, New York. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/450509?searchField=All&sortBy=Rel

[133] Amy Briggs, "Timurid Carpets: I. Geometric Carpets," *Ars Islamica* 7, no. 1 (1940): 20–54.

evance&when=A.D.+1400-1600&what=Textiles&ao=on&showOnly=openAccess&ft=persian+floral&offset=0&rpp=80&pos=1.

The above image is of a fragment from a carpet made in Iran- either as a commission or as a gift (the latter being more likely) for Czar Peter the Great of Russia.[134] It is one of the very few surviving carpet textiles from the 16th century, perhaps due to its well-documented usage in Imperial Palaces. Objects from private collections or those from the lesser social strata tend to survive the least due to lack of initiative or care for preservation of non-precious goods. This carpet, though a woven piece, featured motifs that are now familiar given the study of *Kalamkari* and *Sits* pieces so far in this thesis. Intricate designs of flora and fauna made in the rich color schemes of reds, yellows, greens, blacks and blues were yielded by natural dyes for the core of Persian carpet design. This aesthetic reached India's Islamic Empires like the Mughals and the Deccan through their trade relations with the Safavids, and later intermingled with local culture and artistic aesthetic to produce hybridized designs that later integrated itself into Indian design sensibilities. One of the most important, and obvious means of establishing routes of connected histories is by examining its proof of existence in material goods. This carpet features a wide array of colorful flowers in rounded our designs, i.e. the botanical elements displayed in such types of work did not emphasize on realism, but instead on intricate design elements. This characteristic of Persian designs imprinted itself onto Golconda *Kalamkari* as well, as will be seen in the next textile sample studied for its design characteristics.

[134] "The Emperor's Carpet," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 21, 2021, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/450509.

4.2.3 Reinvention of Floral Imagery in *Kalamkari* and *Sits*

As briefly explored in the previous chapter with regards to the Golconda *Kalamkari*, the universality of floral imagery could be a reason why the specific school of *Kalamkari* was the first generation of European *Sits*/Chintz. Let us take a look at the following two samples of floral Indian painted textiles. The following sample of Golconda style *Kalamkari*, while not the most intricate in design, is a well-represented aggregate of how the floral motifs on long cloth exported to Europe in the late 16th and early 17th centuries might have looked like.

Figure 14. Kalamkari Saree. Resist dyed and hand-painted cotton textile. Made in Srikalahasti, India, 2020.Courtesy of Dwarka Kalamkari E-Commerce platform, Bengaluru, https://www.instagram.com/p/CN2qTdYJ-Y_/?igshid=17v320wq5cc3r.

Ideally, it would have been preferable if it was possible to access an original Indian *Kalamkari* piece from the 16th or 17th century, but as with several other textiles over the course of this thesis, *Kalamkaris* produced from domestic consumption in the early modern centuries have mostly not survived. The few that may be in the Calico Museum in Gujarat, India were inaccessible due to its lack of digitized collections. As result, the above image of a *Kalamkari* Saree produced in modern times in Srikalahasti has been used as a visual sample to

indicate possible design styles of the first set of Indian *Sits* exported to Europe. Produced by group of artisans supported by the not-for profit organization *Dwarka* are making active efforts to produce *Kalamkari* textiles using the traditional 23-step method to preserve the art form in the light of cheap, digitally printed imitations flooding the modern Indian consumer market.[135] As this sample represents, original *Kalamkari* produced for domestic use was usually produced on colored backgrounds like black, blue, red or yellow. These were the most common textile colors in *Kalamkari* that allowed for dye-adherence and long-lasting color fastness. If compared to the Persian carpet in Figure 12, the likeliness in the flow of motifs and its color combination against the black background stands out starkly. Admittedly, the above sample is a contemporary piece; even if one were to take into consideration the research handicap presented by the dissonance in time period, the similarities cannot be denied. Furthermore, present-day Srikalahasti *Kalamkari* is manufactured by the same community of artisans who have resided in the town for the past generations. Though not published, they are thought to possess samples and oral tradition of design instructions that they follow to this day.[136]

[135] Ramanarpanam Trust, "Dwaraka," Dwaraka, 2005, http://www.dwarakaonline.com/Html/MainStory.htm.
[136] Dwaraka *Kalamkari*, *Anita Reddy | The DWARAKA Movement: How Art Transformed Communities* (Bengaluru, India, 2020), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-82zRYDKWLY.

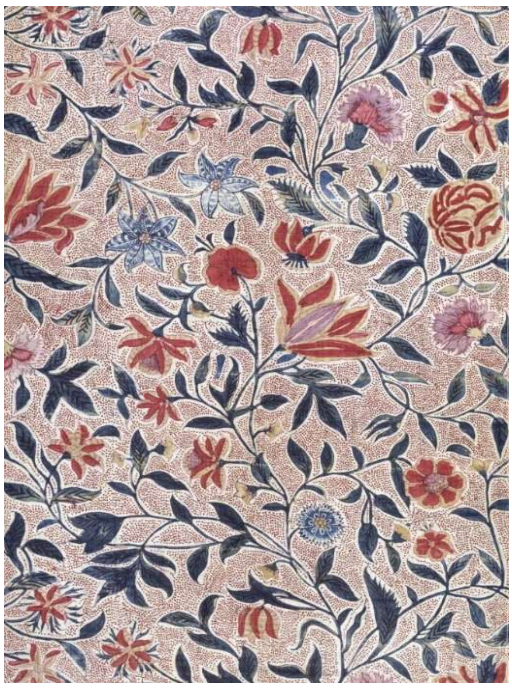

Figure 15. Chintz Fragment. Resist dyed, hand-painted and glazed cotton textile. Made in India, ca. 1700s. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O69912/fragment-unknown/.

Figure 15 is that of a fragment of *Sits* that was once part of a European outfit, later acquired by the V&A from a private collection in 1976.[137] This textile was made in India; given its century of manufacture and the fact that it was found in Europe, it is not a far reach to conclude that this fabric piece was most likely commissioned for production by either the British or the Dutch East India Companies, both the biggest textile importers of the time. Some salient features stand out when comparing this fragment (made to European market tastes) and the previous Figure 13. For one, most imported *Sits* from the late 1600s onwards are decorated on light (often white) backgrounds. The European market had an affinity for light colored *Sits*; this could have two possible reasonings. One, the European tastes were influenced by the aesthetic of white Chinese porcelains

[137] Victoria and Albert Museum, "Fragment | Unknown | V&A Explore The Collections," Victoria and Albert Museum: Explore the Collections, accessed April 20, 2021, /item/O6/O69/O699/O6991/O69912/.

imported as part of the tea and opium trade into the country, or it was simply that the cottons were possibly used in summer- both as draperies or in fashion.[138] Sartorially, it made sense that they chose *Sits* to suit the summer theme of botanical prints on light colors. Whichever of the two was the case, Europeans began importing higher numbers of printed white Calicoes to replace the normal production of dark backgrounds. While the basic motif remailed similar, with almost identical flowering vines creeping across the body of the fabric, its manifestation evolved to take on a more realistic botanical imagery.

Of the two Figures 14 and 15, it is evident to a layman's eye that the commissioned *Sits* (Figure 15) featured motifs that were more 'flower-like' than the traditional motif style. The change in background combined with the shift in depiction of floral imagery seem to be the point of divergence or evolution (depending on perspective) between *Kalamkari* and *Sits*. Flowers became more realistic, and were drawn on whites to allude to a vacuum of space in the background. The VOC's commissions to Indian dyers and printers included making variations for preferred background shades of white and other light colours as opposed to the traditional dark indigo and maroons of *Kalamkari*, spacing prints more sparsely along the length of the textile instead of closely spaced designs and increasing textile bolt width – *bada panna* (Hindi for long cloth) to accommodate for gown and furnishing lengths as opposed to the smaller bolts called *chhota panna* that was otherwise the commonly woven cotton textile size.[139] Correspondences would specify preferred colour combinations, pattern spacing and direction depending on prevalent fashion trends.[140]

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[138] Crill, "A Revolution in the Bedroom," 108.
[139] Raveux, "The Orient and the Dawn of Western Industrialization"; Lemire, "Revising the Historical Narrative: India, Europe and the Cotton Trade, 1300-1800," 205-226.
[140] Lemire and Riello, "
East & West: Textiles and Fashion in Early Modern Europe," 887-916.

While attempts were made to access translated VOC correspondences and commission books from the National Archive of the Netherlands in order to supplement this statement with primary evidence, the sources were inaccessible due to logistical restrictions. Instead, proforma invoices attached as part of correspondences between VOC officials on the Coromandel Coast were studied to glean a rough idea of how textile manufacture specifications worked between VOC and *Kalamkari* workers on the Coast's villages. The letters in question i.e. *an estimate of Coromandel clothes that could be sold in a year in Moluccas, Amboina, Banda, Java, Patani and other southern quarters* from Batavia on 27 April 1623 and *a list of clothes and other items required from the coast of Coromandel annually for the Moluccas, Amboina, Banda, Java, Patani, Siam and the Netherlands* from Jakarta on 16 July 1619 details expected designs of commissioned textiles including:

Colour specifications[141]

"*Chavonis* …of white, black, yellow, light blue, dark blue, yellow green and red"[142]

"Fine *Khasa Betilles* …of best quality in white, blue, black, dark green, bright red and violet colours"[143]

Patterns

"*Tapi Saraasas* …of small flower work in lively colours"[144]

"*Sarasa Malay*… of best quality, different flowers and as much design diversity as possible"[145]

It is important to note that these letters are from the early 1600s, when VOC was still in the process of achieving commercial and political dominance in India. As times changed, their market relationship with producers moved from mercantile to enforced credit-based commissions. Further, European consumer taste were being taken into active consideration in order to meet the newfound demand better; design specificities became complex, with visual samples sent alongside correspondences to emulate production.[146] Pattern books are absent

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[141] The italicized terms refer to local names for different cotton fabrics as per weave quality and intended use

[142] Om Prakash, trans., "An Estimate of Coromandel Clothes That Could Be Sold in a Year in Moluccas, Amboina, Banda, Java, Patani and Other Southern Quarters. Prepared in Batavia, 27 April 1623.," in *The Dutch Factories in India 1624-1627: A Collection of Dutch East India Company Documents Pertaining to India*, vol. 2 (1984: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, n.d.), 254.

