

## MA THESIS

Author: Rohit Prabu

Student ID: 2247550

Supervisor: Dr. Jos J.L Gommans

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Title: The Dutch East India Company's Textile Trade between Coromandel and  
Makassar during the Eighteenth Century

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## **Introduction**

The aim of this thesis is to study the intra-Asian textile trade of the Dutch East India Company (*De Verenigde Oost Indische Compagnie*, hereafter VOC) between the VOC's establishment in the Coromandel region in the southeastern coast of India and the VOC's regional establishment at Makassar on the island of Sulawesi in Indonesia during the eighteenth century. This thesis focusses primarily on the commercial dynamics of the VOC's trade in Coromandel textiles to Makassar. The core of the thesis is built upon the trade analysis of the distribution of Coromandel textiles by the VOC in Makassar during the eighteenth century on the basis of the richness of the VOC's bookkeeping records. The study aims to give an account of the different textile varieties the VOC traded in and the underlying rationale that governed the VOC's commercial policy of trading in specific categories of Coromandel textiles. Therefore, this study also negotiates the modalities of the VOC's policy that informed the trade in Coromandel textiles to Makassar during the eighteenth century. The study is situated within the realm of growing literature on the intra-Asian trade of the VOC and hopes to make a contribution to the existing historiographical discourse on the intra-Asian textile trade of the VOC.

In the formative years of the VOC's presence in Asia, trade had been conducted with money as there were no tradeable commodities that were sought after in the Asian markets. In order to minimize the risk that the sending out of specie from the Republic had entailed, Jan Pieterszoon Coen urged the directors of the VOC to invest the trading capital in Asia in the development of the intra-Asian trade. When the Spanish embargo on the supply of bullion came into effect, Holland was not on the receiving end of large quantities of bullion imports from the Spanish Indies via Spain anymore. Thus, the Dutch naturally had to develop a strong network

of intra-Asian trade.<sup>1</sup> The VOC's intra-Asian trade was roundabout so that Japanese copper was sold in the Indian subcontinent to purchase Indian textiles that were in turn sold in the Indonesian archipelago to procure spices.<sup>2</sup> There was an absence of a mature monetary economy in the lands extending eastward from Malacca, notably in the markets of Moluccas. This prompted the exchange of cloth in lieu of specie.<sup>3</sup> For a very long time, Indian textiles were valued highly as a priced commodity of exchange by the people inhabiting the Indian Ocean world. During the course of the seventeenth century, Indian cotton textiles were granted the status of coinage in various Southeast Asian markets in place of ever declining silver which was obtained previously from Japanese and American mines.<sup>4</sup>

With the emergence of European markets in the seventeenth century, the Indian subcontinent had come to play a leading role in the global trade. Since time immemorial the major textile producing regions in the Indian subcontinent had been Coromandel, Gujarat and later Bengal. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, Indian textiles acquired the position of preeminence in the global maritime trade, substituting spices and rice as one of the most desired commodities. While the commercial and maritime networks of rice and spices were regional, textiles evolved gradually into a global network. By the end of the eighteenth century, India's contribution to the world's textile output was a quarter of the world's total textile output.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 941.

<sup>2</sup> Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700: A Political and Economic History* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 223.

<sup>3</sup> See, George Winius and Markus Vink, *The Merchant- Warrior Pacified: The VOC (The Dutch East India Company) and its changing political economy in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press).

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth R. Hall, "The Textile Industry in Southeast Asia, 1400-1800", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 39 (1996): 104.

<sup>5</sup> Giorgio Riello and Tirthankar Roy, *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500-1800* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

While research on the intra-Asian trade of the VOC has progressed over the last few decades, the pioneering work of W. H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, has informed later scholars of the role and significance of the East India Companies' participation in the intra-Asian trade.<sup>6</sup> The Dutch Historian Heert Terpstra's work on the Dutch East India Company's intra-Asian trade or triangular trade in the seventeenth century continues to remain crucial.<sup>7</sup> The studies conducted by Om Prakash and Els. Jacobs have contributed immensely to our understanding of the VOC's intra-Asian trade.<sup>8</sup> Om Prakash, in his study outlines briefly, the VOC's intra-Asian trade against the primary canvass of the economy of Bengal by examining the VOC's exports of textiles and silk from Bengal to Japan and Southeast Asia, while Jacob's groundbreaking study on the VOC's Euro-Asian and intra-Asian trade during the eighteenth century was informed by extensive research into the bookkeeping records maintained at Batavia, the VOC's Asian headquarters. The more recent work by Ryuto Shimada on the VOC's intra-Asian trade in Japanese copper during the eighteenth century was based, to a large extent, on the bookkeeping records kept at Batavia.<sup>9</sup> Ghulam Nadri's research article on the Dutch intra-Asian trade in Sugar in the eighteenth century has made a useful contribution to the existing literature on the VOC's intra-Asian trade in sugar but his study is devoid of quantitative data available in the bookkeeping records of the VOC at Batavia.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See, W. H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb: A Study in Indian Economic History* (London: Macmillan, 1923).

<sup>7</sup> See, Heert Terpstra, *De Nederlanders in Voor-Indië* (Amsterdam: Van Kampen, 1947) and Heert Terpstra, *Inslinde: Nederland's Verleden in Het Verre Oosten* (Den Haag: W. Van Hoeve, 1949).

<sup>8</sup> See, Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1630-1720* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016) and Els M. Jacobs, *De Handel van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie tijdens de 18de eeuw* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> Ryuto Shimada, *The Intra-Asian Trade in Japanese Copper by the Dutch East India Company During the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> Ghulam Nadri, "The Dutch Intra-Asian Trade in Sugar in the Eighteenth Century", *International Journal of Maritime History* 20 (2008): 63-96.

The study conducted by Ruurdje Laarhoven, *The Power of Cloth: The Textile Trade of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) 1600-1780*, remains a classic on the intra-Asian textile trade of the VOC from India to Indonesia in the said period.<sup>11</sup> Laarhoven has utilized the VOC's bookkeeping records to calculate the exports and imports of textiles by the VOC to analyze the long-term distribution trends, and examines the decline of the VOC's sales in Indian textiles in the Indonesian Archipelago and the import substitution of Indian textiles with indigenous textiles. Her study argued that the revival of the production of the Indonesian batik was the primary cause for the decline of imports of Indian textiles in Southeast Asia. The quantitative data provided by Laarhoven was obtained from Batavia's trade books that include the Batavia's trade journal and Batavia's trade ledger. Since her study focused on the period between 1600-1780, gathering quantitative data from the bookkeeping records produced at the office of the Bookkeeper-General (*Boekhouder-Generaal te Batavia*) was not possible because these records are available from the eighteenth century only. Thus, the quantitative data provided by Laarhoven to substantiate the VOC's exports of Indian textiles to Batavia remains sporadic, oftentimes with a gap of ten or sometimes even twenty years.

What distinguishes Laarhoven's work from some of the studies of other scholars working on the textile trade is her grouping of different types of Indian textiles shipped by the VOC to feed the intra-Asian textile trade in the form of clusters of chintz, checked and stripes, luxury muslin and plain types as opposed to the hitherto existing classification of Indian textiles into cotton and silk types. Laarhoven examines the distribution of VOC's Indian textiles in the form of clusters and offers quantitative data concerning VOC's textile sales on a column graph for the years 1652-3, 1703-5, 1723-5, 1733-5, 1757-9, 1770-1 and 1780-1 at the VOC's Asian headquarters in Batavia and across the VOC's establishments in Indonesia. While Laarhoven

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<sup>11</sup> See, Ruurdje Laarhoven, "The Power of Cloth: The Textile Trade of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) 1600-1780," PhD Diss., (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1994).

has conducted a comprehensive analysis of the VOC's intra-Asian textile trade from 'India to Indonesia,' the study of the VOC's intra-Asian textile trade from one 'regional establishment to the other' (*kantoor to kantoor*) remains absent in the existing historiography.

Therefore, the current study aims to trace the VOC's shipment of textiles from Coromandel to Makassar via Batavia by examining the various bookkeeping records of the VOC, primarily the bookkeeping records kept at the Bookkeeper-General at Batavia. As such this thesis also hopes to demonstrate convincingly that despite the complexities involved, conducting a comprehensive research on the VOC's intra-Asian textile trade is pragmatically feasible.

### *Brief Historical Background*

The port-town of Makassar is situated at the heart of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago. The convenient geographic location of Makassar allowed access to the lands lying to the east and west across the Flores, Java and Banda Seas. Despite the strategic location of Makassar, it never quite played the role of a waystation in the Indonesian Archipelago until the sixteenth century. The port-town of Makassar always played second fiddle to other trading towns in the region such as Sriwijaya, Malacca and Batavia. Makassar's assumption of the role of an entrepot has been ascribed to the Portuguese capture of Malacca in 1511 that resulted in the destruction of a crucial entrepot for South Asian and East Asian merchants. Besides merchants from South Asia and East Asia, Portuguese private traders now traded in Makassar, exchanging valuable goods such as ivory, wax and pepper for Indian textiles, copper, gold and porcelain. The Dutch conquest of the Spice Islands in the early decades of the seventeenth century to ensure the subsequent monopoly of the spice trade and to fend off English competition, further reinforced Makassar's central position in the maritime trade. Moreover, the English factory at Makassar was established chiefly due to Makassar's convenient position enroute the Spice islands.

Makassar was on the receiving end of a wide variety of goods from the east, ranging from nutmeg, mace, pepper and cloves from the spice islands, benzoin and wax from Cambodia, lead from Siam, copper from Japan, gold and silver from Manila, tea, sugar and ginger from China and cotton cloth from India, particularly from the Coromandel coast.<sup>12</sup>

Coromandel's economic linkages with Makassar stem chiefly from the rise of Masulipatnam along the Coromandel coast in the sixteenth century. As the principal port of the kingdom of Golconda, Masulipatnam enjoyed a great reputation for trading in chintz and calicoes, and some of the best coarse varieties of textiles.<sup>13</sup> With the growing prestige of the Safavid ruler, Shah Abbas (1688-1629), Persian presence along the Coromandel coast had increased, and with the simultaneous English penetration of the region, Masulipatnam acquired an upward trajectory. Not only was Masulipatnam a key source of Coromandel textiles, it was also the major port of the Indo-Persian kingdom of Golconda. The chief minister or Mir Jumla was an important participant in the maritime trade with Makassar. The Coromandel Muslim, Mamet Saphy was one of the major foreign traders in Makassar who was considered by the VOC to have been one of its competitors in the trade in Coromandel textiles.<sup>14</sup> Merchants from the Coromandel region ventured to Makassar to exchange textiles for spices. After Makassar fell outside of Mir Jumla's trading network, commercial linkages with India had decreased.

The Dutch conquest of Makassar in November 1667 and the subsequent establishment of the Treaty of Bungaya, decreed that the trading rights of all the Europeans with the exception of the Dutch be revoked, that the VOC be made the sole trader in Indian cloth, Chinese

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<sup>12</sup> John Villiers, "One of the Especiallest Flowers in Our Garden: The English Factory at Makassar, 1613-1667," *Archipel* 39 (1990): 160.

<sup>13</sup> Jagdish Narayan Sarkar, *The Life of Mir Jumla: The General of Aurangzeb* (Delhi: Rajesh Publications, 1979), 6.

<sup>14</sup> Heather Sutherland, "Trade, Court and Company: Makassar in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries," in *Hof en Handel: Aziatische Vorsten en de VOC 1620-1720*, ED. Elsbeth Locher-Scholten and Peter Rietbergen (Leiden: KTLV, 2004), 89-91.



merchandise and spices, and that the navigation of the Makassarese, and requests for ship's passes be restricted.<sup>15</sup> The VOC's castle, Fort Rotterdam became the hub of Makassar and the VOC adopted a system of granting ship's passes, maritime patrolling and port-surveillance by the office of the harbormaster. Non VOC commercial contacts with Manila, where merchants from Makassar shipped Indian textiles to purchase Chinese and Japanese wares, and Spanish coins were disrupted, and Makassar was cut-off from the Philippines. From the outset, the VOC's Makassar factory was merely a strategic outpost rather than a profitable establishment. Since Makassar had few desirable goods for exports, the VOC's Makassar government relied on the profitability of textile imports from India for monetary compensation. Moreover, the VOC was now the sole trader in importing textiles from the Indian subcontinent via Batavia, the VOC's Asian headquarters. Therefore, the Coromandel-Makassar textile trade formed a strategic axis in the VOC's broader system of the intra-Asian trade.

#### *Sources. Methodology and Challenges*

The study is predicated on an engagement with the original archival records of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) housed at the National Archives of the Netherlands in the Hague. Among the massive collections of records of the Dutch East India Company, the inventories of the VOC (*Archieven van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie, 1602-1795* (Access No. 1.04.02)) and the Bookkeeper-General at Batavia (*Het Archief van de Boekhouder-Generaal te Batavia 1700-1801* (Access No. 1.04.18.02) (BGB)) are the most important and relevant to this study. Since Batavia was the rendezvous point and pivot of the VOC's network of information gathering, the intra-Asian trade was essentially split in two legs i.e., from a regional

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<sup>15</sup> Leonard Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 100-101. See also, Leonard Andaya, "Treaty conceptions and misconceptions: A Case Study from South Sulawesi," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 134 (1978).

Asian establishment to Batavia and vice-versa. Therefore, the accounting documents produced at the office of the Bookkeeper-General are the most important sources for historians preoccupied with conducting a detailed trade analysis, the vital components of which include, the volume of shipping movement between the two trading regions in concern, the calculation of imports and exports, and the profitability of the traded commodity. The two most important records of the Bookkeeper-General that are most pertinent to this study are the general account (*generaal journaal*) and Batavia's trade ledger (*Batavia's negotie grootboek*). The archival records of the Bookkeeper-General are massively underutilized and very few studies have been predicated on a comprehensive engagement with the same.

While the records produced by the Bookkeeper-General constitute the fundamental basis for economic historians preoccupied with the study of intra-Asian trade of the VOC during the eighteenth century, the series does have one or two limitations. Firstly, the records of the Bookkeeper-General are available from the eighteenth century only. Secondly, the records of the Bookkeeper-General collection remain only partially complete. These records, albeit with a number of missing years, are available only for the period between 1700-1800.<sup>16</sup> Thirdly, the copies of the records of the Bookkeeper-General sent to the Republic were either sold or destroyed. Therefore, the original records of the Bookkeeper-General were sent to the Republic from Batavia.

Additionally, the recently published online database of the *Boekhouder-Generaal te Batavia* is useful to a modern historian. Published by the Huygens Institute for Dutch History (*Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis*, KNAW), this comprehensive database is predicated on the general account (*generaal journaal*) created by the Bookkeeper-General in Batavia. This

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<sup>16</sup> In the aftermath of the nationalization of the VOC, most records of the Bookkeeper-General were either, sold or destroyed. However, the original documents preserved in Batavia were shipped to the Netherlands in the nineteenth century. See, <http://bgb.huygens.knaw.nl/>.

database contains rich data about the VOC's shipping movement between the different regional establishments in Asia via Batavia and the shipping movement between Batavia and the different chambers in the Republic. Therefore, this database allows a historian access to study the dynamics of the intra-Asian and intercontinental trade.<sup>17</sup> On the basis of analysis of the cargoes carried on the shipping vessels, it is possible to calculate the volume and value of imports and exports.

Since the general account kept by the Bookkeeper-General listed the arrival of the Company's ships in Batavia and departure of the ships from Batavia for every accounting year, the data present in the general account would help us determine the shipping movement between Coromandel and Batavia. So, how many ships departed the VOC's factories on the Coromandel coast and reached Batavia? What was the composition of the cargo that each ship carried? Using the general account the same question with respect to Makassar could be raised, i.e., how many ships departed Batavia for Makassar and what was the nature of the composition of cargo? These ships carried not only Coromandel textiles but also textiles from Bengal and Gujarat. So, what percentage of Coromandel textiles that arrived in Batavia was sent to Makassar in one accounting year and how do we distinguish Coromandel textiles from the textiles procured from the other two textile production areas of the Indian subcontinent. Which VOC's Indian factory on the Coromandel coast sent the highest number of ships and from which factory the VOC obtained the greatest quantity of Coromandel textiles? The answers to the questions raised in this paragraph are all found in the general account.

From the general account, on the basis of the composition of the cargo, one can derive the relevant volume and value of imports and exports. In this thesis, the import and export figures gathered rest on the calculations made after deriving numerical data from the general

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<sup>17</sup> See, <http://bgb.huygens.knaw.nl/>.

account. The results are cross-checked with the same data obtained from the online database of the Bookkeeper-General. The volume and value of textiles exported from Coromandel to Batavia and the same from Batavia to Makassar are calculated on the basis of a selection of a logical and feasible series of accounting years in the eighteenth century.