[143] Prakash, "A List of Clothes and Other Items Required from the Coast of Coromandel Annually for the Moluccas, Amboina, Banda, Java, Patani, Sian and the Netherlands. Prepared at Jakarta, 16 July 1619.," 101.

[144] Prakash, "An Estimate of Coromandel Clothes That Could Be Sold in a Year in Moluccas, Amboina, Banda, Java, Patani and Other Southern Quarters. Prepared in Batavia, 27 April 1623.," 255.

[145] Prakash, "A List of Clothes and Other Items Required from the Coast of Coromandel Annually for the Moluccas, Amboina, Banda, Java, Patani, Sian and the Netherlands. Prepared at Jakarta, 16 July 1619.," 101.

[146] Prasannan Parthasarathi, *The Transition to a Colonial Economy: Weavers, Merchants and Kings in South India, 1720-1800* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 83–88.

from Dutch GLAM's digitized collections. As an alternative, preserved sketches from the British EIC and French patterns books of *Sits* were studied to draw the following observations. These visual samples were either textile fragments of *Kalamkaris* or *Sits* from previous shipments that had sold well in the Dutch markets (hence guaranteeing its profitability) or were hand drawn sketches of designs of patterns and flowers bound in a book and shipped to India.[147]

4.3 Design Manifestation of Hybridized *Kalamkari* as *Sits*

It is admittedly too complex a process for a master's thesis to analyze every single category of *Sits* exported to the Europe in the late 16th century onwards. Several digitized collections of *Sits* displayed at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Rijksmuseum, the Met, The Smithsonian, and the British Museum were perused in the process, and 9 different artefacts made of *Sits* were shortlisted. Following their study keeping in mind material culture theories as elaborated by Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello in *Writing Material Culture History*, the most suitable samples that effectively convey my hypothesis of design evolution and hybridization as a form of connection for several different geographies, political eras, cultures and design sensibilities to create an entirely new style of textile design were chosen. As a result, two subcategories of design elements were identified for the visual presentation:

4.3.1 Overall structural and pattern influence: This category primarily focuses on *Sits* designs on *Palampores* (Bed covers) for the Dutch market from Dutch and English museum collections. The aim of this category of study is to emphasize the overall similarity of design

[147] Victoria and Albert Museum, "Pattern Book | V&A Explore The Collections," Victoria and Albert Museum: Explore the Collections, accessed May 21, 2021, /item/O1/O14/O146/O1462/O14623/O1462398/.

with Persian carpets, as well as Mughal and Deccan design styles that evolved as per European commissions.

4.3.2 Appearance of a particular motif across a variety of textiles: A particular floral motif- in this case, a carnation flower was identified as a common thread across textiles produced in and for different markets over the 16th to 18th centuries. There are admittedly numerous floral motifs- both based on real flowers and "fantastical" created as result of artistic liberties, limitation to the scope of research forcds me to confine my choice to one motif alone.

4.3.1 Overall Structural and Pattern Influence

Sits didn't reach Europe as a fashion fabric. The first cases of commissioned *Sits* products were in the form of quilts and bedspreads called *Palampore*- the anglicized word for the Urdu term '*Palangposh'* meaning bedcovers.[148] There exists proof of colorfully painted Indian bedcovers in Portugal in the 1520s, corroborating with the records of bedding and draperies used by the Royal family in Lisbon during these times.[149] I make the claim that they were likely commissioned by the Europeans because the tropical Indian weather avoided the need for quilts in local usage, where it was a common practice to use thin cotton sheets as blankets among commoners, and brocaded silk sheets among the affluent. It is not a far reach to extrapolate that the Europeans perhaps were enamored by the idea of colorful, intricate bedding that was washable and color-fast- all of which were characteristics that wool, silk or linen blankets traditionally used in Europe did not possess.[150] Unfortunately, there are no surviving pieces of these initial imports of *Palampores* (digitized or otherwise).

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[148] Sarah Fee, ed., "Glossary," in *The Cloth That Changed the World: India's Painted and Printed Cottons* (New Haven, Canada: Yale University Press, 2020), 277.
[149] Otto Charles Thieme, "Appendix," in *By Inch of Candle: A Sale at East-India House 21 September 1675* (Associates of the James ford Bell Library, 1982), 23–24.
[150] Crill, "A Revolution in the Bedroom," 108.

As result of this, it can only be (safely) thought that the onset of printed and painted Indian quilts were produced in the predominant Golconda style since written descriptions only mention that they are colorful designs of flowers on blue, red or white backgrounds, as the contemporary piece (Figure 14) also suggests.[151] Overall textile pattern (with regards to *Palampores* and rectangular décor textiles) was chosen due to the ubiquity of such textiles among surviving pieces of *Sits* in Europe; the examination of multiple pieces of the same yielded in congruent results, of which one sample has been displayed in the following section for illustrative purposes.

Regardless, it is widely assumed that a Persian carpet designs played an important role in shaping the *Palampore's* aesthetic, which in turn shaped the perception of printed and painted cottons in Europe.[152] In the carpets produced in the Safavid dynasty, it was common to see Quran verses or lines from Arabic poems as part of the design with floral backgrounds, as well as imagery of trees and animals from the Quran feature prominently in carpet designs.[153] The following image of a Persian carpet made during the Safavid dynasty in the 1560s is one of the oldest surviving examples of carpets featuring the new school of design developed under the Safavid patronage.

[151] Isabel dos Guimarães Sá, "The Uses of Luxury: Some Examples from the Portuguese Courts from 1480 to 1580," *Análise Social* 44, no. 192 (2009): 589–604.
[152] John Irwin, "Indian Painted and Printed Fabrics," *Art Journal* 32, no. 3 (197321): 368. A. Cecil Edwards, *The Persian Carpet: A Survey of the Carpet-Weaving Industry of Persia* (London, UK: Duckworth, 1975), 30–35.

Figure 16. The Salting Carpet. Hand-knotted and piled silk, wool and metallic thread carpet. Made in Qazvin, Iran ca. 1550s. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O54294/the-salting-carpet-carpet-unknown/.

While this is not the finest quality or most renowned Safavid Persian carpet in existence today, it is the only one of this school of design that featured distinct florals Quranic verses and a central motif that exists in an open-source digital collection. Named 'Salting Carpet' after its contributor Mr. David Salting, a British art collector to the V&A, this piece is an example of the most common carpet style of the time, and it is likely that similar pieces were exported to the Mughals and Deccan Sultanates in the 16th and 17th centuries. This coincided with the emergence of the Golconda school of *Kalamkari* under the Deccan Sultanates near the Coromandel Coast- which was also the first strongholds of the Portuguese and the Dutch (later the British) in the same era. As Golconda *Kalamkari* artists absorbed these new styles of designs, their production also

reflected this novelty. The below *Palangposh* bed spread (anglicized as *Palampore* in the V&A's metadata) is one such example of Indian textile painters hybridizing the Persian carpet's medallion motif on a busily adorned background.

Figure 17. Palampore. Resist-dyed and hand painted cotton textile. Made in Coromandel Coast, India ca. 1700s. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O126857/Palampore-unknown/.

This bed cover was produced for local consumption in the southeast of India i.e. the region proximate to the Coromandel Coast and Golconda.[154] The liberal usage of animal, floral and vine-like motifs around a central medallion is a common theme across the Persian and Indian textile. This design idea of creating a centerpiece for the textile can be linked to the landscaping design of

[154] Victoria and Albert Museum, "*Palampore* | Unknown | V&A Explore The Collections," Victoria and Albert Museum: Explore the Collections, accessed April 28, 2021, /item/O1/O12/O126/O1268/O12685/O126857/.

Charbagh or the Mughal gardens as elaborated previously. These gardens were usually rectangular in nature, with a central water body similar to a fountain divided the space into four quadrants.[155] The symmetry of these gardens were its specialty, serving as a muse for *Kalamkari* and *Sits* makers.

Figure 18. Unknown. Photograph of Taj Mahal Gardens, also known as Charbaug. Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 20/02/2017. http://www.cpreecenvis.nic.in/Database/TajMahal_2094.aspx.

The above image provides visual aid for understanding the basic structure of Mughal Gardens, and the possible inspiration for the *Palangposh* style as depicted in Figure 17. The landscaped space between the Taj Mahal and its gate is a classic *Charbhagh*, with the centerpiece dividing the rectangular area into four quadrants. Commissioned in 1632, this garden's completion in the heart of the Mughal Empire served as an icon to the Mughal and Persian heritage and architecture. Upon the influx of English officials and tradesmen arriving in India and interacting with the Mughals over the 17th and 18th centuries, the British affection for Mughal gardens established itself. Given this, it is not a far reach to offer the explanation that these gardens, which played a very important role

[155] Rehman, "Changing Concepts of Garden Design in Lahore from Mughal to Contemporary Times," 205–17.

in the socialization process of the era, could have lent inspiration for the textile design too. Later, due to intermingling of designs over time, commissions and consumer preferences, modified versions manifested differently according to its market of export for similar textiles.

As elaborated earlier in this chapter, botanical motifs grew more realistic as time passed, and flowers were depicted in realistic styles in *Sits* exported from Coromandel, as per European commissions. The following *Palampore* was created in India for export to the Dutch markets in the early 1700s.

Figure 19. Palampore. Resist dyed, block printed and hand painted cotton textile. Made in Coromandel Coast, India ca. 1720s. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London, https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O128827/Palampore-unknown/.