After tracing the VOC's imports of Coromandel textiles into Makassar via Batavia during the eighteenth century, the study shifts attention to the Company's distribution of Coromandel textiles in Makassar. Therefore, the central focus of this section is directed at engaging the VOC's sales profits of Coromandel textiles in Makassar. The key questions pertinent to this section revolve around the profitability of Coromandel textiles in Makassar. How profitable were Coromandel textiles in Makassar? What were the profit margins that the VOC made on the sales of Coromandel textiles in Makassar? Which archival document of the VOC could answer the above question? The *rendementen* (returns) hold the answer to the above question. By gathering the data from the *rendementen*, the study aims to understand how profitable the VOC's sales in Makassar were. The *rendementen* also allow us to understand the profits that the VOC made on not only Coromandel textiles but also on textiles from Bengal and Gujarat. Therefore, the returns (*rendementen*) drawn at the Makassar factory in the late eighteenth century are consulted to undertake a comparative study of the profitability of not only textiles from Coromandel but also those from Bengal and Surat. By analyzing the data from the *rendementen* it is possible to figure out which individual varieties of Coromandel textiles were the most and least profitable.

Any study that focusses on conducting a trade analysis must also grapple with the mechanisms involved in shaping the demand for certain tradeable commodities. The negotiation of local factors that affected fluctuations of demand for Coromandel textiles in Makassar is crucial to understanding both imports and sales profits. What was the nature and volume of demand for Coromandel textiles in Makassar? The order-lists drawn annually by the

VOC's factories in Asia contain information on the annual demand for different commodities. The order-lists are available in a specific genre of archival records called Orders from all the Asian establishments (*Eisen uit alle Indische Comptoiren*). The order-lists are examined against the backdrop of the profitability of Coromandel textiles from the previous accounting year. These orders are specified only from the year 1720. The orders placed by the VOC's Makassar establishment for Coromandel textiles are examined after a selection of a logically feasible series of years in the eighteenth century with a gap of 5 years between every two accounting years. The series therefore, begins from the year 1720 and ends in 1785. The data however are unavailable for the years 1755 and 1760. But barring these two accounting years, the data are available for all the remaining accounting years. One of the challenges faced when studying the orders placed for Coromandel's textiles is that the orders were placed for individual varieties of Coromandel's, Bengal's and Gujarat's (Surat's) textiles. Therefore, necessary caution has to be taken in differentiating the individual varieties imported from the three textile producing regions.

These order-lists also contain information about the VOC's Makassar factory's demand for Coromandel textiles from some of the factories in Coromandel. For instance, when examining the VOC's Makassar factory's orders for plain guinee cloth, one can also figure out which factory the same variety was being imported from. For example, since, the plain and undecorated guinee cloth belonged to the coarse variety of textiles, and since Northern Coromandel was renowned for its coarse varieties, the Makassar factory ordered plain guinee cloth predominantly from the VOC's Bimlipatnam factory. After an engagement with the order-lists, the resulting observations have also been illustrated on a column graph showing the variations in orders placed every five years over the course of the eighteenth century. These observations offer valuable insights into the supply and demand mechanism, and subsequently help us understand the commercial policy of the VOC.

Gerrit Knaap and Heather Sutherland in their work, *Monsoon Traders: Ships, Skippers and Commodities in Eighteenth-Century Makassar*, have emphasized the role of the office of the harbormaster.<sup>18</sup> The records produced by the harbormaster (*syabhandar*) contain valuable information about the movement of ships, both incoming and outgoing in and from Makassar. The appointment of the harbormaster was an attempt by the VOC to curb private trade in goods on which the VOC had a monopoly. The first harbormaster was appointed by the VOC in 1678, who replaced the bazaarmaster in charge of supervising the incoming and outgoing vessels. These records contain important information about the date of arrival, place of departure and potential destination of the incoming and outgoing ships. However, what is even more relevant is the information about the ownership of the cargo vessels, the value and composition of the cargo shipped by these vessels. These records, titled *Copia specificatie van Makassar*, were annual reports compiled at the office of the harbormaster that registered the arrival and departure of incoming and outgoing non VOC ships. Besides the role of the office of the harbormaster in the supervision of vessels, the most important duty of the harbormaster was inspecting and granting ship's passes and collecting import and export tariffs. In strict observance of the VOC's monopoly on Indian cloth, the harbormaster had to prioritize the supervision of incoming ships over outgoing vessels and lay greater emphasis on checking whether or not the incoming vessels were transporting Indian textiles.

While the position of the Harbormaster was considered desirable among the VOC's employees, the office of the Harbormaster was central to the VOC's desire to obtain information on regional developments. The harbormaster occupied a pivotal role in the VOC's network of information gathering and provided the Company with vital information on crucial issues. This thesis, however, in so far as the consultation of these records is concerned, engages critically

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<sup>18</sup> See, Gerrit Knaap and Heather Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders: Ships, Skippers and Commodities in eighteenth-century Makassar* (Leiden: KTLV Press, 2004).

the report by Jan Hendrik Voll, the harbormaster of Makassar in 1768 who was asked to examine the deterioration of the textile trade. In the third chapter, the section on the decline of the textile trade of the VOC in Makassar is based largely on a critical discussion of Voll's report. An examination of the harbormaster's report will give us a thorough contemporary understanding of the decline of the textile trade.

### *Outline of the Study*

Besides an introduction at the beginning and a conclusion at the end, this thesis consists of three cardinal chapters. Chapter One, 'The Role of Coromandel Textiles in the intra-Asian Trade of the Dutch East India Company', begins with a very brief discussion of the term 'Coromandel' and unfurls the VOC's relationship with the Coromandel coast. This is followed by examining the role of Coromandel textiles in the intra-Asian trade before underlining how the VOC procured textiles from the hinterland of the Coromandel region. Special emphasis is laid on the different textile varieties of Coromandel that will inform our discussion in the third chapter. A short section follows next that discusses the VOC's chief ports of shipment on the Coromandel coast. The focus then shifts towards exploring the historiography of the Coromandel-Southeast Asia textile trade in the late seventeenth century, followed by examining the causes for the decline of imports of Indian textiles into Southeast Asia. In doing so, this section becomes crucial to our study of the VOC's imports of specific categories of Coromandel textiles into Makassar that will aid us in understanding the VOC's policy on the textile trade and how the Company responded to evolving local market conditions.

Chapter Two, 'The Dutch East India Company's bookkeeping of the intra-Asian textile trade', begins by outlining the organizational framework of the VOC's bookkeeping system. This section aims to provide a coherent view of the accounting system of the Company that informed its business in Asia. Special emphasis is laid on the different bookkeeping records

maintained for specific purposes and the logic that informed the Company's usage of specific bookkeeping records to carry out certain tasks. The second section provides an account of the methodological framework adopted to gather the necessary quantitative data to study the VOC's textile trade between Coromandel and Makassar during the eighteenth century. This section also discusses the bookkeeping of the textile trade of the VOC and the many challenges involved in an in-depth study of the intra-Asian textile trade of the VOC and some of the possible ways to maneuver around them.

Chapter Three, 'The Distribution of Coromandel Textiles by the VOC in Makassar during the Eighteenth Century', gives an account of the trade analysis on the basis of the archival data collected and studied in this thesis. The chapter begins with a discussion on the orders placed for Coromandel textiles by the VOC's Makassar establishment in the context of shifting local demand factors that shaped the Makassar textile market. The second section focusses on the exports of Coromandel textiles to Batavia, followed by the VOC's imports of Coromandel textiles into Makassar via Batavia during the eighteenth century. This is followed by a section on the VOC's sales profits registered on Coromandel textiles. Wherever necessary, the results have been presented either in a table or a graph to understand the VOC's pattern of distribution of Coromandel textiles in Makassar during the eighteenth century.



## **The Role of Coromandel Textiles in the intra-Asian Trade of the Dutch East India Company**

### *Setting the Scene: The VOC and Coromandel*

The term Coromandel derives its etymological root from the name *Colamandalam*, the main territorial division of the Cholas, that comprises of lands along the southeast coast of India. From north to south the Coromandel region extends from the Godavari delta to Point Calimere. Today, the Coromandel region encompasses the coastlines of modern Indian states- Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. The recent studies of S. Jeyaseela Stephen have argued against the usage of terms such as Northern and Southern Coromandel in favor of Telugu and Tamil coasts.<sup>19</sup> According to Jeyaseela Stephen, the Coromandel region comprises of the area between the riverine basin of Swarnamukhi in the interior and the northern limit defined by Durgarajapattinam.<sup>20</sup> However, the Coromandel region was argued by Arasaratnam to possess elements of unity, rooted in both, its ecological and climatic conditions, coupled with a shared historical experience primarily in terms of political administration, the people and their social systems and the nature of the relationship between the port and hinterland.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See, S. Jeyaseela Stephen, *Oceanscapes: Tamil Textiles in the Early Modern World* (Delhi: Primus, 2014), 5.

<sup>20</sup> S. Jeyaseela Stephen, *Expanding Portuguese Empire and the Tamil Economy (Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries)* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2009), 24.

<sup>21</sup> Sinnappah Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast 1650-1740* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986), 6.

The pioneering study of Tapan Raychaudhuri on the VOC in Coromandel begins with a brief mention of the term ‘Coromandel Coast’ used by Europeans in the seventeenth century.<sup>22</sup> Raychaudhuri states that the lands south of the river Godavari extending all the way to Nagapattinam was understood to define the Coromandel coast while the coastline north of the Godavari river was referred to as the Gingelly coast that is now the coast of the modern Indian state of Orissa. In this thesis, the term Coromandel is used in light of the three renowned textile producing regions in the Indian Ocean arena, i.e., Gujarat, Coromandel and Bengal that served the export markets of the European trading companies. Since the current study focusses on the VOC’s textile trade between Coromandel and Makassar, it is only logical that the term Coromandel should be used in the same manner as the VOC’s conceptualization of the region. Moreover, the extensive bookkeeping records of the VOC classifies textiles from Coromandel, Gujarat and Bengal on the basis of the terms denoting the three regions respectively.

In the formative years of the VOC’s presence in Asia, the VOC realized that the purchasing power of Indian textiles in the barter with Southeast Asian spices was high. Before the VOC established its administrative and commercial presence in South Asia, it bought Indian textiles in Southeast Asian markets such as Bantam and Achin mostly from Indian merchants. Since the prices of Indian textiles in Southeast Asian markets were comparatively high, the VOC decided to gain a foothold in India closer to the centers of textile production and ship textiles from there to Southeast Asia to buy spices.<sup>23</sup> The Coromandel region was regarded by the Dutch as an easy source of procuring Indian textiles.<sup>24</sup> Also, the chief textiles that were in demand in Southeast Asia came from Coromandel. Since the Portuguese were firmly

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<sup>22</sup> See, Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel 1605-1690: A Study in the Interrelations of European Commerce and Traditional Economies* (S-Gravenhage- Martinus Nijhoff, 1962).

<sup>23</sup> S. P. Sen, “The Role of Indian Textiles in Southeast Asian Trade in the Seventeenth Century,” *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 3 (1962): 94.

<sup>24</sup> Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*, 2.

established in Goa along the west coast of India and the political conditions were turbulent in Bengal, both Gujarat and Bengal were ruled out as sources of Indian textiles respectively. Moreover, the Portuguese along the east coast were not strong enough to offer successful resistance to Dutch attempts to open up Coromandel to the intra-Asian trade. Therefore, the Dutch established a number of factories along the Coromandel coast that were classified into Northern and Southern Coromandel.

The role of Coromandel textiles in the commercial operations of the VOC was primarily manifest in the supply of two different markets. Firstly, the VOC was involved in supplying the markets in Southeast and West Asia amidst intense rivalries with private Portuguese traders, indigenous Asian traders and English East India Company.<sup>25</sup> Secondly, Coromandel textiles were also needed to serve the markets in Europe.<sup>26</sup> During the early decades of the VOC's trading ventures, the exports of Coromandel textiles to Southeast Asian markets were more important and surpassed shipments to Europe. In the closing decades of the seventeenth century the demand for Indian textiles soared enormously chiefly because of changing notions of fashion in the Republic. Indian cotton piece-goods were now exported to Europe to clothe European upper- and middle-class women and men.<sup>27</sup> Also, Indian coarse fabrics were needed to clothe the slave populations of the Americas.<sup>28</sup> The European competition to meet the demands of what has been referred to as the 'Calico Craze' had tremendous ramifications on the textile production in the Indian subcontinent.<sup>29</sup> Towards the end of the seventeenth century,

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<sup>25</sup> Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce Southern India 1500-1650* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 169.

<sup>26</sup> Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce*, 169.

<sup>27</sup> Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient 1600-1800* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 79.

<sup>28</sup> Furber, *Rival Empires*, 79.

<sup>29</sup> Chris Nierstrasz, *Rivalry for Trade in Tea and Textiles: The English and Dutch East India Companies: 1700-1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 11.

exports of Coromandel textiles alongside exports of Gujarat and Bengal textiles, surpassed in both quantities and values, the exports to feed the markets in Asia.

### *The VOC's Mode of Procurement of Coromandel Textiles*

Writing in 1805, Robert Orme states that in a typical village on the Coromandel coast almost everybody, man woman and child was employed in the manufacture of cloth.<sup>30</sup> In India, weaving was either a primary occupation or a secondary occupation alongside agriculture. Since weaving was predominantly a caste-based occupation, most weaving castes lived in villages where there was a potential for export trade. The ports of shipment on the Coromandel coast were defined by their proximity to weaving centers. Before the advent of the entry of Europeans into the textile trade in Coromandel, the indigenous commerce in textiles was subject to seasonal variations. While work was sporadic, the constant demand of the Europeans to feed the intra-Asian textile trade busied the life of the weaver. In the Indian subcontinent, the mode of textile production was based on the system of remitting advances. Since the merchants advanced only cash and not raw materials, the indigenous mode of procurement was different from the 'putting out' system.<sup>31</sup> On the basis of this system, the weaver was granted a sum of advance that was the equivalent to the market price to make the delivery on a later date. This contractual agreement bestowed obligations on both sides, where the advance to the weaver was granted to procure raw materials for the manufacture of large quantities of cloth and to

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<sup>30</sup> Robert Orme, *Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empires, of the Morattoes, and of the English Concerns in Indostan*, ed. J. P. Guha (New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1974), 263.

<sup>31</sup> Sinnappah Arasaratnam, "Weavers, Merchants and Company: The Handloom Industry in Southeastern India, 1750-90," in *Cloth & Commerce: Textiles in Colonial India*, ed. Tirthankar Roy (New Delhi: AltraMira Press, 1996), 87.

ensure the sustenance of both, the weaver and his family.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, the merchant was assured of the delivery of fixed supplies of cloth on the set date.

The European Companies did not have direct access to the weaving villages. The link between the two was the indigenous textile merchant. He assumed the crucial role of not only providing credit to the weavers but also making their goods accessible to the markets. With regard to the position of the merchant who worked on behalf of the English East India Company, Prasannan Parthasarathi uses the term “Company merchant”, who was primarily an intermediary between the Company and local weavers and was responsible for advancing credit to the weavers for the production of textiles.<sup>33</sup> He was accountable to the Company with respect to the quality of the woven cloth delivered. In Coromandel, the indigenous Chetty merchant seems to have played the role of a broker mediating between the Company and the weaver. In the VOC’s records, the suppliers of goods to the Company have been called *leveranciers*. These suppliers entered into contracts with the VOC and had to supply the fixed quantities and stipulated types of textiles.<sup>34</sup> Om Prakash defines this mode of procurement as “cash advance system”.<sup>35</sup> The Companies typically paid anywhere between 50 and 65 percent of the total value of the contract to the merchant. Potential risk emanating from price fluctuations between the date of agreement and date of delivery had to be borne by the merchant.

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<sup>32</sup> See, K.N. Chaudhuri, “The Structure of Indian Textile Industry,” in *Cloth & Commerce: Textiles in Colonial India*, ed. Tirthankar Roy (New Delhi: AltraMira Press, 1996), 53.

<sup>33</sup> Prasannan Parthasarathi, *The Transition to a Colonial Economy: Weavers, Merchants and Kings in South India 1720-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 20-22.

<sup>34</sup> For a discussion of the *leveranciers* with regard to the VOC’s operations in Gujarat, see Ghulam A. Nadri, *Eighteenth Century Gujarat: The Dynamics of Its Political Economy, 1750-1800* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 123-124.

<sup>35</sup> Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1630-1720* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), 102-103.

Even in Europe the weaver was granted an advance either in the form of money or raw materials. But while in Europe, the products manufactured fell under the ownership of the financier and the initial advance represented the wages for his labor, in India the goods produced belonged to the weaver.<sup>36</sup> This ensured that the weaver in India was quite flexible. When the demand for textiles was high during intense rivalries between English, Dutch and French who had all competed in a free market, the weaver had the luxury of disposing of goods to the highest bidder. However, on the basis of a prior consensus the financier or merchant had the first call to buy the produce.