This *Palampore* was manufactured in the early 18th century in Coromandel (most likely in villages in the north of the coast, in proximity with Golconda) specifically for the Dutch market. Its characteristics with relation to the Persian

carpet design and the *Palangposh* is quite stark; for one, the thick decorative border. While the Salting Carpet (Figure 16) sported verses from Quran, this *Palampore*, meant for the Christian Europe features secular botanical and animal motifs. The distinct digression of this *Sits Palampore* from the Persian carpet, or even the previously studies Indian *Kalamkari* designs is its white background as opposed to the dark carpet or the madder red or indigo dyed Indian *Kalamkari* textiles. The *Palampore* meant for European markets is also less busy in terms of motif spacing, especially compared to the *Palangposh* meant for the domestic Indian market. The botanical motifs are less rounded, and more life-like in accordance with the preferences of the European markets of the time.[156] This change in taste is associated with the popularity of the Chinese ink-stroke inspired botanical aesthetic among the Dutch and the British in the 17th and 18th centuries, as will be seen in the later section too.[157] Despite these distinctions in design, its makers have retained commonality among the two through design choices in the form of the central motif; the design of both the Indian *Palangposh*, the European *Palampore* and the Salting Carpet are centred on a medallion-like motif in the middle, serving as the tether for the overall design. This practice provided symmetry to the textile, and created a cohesive but complex design as opposed to a singular pattern of motifs uniformly painted through the textile's body. While no written records can confirm this, it is a possibility that the Coromandel producers made a deliberate design choice with *Palampore* designs by emulating elements of the Persian carpets. For example, by symmetrically designing the *Palampore*, it was possible for the artisans to create repositories of stencils to apply design outlines which could later be detailed with hand painted colours, as in the case of the respective *Kalamkari* and *Sits* in Figures 17 and 19. This speeded the production

[156] Metsger, "The Flowers of Indo-European Chintz," 150–55.
[157] Adam Geczy, "1690–1815: Chinoiserie, Indiennerie, Turquerie and Egyptomania," in *Fashion and Orientalism: Dress, Textiles and Culture from the 17th to The21st Century* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 44–45, http://dx.doi.org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.2752/9781474235280/Geczy0004.

process while maintaining the intricacy and quality of design. European consumers did not necessarily make specific commission requests from Persian influences; that design decisions lay at the hands of the Indian artisan, who did continue to exercise some degree of aesthetic freedom in their productions despite specifications from the colonial merchants.

In order to summarize the various observations made with regards to *Kalamkari* and *Sits* décor fabrics, the following table puts forth the various design influences studied in this chapter through the deconstruction of its salient features.

Table 1. List of distinguishing design factors between Persian carpets, Golconda *Kalamkari* and Commissioned *Sits*

TEXTILE TYPE / **FACTOR**	**PERSIAN CARPETS**	**GOLCONDA *KALAMKARI***	**COMMISSIONED *SITS***
TECHNIQUE	Woven wool and silk	Hand-painted design on dyed cotton	Printed on dyed cotton with hand painted detailing
BACKGROUND	Dark backgrounds	Dark (usually red or blue) backgrounds	Light (usually white, beige or pale pink) background
MOTIF SPACING	Closely spaced	Closely spaced	Widely spaced with considerable background visibility
MOTIF DESIGN INFLUENCE	Ottoman, Quranic influences	Persian, Mughal, Hindu Srikalahasti influences	Persian, Mughal, Golconda, Srikalahasti, Gujarati, Chinese influences

SYMMETRY	Symmetrical rectangular design with central medallion	Symmetry contingent on textile purpose		Symmetry contingent on textile purpose	
		Bed coverings and floor cloths: symmetrical with central medallion designs	**Long cloth, miscellaneous textiles**: closely and irregularly spaced overall design with no symmetrical design choices	**Palmpores:** Symmetrical rectangular design with either medallion or vertical design encompassing centre of textile	**Long cloth, miscellaneous textile:** repetitive, continuous floral motifs

4.3.2 Carnation Motif

The above section focused on drawing a macro-level perspective on transoceanic design influences between textiles produced, inspired from, reproduced, hybridised and consumed elsewhere. Now, the focus of this research shifts to picking and choosing a particularity as a focal point. Floral motifs have been part of textile design since the turn of the past millennia, with archaeological excavations from Mesopotamian and Harappan Civilizations unearthing textile fragments with flower-like designs on them. As already well established by this point in research, floral motifs from the backbone of Golconda *Kalamkari* (and its Persian predecessor) and the European *Sits*. A

collective representation of a variety of floral motifs defines the usual style of *Sits*. It is, of course, given the scope of this thesis as well as time constraints, impossible to present connections and commonalities between motifs of several different flowers in these textiles. As result, digitised collections of textiles from different parts of the world including India (the Coromandel specifically), Netherlands, China and Persia were observed for commonalities in design. As textiles were being studied, one particular flower happened to appear in several pieces from the 15th century onwards, despite the widespread points of origin of these textiles.

The Carnation flower in particular stood out in its copious presence on textiles. Though actively cultivated globally for centuries, this flower is said to originate from the Mediterranean region. Logically, it is entirely plausible that its presence was found in western Europe due to proximity; more interestingly though, this flower's stylised motif has been found in Indian, Persian, Turkish and Chinese textiles of the 17th and 18th centuries. The likeliest explanation being that these motifs were part of art, textiles or botanical samples that were transported from Europe eastwards.

Figure 20. Darkone, Carnation (Dianthus caryophyllus). Photograph of Cultivated Carnation Flower, CC BY-SA 1.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/1.0>, via Wikimedia Commons, 18 September 2004, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gartennelke_1.jpg.

When reimagining this flower in a two-dimensional context, it resembles a fan-like motif with zigzagged edges and a circular flower structure. Here too, one has to reiterate the earlier observation that until the mid-1700s, floral motifs from Persia, Turkey and India were largely stylised to vaguely resemble the original flower, and not take on the sharp and realistic style that Chinese tapestries and later printed European *Sits* did.[158]

The following images of artefacts from different parts of the world were chosen with the sole purpose of establishing the widespread role of floral motifs in textile designs, and to reiterate its universal appeal. How else is one to justify the identical appearance of this motif in cloth produced in places where the flower was historically never indigenous.

Figure 21. Furnishing Fabric. Velvet textile with woven twill tie on cut-silk pile. Made in Basra, Ottoman Empire ca. 1500s. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London, https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O86240/furnishing-fabric-unknown/.

[158] Sykas, "Refashioning Indian Chintz in the European Manner," 204–6.

This textile was made in the 16th century in the Ottoman Empire. Given the samples of similar fabric recovered in Florence and Venice, this was part of larger shipments meant for export to Italy or Spain, where heavily brocaded textiles were a popular furnishing fabric.[159] Carnations were a popular floral motif, perhaps due to the Ottoman Empire's trade relations with the region. This suggests a historical connection between the flower's origin in the Iberian and Mediterranean regions and its travel to the Ottoman, where it was integrated into the local design style to produce the above. This textile fragment features several different styles of flowers, but the centrepiece is that of a carnation conceptualised as a stylised two-dimensional flower. The background is also important to note, for its red colour was a defining characteristic of Turkish textiles due to the abundance of the Madder root- the primary source of natural red dye native to the region.[160] This design, and even the dyes were soon penetrating Indian design sensibilities too, with cottons produced for local use in Golconda also featuring identical motifs.

[159] Victoria and Albert Museum, "Furnishing Fabric | Unknown | V&A Explore The Collections," Victoria and Albert Museum: Explore the ollections, accessed April 26, 2021, /item/O8/O86/O862/O8624/O86240/.
[160] Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 22–23.

Figure 22. Sitsen Vrouwenjak. Resist dyed and block printed cotton textile with hand painted details. Textile made in India ca. early 1700s, Tailored in Friesland. Courtesy of Fries Museum, Leeuwarden, https://collectie.friesmuseum.nl/?diw-id=tresoar_friesmuseum_T1959-040.

The above image is that of a women's jacket normally worn over gowns as part of the Klederdracht, or the traditional Dutch folk costume, worn especially by women in Hindeloopen and other cities of Friesland- a region that was considerable influenced by the incoming VOC merchandise from its proximate port of Amsterdam.[161] Produced in India for the Dutch market, this textile is dyed with madder red and indigo, and featured a typical *Sits* pattern, made on a light background to cater to European consumption.[162] The zoomed in picture focuses on the motif in question- the carnation flower manifests in this textile too. Its design is almost identical to the Turkish interpretation of the flower in

[161] Martin Dunford, *The Rough Guide to The Netherlands* (Rough Guides, 2010), 220–25.
[162] Giorgio Riello, "The Indian Apprenticeship: The Trade of Indian Textiles and the Making of European Cottons," in *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500-1850*, ed. Tirthankar Roy and Giorgio Riello (Leiden, Netherlands: BRILL, 2009), 307–46; Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 20.

Figure 21, with the two-dimensional rosette in a circular form bordered with zigzagged edges. While the Turkish design is monochrome due to constraints presented by weaving, the hand-painted *Sits* is more intricate in terms of the flower's design itself. This replication of design style is not merely coincidental. As already established, Turkish and Persian art and textiles (both of which share similarity in style) was a common fixture in the Islamic Deccan and Mughal dynasties. As result, it in turn integrated itself into *Kalamkari* design as well, later marking its presence in textiles for Europe. While European commissions for textile production did usually specify print sizes, colour schemes and textile width, the specificities of design were usually left to the artisan's discretion.[163] As result, it is possible that the artisans emulated pattern from art or textiles already familiar to them or caught their attention while perusing foreign goods in their homeland.

Later in the 18th century as *Sits* production evolved and commenced being produced domestically in Europe, the design elements also evolved. The copious influx of Chinese and Japanese goods into Europe and the Netherlands especially resulted in huge popularity for their motifs. Traditional Chinese botanical designs varied greatly from Indian or Persian ones; Chinese floral motifs were usually less stylised, and more akin to the actual flower, often portraying its designs from a profile i.e. as viewed from the side. This was in contrast to the south and west Asian artists who rendered the flower as a whole, circular motif for better symmetry of design and scope for intricate detailing, as in the case of Figure 21. The following women's hat is a perfect example of this intermingling of two separate textile art styles in the form of a Chinese themed European *Sits*.

[163] Prakash, "A List of Goods to Be Supplied Annually from Coromandel from Holland and the Archipelago. Sent from Jacarta in December 1617.," 251–55.

Figure 23. Zonhoed. Printed cotton women's Sits sunhat. Made in Jouy-en-Josas, France 1770-1789. Courtesy of Fries Museum, Leeuwarden. https://collectie.friesmuseum.nl/?diw-id=tresoar_friesmuseum_T1957-371.

This sunhat, manufactured in France for export to the Netherlands, features block printed designs depicting the elements of a Chinese tea ceremony using a *Sits*-like aesthetic complemented by botanical designs. While this too, features a mélange of flowers as part of its design, observe the zoomed in section of the hat in which a carnation emerges from a vase. This carnation's design is markedly distinct from the previous two instances of this flower's appearance in textiles. These shares better similarity with the actual flower itself. This design practice is distinct from the *Kalamkari*'s style, and is a completely new reimagination of the floral motif on textiles, drawing inspiration from Chinese *Kesi* tapestries from the Qing dynasty.

Figure 24. Panel. Tapestry of gold and silk thread weave on silk ground. Made in China, 1650-1750. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O169693/panel-unknown/.

The above *Kesi* tapestry is from the *Qing* dynasty's era between the 17th and 18th centuries. Such tapestries were often based off of traditional Chinese ink paintings- justifying its minimalist and linear style alluding to brush strokes. However, the purpose of introducing this painting to this analysis it to observe its portrayal of a carnation. While the lilies in the foreground is this tapestry's focal point, the three smaller flowers in the background are carnations, identifiable for its zigzagged edges and circular whorl of petals. This style of reproducing floral motifs is identical with the hat in Figure 23. The onset of *Chinoserie*- the affection for goods and aesthetic from China in Europe during this period makes for an easy linkage to the proliferation of this aesthetic in European *Sits*. This change in design preferences created a hybridized design rising in popularity in Europe, with (some) Indian commissions, as well as the new generation of European cotton printers involving these motifs in their prints. The acceptance of the Chinese style of botanical representation also

coincides with the surge in popularity of flower garden in Britain and the Dutch Republic, and can hence justify this design evolution.

4.4 Conclusion

Europe's general fascination with botanical imagery, especially of exotic flowers they had never encountered before was one reason they took to *Sits* prints. With floral patterns being the specializations in Indian fabrics, manufacturers were now willing to customise colours and patterns according to European demands, helmed by the Dutch and British East Indian Companies, especially since the VOC commenced its export to the Netherlands as an official commodity since 1664.[164] The following chart explains the various contributions of Hindu, Persian, British and Chinese cultures in the creation of the textile that is today identifiable as *Sits*.

[164] Raveux, "The Orient and the Dawn of Western Industrialization"; The Events Calendar, "Chintz: Cotton in Bloom," *Handwerkwereld* (blog), accessed February 24, 2021, http://www.handwerkwereld.com/evenementen/chintz-cotton-in-bloom/.

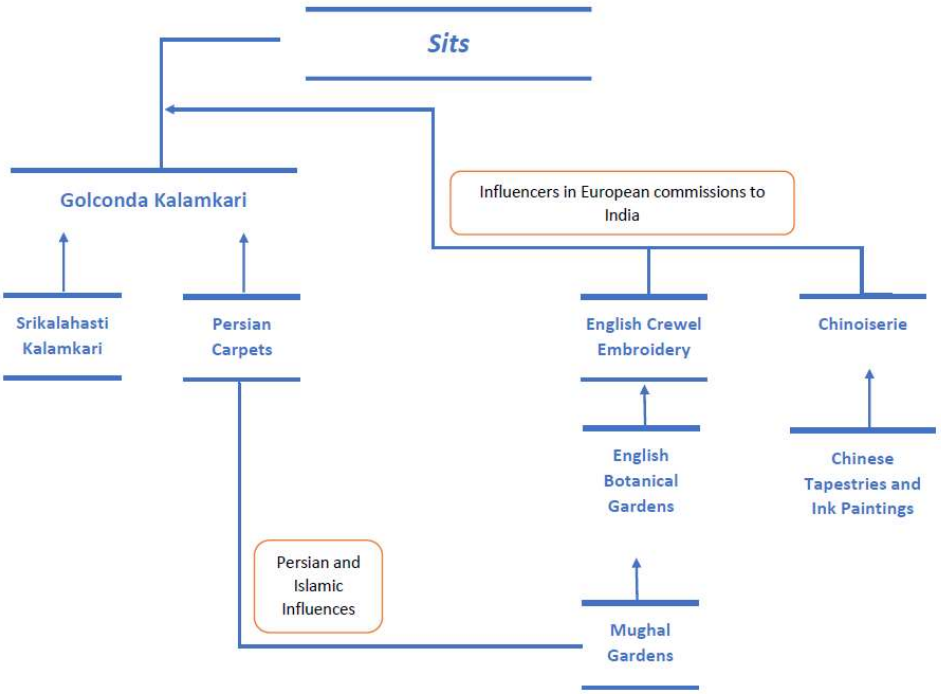

Figure 25. Chart deconstructing cultural design influences in the composition of the European *Sits*. (Source: Author's own)

The history behind this textile's transoceanic popularity is one of the most stellar examples of connected histories and its material manifestations. Persian trade with the Deccan Sultanates plays the role of a catalyst for the proliferation of floral motifs in Golconda *Kalamkari*; this *Kalamkari*, following export to Europe, found popularity due to the familiar iconography already consumed in the form of crewel embroidery. European consumers then demand aesthetic changes to the motif style to match the trendsetting exotic botanical gardens visited by the gentry, which in turn have been inspired by the Mughal gardens. Coincidentally, the Mughal gardens themselves are descendants of the Persian *Pairideaza* gardens. Looking through the larger lens, it may seem like a minor change in motifs an inconsequential change; but re-examining it journey from both the points of view of the producer and the consumer across continents brings to light several factors- of which some are removed from the realm of

fashion altogether, as influential decision makers. These changes, when hybridized with the minimalist styles of the Chinese *Kesi* tapestry work and brush stroke paintings resulted in the creation of the *Sits* style that is identifiable for its unique look to this day; intricately designed, yet realistic looking flowers in vibrant colors were painted or printed on light colored backgrounds to produce long cloth or specific décor textiles that were imported into Europe from the 17th century onwards from India. This evolution of design is visible in textile design across time and continents as indicated using the example of the carnation motif, creating a pathway of trade and exchange of goods- diplomatically (as in the case of the Persian carpets) or commercially.

Here, it has to be noted that *Chinoiserie* also played a critical role in shaping design preferences of European consumers. Despite its prominence, it is deliberately left unexplored in this thesis due to restraint of scope, and will perhaps be revisited at a later time for in-depth study. The usage of material culture analysis, which is simply put the study of an object's story itself reveals that connected histories manifests dynamically, even beyond the scope of written records alone.[165]

[165] Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Taking Stock of the Franks: South Asian Views of Europeans and Europe, 1500–1800," *The Indian Economic & Social History Review* 42, no. 1 (March 1, 2005): 69–100, https://doi.org/10.1177/001946460504200103.

5. Europe's *Sits* Ownership

The previous chapter presented combinations of designs from different cultural contexts to indicate the hybridization of *Sits* as it absorbed influences from cultures with connected histories- social, economic, political and even architectural histories. Now, the trade and commercial reception of the textile in Europe requires an overview in order to reiterate the production, distribution, and reception of *Sits* in Europe in the late 17th century onwards. This chapter aims to answer the sub question of how the preference for *Sits* influence cotton textile market opportunities in the Dutch Republic and Europe. There exists evidence to suggest that the mainstream demand for Indian Calico was not as universal as widely claimed in several renowned research works. Despite the largely complimentary aspects of their writing, Olivier Raveaux proposes in *The Orient and the Dawn of Western Industrialization: Armenian Calico Printers from Constantinople in Marseilles (1669–1686)* that common people did not show much preference for it due to its peculiar and unfamiliar designs until the 1660s.[166]

5.1 Advent of European Domestic Market Opportunity

Sensing the market opportunity nevertheless, the British and Dutch East India Companies commissioned for Europe friendly designs and sent commissioned samples with color and pattern specifications to India to train Indian artisans accordingly. It is evident from the previously examined textile samples that the imported *Sits* from India in the mid-1600s onwards were a hybrid of familiar and exotic designs that was palatable to European tastes, as has already been established through the material culture analysis.

[166] Raveux, "The Orient and the Dawn of Western Industrialization," 78–79.

By the turn of the 18th century, floral patterned cottons in Europe were a consumptive mainstay across domestic drapery, home-wear, womenswear and even menswear in Europe. This surge in popularity is commonly referred to as the 'Calico Craze', which took over European design sensibilities from the mid to late 17th century onwards.[167] As already established in the previous chapter, the Indian *Kalamkari*'s transformation under the influence of several foreign aesthetic had resulted in the conception of *Sits* or Chintz as it was known in Europe. It was consumed for its exotic nature as a product that condensed the entirety of the East into palatable textile designs for use. Unfortunately, every accessible research in the English language is centered on Britain's Calico and Chintz market. Not many observable studies or primary sources indicate the Dutch reception of *Sits*, despite Britain and the Dutch Republic operating on almost identical socio-economic strata given the powers of the VOC and the EIC in Asia and Africa. While Indian *Sits* admittedly did play an important role in transforming the design sensibilities in Europe, studies and resources (or the lack thereof) suggest that the textiles' volume and impact were not necessarily hand in hand.[168]

Chris Nierstrasz- a renowned historian specializing in the VOC's trade presence in the East and its consequences for the Dutch economy in the early modern era confirms this disparity.[169] He is also of the opinion that resources detailing the reception of Indian *Sits* as a popular textile in the Dutch Republic was a rarity simply because its volume of supply was low compared to white Calicoes or rough, blank cottons. This practical difficulty, exacerbated by the lack of translated sources has forced me to create a picture of the European and Dutch response to *Sits* based on secondary resources by historians including Nierstrasz, Lemire, Riello and Raveaux.

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[167] Smith, "Project MUSE - 'Callico Madams,'" 30.
[168] Nierstrasz, "The Consumption of Textiles."
[169] As discussed personally in an E-mail conversation Dr. Nierstrasz.

5.2 Emergence of European Printers

Just as Indian imports of printed *Sits* was gaining popularity in Europe, local textile industrialists were identifying opportunities to undercut this demand for a foreign product. The period from the end of 1600s also simultaneously witnessed European cloth printers in Marseilles, Amersfoort and Lancashire actively attempting to imitate *Sits*' printing and dyeing techniques locally in hopes of profiting off of the preference for this style of textile.[170] European mercantilist policies meant that there was a constant demand for locally commercializing any potential interest in foreign commodities such that local production centers for these products could be established to better attune the market to consumer preferences. Ships carrying *Sits* from India took months to reach Europe, and oftentimes, the designs it was carrying would already have gone out of fashion in Europe.[171] Instead, if local producers were to fulfil this demand, they would be filling the temporal gap created by the shipping time of Indian goods.