Due to the constant cutthroat competition between the Dutch, English and French East India Companies involved in the purchase of Coromandel textiles, the quality of cloth oftentimes deteriorated. Whenever supplied with poor quality cloth or cloth that did not meet the stipulated specifications, the VOC rejected the cloth straightaway. At times the weavers accepted the initial credit offered to them but would deliberately deliver poor quality cloth to the VOC to be turned down so that they could sell the same cloth to private indigenous, English and Portuguese traders or to competing Companies. On the other hand, the participation of the VOC in the intra-Asian textile trade to meet the specific demands of the various Asian markets raised complications for the weaver. Since the VOC specialized in the export of a wide range of textile types and varieties coupled with varying sizes, textures and qualities, the orders placed were different every year so that the weaver could not fulfil his contract. Moreover, the price of grain and cotton thread rose in the first decades of the eighteenth century. Since agriculture and weaving went hand in hand, poor harvests and famines had a detrimental effect on textile production.

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<sup>36</sup> Arasaratnam, "Weavers, Merchants and Company," 87.

S. Arasaratnam argues that by the eighteenth century, the VOC's Coromandel textile trade had moved from the factories in northern Coromandel to southern Coromandel.<sup>37</sup> The chief ports of southern Coromandel cloth shipments were Nagapattinam, Porto Novo and Sadraspatnam. The harvest failures and near famine like situation in southern Coromandel that lasted for a period of five years between 1731 and 1735 caused the prices of textiles to soar. This was because the prices of cotton textiles were directly tied to the rising prices of rice on which the lives of Coromandel weavers, painters and dyers depended.<sup>38</sup> Such conditions had a direct effect on the production of textiles and VOC's shipments of cloth to Batavia for both, return shipments to the Republic and the Asian markets.

### *The Textiles of Coromandel*

The Coromandel region was renowned for its plain and painted varieties of piece-goods. The plain cotton piece-goods included the finely woven muslin that was exported under the name of 'Betilles.'<sup>39</sup> The name betilles is derived from the Portuguese *beatilla*, which means 'veiling.'<sup>40</sup> The type of plain cotton cloth known as 'longcloth' was one of the most expensive among the fine muslins and was much sought after primarily because of its dimensions that extended up to 37 yards. The other important varieties produced particularly for the export markets were 'salempores', that was roughly 16 yards in length and available in different hues, qualities and prices. The standard ordinary plain cloth included 'muris' and 'percallas'. The

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<sup>37</sup> S. Arasaratnam, "The Dutch East India Company and its Coromandel trade, 1700-1740," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde* 123 (1967): 339-340.

<sup>38</sup> Arasaratnam, "The Dutch East India Company," 340.

<sup>39</sup> John Irwin and P. R. Schwartz, *Studies in Indo-Indo European Textile History* (Ahmedabad: Calico Museum of Textiles, 1966), 39.

<sup>40</sup> Irwin and Schwartz, *Studies in Indo-Indo European Textile History*, 39.

dyed cotton cloth came in striped, checked and plain varieties. This group consisted of the cheaper grades of salem pores and muris. The major patterned cloth produced was ‘gingams’, that were predominantly striped cloths that had an unusually tough texture. The patterned varieties of textiles consisted of ‘rumalls’ (handkerchiefs) that were manufactured mainly in the loom.<sup>41</sup> The method of the application of dyes after weaving produced many patterned varieties, the famous among them being the ‘chintz’, or spotted cloth.<sup>42</sup> The manufacture of chintz was essentially complex that involved printing with a wooden block by hand and creating designs out of painting with the technique of mordant dyeing.

The patterned varieties on the Coromandel coast were produced with a pen or a brush as opposed to the block that was used in the production of chintz.<sup>43</sup> The Portuguese referred to the cloth produced by this method as *pintado*, or ‘painted.’ The English labelled this variety as ‘painted cloth’ and the Dutch used the term *geschilderd* (painted). The term is also interchangeable with *gebatikt* that was produced by similar process predominantly in Java. Besides painted chintz there was also ordinary chintz. Ordinary chintz was one of the most important textiles that were in high demand in Southeast Asia and was exported mainly from southern Coromandel.

Among the most common and desired varieties in the Asian markets were the coarse calicoes. While the calicoes varied in size and quality, the coarse calico called ‘guinee’ was the most desired in the Asian markets. As will be elaborated in the third chapter, the VOC’s exports of plain and undecorated Coromandel ‘guinee cloth’, to Makassar were consistently profitable

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<sup>41</sup> Joseph J. Brenning, “Textile Producers and Production in Late Seventeenth Century Coromandel,” 23 (1986): 334.

<sup>42</sup> Brenning, “Textile Producers,” 334.

<sup>43</sup> W. H. Moreland, *Peter Floris: His Voyage to the East Indies in the Globe: 1611-1615*, ed. W. H. Moreland (London: Hakluyt Society, 1934).



and illustrated an upward trend even when the trade was declining. The sail cloth (*zeil doek*) was the coarsest calico, usually around 12 yards in length and was exported in large quantities.<sup>44</sup> Brenning suggests that the sail cloth could have been used in Asian shipping. The tape-chindes, sarassas and sallaloes were some of the painted calicoes that were in demand in the Malay peninsula.<sup>45</sup> The ‘tapi’ or ‘tape’ usually consisted of a piece of cloth that that was used by both men and women.<sup>46</sup> It was mostly draped around the waist and sometimes used either as a shawl or turban.

The painted cloth varieties formed the bulk of exports from Coromandel to markets in Southeast Asia. While weaving, dyeing, bleaching and painting were spread throughout the Coromandel coast, the specialized varieties were scattered on the basis of availability of raw materials. The dyes that were available in northern Coromandel were of a superior quality to those in southern Coromandel and they could be obtained from centers such as Masulipatnam and Petapuli. Patterned varieties for exports to markets in Asia were the specialties of southern Coromandel, particularly Pulicat. Northern Coromandel’s textile industry for export situated around the Godavari delta was not as specialized as southern Coromandel’s industry that produced painted cloth for the export markets primarily in Southeast Asia.<sup>47</sup>

#### *The VOC’s Ports of Shipment on the Coromandel Coast*

This aim of this short section is to provide a brief background to the reader on the VOC’s ports of shipment on the Coromandel coast in light of calculation of textile exports from Coromandel

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<sup>44</sup> Brenning, “Textile Producers,” 335.

<sup>45</sup> Vijaya Ramaswamy, *Textiles and Weavers in Medieval South India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985), 122.

<sup>46</sup> Moreland, *Peter Floris*.

<sup>47</sup> See, Joseph J. Brenning, “The Textile Trade of Seventeenth Century Northern Coromandel: A Study of a Pre-Modern Asian Export Industry,” PhD Diss., (Ann Arbor, The University of Wisconsin, 1975), 253-254.

to Batavia during the eighteenth century. Since the VOC's Coromandel establishment was one of the biggest in Asia, it had in its ambit a string of factories extending along the coast from north to south. Therefore, textiles were shipped from multiple ports of embarkation to Batavia to feed both the intra-Asian trade and intercontinental trade.

In the seventeenth century the VOC established a web of factories on the Coromandel coast that acted also as ports of shipment to link them to Batavia, the headquarters of the Asian business. Initially the VOC's regional headquarters was situated at Fort Geldria in Pulicat until the transfer of the regional headquarters to Nagapattinam in 1690. Pulicat classified under Southern Coromandel by the VOC, was a renowned center for painted cotton piece-goods. The Hindu Chetty merchants operated out of Pulicat to trade with Melaka to exchange Coromandel cloth for Sumatran and Malay gold.

The port on the Coromandel coast that dominated much of the international trade in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was Masulipatnam. Its success lay not so much because of its anchoring facilities but rather its geographical location. The port was primarily a centralizing link on the coast and was well-connected to the hinterland by roads. While some of the other centers such as Nizampatnam, Petapuli, Narspore and Madapollam were good anchoring points and easily accessible to the textile production centers, Masulipatnam however, was connected to the administrative center of the Kingdom of Golconda.<sup>48</sup> The port was renowned for cotton textiles especially the painted chintzes. The weaving villages up to 50 miles from Masulipatnam were dense clusters of textile production that catered to exports to the international markets. The port was prosperous until the mid-1660's owing its demise to the ravaging famines and

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<sup>48</sup> Sinnappah Arasaratnam and Aniruddha Ray, *Masulipatnam and Cambay: A history of two port-towns 1500-1800* (New Delhi: Munshiram, 1994), 22.

warfare.<sup>49</sup> The East India Companies in the eighteenth century in lieu of Masulipatnam shifted their focus to Bimilipatnam and Ganjam noted for their coarse cotton textile varieties.

The VOC's new factory at Sadraspatnam in the late 1660's was situated in a convenient location with adequate supply of cloth and rice. Sadraspatnam would emerge as one of the most important ports of shipment to the VOC and this is evident from the number of ships that sailed annually from Coromandel to Batavia. Another important port of shipment on the Coromandel coast was Bimilipatnam. Although the chief significance of the VOC's Bimilipatnam factory lay in its proximity to the rice producing hinterland, the factory was also close to the coarse cotton textile weaving centers. The VOC's Makassar establishment in its placement of orders for Coromandel textiles referred constantly to the textile varieties from Bimilipatnam. However, this will be elaborated in the third chapter.

In Southern Coromandel, the most important factory was Nagapattinam that would assume the status of regional headquarters in 1690. With gradual shift in the commercial operations from north to south many weavers and their families moved down south. With respect to the number of ships that sailed between VOC's factories in Coromandel and Batavia, Nagapattinam sent the highest number of ships. The two ports of Nagapattinam and Nagore were ports of embarkation for the textile trade to Southeast Asia. Other factories included Porto Novo, Teganapatnam and Devanapatnam.

### *Prelude to the Eighteenth Century*

In light of the dominance of Southeast Asian imports of Indian textiles from the sixteenth until the end of the seventeenth century, Anthony Reid remarked that the peak period of import of

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<sup>49</sup> John Guy, *Woven Cargoes: Indian Textiles in the East* (Singapore: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 30.

Indian textiles into Southeast Asia was roughly between 1620's and 1650's following which a steep fall in the demand of Indian cloth from the late seventeenth century ushered in the end of the 'Age of Commerce.'<sup>50</sup> In the late 1670's, 40,000 riksdollars (rds) of Indian textiles had been imported to central and east Java and the importation of Indian textiles decreased tremendously to a mere 4000 riksdollars in the year 1690.<sup>51</sup> The importation of Indian textiles by private merchants also decreased from 41,234 pieces in the year 1680 to fewer than 10,000 pieces around 1800.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, the enforcement of monopoly on the import of Indian textiles by VOC in Southeast Asia, compelled the local people to take recourse to other sources of supply of cloth. The indigenous traders such as the Bugis, Makassarese and Wajorese who operated outside of the monopolistic sphere of the VOC, had to contend with rising prices of Indian textiles. While the reasons for the increase in prices of Coromandel textiles have not been studied adequately, the increasing cost of living and the soaring prices of grain and cotton in Coromandel have been attributed as some of the important reasons for the decline of exports of textiles from the Indian subcontinent and Coromandel in particular.<sup>53</sup>

The rise in the prices of Indian textiles, particularly those procured from Coromandel, was also because of the influx of precious metals in the Indian subcontinent. The rapid growth of demand among the East India Companies for the production of textiles for exports to the

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<sup>50</sup> Anthony Reid, "An 'Age of Commerce' in Southeast Asian History," *Modern Asian Studies* 24 (1990): 22. See also, Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, vol. 2, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

<sup>51</sup> Luc Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger: The Dutch East Indies Company and the Northeast Coast of Java 1680-1743* (Leiden: KTLV, 1996), 147-148.

<sup>52</sup> For further discussion on the end of 'The Age of Commerce,' see also Kwee Hui Kian, "The End of The Age of Commerce: Javanese Cotton Trade Industry from the Seventeenth to the Eighteenth Centuries," in *Chinese circulations: capital, commodities and networks in Southeast Asia*, ed. Eric Tagliacozzo and Wen-Chin Chang (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 285-290.

<sup>53</sup> Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*,

home markets in Europe was another factor that led to the soaring prices of cloth.<sup>54</sup> Although the VOC was to a large extent successful in restricting competition in the commerce in Coromandel textiles, the substantial increase in the purchase price of Coromandel textiles led to a decrease in the profit margins on the textiles sold in Southeast Asia. The original prices of textiles would never return back even by the turn of the eighteenth century. During the first few decades of the eighteenth century, the prices of rice, cotton and wages among the weavers had a direct impact on the purchase price of textiles. One of the ways in which the VOC combated the rising prices of textiles in the Indian subcontinent was by allocating poorer qualities of Indian textiles for the Southeast Asian markets and better qualities for the European markets.<sup>55</sup> Ruurdje Laarhoven asserts that the VOC sacrificed the quality of textiles for cheaper price. This trend had continued throughout the eighteenth century leading eventually to the decline of the VOC's commerce in Indian textiles to Southeast Asia.

Due to the limited participation of Southeast Asian traders in the export commerce arising out of the VOC's consolidation of monopoly on Indian textiles, the English and Dutch noted that the impoverishment of the people of Southeast Asia was directly responsible for the lack of sales of Indian cloth in Southeast Asian markets.<sup>56</sup> The Asian merchants operating out of Makassar participated in a flourishing trade with Patani, Siam, Jambi, Palembang, Johor and Batavia.<sup>57</sup> After the VOC conquest of Makassar, this remunerative trade shifted to Manila. Whereas earlier, Makassar was one of the major centers of the Coromandel trade to Southeast Asia that involved the Hindu and Muslim merchants from Coromandel and the private

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<sup>54</sup> Laarhoven, *The Power of Cloth*, 293.

<sup>55</sup> Laarhoven, *The Power of Cloth*, 294.

<sup>56</sup> Reid, "An 'Age of Commerce'," 24.

<sup>57</sup> See, J. Noorduyn, *De Handelsrelaties van het Makassaarse rijk volgens de Notitie van Cornelis Speelman uit 1670*, (Amsterdam: Verloren, 1983).

Portuguese and English traders in shipping large quantities of textiles, the center had now shifted to Manila.<sup>58</sup> Thus, the people of Makassar were no longer on the receiving end of Indian cloth because of significantly altered local conditions.

This shift was manifest in the indigenous production of cloth. The transition from Southeast Asian consumption of Indian textiles towards indigenously grown cotton was visible on the island of Java from the latter decades of the seventeenth century. The Javanese began to substitute textiles from Coromandel with homegrown fabrics. Not only were the locally produced varieties of textiles cheaper but were also considered to have been of better quality. Even the home grown cotton yarn produced on the island of Java was considered to have been of a comparable quality to the cotton yarn procured from Bengal and Gujarat.<sup>59</sup> Therefore indigenous cloth was favored by the people of Southeast Asia. The following section aims to elaborate on the decline of imports of Indian textiles into Southeast Asia, notably the Indonesian Archipelago and the substitution of Indian textiles with locally produced cloth most importantly the Javanese Batik.

### *The Decline of Southeast Asian Consumption of Indian Textiles*

The decline of Southeast Asian imports of Indian textiles towards the end of the seventeenth century has warranted much attention across the literature on the role of Indian textiles in Southeast Asian markets. Anthony Reid has attributed the decline in the sales of Indian textiles in Southeast Asia to the VOC's monopolistic practices that eventually led to the impoverishment of Southeast Asians. Barbara Watson Andaya is convinced that the Chinese

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<sup>58</sup> Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*, 129-154.

<sup>59</sup> See, Matsuo Hiroshi, *The Development of Javanese Cotton Industry* (Tokyo: East West Publications, 1969), 2.

who participated in the cloth trade in Indonesia had a crucial advantage over the VOC in that they had women to abet them.<sup>60</sup> The Chinese merchant sojourners brought their wives along with them who stayed until the end of their sojourn. The women were engaged predominantly in retail and supervised local textiles stores. The VOC realized the growing competition from the Chinese and decided to supply textiles to the Chinese who ventured into the hinterland to exchange cloth for pepper.<sup>61</sup> Oftentimes, the Chinese procured textiles at the Company's auctions in Batavia. Luc Nagtegaal argues that Reid's impoverishment hypothesis is but a reflection of contemporary seventeenth century VOC officials who sought to comprehend the declining Indian textiles sales in the Indonesian Archipelago and examine why the textile trade to Java in particular had been more prosperous prior to 1680.<sup>62</sup> What complicates the matter further is the already existing Javanese cotton industry. The indigenous Javanese textiles were not only cheaper but were also of a superior quality when compared to Indian textiles. The Javanese textiles were cheaper primarily because of inexpensive labor and low cost of living. The VOC's High Government in Batavia reached a conclusion that the decline of the textiles sales in Java had nothing to do with either the quality or price of Indian textiles. However, the real reason behind the dramatic fall in the demand for Indian textiles lay in the nature and role assigned to them by Southeast Asians.