Early attempts at imitating Indian prints on either locally produced linens or on imported raw Calicoes were futile for Europe lacked key dye and mordant ingredients to chemically process the retentive colors.[172] As discussed in earlier chapters, several dyes that were critical for the vibrant, fade-proof colors of Indian cottons were extracted from plants and roots that were indigenous to Indian soils. Indigo and Madder- the source plants of blue and red dyes respectively grew only on tropical soils, and was impossible to produce on European soils. Attempts were made to cultivate it in the Mediterranean, but

[170] Berg, "In Pursuit of Luxury"; Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 85-142.
[171] Raveux, "The Orient and the Dawn of Western Industrialization," 77–91; Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 20–28.
[172] Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" 1-28.

was feasible only on a small scale.[173] As result, European cotton printing was heavily dependent on imported Indian, Arab and Indonesian dyes and mordants.

Even with the possession of dyes, recreating the quality of *Kalamkari* prints were difficult for European producers. One reason was that Indian textile workers did not hold written knowledge of their working process. *Kalamkari* making marks its beginnings as a folk-based art form; the prevalence of its nature as an oral history and caste/community-based occupation meant that dye recipes, print making techniques, etc. was informally passed down generations.[174] Without accurate measurements, the European travelers and traders visiting these cloth-making towns for information fathering were also helpless.[175]

Another reason was that Europeans were innately unfamiliar with the idea of textile painting; as a society whose textile decoration was largely based on embroidery, knitting and weaving, the lengthy steps necessary for preparing the base textile before dye adherence was foreign to them. It is important to remember that Europeans with no prior skill in the field were attempting to fast-track an artistic method that had been perfected by generations of familial trade secrets, dye recipes and versatility of Indian producers. Further, the time-consuming nature of individually painting cottons made business prospects in the field doubtful. Fearing competition, the Calico Acts of 1700 and 1721 in England banned the sale and use of colored, printed cotton textiles from India.[176] Marseilles, Antwerp, Amsterdam and London were among the first European centers to identify high demand for printed Calicoes, owing to their port connections and trade connections through the Dutch and the British East India

[173] Riello, 16–18.
[174] Ramanarpanam Trust, "Dwaraka."
[175] Parthasarathi, "Cotton Textiles in the Indian Subcontinent, 1200-1800," 17-42; Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 1-28.
[176] Nierstrasz, "The Consumption of Textiles," 156; Smith, "Project MUSE - 'Callico Madams,'" 31.

Companies. Despite these cities attempting early imitations, these were not competitive in quality to the Indian imports, and were priced not too differently. Until then, the expanded British (and Dutch) control over cotton textile production centers in India meant that high quality goods could be imported into Europe and prices dictated on the colonists' terms. Since Europeans had plentiful access to such textiles, the demand for subpar quality local produce was naturally low and people made the obvious choice to shop for the Indian 'original'.[177] By late 1700s, this situation changed; Indian Calico – both printed and blank, were being sold in European cities for extremely cheap rates due to the low wages paid to Indian producers, exploitative export financing methods and the large influx of the textile as an item re-exported from other European ports.[178] Domestic cotton printing methods were also rapidly evolving, and European prints were finally reaching the vibrancy of Indian cottons.[179]

The following process, derived from information presented by various authors and as can be gleaned from translated VOC correspondences from Om Prakash's collection titled '*The Dutch Factories in India 1624-1627: A Collection of Dutch East India Company Documents Pertaining to India'* shows that the time gap between a textile's demand and its supply was very high, risking it falling out of fashion by the time of its final sale. This explains the imminent opportunity for developing a strong domestic industry beyond mere protectionist interests alone. While it was not possible to exactly ascertain the time taken for the full trading process from the available sources, it can be safely assumed that the cycle took upwards of a year to complete. Keeping this in mind, an approximated timeline has been prepared. For reference, all ships bound eastwards from Europe travelled through the Cape route i.e. around the

[177] Lemire and Riello, "East & West: Textiles and Fashion in Early Modern Europe," 898.
[178] Nierstrasz, "Rivalry for Textiles"; Parakunnel J. Thomas, "The Beginnings of Calico-Printing in England," *The English Historical Review* XXXIX, no. CLIV (April 1, 1924): 206–16.
[179] Olivier Raveux, "Spaces and Technologies in the Cotton Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: The Example of Printed Calicoes in Marseilles," *Textile History* 36, no. 2 (November 1, 2005): 132–34, https://doi.org/10.1179/004049605x61627.

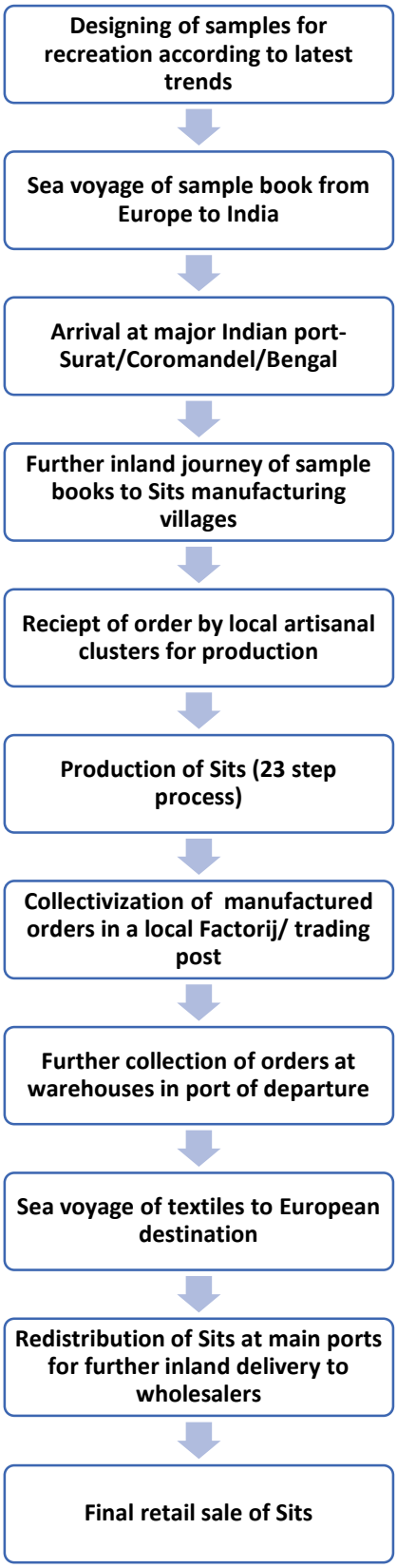
African continent (the Suez Canal only opened in 1869). The Cape route between western Europe and India took approximately six months one-way accounting for weather and winds.[180] Furthermore, inland travel of orders and the production processes would also have taken months to complete given the time consuming and laborious production process of *Sits*.[181] Given such large temporal gaps, the wait for textiles was vary long in Europe. The following list summarises the life cycle of a commissioned design from its conception in Europe to its final delivery for simplified understanding.

Figure 26. Steps involved in the life cycle of commissioned piece of *Sits* (below)

(Source: Author's Own)

[180] Michael H. Fisher, "From India to England and Back: Early Indian Travel Narratives for Indian Readers," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (2007): 153–72, https://doi.org/10.1525/hlq.2007.70.1.153.

[181] Maddala Sravani and Chiruvoori Ravi Varma, "The Ancient Art of *Kalamkari*: Problems and Prospects with Special Reference to Pedana, Andhra Pradesh," *International Journal of Science and Research* 9, no. 7 (2018): 1099–1103.


Designing of samples for recreation according to latest trends
Sea voyage of sample book from Europe to India
Arrival at major Indian port- Surat/Coromandel/Bengal
Further inland journey of sample books to Sits manufacturing villages
Reciept of order by local artisanal clusters for production
Production of Sits (23 step process)
Collectivization of manufactured orders in a local Factorij/ trading post
Further collection of orders at warehouses in port of departure
Sea voyage of textiles to European destination
Redistribution of Sits at main ports for further inland delivery to wholesalers
Final retail sale of Sits

Now, the technological and methodological progress needed to be hand in hand with these entrepreneurial opportunities in order to bolster a locally competitive industry for *Sits* manufacturing. By the late 17th century, several French traders and missionaries stationed in India sent back detailed manuscripts of the printing process, which was widely circulated locally.[182] Working for the French East India Company, they collected key information from India's cotton painting and printing centres of Burhanpur and Sironji in Surat and Masulipatnam and Negapatnam on the Coromandel Coast.[183] This manuscript can be considered a pivotal intervention in the field of European cotton printing for finally, the local producers were in possession of a solution to the aforementioned problem with the lack of measurements of dyes and written records of the production process. It was perhaps due to the French presence in the dissemination of this knowledge that one of the first successful production clusters of *Sits* in Europe was in Marseilles, France helmed by migrant Armenian labour.[184]

5.3 Role of Armenian Migrant Labour

In this largely Eurocentric chapter too, there exists the overwhelming presence of transoceanic movements that made technological and skill transfer possible for the development of the European cotton printing industry. Turkish and Armenian textile makers played a critical role as skilled intermediaries in this process. The Ottoman Empire was already a renowned textile producer; their red dyes and intricate prints were a sartorial mainstay in the Arab world and

[182] Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 1-28; Raveux, "Fashion and Consumption of Painted and Printed Calicoes in the Mediterranean during the Later Seventeenth Century," 49-57.
[183] George Bryan Souza, "The French Connection: Indian Cottons and Their Early Modern Technology," in *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500-1850*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Tirthankar Roy (Leiden, NETHERLANDS, THE: BRILL, 2009), 348.
[184] Raveux, "Fashion and Consumption of Painted and Printed Calicoes in the Mediterranean during the Later Seventeenth Century," 49–67; Raveux, "Spaces and Technologies in the Cotton Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 131–45.

were created using techniques not unsimilar to the Indian block printing.[185] This connection is an avenue worthy of further research, but will be temporarily shelved due to the scope of this thesis. Armenian traders on the other hand were already a powerful trade presence in India, with cotton and dye trade in Gujarat falling under their realm of control despite the colonial presence in the region.[186] The Armenian communities in Gujarat and the Ottoman Empire held considerable control over the trade of red Madder dye specifically- a central aspect of the vibrant *Sits*' dyeing process.[187] They were also at a geographically closer point of inference for understanding trade secrets and methods of *Sits* manufacturing from Gujarat. The seabound transmission of this knowledge coupled with settler communities of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, France, Poland, Russia, France and later in the Low Countries created a wide communal network of cotton textile specialists independent of colonial knowledge in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries.[188]

Considering that the Armenian knowledge of *Sits* decoration came from Surat in Gujarat i.e. the centre of block printed cottons, European *Sits* too moved away from the painted tradition that Coromandel *Sits* had initially instilled into consumptive styles. The Armenians for example, were the first community to manufacture red patterned *Sits* on white textile in Marseilles. Heavily influenced from Gujarati block printed *Kalamkari* and Turkish floral motifs, these *Chafarcanis* were produced keeping in mind European preferences and specifications of light backgrounds and small and consistent prints. As mentioned above, the Armenian textile printing communities had ready access

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[185] Raveux, "The Orient and the Dawn of Western Industrialization," 80–91.
[186] Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 17.
[187] Souza, "The French Connection: Indian Cottons and Their Early Modern Technology," 360; Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 14.
[188] Avedis Krikor Sanjian, *The Armenian Communities in Syria under Ottoman Dominion,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 50–55; Raveux, "The Orient and the Dawn of Western Industrialization," 77–91.

to both Indian and Turkish dyes due to their trade networks and cultural proximity, and possessed the know-how of block printing most likely from the Ottoman Empire and west India. European printers struggled with their inability to produce bright fade-proof colours despite employing dyes exported from India and the Ottoman Empire for the same.[189] This problem was solved upon the introduction of the mordant dyeing technique (commonly used in *Kalamkari* production as pre-established) in which the dye was blended with a viscous chemical made of various metal oxides to create a reaction that fixed the dye in its intended position on the textile without bleeding.[190] While no accessible research explicitly links this development to the Armenian community, it is a natural connection to make given that the first records of mordant printing in Europe was in Marseilles- coincidentally also the first and the largest European stronghold of Armenian cotton printers due to its nature as a free port since 1669 that encouraged settling of Levantine and Arab trading communities in the region.[191]

5.4 *Sits* in the Netherlands

Before *Sits* was imported in large quantities- making it an affordable textile, its consumption in the Dutch Republic was also conspicuous in nature, with only the gentry and the merchant class affording *Sits Palampores* or fashion textiles.[192] One of the first instances of *Sits* consumption being democratized in the Netherlands is through the presence of a second-hand market of textile

[189] Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 17–19.
[190] Sravani and Varma, "The Ancient Art of *Kalamkari*: Problems and Prospects with Special Reference to Pedana, Andhra Pradesh," 1100.
[191] Raveux, "Spaces and Technologies in the Cotton Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 133.
[192] Gieneke Arnolli, "Chintz, New in the 17th Century," in *ICOM Costume Committee Annual Meeting in Utrecht 2018* (International Committee for Museums and Collections of Costume, Uthrecht: ICOM, 2018), 2–4, http://costume.mini.icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2020/08/Gieneke-Arnolli-Chintz-new-in-the-17th-century.pdf.

scraps from the remaining bits of tailored *Sits* pieces like elaborate gowns or décor pieces like cushions and bedcovers of the elite that were either cast away or sold.[193] Before *Sits* became ubiquitous through plentiful imports and local production, the only manner common people could afford the cloth was through purchasing scrap and used fabrics from tailors and dressmakers.[194] This may perhaps also be the reason the traditional *Klederdracht* featured *Sits* in spaced out patterns as seen in the below photograph of a girl wearing a *Klederdracht*, for it is unlikely that one could obtain sufficient fabric to create a full item of clothing.

Figure 27. *Unknown*, Portrait of a girl in traditional Klederdracht, 1-1-1932, Catalogue no. 2.24.14.02, Courtesy of the National Archive of Netherlands, Hague, Netherlands, https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/en/research/photo-collection/aea7adee-d0b4-102d-bcf8-003048976d84.

[193] Ilja van Damme, "Second-Hand Trade and Respectability: Mediating Consumer Trust in Old Textiles and Used Clothing (Low Countries, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries)," in *Selling Textiles in the Long Eighteenth Century: Comparative Perspectives from Western Europe*, ed. Jon Stobart and Bruno Blondé (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014), 193–209, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137295217_12.
[194] van Damme, 193–209.

The above photograph of a girl in *Klederdracht* is from the early 20th century- a time by which mechanised *Sits* production was common practice in the Netherlands. The purpose of this photograph is to visually illustrate the placement of *Sits* on a focal point of the costume instead of an overall pattern as in the case of elite gowns due to the historical association of its user demographic with the once-expensive textile that could perhaps only have been afforded in small pieces, hence agreeing with the records of repurposed *Sits* scraps.[195] Within decades though, this practice became obsolete since *Sits* had become more ubiquitous through extensive imports from Britain and local manufacture above and beyond the share of printed Calicoes already being imported by the VOC, as will be discussed in the later part of this section. Regardless, the styling of *Klederdracht* in this manner survived the time, as evidenced by this photograph with the traditional dress largely consisting of plain or striped cotton, with accents on the yoke, bodice and sleeves, as well as the formal overcoat usually made of *Sits*.

The earliest existing record of establishment of Indian style cotton printing in the Netherlands is in 1678 in Amersfoort, where two Dutch businessmen Jacob ter Gou and Hendrik Popta set up a Calico printing workshop with Armenian artists providing the necessary skilled labour.[196] The following manuscript of the city resolution of the Amersfoort City Council from 22nd June 1678 records the commencement of their business.

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[195] van Damme, 193–209; Bruno Blondé, Laura Van Aert, and Ilja Van Damme, "'According to the Latest and Most Elegant Fashion': Retailing Textiles and Changes in Supply and Demand in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Antwerp," in *Selling Textiles in the Long Eighteenth Century: Comparative Perspectives from Western Europe*, ed. Jon Stobart and Bruno Blondé (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014), 138–59, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137295217_9.
[196] Arnolli, "Chintz, New in the 17th Century."

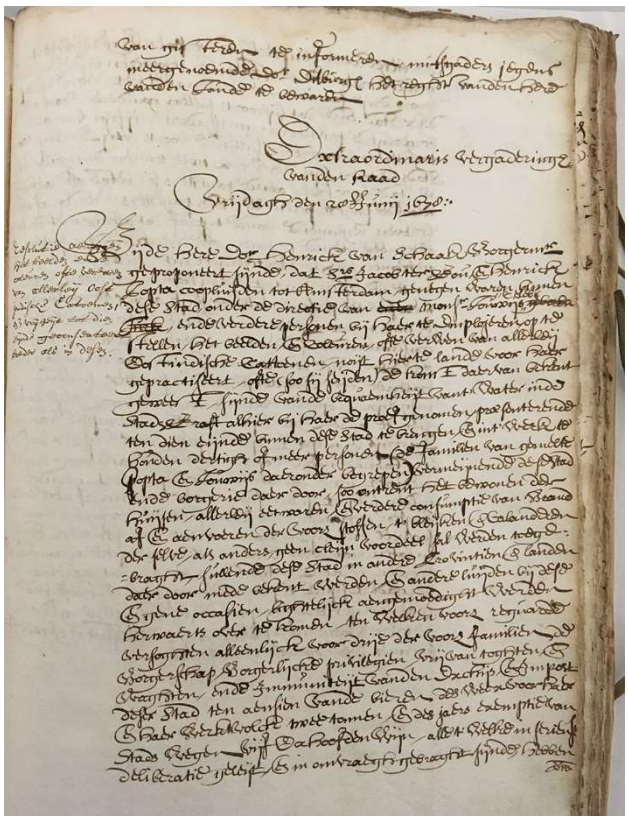

Figure 28. Page of municipality resolution of the foundation by Jacob ter Gou and Henrick Popta a cotton printing press led Louwerijs d 'Celebi, 22-06-1678, Inventory no. 2240, 0001.01 Amersfoort City Council 1300-1810. Courtesy of Eemland Archives, Amersfoort, Netherlands.[197]

Further corroborating the above network of global connections is the fact that the Armenian dyers hired by the two men was from the colony of settlers from Marseilles, with a man named Louwerijs d 'Celebi leading their skilled labour as also detained in the above manuscript page.[198] It is interesting to note that the two businessmen mention that the skilled aspect of the production process would not be carried out by them; the commercial aspect drew them to the endeavour, and the Armenian printers, assumed to have received training from

[197] Digitized by Nathalie Caseé for Hali Magazine, https://hali.com/news/how-the-dutch-made-chintz-their-own

[198] Ernst Homburg, "From Colour Maker to Chemist: Episodes from the Rise of the Colourist, 1670– 1800," in *Natural Dyestuffs and Industrial Culture in Europe, 1750-1880*, ed. Robert Fox and Agusti Nieto-Galan (Canton, MA: Science History Pubns, 1999), 221–23.

Turkey would be doing the production works exclusively.[199] The significance of migrant labour in creating the domestic printing industry in Netherlands is indeed insurmountable, for without them it was likely that the industry would have greatly delayed its set up, and perhaps, *Sits* would not have been the far reaching fabric as it became, part of regular peoples' clothing and home decor. *Sits* printing in Amersfoort was first limited to block printing in which an engraved wooden block was covered in dye and stamped onto the textile to produce repetitive prints. As Armenians in Marseilles, and later Lancashire and Amersfoort experimented with production techniques for *Sits* printing they created the means to combine unique production aspects of the two primary *Kalamkari* styles: large, intricate designs as in the case of Golconda *Kalamkari*, and block printing practiced in Gujarat to innovate a third, faster and artistically competent production technique.

[199] Nathalie Cassée, "How the Dutch Made Chintz Their Own," *HALI*, November 23, 2020, https://hali.com/news/how-the-dutch-made-chintz-their-own/; Raveux, "The Orient and the Dawn of Western Industrialization."

Figure 29. C.F. Frihsch, Copper Printing Plate. Copper printing plate engraved with jewellery-style patterns. Made in Netherlands, 1747. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O110703/copper-printing-plate-printing-plate-frihsch-cf/.