Between 1600 and 1700, the volume of imports of Indian textiles was so massive that we are left puzzled as to why the demand was so great in the seventeenth century. Because of the already existing local textile industry that catered to the clothing demands of Indonesians, not all Indian textiles were imported to be used as clothing apparel. In Southeast Asia, Indian

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<sup>60</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya, "The Cloth Trade in Jambi and Palembang during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Indonesia* 48 (1989): 36.

<sup>61</sup> Andaya, "The Cloth Trade," 36.

<sup>62</sup> Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger*, 148.

textiles did not serve the function of providing everyday clothing material to the people.<sup>63</sup> Of course, the ruling elites of the courts of Southeast Asian polities did seek to buy some of the more rare and exotic varieties of Indian textiles to be used principally as royal gifts to abutting courts.<sup>64</sup> However, Indian textiles never assumed the status of cloth of everyday consumption. So what then was the true role that Indian textiles had played in Southeast Asia?

The true significance of Indian textiles lay in the economic and symbolic significance attached to them. In Southeast Asia, Indian textiles were appropriated for the economic value embedded in them. Indian textiles were utilized as money, as a form of exchange currency. As a form of exchange instrument, money is the monetary expression of the value of goods. In Southeast Asia, Indian textiles operated as a commodity in the social and cultural exchanges and religious and ceremonial transactions.<sup>65</sup> Indian textiles were considered to be commodities in so far as the commodity possessed an economic value.<sup>66</sup> The value of Indian textiles is enshrined in the forms of exchange. Thus, they do not necessarily possess an absolute value and the value is predicated on constant forms of exchange as opposed to the demand generated.<sup>67</sup> The notion of the two-fold dimensional aspect of a commodity manifest in its utility and value is applicable to the role assigned to Indian textiles by Southeast Asians.<sup>68</sup> In southeast Asia, besides the utilitarian value of textiles as garments for covering, the role of textiles in defining one's status, class and wealth was more important. Possession of cloth also

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<sup>63</sup> Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger*, 149.

<sup>64</sup> Andaya, "The Cloth Trade," 37.

<sup>65</sup> Laarhoven, *The Power of Cloth*, 57.

<sup>66</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *The social life of things: commodities in cultural perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 3.

<sup>67</sup> Appadurai, *Social life of things*, 4.

<sup>68</sup> See, Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol.1 Book One: The Process of Production of Capital, ed. Frederick Engels (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 2015), 30.



served as a marker of differentiation between social groups especially the more affluent coastal inhabitants and hinterland inhabitants.<sup>69</sup> People received wages in cloth, advanced taxes in cloth and gave cloth as gifts. Therefore, cloth served a wide range of functions in the social and political life of people in the Indonesian Archipelago.

In the seventeenth century, on the island of Java, Indian textiles were utilized as “hoard money”. Therefore, they did not necessarily circulate.<sup>70</sup> The VOC officials noted in the seventeenth century that the people in the north coast of Java did not cover themselves with Indian cloth and almost everyone clothed themselves in Javanese textiles.<sup>71</sup> Although the imports of Indian textiles were considerable, the Javanese preferred to wear cloth that was locally manufactured. The VOC’s discourse on the lack of usage of Indian textiles as a form of clothing among the Javanese was consistent throughout the seventeenth century. Thus, Nagtegaal concludes that the only other significance of Indian textiles lay in their usage as “hoard money”. Cloth as a currency and as one of the ways of amassing wealth was also common in West Africa.<sup>72</sup> In places such as Senegambia and Bundu, cloth was not only a commodity but also acted as currency or a trusted item of exchange in the long-distance trade. Also, the quantities of textiles were the yardstick against which the prices of pepper were measured in Padang and Aceh. Since textiles from India were objects of scarcity and had to be imported, they were better suited to be used as hoard money. Moreover, textiles manufactured locally were more readily available and abundant, therefore they could not be used as hoard money. The Javanese demand for Indian textiles was very specialized so that some of the

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<sup>69</sup> Laarhoven, *The Power of Cloth*, 58.

<sup>70</sup> Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger*, 149.

<sup>71</sup> Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger*, 149.

<sup>72</sup> Philip D. Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa: Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1975), 212.

weaving centers in Coromandel had to specialize in the ‘Javanese range.’<sup>73</sup> This included the expensive varieties such as *kain gulung*, that were sold predominantly on the island of Java. The highly specialized varieties of textiles demanded by the Javanese arose out of the monetary value attached to Indian textiles as opposed to changing notions of fashion.

Nagtegaal states that the monetary role assigned to Indian textiles while certainly very important and relevant to our understanding of declining imports of Indian textiles in the late seventeenth century, still does not in itself disprove the proponents of the ‘underdevelopment or impoverishment theory’ because if the people were inflicted with poverty then they would not have been able to hoard as much.<sup>74</sup> Nagtegaal also argues that the monetary role played by Indian textiles was now played by silver coins. After 1680, silver coins were imported into Java from Batavia by the VOC in massive quantities owing to the VOC’s gradual expansion in the trade with Java.<sup>75</sup> The replacement of Indian textiles as money with silver coins was possible because not only were silver coins rare but could also be circulated. Thus, they competed with Indian textiles for supremacy in their currency value and replaced them.

#### *Substitution of Indian Textiles with Indigenous Cotton Textiles*

Towards the end of the seventeenth century the inflation of prices of Coromandel textiles and the inferior qualities of cloth shipped to Southeast Asian markets forced the Southeast Asians to shift to local production of textiles. The printed and patterned varieties of Coromandel textiles were considered to be incomplete. Also, some of the textiles tended to fade in color and lose their original texture. The drastic decrease in the demand for Coromandel textiles

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<sup>73</sup> Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company*, 157.

<sup>74</sup> Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger*, 151.

<sup>75</sup> Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger*, 151.

compelled the VOC to foster partnerships with the local traders in the production and sale of indigenous woven cloth across the markets in Southeast Asia. This led to a rise in the demand for locally produced textiles most notably, the Javanese textiles.

Concomitant with the rise in demand for Javanese cotton fabrics, the special Javanese variety produced by the Javanese cotton industry known as the 'batik' was much sought after by the regional consumers. The north coast of Java also known as Pasisir, was renowned particularly for exports of batik besides plain varieties of cloth. The Melaka Straits, Sumatra and Kalimantan had all imported Javanese textiles. Places such as Jambi and Palembang also made a cut on the procurement of Indian textiles in lieu of locally woven cloth and textiles produced in Java, Siam and Cambodia. Other important centers of textile production were Madura and Tuban that had enjoyed a good reputation since the early decades of the sixteenth century. However, the Javanese textile industry could not keep pace with the sudden surge in demand for its textiles because of limited quantity of supply of raw cotton. Therefore, there was a need for import of raw cotton. The Javanese textile industry relied on imports of raw cotton from Sumatra. In Sumatra, around the same time, the indigenous pepper producers were severely affected by falling prices of pepper. Thus, some of the Sumatran pepper producers shifted their focus to cultivation of cotton. Also, some of the plain and undecorated Indian textiles imported into Sumatra were either dyed or painted because weaving was generally more expensive.

Indian textiles imported into the Indonesian Archipelago had an appreciable degree of influence on some of the local textile traditions. The Indonesian resist-dyed batik was one of the textile varieties that was heavily influenced by imports of Indian textiles, particularly the

*patola* textiles of India.<sup>76</sup> Indonesian imports of the resist-dyed textiles from the Indian subcontinent from the thirteenth century or earlier and the subsequent adoption of some of the original techniques continues to influence contemporary Indonesian textile traditions.<sup>77</sup> The geometric and figurative patterns of the *patolu* silk fabric of Gujarat and the painted cotton varieties of Coromandel (*chintz*) were assimilated into the Indonesian textile traditions.<sup>78</sup> The batik was created by allowing a coat of wax to cover a part of the cloth and then dipping it in dye baths. The intricate designs obtained were a result of the contrast between the undyed and dyed areas on the fabric.<sup>79</sup>

The VOC's monopoly of cloth imports into Makassar forced the Makassarese to take recourse to local production of cloth and finding new places to procure Indian textiles. Makassar was renowned for the quality of cotton it produced. The coarse and striped varieties were the most common. The striped variety was worn usually as trousers and the checked cotton variety was worn as *sarongs*.<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, against the backdrop of repressive Dutch policies in Makassar and the suppression of free trade, particularly in Indian textiles, the Buginese and Makassarese traders shifted their attention to Johore because the English, Danes, Portuguese, Armenians had all brought Indian cloth to Johore. The textiles that they had obtained here were much cheaper than the Indian textiles sold by the VOC at Fort Rotterdam in Makassar. Nevertheless, during the eighteenth century the Buginese and Wajorese traders would prove to be a constant threat to the VOC's observance of monopoly in trade in Indian textiles. The

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<sup>76</sup> Kenneth Hall, "Textiles Reorientations: The Manufacture and Trade of Cottons in Java c. 1600-1850," 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 (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 184.

<sup>77</sup> Fiona Kerlogue, *The Book of Batik* (Singapore: Archipelago Press, 2004), 18.

<sup>78</sup> Ruth Barnes, *The Ikat Textiles of Lamalera: A Study of An Eastern Indonesian Weaving Tradition* (Brill: Leiden, 1989), 19-21.

<sup>79</sup> Hall, "Textiles Reorientations." 184.

<sup>80</sup> Laarhoven, *The Power of Cloth*, 382.

VOC's response to the indigenous production of textiles and private imports of cloth into Makassar during the eighteenth century coupled with a conscientious decision to import only specific categories of Indian textiles into Makassar will form the core of the third chapter. This will be predicated to a large extent on the wealth of quantitative data that can be gleaned from the VOC's bookkeeping records.

## **The Dutch East India Company's Bookkeeping of the intra-Asian Textile Trade**

### *The Dutch East India Company's Bookkeeping System*

The Dutch East India Company's bookkeeping system was informed by its federal structure in the Republic and its centralized character in Asia. The VOC was in essence, a multilateral trading organization with a "sales office" in Europe.<sup>81</sup> The six chambers in the Republic operated individually with a visible degree of autonomy. Due to the absence of a centralized system of bookkeeping, each chamber practiced its own form of bookkeeping and stood in a current account relationship with each other. The locus of centralization of the VOC's business was Batavia. Every regional establishment in Asia was subordinate to Batavia and every factory was a "little Batavia".<sup>82</sup> Communications between every regional establishment and Batavia were more frequent when compared to direct communications between a regional establishment and Patria.

The High Government in Batavia was headed by the Governor-General and assisted by the Council of the Indies. Next in rank was the Director-General who was accorded with the overall responsibility of overseeing the commercial and logistical operations concerning trade, shipping and the management of warehouses. The office of the Director-General was composed of a small cadre of merchants and bookkeepers. Accountable to the him was the Bookkeeper-General (*De Boekhouder-Generaal te Batavia*) who was bestowed with a multiplicity of tasks pertaining to all matters related to the institution of bookkeeping. A comprehensive annual

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<sup>81</sup> Jan De Vries and AD Van Der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, failure, and perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 392.

<sup>82</sup> Furber, *Rival Empires*: 191.

statement of the financial results of the VOC was compiled in the office of the Bookkeeper-General.

The office of the Bookkeeper-General in Batavia was in charge of compiling the highest level of the Company's financial accounts- the general accounts (*generale journalen*) and the general ledgers (*generale grootboeken*). The general accounts were predicated on the trade books (*negotie boeken*) of the respective factories in Asia.<sup>83</sup> Both the general accounts and general ledgers, had to be closed every year. One copy was preserved in Batavia, while two copies- one for the Amsterdam Chamber and one for the Zeeland Chamber, were shipped annually with the '*naschepen*' from Batavia to the Republic.<sup>84</sup> While the highest level of Company's financial accounts were maintained at Batavia, Batavia itself kept its own set of trade books. Batavia's trade books included the trade journal (*Batavia's negotie journaal*) and the trade ledger (*Batavia's negotie grootboek*).

The dyadic relationship between Batavia and Patria was one in which Batavia had to give an account to Patria of the expenses incurred on the principal amount. These expenses (*reele effecten*) towards ships, fortifications, gifts, maintenance or consumption costs had all fallen under the debit side while on the credit side, Batavia had to give an account of its general income from taxes (*generale inkomsten*), general profits (*generale winsten*), profits registered on the sales of commodities and the financial transactions between the various factories.<sup>85</sup> In the general accounts (*generale journalen*), besides stating the profits derived from trade, the Bookkeeper-General had to give an account of rough profit margins (*ruwe winsten*). The *ruwe*

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<sup>83</sup> See, Els M. Jacobs, *Merchant in Asia: The Trade of the Dutch East India Company during the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: CNWS, 2006), 295.

<sup>84</sup> The return fleet (*retourvloot*) departed from Batavia usually in the months October/November and January/February. Due to the loading of the cargoes procured from some of the other Asian establishments, some ships departed only in April/May. These ships were hence, called '*naschepen*'.

<sup>85</sup> Niels Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century: The East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade* (University of Chicago: Chicago, 1973): 38.

*winsten* were indicative of the gross profit margins registered on the merchandises and provisions shipped from both, the Republic and all the factories in Asia.<sup>86</sup> The figures in the *ruwe winsten* concerning every regional establishment were based on the VOC's annual statement of returns (*generaal rendement*) produced at the concerned regional establishment.<sup>87</sup>

These general accounts and general ledgers were sent with the '*naschepen*' from Batavia to the Amsterdam and Zeeland Chambers because in principle, that was where the Gentlemen Seventeen forgathered.<sup>88</sup> Wherever necessary the Gentlemen Seventeen were provided with additional explanation by the Bookkeeper-General. These annual balance sheets provided the Gentlemen Seventeen with a clear financial picture of the Asian business including the profitability of individual factories, and the same in relation to Batavia.

The office of the Bookkeeper-General was in charge of recording the arrival and departure of ships that came to anchor in Batavia. With regard to this, the genre of document that provides us with ample amount of information is Batavia's trade journal (*Batavias negotie journaal*).<sup>89</sup> Batavia's trade journal contains information about the name of the ship that had arrived in Batavia, the nature and volume of cargo carried on each ship, the values associated with the consignments and finally the destination, i.e., whether the ship sailed back to the Republic as part of the '*retourvloot*' or remained in Asia for the intra-Asian trade.<sup>90</sup> The data accounted for in Batavia's trade journal was then updated into the general account.

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<sup>86</sup> Het Nationaal Archief (hereafter, NA), 1.04.18.02 (hereafter, BGB): 10753, 1702/1703, pp. 429.

<sup>87</sup> To elaborate, the Bookkeeper-General drafted the *ruwe winsten* on the basis of the figures in the annual statement of returns produced at the VOC's Makassar factory.

<sup>88</sup> Judith E. Schoonveld and Gerrit Knaap, "Een man van 'grote omneslag' maar 'beperkt statuur': De Boekhouder-generaal van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Batavia, 1611-1802", *Tijdschrift voor Zeegeschiedenis* 37 (2018): 12.

<sup>89</sup> This observation is based on NA: BGB: 11844, 1779-1780.

<sup>90</sup> NA: BGB: 11832, 11833, 11844, 11835, 11836, 11837, 11839, 11840, 11841, 11842, 11843, 11844, 11845, 11846, 11847, 11848, 11849, 11850.



The general account gives a comprehensive financial account of the VOC's business in Asia. The various operations of the VOC are mentioned in a systematic order and include the invoice of ships leaving for the Republic and arriving at Batavia and the movement of ships between the Asian factories. The recording of the movement of ships to and from the Republic was done first, followed by mentioning the ships arriving at Batavia from the various Asian establishments of the VOC under the heading, '*Batavias belasting*' and finally the ships departing Batavia for the Asian establishments under the heading '*Batavias ontlasting*'. Besides stating the total cargo value of each ship, the general account also provides information about the quantity and value of each commodity shipped on board from one place to the other.<sup>91</sup>

The Bookkeeper-General had to also administer the cargoes that had been received from the Republic and the return goods (*retourgoederen*) that had been sent back to the Republic. The Bookkeeper-General had to prepare a list of goods received from the Republic and the goods sent from Batavia to the Republic. This was done largely through a meticulous examination of the invoices of the ships (*factura's*) arriving at and departing from Batavia. The notes on the orders (*bevindingen op de eisen*) were constituted in the office of the Bookkeeper-General.<sup>92</sup> From the last quarter of the seventeenth century, these notes along with the original orders were sent to the Republic. Should the volume of the goods received at Batavia not meet the original orders sent to the Republic, then the Gentlemen Seventeen could figure out where they had been lax.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> The general account therefore, is crucial to the study of the intra-Asian trade because it holds vital data concerning imports and exports.

<sup>92</sup> See, T. L. Balk, van Dijk and D. J. Kortlang, *The Archives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and the Local Institutions in Batavia* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

<sup>93</sup> This is based on notes compiled by the record keeper and addressed to the Gentlemen Seventeen in Het Nationaal Archief (Hereafter, NA), 1.04.02 (Hereafter, VOC): 2364, 'Bevindingen van de lading der Schepen,' 1737, pp. 1988.

The VOC's central administration in Batavia was the focal point of coordination of all the reports and correspondences from the Asian factories for the sake of drafting the annual demand or order-list (*eis*).<sup>94</sup> This was one of the searing challenges that the VOC had to negotiate throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There were primarily three important kinds of *eisen* that were deemed standardized across the various regional establishments and the Asian headquarters, Batavia, i.e., order for supplies (*eis der behoeften*) drafted by the High Government in Asia to procure goods from the Republic to be sent to Asia, order for ready money (*eis der contanten*) a requirement of Batavia on behalf of the Asian operations and finally the order for return goods (*eis van retouren*) drafted by the Gentlemen Seventeen that were intended for sales in the Republic.

Requirement or order-lists (*eisen*) were prepared at three different places- in the Republic, in Batavia and in all of the other regional establishments in Asia. The copy requirements from the Gentlemen Seventeen in the Republic were addressed to the Governor-General and Council and sent to Batavia and these can be consulted for the years 1702-1792.<sup>95</sup> The copy requirements from the Governor-General and Council concerning goods to be sent to Asia from the Republic were addressed to the Gentlemen Seventeen.<sup>96</sup> The requirements of the factories were forwarded to the Governor-General and Council in Batavia and the VOC's archival inventory contains sixty-three volumes pertaining to the years between 1669-1790.<sup>97</sup> Finally, the copy requirements from the Governor-General and Council to the factories are available for the years 1719-1771.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> See, Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient: 1600-1800* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976): 191.

<sup>95</sup> See, NA: VOC: 13398-13471.

<sup>96</sup> See, NA: VOC: 13472-13508.

<sup>97</sup> See, NA: VOC: 13509-13571.

<sup>98</sup> See, NA: VOC: 13575-13620.

The changes in the VOC's intra-Asian trading operations influenced the commercial policy of the Gentlemen Seventeen in the Republic. The profitability of the intra-Asian trade of the VOC determined the order for ready money.<sup>99</sup> The more profitable the intra-Asian trade, the less demand for ready money Batavia had upon Patria.<sup>100</sup> Since more than goods, currency was needed to fund the trade in Asia, the 'cash', i.e., silver and gold formed the valuable part of the cargo.<sup>101</sup> Therefore, the requirements or orders (*eisen*), that were central to the VOC's business in Asia and drafted in Batavia, were sent to the Gentlemen Seventeen who then decided how much cash they wanted to advance. While it is impossible to examine the amount of cash that was sent on each ship, the data in Asia are available. What is noteworthy about the data in Asia is that they are complete and more detailed than those from the books of the chambers in the Republic. One possible explanation of this has been put forward by Gaastra. Gaastra argues that the objective of the Gentlemen Seventeen to meticulously survey overseas affairs must have certainly played a role in this.<sup>102</sup> The general account that is now in a bad state, should have allowed the Gentlemen Seventeen to have ascertained what the ships that had arrived in Batavia had delivered.<sup>103</sup>

The requirements or order-lists, drafted by the Gentlemen Seventeen for the return goods to be sent from Batavia, were predicated on Patria's annual statement of returns (*rendementen*) at end of an auction in the Republic.<sup>104</sup> These *rendementen* illustrated the gross

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<sup>99</sup> J.J. Steur, *Herstel of Ondergang: De voorstellen tot redress van de V.O.C 1740-1795* (Utrecht: H&S, 1984):27.

<sup>100</sup> Steur, *Herstel of Ondergang*: 27.

<sup>101</sup> F. Gaastra, "Geld tegen goederen: een structurele verandering in het Nederlands-Aziatisch handelsverkeer", *Bijdragen en medelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 91 (1976): 252.

<sup>102</sup> Gaastra, "Geld tegen goederen", 252.

<sup>103</sup> Gaastra, "Geld tegen goederen", 252

<sup>104</sup> Kristof Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade: 1620-1740* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1958): 258.

profit margin registered on each commodity.<sup>105</sup> These *rendement* lists were forwarded along with the *eisen* to Batavia to help the authorities in Batavia process the composition of the return goods.<sup>106</sup> Thus, when viewed from the vantage point of *eisen* from Patria, i.e., the Gentlemen Seventeen's requirements upon Batavia and the regional factories in Asia, the logic that dictated the commercial policy of the Gentlemen Seventeen becomes evidently clear. The requirements of the Gentlemen Seventeen remained contingent on the outcome of public auctions held at the respective chambers in the Republic, and on whether the Gentlemen Seventeen were content with the outcome of the sales.<sup>107</sup> Thus, when placing a new order (*eis*) upon textiles from Coromandel, the Gentlemen Seventeen write:

De verkoping in de respectieve kameren laatst bij deselve en bij die van de kamer van Enkhuijsen op een deselve maand affgelopens zijnde heeft ons veel genoeg gegeven, waar van de Compagnie en kooplieden, beide voldaan zijn<sup>108</sup>

In his famous study of the VOC's trade between the Dutch Republic and Asia, Kristoff Glamann argues that the *rendementen* drawn at the end of each auction formed the basis of the Gentlemen Seventeen's *eisen* upon Batavia and the regional Asian factory. Glamann regarded the *rendementen* to have been the "Alpha and Omega of the Company's trade".<sup>109</sup> The implication was that only a tentative or 'provisional' *eis* was drafted when the Gentlemen Seventeen

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<sup>105</sup> Gross Profit is the difference between the purchase price and selling price of a specific commodity.

<sup>106</sup> Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade*: 258.

<sup>107</sup> NA: VOC: 3513, *Formeele Beantwoorde Patriase eis*, 1736.

<sup>108</sup> NA: VOC: 3513, *Formeele Beantwoorde Patriase eis*, 1736.

<sup>109</sup> Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade*, 258.

forgathered. The original or final *eis* was drawn by the committee that attended the auctions, sometimes in consultation with the members of the Amsterdam chamber.<sup>110</sup>

The *rendementen* gave an account of the purchase price (*inkoop*), selling price (*verkoop*) and the gross profits (*winst*) registered on all the different goods that the company had traded in. These *rendementen* were drafted at all the regional factories in Asia. The *rendementen* were indispensable to the Gentlemen Seventeen because they offered vital information about the profitability of the goods sold in Asia on the basis of which new orders were drafted. The *rendementen* arrived in the Republic annually as part of the *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren* (OBP) series of documents.

The graph below illustrates the bookkeeping system of the VOC. The graph is included to help comprehend the various bookkeeping records maintained at every organizational layer of the VOC and shows how the orders (*eisen*) flowed from one organizational layer to the other. Furthermore, all three organizational levels of the Company, i.e., Republic (Patria), Batavia and the regional Asian establishment drafted the annual statement of returns (*rendement*).<sup>111</sup> The VOC's system of bookkeeping, therefore, remained consistent across all three organizational levels. More significantly, as illustrated in the graph (see figure 1, page. 47), the office of the Bookkeeper-General in Batavia was the pivot in the extensive financial information network of the VOC in Asia. The main task of the office of the Bookkeeper-General was to gather all the scattered financial and commercial documents and compose them in a standardized form.<sup>112</sup> What becomes manifest from the multiplicities of tasks at the office of the bookkeeper-general

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<sup>110</sup> Femme, Gaastra, *Bewind en Beleid Bij De VOC 1672-1702* (Zutphen, De Walburg Pers, 1989), 50.

<sup>111</sup> As mentioned earlier, the office of the Bookkeeper-General in Batavia referred to the *rendement* as *ruwe winsten*. In the *ruwe winsten*, the figures concerning gross profit margins registered on a commodity sold by the Company in every Asian establishment were derived from the *rendement* produced at the regional Asian establishment in concern.

<sup>112</sup> Schoonveld and Knaap, "Een man van 'grote ommeslag', 12.

in Batavia is a logical organizational framework built on standardized and aggregated accounting with the definitive purpose of exercising financial control.<sup>113</sup> The figures produced by the Bookkeeper-General, therefore, were numerical expressions of all the questions the Gentlemen Seventeen had sought answers for.

Against the backdrop of the VOC's system of bookkeeping, the following section engages the methodological framework chosen for this study. Having underlined the various bookkeeping records maintained at the three organizational levels of the Company, the next section discusses the nature of the bookkeeping records in so far as the study of the intra-Asian textile trade between Coromandel and Makassar during the eighteenth century is concerned. Therefore, the following section aims to give an account of how and from where the relevant trade figures presented in this thesis are derived, gathered and processed.

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<sup>113</sup> Schoonveld and Knaap, "Een man van 'grote ommeslag', 12.

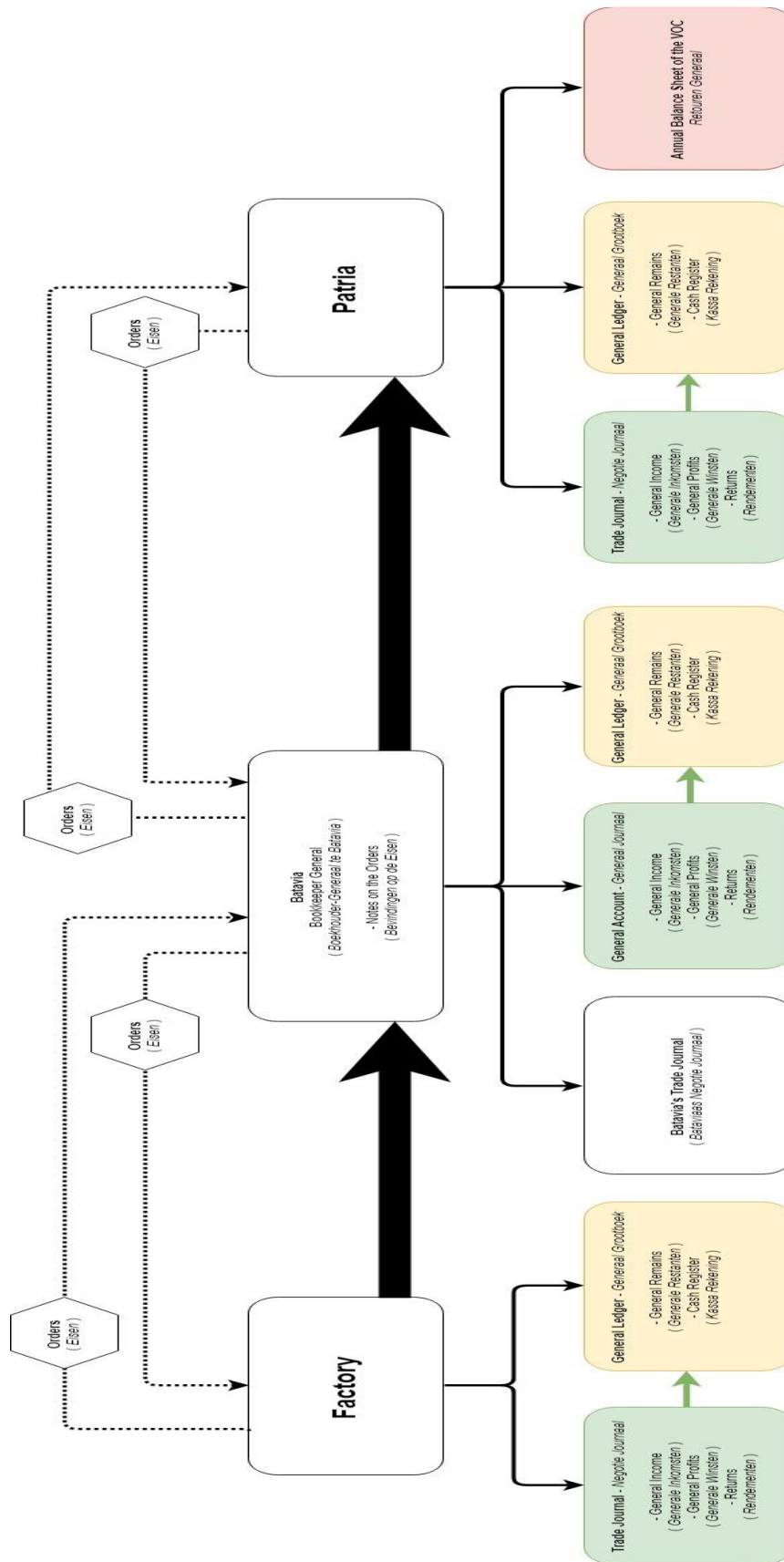


Figure 1: Graph illustrating the VOC's Bookkeeping System based upon the bookkeeping records kept at the Factory, Batavia and Patria

*The Dutch East India Company's bookkeeping of textiles: Methodology and Challenges*

Since this thesis is about the VOC's intra-Asian textile trade between Coromandel and Makassar during the eighteenth century, it is crucial to understand the volume of trade between the two VOC establishments. The intra-Asian trade was conducted via Batavia. Therefore, the archival records kept at the office of the Bookkeeper-General in Batavia are central to gathering information about the volume of movement of textiles from Coromandel to Makassar via Batavia. The general account produced by the Bookkeeper-General gives us the necessary quantitative data concerning the shipping movement between Coromandel and Batavia and Batavia and Makassar and the exports of textiles from Coromandel to Makassar via Batavia. Since a full sweep of the eighteenth century by providing quantitative data for all the years is impossible and beyond the scope of this thesis, a logical and feasible methodological approach is deemed necessary.

Therefore, to gather data concerning exports of Coromandel textiles to Batavia and imports of Coromandel textiles into Makassar during the eighteenth century, this thesis takes into consideration Els Jacob's methodological approach that stresses on the selection of a logical and feasible combination of years in the general accounts kept at the office of the Bookkeeper-General in Batavia. Thus, the accounting years 1700-1702, 1710-1712, 1721-1722, 1730-1732, 1740-1742, 1750-1752, 1760-1762, 1771-1772, 1780-1782 and 1789-1790 are chosen for this study. The resulting figures gathered and presented are *biennial averages* of the volume and value of Coromandel textiles shipped from Coromandel to Batavia and from Batavia to Makassar. Although a very detailed analysis of exports and imports covering the entire time span of the eighteenth century is beyond of the scope of this thesis, the aforementioned selection of years, representative of biennial averages of the first two book years of every decade during the eighteenth century, does manage to offer a comprehensive



picture of the textile trade between Coromandel and Makassar. The *biennial averages* apply to all the chosen pairs of book years except for the pairs of book years 1721-1722 and 1789-1790 because of a number of missing book years in the general account series. The *biennial averages* have been chosen to avoid distortions and provide a more accurate export and import figures. The figures obtained and presented reveal only the volume and value of Coromandel textiles and do not take into consideration costs associated with packaging and repackaging, toll duties levied on the vessels, or any other charges or fees.

The figures obtained from the chosen pairs of book years give an account of the volume and value of exports of Coromandel textiles to Batavia and exports of Coromandel textiles to Makassar. Since the VOC also shipped Bengal and Gujarat textiles from Batavia to Makassar, sufficient care has been taken in segregating Coromandel textiles from textiles procured from Bengal and Gujarat. In the general accounts, the Bookkeeper-General differentiated the various varieties of textiles from the three textile producing regions in the Indian subcontinent-Coromandel, Bengal and Gujarat by classifying individual textile varieties into '*Kust*', *Bengals* and *Surat's* respectively.

The data concerning the VOC's shipping movement between Coromandel and Batavia and Batavia and Makassar during the eighteenth century is important to understand the volume of trade that was carried out by the VOC during the eighteenth century. As mentioned in the preceding section, the general account recorded the shipping movement between Batavia and the Company's regional Asian establishments. By analyzing the data in the general account from the chosen pairs of book years, an account is given of the number of ships that sailed between Coromandel and Batavia and between Batavia and Makassar during the eighteenth century.