European workshops adopted the copper plate printing technique in which dyes were applied to large copper plates engraved with intricate designs, which were then used as a large-format 'block' to emulate the wooden block printing technique but on a larger scale. The above copper plate for example, was manufactured in Netherlands to print impressions of jewellery designs, as was the trend of the time. While there is no extensive literature on the conception of the copper plate technique, its possible inspirations are conspicuous enough given the pre-emptive research on the Indian textile decoration processes already conducted for the purpose of this thesis. While the exact inventor of this technique is unknown, it is widely credited to Francis Dixon from Drumcondra near Dublin for having successfully printing on cottons using copper plates in

the early 1750s.[200] As with the case of all profitable innovations, this technique spread through Europe, and Calico printers were favouring it vis a vis traditional wood-block printing or Indian hand painting since it allowed for cheaper, faster production with lesser capital expenditure.[201]Armenian craftsmen possessed dyeing techniques and printing knowledge, and Europeans innovated novel printing methods to cut down time and expenditure. Vibrant and well-designed *Sits* could now be manufactured in Europe at cheap prices and faster supply speeds in contrast to Indian imports.

5.4.1 The Dutch Digression

France and Britain were quick to introduce bands on printed and painted Indian cottons in the early 18th century due to the influence of local wool, silk and linen manufacturers' lobbies operating under the fear that the imported textiles were "haemorrhaging" their market presence.[202] The Dutch Republic was a significant outlier because despite the considerable inflow of Indian cottons into the market, they did not impose any import restrictions. As result, Indian *Sits* for Dutch market was in demand even well into the 18th century at a time when its contemporaries like France and Britain had banned its consumption in their Empires.

This difference in regulation created a new market opportunity for the British and to some extent, the French they could now redirect their share of colored Calicoes i.e. *Sits* to the Dutch markets. The British Calico Act stated that colored Calicos could be imported into Britain only if it were for the purpose of re-

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[200] P. C. Floud, "The English Contribution to the Development of Copper-Plate Printing," *Journal of the Society of Dyers and Colourists* 76, no. 7 (1960): 425, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-4408.1960.tb02387.x.

[201] Lemire and Riello, "East & West: Textiles and Fashion in Early Modern Europe," 903–7; Floud, "The English Contribution to the Development of Copper-Plate Printing," 425–34.

[202] Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 11; Lemire and Riello, "East & West: Textiles and Fashion in Early Modern Europe," 898–900.

export. Only blank, white Calicoes could be imported for domestic consumption into Britain.[203] This was a well-timed blessing in disguise for local people of interest in the cotton textile industry. The rapidly developing cotton printing technologies in Britain and the rest of Europe meant that cheap white Calicoes could be imported and printed on domestically. The following correspondence between British EIC officials and their colleagues in Surat condenses the future of Indian cotton consumption in Europe: "the Prohibition on Chintz or painted or printed Calicoes is only on those manufactured beyond the Seas; because We have a great many persons here do the same work almost as good as India, so that you will do well to send us more white Calicoes and fewer Chintz if readily procurable."[204]

Why did the Dutch not impose similar protective measures? The simple answer was that the VOC's priorities lay elsewhere. As mentioned in the chapter detailing VOC's presence in India, their commercial empire was built as the facilitators of intra-Asian and African trade. The Dutch placed their trade with Java and Africa above their textile trade between India and the Dutch Republic.[205] The British identified Dutch market demand such that they could import colourful Indian cottons for reexport to the Dutch markets.[206] By the 1750s, the British had managed to wrest powers from the VOC in Gujarat Bengal and Coromandel, making them the most dominant presence in the Indian cotton textile production centres. As result of this, most *Sits* that came into common use in the Dutch Republic were the reflection of English tastes. As evidenced by the *Sits* textiles from Dutch collections in the previous chapters, its designs bore resemblance to the English influences of Crewel work and

[203] Lemire and Riello, "East & West: Textiles and Fashion in Early Modern Europe," 899–900.
[204] Court of Directors to the President and Council at Surat, Aug. 21, 1700, E/3/93, fol. 169v, IOR, APAC, BL; Jonathan P. Eacott, "Making an Imperial Compromise: The Calico Acts, the Atlantic Colonies, and the Structure of the British Empire," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (2012): 747, https://doi.org/10.5309/willmaryquar.69.4.0731.
[205] Nierstrasz, "Rivalry for Textiles," 124–53; Eacott, "Making an Imperial Compromise," 736.
[206] Nierstrasz, "The Consumption of Textiles," 154–89.

botanical fascination, which was offset by the common denomination of *Indioserie* and *Chinoiserie* that both the cultures were experiencing.

At the very core of textile printing innovation in Europe was the potential business opportunity of being able to deliver locally printed cottons to consumer markets in response to changing fashion trends quicker than Indian imports. As illustrated above, there existed a temporal gap of almost a full year between the commissioning of a particular *Sits* textile from Europe and its supply in the British, Dutch or French markets. The British were prompt in taking advantage of this market opportunity. Furthermore, Britain was still importing plain Calicoes from India well into the 19th century too. These blank Calicoes-- either blank white or dyed red -- were used as the base for printing *Sits* patterns from the mid-18th century for export to the rest of Europe. This way, they could defer import expenditure on inexpensive blank cloth, add value to it by the means of cost and labour effective decoration techniques and then resell the textile for a profit elsewhere, taking over the Indian exports in the process.

At the same time, The British EIC's foreign policy was also built on importing as much Asian goods as possible to their domain. The VOC on the other hand focused its resources to export Asian goods to other regions within Asia (like the spice trade discussed in previous chapters) and the Atlantic.[207] The VOC did not prioritise flooding the Dutch market with Indian textiles, while the British were in possession of surplus imports, and later locally printed textiles. The role of EIC in the Dutch consumptive preferences were not necessarily a result of competition, but that of causation. Import-friendly Dutch laws coupled with import-substitution fueled English laws resulted in the creation of ample market opportunity for the English to divert their goods to the Dutch Republic. The Dutch did not develop a *Sits* aesthetic of their own primarily due to their lack of incentives to produce *Sits* locally. Even though several printers established factories in Amersfoort and Amsterdam, their volume of production was small

[207] Nierstrasz, "Imperfect Monopolies," 37.

in comparison to the re-exports, and later the local prints from Britain and to an extent, France.[208]

5.5 Conclusion

The mercantilist and protectionist instincts of European regions like Britain and France created opportunity to explore domestic means to fulfil market demand for Indian *Sits* for faster supply and avoidance of foreign expenditure. This bolstered European innovation in printing and dyeing techniques that helped create a strong *Sits* printing industry in cities like Amersfoort, London and Marseilles by the late 17th century onwards. This process was not a result of purely western innovation, but an elevated amalgamation of pre-existing techniques improved upon by producers to suit cost-effective and timely mass production of intricate designs. This would not have been possible if it were not for the critical role played by Armenian traders and cotton printers who settled in various European port cities over the 17th and early 18th centuries for the purpose. Strong protectionist policies in Britain and France allowed for import substitution of *Sits*, whereas the lack of such policies in the Dutch Republic allowed for the entry of *Sits* not just from India, but also from Britain, both in the form of reexported *Sits* from India and those printed in Britain itself. The multi-cultural evolution of *Kalamkari* into *Sits* in the Dutch Republic can be condensed into the fact that the Dutch shared preferences with the British Chintz design sensibilities not only because they were similar societies with similar tastes, but because the Dutch markets were flooded with affordable British imports at the peak of the Dutch Calico craze, due to which the remaining designs as seen in museum collections mirror the prevalent British tastes of the era.

[208] Eacott, "Making an Imperial Compromise," 748–50.

Conclusion

Figure 30. Nightgown. Printed cotton menswear dressing gown. Dyed in India, printed and tailored in Netherlands, 1750-1775. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O89443/night-gown-unknown/.

This above nightgown is an apt addition to the conclusion of this thesis due to the very nature of its existence. This picture is that of a men's nightgown- also known as Kimonos or Banyans in the Dutch Republic and elsewhere in Europe. This innocuous item of clothing is emblematic of the connected histories discussed over the course of this thesis. This particular piece has transoceanic origins; the red textile was dyed in the Coromandel Coast and exported to the

Dutch Republic, where it was block printed and sewn into the garment.[209] The motif design is heavily inspired by the Chinese aesthetic- a direct consequence of the prevalent *Chinoiserie* trends in Europe- Britain and the Dutch Republic specifically.[210] Its very names were direct adaptations of terms used in two distinct native cultures from the East. Kimono originally refers to a traditional Japanese garment, while Banyan is a Hindi term used in common Indian vernacular to refer to a men's undershirt usually worn in domestic settings. By creating a portmanteau of the implications of the two terms' actual meanings, its European usage was reappropriated to refer to a robe-like garment worn in domestic settings by gentlemen.[211] This example has been placed here for a specific reason. It, through one image alone, condenses the essence of this thesis. An Indian textile design technique practiced in the Dutch Republic on red-dyed Indian cotton with designs heavily inspired by China and Japan; the interconnectedness of political and economic histories between these faraway lands, only connected by transoceanic movement of people and goods, resulted in this cultural exchange that manifested through textile design.

Through the process of observing the design and cultural elements that played a role in the transformative journey of *Kalamkari* from the Coromandel Coast to *Sits* in the Dutch Republic and Europe as a whole, the interconnectedness of trade and political networks, which in turn dictated cultural trends and consumptive choices were explored in this thesis. While *Sits* was a unilateral export from India to Europe, the influx of design influences that were contributive to the distinctive *Sits*' floral motifs were varied. The essence of this thesis is to reconcile *Kalamkari*'s design history prior to European intervention, and observe few, if not all contributive factors that resulted in its evolution to

[209] Victoria and Albert Museum, "Night Gown | Unknown | V&A Explore The Collections," Victoria and Albert Museum: Explore the Collections, accessed May 16, 2021, /item/O8/O89/O894/O8944/O89443/.
[210] Lemire and Riello, "East & West: Textiles and Fashion in Early Modern Europe."
[211] Raveux, "Fashion and Consumption of Painted and Printed Calicoes in the Mediterranean during the Later Seventeenth Century," 54–55.

Sits over the 17th century. This forms the crux of this thesis, and justifiably answers the main research question of 'What influenced the Golconda *Kalamkari* in the process of its evolution into *Sits* for European markets?'. Golconda *Kalamkari* in itself was a flourishing textile in popular use in times predating colonial presence in India. It was exported to the Far East, and domestically consumed in kingdoms beyond its area of production in Golconda and its surrounding villages. The exodus of ideas and consumptive patterns also predated European presence in Asia; the VOC and EIC were able to create a gainful economic movement out of their relations with the East due to their prowess in playing the role of facilitators and unifiers in the previously fragmented trade networks.

The Portuguese *Armada's* Indian expedition created favourable path dependencies for the VOC such that they arrived on the Coromandel Coast during an era when Indian dynasties were also conducting oceanic trade, as in the case of the Safavid era Persians and the Mughals and Qutb Shahis in India. Despite *Kalamkari* and *Sits* textiles itself being the focal point of the thesis, it was a deliberate decision to commence the research with a thorough background of the colonial presence in India. The journey of transformation of the textile began with *Kalamkari* in itself absorbing design influences from other Asiatic cultures and aesthetic. This textile travelled westward to Europe through the externalised commercialization of the already existing *Kalamkari* producing communities along the Coromandel Coast for market expansion. The usage of *Kalamkari* as a mode of exchange to fuel their spice trade, and later their recognition of the potential market opportunity these textiles presented in Europe was a turning point for it.

There were two possible directions this thesis' main body of research could have manifested in; the first being the advent of *Chinoiserie* in the Dutch Republic given the extensive commercial presence of VOC in China and Japan. The other being the study of the predecessor of European *Sits* i.e. *Kalamkari*. This thesis

chose the latter path for it would conglomerate several independent ideas pre-existent in the academic discourse under one, cohesive progression of textile design evolution as seen through the lens of the Connected Histories framework. The second chapter is a historiographical account of the possible origins of *Kalamkari*; its folk and religious origins leave room for speculation, hence the stress on 'possible'. Supported by material culture analysis of various textile artefacts, this chapter established that Hindu and Muslim patronages played a critical role in steering the design influences of the textile, with the producers picking and choosing elements from both the schools of *Kalamkari* design in order to cater to both communities profitably. This is likely to be the reason why floral motifs- a markedly secular choice, were ubiquitous in *Kalamkari* designs. This in turn is also why VOC imported these textiles to Europe; secular motifs directly translated to wider reach, and the 'exotic' Indian textiles were already a much-publicized product thanks to the Portuguese *Pintadoes*.[212] Its floral designs, despite heavy religious history of Hindu and Muslim patronage, its fantastical designs that foddered the fascination for the unfamiliar Asian cultures allowed for its dissemination in Europe from the 16th century onwards.

The hand-painted Calicoes i.e. Golconda *Kalamkari* that made its way to Europe under the purveyance of the VOC in the 17th century were a specific style of intricately designed fabric that was most commonly used for home décor purposes.[213] This textile in itself was a product of design inspirations amalgamative of Persian and Mughal influences- both of Islamic heritage, hence linking back to the development of the Golconda school of *Kalamkari* as mentioned previously. Persian carpets- characterized by its symmetrical designs, floral motifs and intricate borders were adopted as blueprint for the production of *Palampores* for the European markets due to its resemblance to

[212] Ferreira, "Asian Textiles in the Carreira Da Índia," 147–68.
[213] Lemire, "Domesticating the Exotic," 64–85.

quilts and bedspreads in shape and structure, adding British and Dutch design opinions into the mix by the means of commissioned production.

While the intention at the conception of this research idea was to establish possible Dutch links to design innovation of *Sits* as it were commissioned from Coromandel Coast, overwhelming evidence from the research of primary sources of letters and digitized textile artefacts headed in a different direction. Almost every single item of *Sits* exported by the VOC into the Dutch Republic took after the English design sensibilities. The intricate florals proposed by *Kalamkaris* from the Coromandel Coast were received with trepidation due to the entirely foreign aesthetic it presented, and the proposed modifications to the textiles to better suit the European palate were from an English social perspective. Crewel embroidery- pioneered in Stewart era England, and the rise of botanical leisure gardens in the Victorian era were foundational to the evolution of floral motif preferences among the British, which in turn were reflected in Chintz/*Sits* pieces exported by EIC and VOC from the mid-17th Century. Commission books from VOC were also reflective of these changes with letters of correspondence between VOC officials in Holland and trading posts on the Coromandel Coast detailing colors patterns and sizes of expected textiles.[214] Study of accounts and existing research of society and trade in the Dutch Republic and Britain in the 17th and 18th centuries suggest that they operated in similar manner, and perhaps the consumer preferences reflect this similarity.[215] Though mentioned in passing, Chinese and Japanese design aesthetics also played a critical role in the directional shift of floral designs

[214] Prakash, "A List of Clothes and Other Items Required from the Coast of Coromandel Annually for the Moluccas, Amboina, Banda, Java, Patani, Sian and the Netherlands. Prepared at Jakarta, 16 July 1619."

[215] Chris Nierstrasz, "Conclusion," in *Rivalry for Trade in Tea and Textiles: The English and Dutch East India Companies (1700–1800)*, ed. Chris Nierstrasz, Europe's Asian Centuries (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 190–97, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137486530_7.

among the English and Dutch, with lighter backgrounds and linear motifs as reflected on ink paintings and ceramics from the regions showcased.[216]

The common thread binding leisure gardens, Chinese ceramic and Japanese silk consumption was that they were all goods consumed by the gentry and the affluent merchant classes.[217] Serving as a precedent of the present-day practice of trickle down among trends and fashions, *Sits* too was first an item of value, later democratized due to mercantilist opportunism and cheaper production. Its appearance was valued due to its exotic nature as a product of multi-culturalism and the 'Orient' or the East. This justifies the overwhelming mixtures of Indian, Persian, Arab, Chinese and Japanese stylization in the *Sits* textiles analyzed over the course of this thesis. While not a circular pathway, the dissemination of foreign aesthetic and its integration into transoceanic societies as a whole is a recurring theme among both *Kalamkari* and *Sits*. Rounded, intricate floral motifs and symmetrical medallion designs of Persian carpets and gardens in Golconda *Kalamkari*, and *Kalamkari* and Mughal-inspired British flower gardens in turn influencing European-style *Sits*. The seemingly 'Western' changes also have Oriental origins, as in the case of the ancient *Pairidaeza* gardens of Iran and its descendant *Charbagh* gardens of the Mughal dynasties from the 16th and 17th centuries.[218]

The core of primary research in this thesis is centered on the deliberate choice of two design categories in order to apply the connected histories framework to these artefacts and establish transoceanic and intercultural connections. Overall textile design influences- evolving from Persian carpets and prayer mats to Indian floor spreads, which in turn were reinvented as bedspreads for the European markets featured the retention and innovation of design elements,

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[216] Maxine Berg, "Quality, Cotton and the Global Luxury Trade," in *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500-1850* (Leiden, Netherlands: BRILL, 2009), 391–414.
[217] Berg, "In Pursuit of Luxury."
[218] Elizabeth B. Moynihan, *Paradise as a Garden: In Persia and Mughal India* (London, UK: Scolar Press, 1982), 168.

which were both reflective of its history, while also adapting to changing times. The second category was a critical decision; a singular motif could be deemed as too vague or coincidental in its appeal. The decision to select the carnation motif was to present that extent of movement- in this case of botanicals too, that occurred in the preceding centuries that resulted in this Mediterranean flower appearing in Chinese, Arab, Persian, Indian and European aesthetic in its distinctive style. The intention of cross-analyzing these textile artefacts and motifs in this thesis was not to create individual origin stories for each of these aforementioned elements; instead, the intention is to recapture the precedence of the textile's history prior to European intervention such that it presents a continuous picture of evolution, as opposed to the solely subaltern or Eurocentric narratives that mainstream, in-depth object histories tend to take.

Even as its European presence flourished and domestic mercantilist policies intensified, the Dutch production of *Sits* did not, surprisingly, make great impact in its perception and dissemination in the region despite its cultural integration locally in traditional costumes. Instead, it was the British designs that flooded the Dutch markets in the 18th and early 19th centuries. The political presence of EIC in India by this era helped leverage its textile production markets more profitably than the VOC could; furthermore, VOC's priority in facilitating intra-Asian and African trade reflected in their lack of priority in deploying resources to develop local fashion trends into commissions to India that would in turn herald new fashions. On the other hand, the EIC's focus on trading goods between Britain and India, coupled with their greater power in the subcontinent following 1757 allowed for them to transcend being market opportunists in Coromandel Coast's textile industry to being primary market drivers. European production of similarly designed textiles were not, unlike popular European narrative, an independently Eurocentric venture.[219] Extensive skilled migrant

[219] Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 1–28; Raveux, "The Orient and the Dawn of Western Industrialization," 77–91.

labour with methodological inputs from India and Ottoman Empire provided basis for European innovation in order to meet changing fashion tastes in its regions. In the process, the Dutch, despite its local *Sits* printing industry in Amersfoort, adopted the British design sensibilities, which were in turn reflective of Persian and Golconda *Kalamkari* designs. This overwhelming British presence is perhaps also why the textile is globally identified by its English name 'Chintz' instead of *Sits*, *Pintado* or *Kalamkari*. These observations are, of course, independent of the prevailing *Chinoiserie*-related preferences of Europe. This area has been deliberately left unaddressed in this thesis due to the limitation of scope; the extensive influence of *Chinoiserie* would have widened the research are beyond the means of a Master's thesis.

These findings reveal the complexly interconnected nature of histories as result of trade, political relations and migration. *Kalamkari*'s transformation into *Sits* as consumed in the Dutch Republic and beyond occurred when designs of European fascination blended with the existing *Kalamkari* designs which in itself originated from Persian aesthetic. This chain of occurrences exemplifies the connected histories framework as proposed by Subrahmanyam in which histories as narrated by multiple perspectives create a comprehensive, macro-perspective picture of events and its consequences. This thesis focused to apply this framework to narrate the transformation of a single textile from one part of India from the 17th and 18th century, and its hybridization as result of its interaction with multicultural influences. This research only opens scope for further study in the field of connected histories that could potentially be conducted with various aspects of material and intangible cultures that have transformed, adapted and reinvented themselves as result of colonialism and trade in the past centuries.

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