After gathering and processing the data, the figures were re-examined by referring to the online database of the Bookkeeper-General in Batavia. The data available on this online

database is predicated on the quantitative data obtained from the general account series. Information concerning shipping movement including the date of departure, the departure and arrival region and the composition of the cargo, the total volume and value, were all be obtained after consulting this database. The values of the cargo are mentioned clearly in either Indian light guilders, Indian heavy guilders or Dutch guilders. The preponderant currency that was adhered to, in the books compiled by the Bookkeeper-General during the period 1700-1743, was the Indian guilder.<sup>114</sup> The orders issued by the Gentlemen Seventeen to the bookkeeper-general to use Dutch guilders appear not have been followed.<sup>115</sup> This meant that values in Indian guilders continued to be entered in the books during the period 1743-1768. However, in 1768, with the reissuance of orders by the Gentlemen Seventeen, Dutch guilders began to be used in the books kept at the office of the Bookkeeper-General in Batavia.<sup>116</sup> The financial results of trade in this thesis will be presented in both Indian light guilder and Dutch heavy guilder. The mathematical conversions of the currencies from the Indian light and heavy guilders to Dutch heavy guilder are predicated on the exchange rate- 83.65 Dutch guilders = 125 Indian light guilders = 100 Indian heavy guilders.<sup>117</sup>

In the general account, the volume of the cargos of Indian textiles is stated in terms of number of pieces of a particular variety of textiles. In the Netherlands during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the VOC traded in textiles by using the *ell* as the unit of measurement

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<sup>114</sup> For an elaborate discussion on the dichotomy between the Dutch heavy money (*zwaar geld*) and Indian light money (*licht geld*), see Els M. Jacobs, *Merchant in Asia: The Trade of the Dutch East India Company during the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: CNWS, 2006),

<sup>115</sup> See, <http://bgb.huygens.knaw.nl/>.

<sup>116</sup> See, <http://bgb.huygens.knaw.nl/>.

<sup>117</sup> See J. P. de Korte, *De Jaarlijkse Financiële Verantwoording in de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (Leiden: Nijhoff, 1984).

of quantity.<sup>118</sup> However, in Asia the VOC traded in Indian cloth largely in terms of number of pieces. The VOC's unit of measurement of quantity of textiles in the textile trade adhered to number of pieces. This was because the VOC adopted the Indian tradition of trading in large quantities of textiles in pieces and not bales. In India, the quantities of textiles traded were also measured in *corge*. One *corge* typically consisted of twenty pieces of cloth. The VOC at times also measured the quantity of textiles in a *corge*. For example, in the year 1701/1702, the ship called *Eikelenburg*, that departed from Nagapattinam for Batavia, carried among large quantities of Coromandel textiles measured in pieces, 12 *corge* of *tapis sits* and 15 *corge* of *tapis telpocan klein*. In this thesis, the volume of textiles is given in terms of number of pieces and attention is paid to converting *corge* to number of pieces by multiplying by twenty pieces.

Since the ledger states the final position of the Company's commercial transactions in Asia, it is possible to gather the total export volume and value of a particular commodity that the Company traded in. Therefore, Batavia's trade ledger classified Indian textiles on the basis of the three textile production areas in India. For example, in Batavia's trade ledger from the book year 1715/1716, the final position of the variety of Coromandel textiles called the ordinary bleached Salempuris (*Salempuris gemeen gebleekt*) was classified into *kust*, a term that referred to a textile variety from Coromandel.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, since the VOC traded in a wide range of varieties of textiles, it is also possible to trace the shipment of a particular variety of textiles from one place to the other. For example, it is possible to trace the shipment of textiles from either Coromandel, Bengal or Gujarat to Batavia and the end destination. The end destination was usually one or more of the Company's Asian establishments or one or more of the chambers in the Republic. The volume and value of the traded commodity are also stated. The debit side

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<sup>118</sup> An *ell* was a standard unit to measure the length of a cloth. One *ell* was approximately 45 inches in length.

<sup>119</sup> NA: BGB: 10814.

was revealed on the left page and the credit side on the right page. The entries were made in a chronological order from the start of a book year in September and ended at the end of the book year in August. The details of the names of the ships that carried a specific variety of textiles are mentioned on the debit side. On the credit side, the establishments that imported a specific variety of textiles in concern are mentioned. The unit of measurement of quantity and value are number of pieces and guilders respectively. For example, in the accounting year 1715/1716, Makassar imported 1200 pieces of ordinary salempores from Coromandel worth 5339.48 guilders.<sup>120</sup> Similarly, the final position of every commodity that the VOC had traded in can be ascertained.<sup>121</sup>

Since the plain and undecorated guinee cloth was the widely traded variety of Coromandel textiles by the VOC in Makassar, Batavia's trade ledger has been consulted in this thesis to give an account of its annual financial position. Since the ledger represents the final position of the Company's financial activities, it is possible to ascertain the total volume and value of a specific commodity shipped to the Company's establishments in Asia and chambers in the Republic. This exercise will aid us in understanding what percentage of a specific variety of Coromandel textiles were shipped from Coromandel to Makassar by the VOC and what was Makassar's annual share of imports of ordinary coarse and bleached guinees in relation to the total annual exports of the same variety. However, Batavia's trade ledger remains far from complete. Biennial averages of the imports of ordinary coarse and bleached guinees into Makassar for two years from every decade are impossible to calculate. Thus, only one year

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<sup>120</sup> NA: BGB: 10814.

<sup>121</sup> Ruurdje Laarhoven's study about the Dutch East India Company's textile trade was predicated to a large extent on Batavia's trade ledger. She consulted the ledger to explore her case study on Ambon in which she traced the shipment of Indian textiles from the production areas in the Indian subcontinent to the end destination (Ambon).

from every decade can be taken into consideration. The book years, 1704-1705, 1715-1716, 1730-1731, 1740-1741, 1750-1751, 1764-1765 and 1773-1774 are chosen for this exercise.

### *The Profitability of Coromandel Textiles in Makassar*

This thesis relies on the annual statement of returns (*rendement*) drawn at the VOC's Makassar establishment to give an account of the profitability of Coromandel textiles in Makassar. However, the *Generale Rendement* is available only for latter decades of the second half of the eighteenth century from the book year 1766/1767 with a few missing years. From the book year 1769/1770 the *Generale Rendement* remains complete until the year 1791/1792. In this thesis, the quantitative data concerning the purchase price, selling price, the sales profits (the difference between the selling price and purchase price) and the profit percentage registered on Coromandel textiles in Makassar are provided for all years between 1766/1767 and 1791/1792 barring two missing years namely, 1767/1768 and 1768/1769. The question of how profitable were Coromandel textiles in Makassar will allow us to comprehend better the dynamics of the textile trade between Coromandel and Makassar in the late eighteenth century.

In the absence of *Generaal Rendement* for the first half of the eighteenth century, quantitative data concerning the sales profits made by the VOC on Coromandel textiles in Makassar are derived from the annual statement of rough returns or *ruwe winsten* in the general account.<sup>122</sup> The data in the *ruwe winsten* mentioned in the general accounts of the first few decades of the eighteenth century are mostly complete.<sup>123</sup> Data pertaining to the purchase price, selling price, the sales profits and the profit percentage registered on all the commodities sold by the VOC in Makassar are available. However, the *ruwe winsten* summarized in the general

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<sup>122</sup> See the previous section about the significance of *ruwe winsten*.

<sup>123</sup> NA: BGB: 10753.

accounts of the first half of the eighteenth century mention only the sales profits on the quantities of a specific commodity sold.<sup>124</sup> Thus, although we can only determine the quantity of Coromandel textiles exported to Makassar through the cargoes of ships from Batavia to Makassar (which are part of the general account of the Bookkeeper-General), we can grasp the profitability of Coromandel textiles on the basis of the *ruwe winsten* of the first half of the eighteenth century and *generaal rendement* produced at the end of an auction in Makassar in the late eighteenth century.

The annual statement of returns (*Generaal Rendement*) drawn in the late eighteenth century is quite detailed when compared to the annual statement of returns (*ruwe winsten*) of the early and mid-eighteenth century. The sales profits documented in the late eighteenth century provide information about the origin of a particular textile variety, i.e., the name of the factory from which the same variety was shipped to Makassar. Thus, the names of factories in Coromandel such as Nagapattinam, Bimlipatnam, Sadraspatnam, Porto Novo and Jaganathapuram were mentioned in these statements of returns. The section on the profitability of Coromandel textiles in Makassar in the next chapter engages the profits registered on textile varieties procured from some of these factories. The methodological approach adhered to in this thesis to calculate the annual average sales profits of Coromandel textiles by the VOC in Makassar is the calculation of biennial averages of the first two years of every decade until the pair of book years 1770-1772. Therefore, the combination of book years 1700-1702, 1710-1712, 1721-1723, 1730-1732, 1740-1742, 1750-1752, 1760-1762 and 1770-1772 are chosen to calculate the biennial averages of annual sales profits of Coromandel textiles in Makassar during the eighteenth century.

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<sup>124</sup> NA: BGB: 10788.

The data concerning the profitability of Bengal and Gujarat textiles are also available in both *ruwe winsten* and *Generale Rendement* because the VOC also traded in these textiles in Makassar. To distinguish the different textile varieties, the VOC adopted the terms *Coromandelse*, *Bengalse* and *Zouratse lijwaten* to refer to textiles procured from the three production areas- Coromandel, Bengal and Gujarat respectively. Although the share of Coromandel textiles in the imports of Indian textiles into Makassar was much bigger when compared to imports of textiles from Bengal and Gujarat, some of the varieties of textiles procured from these regions were nevertheless profitable in Makassar.<sup>125</sup> Therefore, the sales profits registered on both Bengal and Gujarat textiles are also provided for the late eighteenth century. A table is drawn to give a comparative account of the total sales profits registered by the VOC on Coromandel, Bengal and Gujarat textiles in Makassar. A detailed *rendement*, illustrating the profit margins registered on all the different varieties of textiles exported from the three regions is usually followed by a brief summary, i.e., *korte samentrekking*. Suffice it to say that a mere glimpse of this summary would have illustrated the profitability of Indian textiles to the Gentlemen Seventeen.

Against the backdrop of the VOC's system of bookkeeping and the methodological framework appropriated, the next chapter discusses the observations and results of the study of the VOC's textile trade between Coromandel and Makassar during the eighteenth century. The results presented include the shipping movement between Coromandel and Batavia and Batavia and Makassar, the volume and value of the VOC's exports of Coromandel textiles to Makassar, the VOC's average annual sales profits registered on the distribution of Coromandel textiles in

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<sup>125</sup> To a large extent, Coromandel textiles were meant to serve the VOC's intra-Asian trade whereas textiles from Bengal were shipped primarily as part of the return goods (*retourgoederen*) to the Republic.

Makassar during the eighteenth century and the dynamics of demand for Coromandel textiles in Makassar.



## **The Distribution of Coromandel Textiles by the VOC in Makassar during the Eighteenth Century**

The first part of this chapter is about the demand for Coromandel textiles in Makassar during the eighteenth century. The demand is negotiated through the order-lists sent from Makassar to Batavia for the various varieties of Coromandel textiles, and these order-lists also allow us to comprehend from which factory on the Coromandel coast did the VOC's Makassar government procure textiles. The second part of this chapter is about the VOC's exports of textiles from Coromandel to Batavia and from Batavia to Makassar during the eighteenth century on the basis of the biennial averages of the combination of years chosen. This section also discusses the VOC's shipping movement between Coromandel and Batavia and Batavia and Makassar during the eighteenth century. The major trends in the rise and decline of the Coromandel-Makassar textile trade are discussed to view the development of the textile trade during the course of the eighteenth century. The last section of the chapter discusses the sales profits of Coromandel textiles in Makassar during the eighteenth century. This section also engages the sales profits of the VOC in the late 70's and 80's on Indian textiles procured from all three textile producing regions in the Indian subcontinent, Coromandel, Bengal and Gujarat.

### *Orders Placed by the VOC's Makassar Factory for Coromandel Textiles*

The Dutch East India Company's Makassar factory was strategic primarily to its overall commercial operations in Southeast Asia. This was also compounded by the fact that Makassar had few commodities that were desirable for exports to the various markets in Asia. The

Makassar factory was of little economic significance and except the revenue generated from collecting taxes, the VOC almost always incurred financial losses on the maintenance of this factory.<sup>126</sup> Therefore, the VOC was reliant predominantly on importing Indian textiles, particularly Coromandel textiles, into Makassar because textiles from the Indian subcontinent had a considerable demand.

The Makassar factory's demand for textiles from the Indian subcontinent can be perused through the prism of the annual order-lists drafted by the Makassarese government. The Company's order-lists were sent annually to Batavia. The Batavian government processed the order-lists for all goods and commodities. The orders for goods were classified primarily into two categories. They included the goods that had to be sent from the Republic and the goods that to be acquired from Asia. The orders for Indian textiles were slotted into the category of goods to be procured from Asia. Furthermore, the orders for Indian textiles were classified into textiles to be procured from the three renowned textile producing regions in the Indian subcontinent- Coromandel (*Coromandelse lijwaten*), Gujarat (*Zouratse lijwaten*) and Bengal (*Bengalse lijwaten*). The unit of measurement of volume of textiles in the order-lists was predominantly 'packet'. A packet is said to have consisted of anywhere between 80 and 240 pieces. In the latter decades of the eighteenth century however, the order-lists did state the number of pieces of specific varieties of textiles that were required. To ensure consistency, this section adopts number of packets as the unit of measurement.

The Makassar factory's orders for Coromandel textiles during the eighteenth century begin to decline gradually from 106 packets in the year 1720 to 48 packets in 1730 (see table

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<sup>126</sup> Gerrit Knaap, "All about Money: Maritime Trade in Makassar and West Java around 1775," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 49 (2006): 485.

3.1). There is a sudden surge in demand for Coromandel textiles around 1735.<sup>127</sup> The mammoth rise in the order for 125 packets of Coromandel textiles in 1735 can be attributed to the improved climatic conditions on the Coromandel coast after a period of famine like conditions. Out of the 106 packets ordered in 1720, nearly half of the composition of orders for Coromandel textiles was defined by orders placed for plain and undecorated guinee cloth.<sup>128</sup> A total of 50 packets of this variety were sought after by the Makassar factory. The Makassar factory's demand for the plain guinee cloth remained consistent in 1730 when it had placed an order for 15 packets out of a total of 48 packets ordered.<sup>129</sup> The orders placed for Coromandel textiles in 1735 continue to be characterized by all of the popular and much sought after coarse varieties of textiles. Out of 125 packets ordered, the orders placed for the coarse and plain varieties included 3 packets of, muris, 4 packets of percallas, 13 packets of salemore and 6 packets of guinee cloth. This trend continued into the year 1740 when out of the total of 110 packets of Coromandel textiles ordered, the coarse varieties of Coromandel textiles formed the bulk of the composition of the orders that included 10 packets of betilles, 4 packets of percallas, 10 packets of salemore and 12 packets of ordinary guinee cloth.<sup>130</sup>

The year 1750 bore witness to massive quantities of Coromandel textiles being ordered by the Makassar factory.<sup>131</sup> Once again the plain and undecorated varieties of Coromandel textiles dominated the composition of orders for Coromandel textiles. The plain and undecorated guinee cloth was the most important variety of Coromandel textiles that enjoyed a great demand in Makassar. The growing demand in Makassar for the ordinary bleached guinee

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<sup>127</sup> NA: VOC: 13525, Requirement of the Makassar Factory to the High Government in Batavia, 1735.

<sup>128</sup> NA: VOC: 13512, Requirement of the Makassar Factory to the High Government in Batavia, 1720.

<sup>129</sup> NA: VOC: 13519, Requirement of the Makassar Factory to the High Government in Batavia, 1730.

<sup>130</sup> NA: VOC: 13530, Requirement of the Makassar Factory to the High Government in Batavia, 1740.

<sup>131</sup> NA: VOC: 13539, Requirement of the Makassar Factory to the High Government in Batavia, 1750.

cloth is manifest explicitly in the order-lists. This continued to dictate the VOC's policy of importing large quantities of guinee cloth into Makassar. In 1750, around 80 packets of ordinary guinee cloth, chiefly from Bimilipatnam, were ordered by the Makassar factory. The orders placed for other ordinary bleached varieties included 20 packets of betilles, 6 packets of muris, 4 packets of percallas and 10 packets of salempore.

Table 3.1: Orders placed for Coromandel Textiles

Year	Number of Pieces	Year	Number of Pieces
1720	106	1755	NA
1725	39	1760	NA
1730	48	1765	48
1735	125	1770	70
1740	52	1775	49
1745	110	1780	36
1750	166	1785	48

*Sources:* NA: VOC: *Copia Aankomende Eisen van alle Indische Comptoiren*, 13512, 13516, 13519, 13525, 13530, 13534, 13539, 13551, 13558, 13563, 13568.

The Company's factories on the Coromandel coast that supplied some of the most important varieties of Coromandel textiles demanded by the Makassar establishment included Nagapattinam, Bimilipatnam and Sadraspatnam. In the order-lists of the Makassar factory for Coromandel textiles, the names of the factories from which they demanded specific varieties of Coromandel textiles were also stated. To elaborate, in the orders placed for Coromandel textiles in 1765, the Makassar factory had stated that they needed around 42 packets of plain guinee cloth from the Company's Bimilipatnam factory, 4 packets of plain and undecorated salempores

from Jagannathapuram, 2 packets of ordinary bleached percallas from Sadraspatnam and the blue and red varieties of salem pores and percallas from Nagapattinam.<sup>132</sup>

In the late eighteenth century, the demand for Coromandel textiles in Makassar showed a downward trend until 1785. From the year 1770 until 1780, a period of progressive decline had ensued in the orders placed for Coromandel textiles. Even in the 70's the Company continued to focus on importing the coarse and plain varieties of Coromandel textiles into Makassar. In 1770, out of a total of 70 packets ordered, the share of ordinary bleached guinee cloth and betilles was 37 and 10 packets respectively.<sup>133</sup> The orders placed in the year 1770 also state the number of pieces. The Makassar factory had asked for 180 pieces of guinee cloth in 37 packets and 400 pieces of betilles in 10 packets. The year 1780 is indicative of the lowest volume of orders placed for Coromandel textiles during the eighteenth century. Out of a total of 36 packets of Coromandel textiles ordered, the share of plain guinee cloth was 30 packets. The Company's authorities in Makassar were aware of the high profit margins registered on this variety. Therefore, when the placing an order for plain and undecorated guinee cloth in 1780, a specific note was added that insisted on the acquisition of 30 packets of guinee cloth of the least price ("*van de minste prijs*").<sup>134</sup> In 1785, the Company's demand for 25 packets of plain guinee cloth out of a total of 48 packets reveals that the share of this variety crossed the 50% mark.

From the point of view of demand, the study of the VOC's Makassar factory's orders placed for Coromandel textiles suggests that the one variety that was much sought after by the Company for sales in Makassar was the ordinary bleached or plain or undecorated guinee cloth.

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<sup>132</sup> NA: VOC: 13551, Requirement of the Makassar Factory to the High Government in Batavia, 1765.

<sup>133</sup> NA: VOC: 13554, Requirement of the Makassar Factory to the High Government in Batavia, 1770.

<sup>134</sup> NA: VOC: 13563, Requirement of the Makassar Factory to the High Government in Batavia, 1780.

This was imported predominantly from the Company's Bimilipatnam factory on the northern Coromandel coast. The VOC's Bimilipatnam factory's significance lay in its considerable share of exports of ordinary bleached guinee cloth to the Asian textile markets. Therefore, there is a need to examine critically Sinnappah Arasaratnam's argument that the main ports of shipment of cloth were located in southern Coromandel.<sup>135</sup> According to Arasaratnam, the chief ports on the southern Coromandel coast included Nagapattinam, Sadraspatnam and Porto Novo. While his argument that the textile trade of the VOC had been centralized in Nagapattinam by the first three decades of the eighteenth century holds true, his notion that the "Northern Comptoires did supplement a little" seems unconvincing in light of the quantitative data provided in this thesis.<sup>136</sup> The Dutch shipping lists during the eighteenth century certainly suggest that more ships departed from the Company's factories on the Southern Coromandel coast including Nagapattinam, Sadraspatnam and Porto Novo. However, the volume and value of cargo of specific varieties of Coromandel textiles are better indicators or crucial determinants of the overall contribution of a particular factory, located in either Northern or Southern Coromandel, to the intra-Asian textile trade or exports to Asian textile markets.

#### *The VOC's Exports of Textiles from Coromandel to Batavia during the Eighteenth Century*

The VOC's exports of textiles from Coromandel to Batavia during the eighteenth century is illustrative of a rise and decline duality (see table 3.2). The exports of Coromandel textiles to Batavia with respect to both volume and value begin to rise gradually during the first three decades of the eighteenth century and start to fall steadily around 1730's and 1740's. During the second half of the eighteenth century except around the decades 1750's and 1760's, the

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<sup>135</sup> Arasaratnam, "The Dutch East India Company and its Coromandel trade," 339-340.

<sup>136</sup> Arasaratnam, "The Dutch East India Company," 339-340.

export values of Coromandel textiles begin to show a gradual downward trend. However, it is clear that the volume of exports of Coromandel textiles decreases steadily from the period 1750-1752 onwards.

The rise and decline duality however, is not applicable to the shipping movement between Coromandel and Batavia. This is because the volume and value of a specific variety of Coromandel textiles was the primary determinant of the rise and decline of exports as opposed to the shipping traffic between the two establishments. Between 1700-1702, a biennial average number of six ships set sail for Batavia from Coromandel.<sup>137</sup> Three ships departed from Nagapattinam, the regional headquarters of the VOC's Coromandel establishment, two from Masulipatnam and one from Pulicat. A total of 259316 pieces of textiles valued at 776143.65 Dutch guilders were shipped from Coromandel to Batavia. The ordinary guinee cloth was the single largest item of textiles exported to Batavia. An average of 5032 pieces of plain guinee cloth was sent to Batavia. This variety was in high demand across all of the VOC's Asian factories and the chambers in the Republic. The volume and value of ordinary guinee cloth was always directly proportional to the total cargo value of a ship. The total cargo value of a ship soared every time this variety was an integral part of the cargo. Thus, although there was an average of thirteen ships that departed from Coromandel between 1750-1752, the total cargo value of the goods shipped to Batavia remained more or less the same when compared to the years 1721-1722 and 1760-1762. During the year 1771-1772, two ships, *Lekkerlust* and *Vredelust* departed Coromandel for Batavia.<sup>138</sup> Out of the total cargo value of 4,22,902 Dutch guilders that *Lekkerlust* transported, the value of plain guinee cloth was 3,05,086. *Vredelust*

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<sup>137</sup> NA: BGB: 10751, 10752.

<sup>138</sup> NA: BGB: 10790.

transported a cargo value of 4,95,954 Dutch guilders and the value of plain guinee cloth was 1,79,165.

The trend in the rise of exports of Coromandel textiles is disrupted after the first three decades of the eighteenth century. The total value of cargoes shipped to Batavia in the book year 1730-1731 was 10,54,861 Indian guilders and dropped to 8,67,072 Indian guilders in the book year 1731-1732.<sup>139</sup> The drastic fall in the exports of textiles from Coromandel around 1730-1732 is attributed to the harvest failures and near famine like situation in southern Coromandel that lasted for a period of five years between 1731 and 1735.<sup>140</sup> There was a tremendous surge in the price of cotton since the price of a cotton thread was tied directly to the increase in the price of rice on which the lives of Coromandel weavers, painters and dyers depended.<sup>141</sup> Such conditions had a direct effect on the production of textiles and VOC's shipments of cloth to Batavia for both, return shipments to the Republic and the Asian markets. The decline in the exports of Coromandel textiles continues into the 1740's until there is a sudden resurgence of the Coromandel textile exports during the next two decades. After 1760-1762, the export figures begin to decline again. The table below (table 3.2) illustrates the distribution pattern of Coromandel textiles in Batavia by the VOC during the eighteenth century.

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<sup>139</sup> NA: BGB: 10767, 10768.

<sup>140</sup> Arasaratnam, "The Dutch East India Company," 340.

<sup>141</sup> Arasaratnam, "The Dutch East India Company," 340.



Table: 3.2 VOC Exports of Coromandel Textiles from Coromandel to Batavia

YEAR	COROMANDEL - BATAVIA		
	Pieces	Value	
		Indian Guilders	Dutch Guilders
1700-1702	259316	1160154.94	776143.65
1710-1712	374379	1694439.57	1133580.07
1721-1722	420917	2429676.07	1625453.29
1730-1732	156536	972268.89	650447.89
1740-1742	64504	540166.4	361371.32
1750-1752	268288	2093937.15	1401262.74
1760-1762	262965	2282825.18	1527666.61
1770-1772	154623	1337549.09	895087.85
1780-1782	67100	611513.43	409224.79
1789-1790	36743	501586.70	335661.82

*Sources:* NA: BGB: 10751, 10752, 10757, 10758, 10762, 10767, 10768, 10772, 10773, 10775, 10766, 10783, 10784, 10790, 10795, 10796, 10800.

Since the VOC's Makassar factory received textiles from Coromandel via Batavia, the volume of exports of Coromandel textiles from Coromandel to Batavia had a direct impact on the VOC's Coromandel textile trade to Makassar. Therefore, figures presented in the tables 3.1 and 3.2 show a more or less similar rise and decline trends in the exports of Coromandel textiles from Coromandel to Batavia and Batavia to Makassar. However, the export trends also reveal inconsistencies. For example, when the volume of exports of Coromandel textiles from Coromandel to Batavia reached an all-time low in 1740-1742, the volume of exports of

Coromandel textiles from Batavia to Makassar in the same period reached an-time high during the eighteenth century (See table 3.4). The inconsistency stemmed primarily from the stockpiling of textiles in the warehouses in Batavia and the sudden release and distribution of textiles by Batavia. The following section shifts the attention to the exports of Coromandel textiles to Makassar via Batavia during the eighteenth century.

*The VOC's Exports of Coromandel Textiles from Batavia to Makassar during the Eighteenth Century*

Unlike the VOC's export figures of textiles from Coromandel to Batavia during the eighteenth century that showed a rise and decline trend in two cycles, the export figures of Coromandel textiles shipped from Batavia to Makassar show a decline, rise and decline trend. The export figures during the first three decades of the eighteenth century illustrate a decline until 1730-1732. While the VOC imported five hundred fewer pieces of Coromandel textiles into Makassar between 1710-1712 when compared to 1700-1702, the value however, increased rather than decreased. There was a difference of nearly four thousand Dutch guilders between the values of the two combinations of book years. This was primarily because large quantities of some of the expensive varieties of Coromandel textiles were imported into Makassar. In the book year 1710-1711, the VOC imported 800 pieces of ordinary guinee cloth valued at 2,549.65 Dutch guilders, 800 pieces of plain salempores worth 2,281.30 Dutch guilders and in the book year 1711-1712, 600 pieces of ordinary bleached betilles priced at 2,476.70 Dutch guilders and 1280 pieces of the red variety of percallas worth 1,633. 62 Dutch guilders.<sup>142</sup> The plain and coarse guinee cloth, salempores and betilles were the most sought after by the VOC's Makassar establishment. These three varieties of Coromandel textiles accounted for nearly 75% of

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<sup>142</sup> NA: BGB: 10757, 10758.

Makassar's Coromandel textile imports. The import trends of Coromandel textiles in Makassar during the eighteenth century reveal that the VOC focused on trading in the plain and undecorated varieties of Coromandel textiles. The VOC's imports of the finer, printed and painted varieties of Coromandel textiles (chintzes) were minimal.

The fine varieties of Indian textiles were offered usually by the VOC as gifts to the local rulers of Makassar. The general accounts of the first two decades of the eighteenth century offer information about the varieties and quantities of textiles that were offered as gifts by the VOC to the indigenous rulers of Makassar. To elaborate, out of the four ships that departed Batavia for Makassar in the book year 1700-1701, the composition of the cargo on the ship *Eenhoorn* was defined only by gifts that were to be given to the indigenous rulers of the kingdoms of Bone and Gowa.<sup>143</sup> Amongst a wide range of gifts, Indian textiles were accorded a special status. Some of the important varieties of Coromandel textiles that were offered included the fine varieties of muris, salem pores and betilles. The finer varieties of textiles from Bengal and Gujarat were also offered as gifts to the rulers of Gowa and Bone. Some of the main varieties of these textiles include *baftas*, *pathols*, *dongris* and *sits* from Gujarat and *malmal* and *cassa* from Bengal. The volume and value of textiles offered by the VOC as gifts from the three regions in the Indian subcontinent was rather small. The general accounts of the latter decades however, do not record this information anymore.

From Batavia's trade ledger, it is clear that the VOC adopted the policy of trading extensively in the plain and undecorated cotton textiles from Coromandel. Batavia's trade ledger reveals the marginalization of the finer, printed and painted varieties of Coromandel cotton textiles in the Company's exports to Makassar during the eighteenth century. The Coromandel chintzes were rarely included as part of the cargo on the ships bound for Makassar.

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<sup>143</sup> NA: BGB: 10751.

The white and coarse calicoes appear to have been given greater emphasis in the intra-Asian textile trade of the VOC during the eighteenth century. Among the plain and undecorated coarse calicoes, the guinee cloth procured predominantly from Bimilipatnam, and to a lesser extent Nagapattinam, was the chief item of export to the Asian textile markets.

In the book year 1704-1705, the VOC exported 60483 pieces of plain and undecorated guinee cloth valued at 3,85,044.97 Dutch guilders from Coromandel to Batavia.<sup>144</sup> Out of these, Makassar imported 400 pieces valued at 2570 Dutch guilders. In 1713-1714, out of the total exports of 73360 pieces exported from Coromandel to Batavia, Makassar received 400 pieces of plain guinee cloth.<sup>145</sup> The VOC shipped 300 pieces to Makassar via Batavia again in 1730-1731 out of the 39766 pieces sent from Coromandel to Batavia. In 1740-1741, Makassar received 80 pieces out of the 44246 pieces Batavia had received from Coromandel.<sup>146</sup> In 1773-1774, a total of 50,508 pieces of plain guinee cloth were exported from Coromandel out of which 12,000 were meant for Patria and 38,508 were reserved for the VOC's Asian factories.<sup>147</sup> Out of these, Makassar received a total of 1263 pieces valued at 11218 Dutch guilders.<sup>148</sup> While the overall imports of Coromandel textiles into Makassar during the eighteenth century were progressively declining, the plain and undecorated guinee cloth showed an opposite trend.

The volume and value of Coromandel textiles imported into Makassar around 1740-1742 increases exponentially before assuming a gradual decline trend until 1789-1790. Although the VOC imported 7470 pieces of Coromandel textiles during 1740-1742 valued at 22237.59 Dutch guilders, the value of 5061 pieces of Coromandel textiles imported into

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<sup>144</sup> NA: BGB: 10811.

<sup>145</sup> NA: BGB: 10813.

<sup>146</sup> NA: BGB: 10821, 10829.

<sup>147</sup> NA: BGB: 10677.

<sup>148</sup> NA: BGB: 10677.

Makassar around 1750-1752 was 20317.62 Dutch guilders.<sup>149</sup> The difference was not because of the decrease in the number of pieces imported but because of the absence of the Coromandel guinee cloth in the cargos. This reveals that the guinee cloth was a prized asset reserved for sales by the VOC in Makassar during the eighteenth century. The period of decline in Coromandel textile imports begins around 1740-1742 resulting in a substantial fall in the number of pieces of textiles imported from 7470 to 5061. Between the periods, 1750-1752 and 1760-1762, the decline was not severe because the difference in average imports was merely 21 pieces of Coromandel textiles. From the period 1770-1772, however, the trend of progressive decline ensues as the average import volume of Coromandel textiles begins to fall substantially with a difference of more than a thousand pieces. The table 3.3 (page. 70) below is illustrative of the shipping movement between Coromandel and Batavia and Batavia and Makassar. The table 3.4 and the graph 3.A corroborate the decline-rise-decline trend in Coromandel textile imports into Makassar during the eighteenth century.

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<sup>149</sup> NA: BGB: 10772, 10773, 10775, 10776.

Table 3.3: Biennial Averages of Shipping Movement

Year	Coromandel-Batavia	Batavia-Makassar
1700-1702	6	4
1710-1712	4	3
1721-1722	5	1
1730-1732	5	3
1740-1742	4	2
1750-1752	13	2
1760-1762	10	3
1770-1772	2	2
1780-1782	1	1
1789-1790	1	5

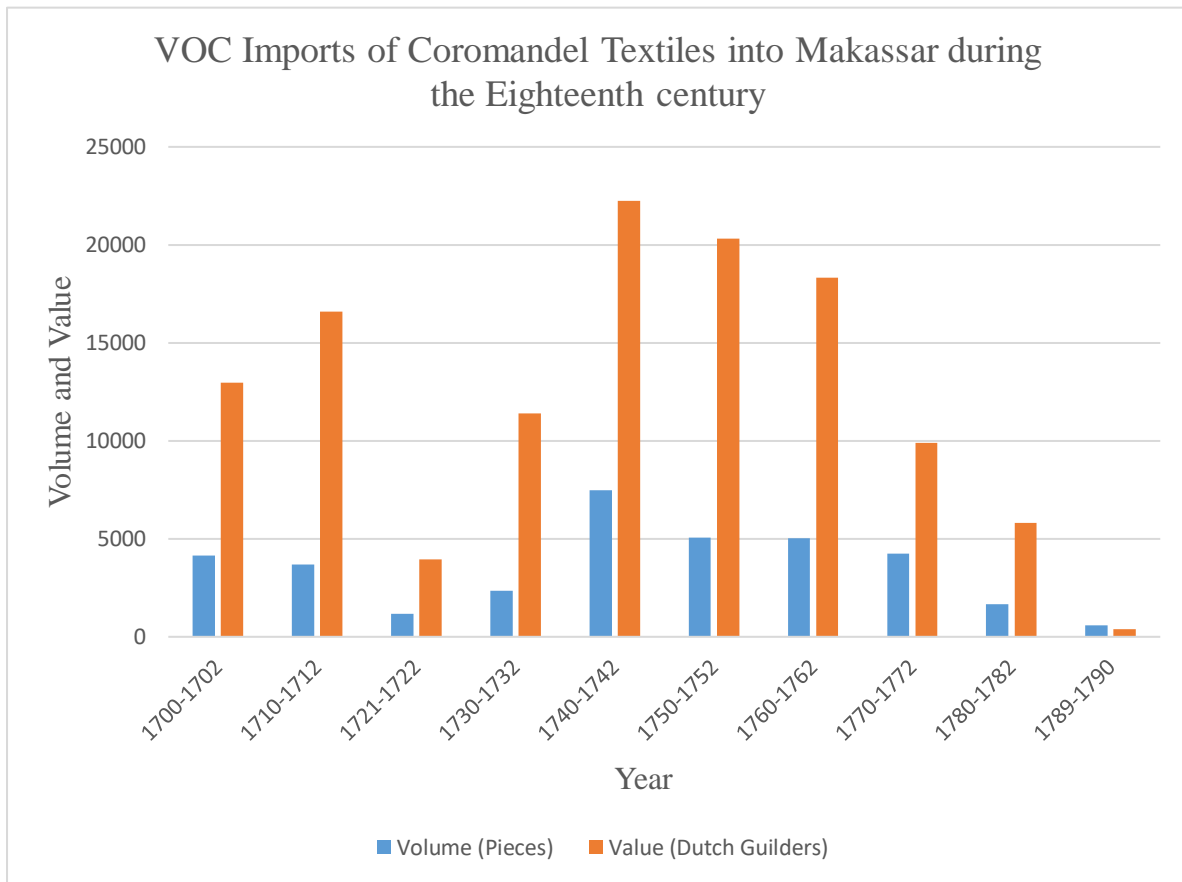
Sources: NA: BGB: 10751, 10752, 10757, 10758, 10762, 10767, 10768, 10772, 10773, 10775, 10766, 10783, 10784, 10790, 10795, 10796, 10800.

Table: 3.4 VOC Exports of Coromandel Textiles from Batavia to Makassar

YEAR	BATAVIA - MAKASSAR		
	Pieces	Value	
		Indian Guilders	Dutch Guilders
1700-1702	4133	19402.95	12980.57
1710-1712	3673	24819.96	16604.56
1721-1722	1170	5909.04	3953.15
1730-1732	2345	17023.77	11388.90
1740-1742	7470	33240.05	22237.59
1750-1752	5061	30361.06	20317.62
1760-1762	5040	27402.76	18337.93
1770-1772	4260	14772.98	9886.08
1780-1782	1662	8680.87	5809.24
1789-1790	580	577.35	386.36

*Sources:* NA: BGB: 10751, 10752, 10757, 10758, 10762, 10767, 10768, 10772, 10773, 10775, 10766, 10784, 10783, 10790, 10795, 10796, 10800.

Graph 3.A: Significance of Coromandel Textiles for the VOC in Makassar



Sources: NA: BGB: 10751, 10752, 10757, 10758, 10762, 10767, 10768, 10772, 10773, 10775, 10766, 10784, 10783, 10790, 10795, 10796, 10800

In 1765, the Gentlemen Seventeen expressed their displeasure at the state of the Company's trading affairs on the island of Sulawesi.<sup>150</sup> Three years later, in 1768, the harbormaster Jan Hendrik Voll was given the task of examining the causes for the decline of the textile trade. Voll's report was addressed directly to the governor and director of the VOC's Makassar establishment. In his report, Voll states that one of the chief causes was the economic

<sup>150</sup> NA: VOC: 3210, Letter from the Gentlemen Seventeen to the High Government in Batavia, 15.



deprivation of the local traders of Makassar.<sup>151</sup> These traders had expressed annoyance with the VOC's increase in prices of textiles while the quality of textiles supplied had degenerated. Another important cause was the improved bargaining position of local merchants trading in trepang and tortoise-shell. Voll also reported that the textiles imported by English private traders into Makassar were often sold at cheaper prices, therefore, luring the local traders into buying these cheap textiles. The local traders such as the Wajorese and Mandarese continued to trade in contraband commodities such as Indian textiles that were principally the monopoly of the VOC. These traders were identified by Voll to have been directly responsible for the decline of the textile trade of the VOC. The forbidden commodities were imported into Makassar by the English who sent at least one or more ships annually to Makassar. Voll's countermeasure to prevent imports of contraband items was to increase the number of VOC's cruise vessels to twelve so as to patrol the bays, rivers and creeks. He also advised that these patrol vessels be split into three coteries to ensure the guarding of Sumbawa, the Gulf of Bone and the west coast of the island of Sulawesi, from Makassar to Mandar. Although the toll fee to enter and exit Makassar was set at 15%, this was not yet effectuated into practice. Voll also recommended that the textiles purchased from the Company's public auctions should be subject to toll-free export from Makassar.

In the 60's however, local traders such as Wajorese and Buginese continued to ship Selayar, Buginese and other cloths from Sulawesi.<sup>152</sup> Buginese cloth was procured from the areas in which Buginese was widely spoken and included Bone and Wajo, and Selayar cloth was produced on the island of Selayar. The checked patterns defined Buginese cloths and Selayar cloth was known for being produced in white and blue colors with checks and stripes

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<sup>151</sup> NA: VOC: 3243, Letter from the harbormaster Jan Hendrik Voll to David Boelen, the Governor and Director of Makassar, 101.

<sup>152</sup> Knaap and Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders*, 111.

defining the style. Buginese and Selayar cloth exports rose from a mere 420 pieces in the 20's to 590 pieces in the 60's, while Selayar cloth exports grew from 80 pieces in the 20's to 480 pieces in the 60's.<sup>153</sup> The striped cotton textiles from Coromandel appear to have influenced the indigenous imitation of *gingam* that resulted in the production of Selayar *gingam*. This indigenous variety was one of the items of Selayar cloth exports via Makassar. The markets for these private cloth exports were Ambon which claimed 63% of these cloths and Buton that occupied 14% of the market share. In the 70's and 80's, when Buginese cloth exports assumed a gradual decline trend, Selayar cloth exports continued to rise in the 70's. The exports of Selayar cloth declined only from 1780.

The production of indigenous textiles on the island of Sulawesi was based partly on local adaptations of Coromandel textiles. This was borne out of changes in the local consumption patterns of textiles. When the VOC's Coromandel textile sales went on a downward spiral in the 60's, the Company's officials accused the locals on the island of Sulawesi of possessing a conservative attitude towards cloth consumption and clothing styles. The modest clothing habit of the Sulawesians was noted as one of the reasons for the VOC's unimpressive sales in Makassar.

Two years later, in 1770, the Gentlemen Seventeen responded to the High Government in Batavia concerning the state of affairs at the Makassar factory in the interest of improving the trade and also acknowledged Voll's report on the decline of the Company's trade in Makassar.<sup>154</sup> The Gentlemen Seventeen wrote that despite the propositions submitted by Voll to prevent the further decline of the Company's trade on the island of Sulawesi, the improvement of the Company's trade was unlikely as long as the current state of affairs there

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<sup>153</sup> Knaap and Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders*, 111.

<sup>154</sup> NA: VOC 3358: Letter from the Gentlemen Seventeen to the High Government in Batavia, 7.

remained unchanged.<sup>155</sup> The Gentlemen Seventeen also stated that the Company's trade must be improved only by mercantile means. They affirmed that none other than the most wanted goods must be sent to the VOC's Makassar factory.<sup>156</sup>

In fact, stockpiling of various goods by the VOC's Makassar factory, particularly Indian textiles, had an impact on the quality of goods sold at public auctions.<sup>157</sup> As mentioned above, deterioration in the quality of textiles was one of the causes for the decline in the VOC's textile trade in Makassar. Towards the end of the 1760's, the Company's fiscal officer Fredrik Willem Hendrik ordered the clearance of textiles lying for as many years in the Company's warehouses.<sup>158</sup> These textiles were described as being rotten and damaged. In order to reduce further damage to these textiles, it was decided that they would be disposed of at the next public auction.

#### *The VOC's Sales Profits of Coromandel Textiles in Makassar*

The biennial averages of the sales profits registered by the VOC on Coromandel textiles during the eighteenth century in Makassar do not depict a straightforward picture of rise and decline (see table 3.5). The trend in rise and decline is largely blurred because the sales profits alternate continually in a rise and decline cycle during the course of the eighteenth century. The only conspicuous trend is the progressive decline in the number of pieces of Coromandel textiles sold by the VOC in Makassar from the period 1750-1752 onwards. There is also a marked difference in the figures corresponding to the quantities of Coromandel textiles sold and the

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<sup>155</sup> NA: VOC 3358: Letter from the Gentlemen Seventeen to the High Government in Batavia, 8.

<sup>156</sup> NA: VOC 3358: Letter from the Gentlemen Seventeen to the High Government in Batavia, 8.

<sup>157</sup> NA: VOC: 3210, 3.

<sup>158</sup> NA: VOC: 3210, 3.

sales profits made by the VOC in Makassar. For example, between the two periods 1700-1702 and 1710-1712 quantities of Coromandel textiles sold by the VOC in Makassar decreases from 3397 pieces to 3162 pieces but the values associated with the same periods increase from 8972.89 to 10704.35 Dutch guilders. The inconsistency is a result of the sales profits registered on the plain and undecorated Coromandel guinee cloth. In the period 1700-1702, the VOC sold 300 pieces of plain guinee cloth for 2074.57 Dutch guilders and between 1710-1712, 409 pieces of plain guinee cloth were sold for 2610 Dutch guilders. Another important factor that contributed to the increase in the VOC's sales profits of Coromandel textiles in Makassar was that massive quantities of plain and undecorated betilles were sold in the period 1710-1712. In the year 1711-1712 alone, the VOC sold 900 pieces of this variety for a staggering amount of 8889 Dutch guilders.<sup>159</sup> The profit margin however, was 51%. In the period 1700-1702, the two most important varieties of Coromandel textiles with regard to both quantity and value, were the plain percallas and salempores. Between 1700-1702, the VOC sold an average of 541 pieces of percallas for 1307.45 Dutch guilders and 348 pieces of salempores for 1626.45 Dutch guilders. Among the salempores sold were the plain and red varieties. The red variety of salempores was twice as profitable as the plain variety in this period. The VOC sold 312 pieces of ordinary bleached salempores for 1000.9 Dutch guilders and 384 pieces of red salempores for 2252 Dutch guilders. However, the volume of sales of the printed and colored varieties of Coromandel textiles decreased rapidly during the eighteenth century.

During the period 1721-1723, the number of pieces of Coromandel textiles sold decreased substantially and the sales profits nearly halved.<sup>160</sup> This was primarily because the VOC auctioned a significantly reduced number of pieces of guinee cloth. In this period, a mere

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<sup>159</sup> NA: BGB: 10758.

<sup>160</sup> NA: BGB: 10762.

average of 185 pieces of guinee cloth, including the plain and fine variants were sold for an average value of 954.57 Dutch guilders. This was less than half the value of guinee cloth sold in the periods 1700-1702 and 1710-1712. The sales profits of the VOC increased again around 1730-1732, although only to a small extent. In the year 1731-1732, among Coromandel textiles, the single largest textile variety sold by the VOC was the blue/brown variety of salem pores.<sup>161</sup> About 868 pieces of this variety were sold for 2474 Dutch guilders.<sup>162</sup> This was because the VOC realized that the sales profits of salem pores were lucrative especially after selling 397 pieces of the blue/brown variety of salem pores in the preceding year for 1211.10 Dutch guilders.

The VOC was dissatisfied with its Indian cloth sales during the 1730's. Moreover, it was around this period (1730-1732) that the volume of imports of Coromandel textiles into Batavia decreased tremendously. The period between 1730-1734 was replete with famine like conditions in Coromandel that caused an increase in the prices of cotton. Due to the rise in cotton prices, the VOC decided to export a considerably small volume of textiles to Batavia. The volume of imports of Coromandel textiles into Makassar via Batavia in the same period however, showed an upward trend. This was because Batavia began distributing textiles from its warehouses. While the production region of Coromandel textiles was inflicted with troubles, the sales region was equally affected. The political climate in Makassar, especially the war associated with Arung Singkang was considered to be the chief reason for mediocre textile sales. In 1730 the Makassar factory regulated the reduction in the profit margins of textiles to

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<sup>161</sup> NA: BGB: 10768.

<sup>162</sup> However, in the same period the VOC sold 1099 pieces of *chintzes* from Gujarat for 2597 Dutch guilders.

40%.<sup>163</sup> While there was a growing concern about repudiation of this regulation, the reason asserted was that since the private imports of textiles by the Wajorese, Chinese and Mandarese had declined, the local traders would now seek to buy textiles auctioned by the Company at its outlets. In 1730, the Company revised the prices of Coromandel textiles with the new regulation in mind. The coarse and plain guinee cloth was now to be sold for a profit margin of 48.75%, the fine guinee cloth for 43.5%, the coarse and plain salempores for 46% and the red colored betilles for 52%.<sup>164</sup> However, textile sales remained unaffected even after lowering the prices. During the following year in 1731, the VOC refocused its attention on the threat posed by the Wajorese and Buginese traders who were still thought to be importing Indian textiles into Makassar through private channels. The Company's response was to make certain that none of their ships sailed the waters under its jurisdiction without collecting a pass from the harbormaster.<sup>165</sup> In 1735, the Company revised the profit margins and decided to ensure that the plain and undecorated varieties of Indian textiles that included guinee cloth, salempores, muris and betilles, touched the 50% profit mark.<sup>166</sup> The profit margin of *chintzes* from Gujarat however, was set at 66%.

After a temporary decline in the sales profits during 1740-1742, there was a sudden surge in the sales profits around 1750-1752. During 1760-1762, the number of pieces of Coromandel textiles sold was reduced by nearly 700 pieces, i.e., from 4262 to 3578. However, what was astonishing about this period was that the value of Coromandel textile sales during 1760-1762 had almost doubled to 13484.93 Dutch guilders from 7931.42 Dutch guilders during

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<sup>163</sup> NA: VOC: 2192, Letter from the High Government in Batavia to the Governor and Director of Makassar, 142.

<sup>164</sup> NA: VOC: 2192, *Prijs Courant*, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1731, 143.

<sup>165</sup> NA: VOC: 8199, Letter from the VOC's Makassar factory to the High Government in Batavia, 22.

<sup>166</sup> NA: VOC: 2345, 240-241.

1750-1752. This was primarily because this period witnessed massive quantities of all of the major plain and undecorated varieties of guinee cloth being sold by the VOC in Makassar. During 1760-1762, an average of 1682 pieces of guinee cloth were sold for a sum of 9258.40 Dutch guilders. In 1761-1762 alone, 1620 pieces of plain guinee cloth from Bimilipatnam were sold for a sum total of 12,346.58 Dutch guilders.<sup>167</sup> It was also around this period that the returns (*rendementen/ruwe winsten*) began to mention the production areas of textiles. The names of the factories of the VOC in Coromandel from where textiles were procured were stated explicitly.

To elaborate, during 1761-1762, a total of 1116 pieces of salem pores were sold in Makassar out of which 476 pieces were procured from Nagapattinam and, sold for 1915.80 Dutch guilders and 640 pieces were procured from Palicol that resulted in a sales profit of 1616.53 Dutch guilders.<sup>168</sup> Similarly, 33 pieces of rumal, used principally in the manufacture of handkerchiefs, were imported from Jagannathapuram in northern Coromandel and sold for 132.32 Dutch guilders. A total of 879 pieces of three varieties of percallas were sold in Makassar that included the plain, red and blue/brown varieties. The plain and undecorated percallas were obtained from Sadraspatnam while the blue/brown variety was procured from both Nagapattinam and Sadraspatnam. A total of 402 pieces of coarse and plain betilles were obtained from Nagapattinam that were sold for 957.92 Dutch guilders. The coarse, plain and undecorated textile varieties were the most profitable items of trade in Makassar during the eighteenth century.

Towards the end of the 60's, the coarse and plain guinee cloth from Bimilipatnam was the highest priced textile variety among all of the Indian textiles sold by the VOC in Makassar.

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<sup>167</sup> NA: BGB: 10784.

<sup>168</sup> NA: BGB: 10784.

The price of one piece of coarse and plain guinee cloth from Bimilipatnam was fixed at 9 Dutch guilders while Bengal *chintzes* from Patna and Kazimbazar were priced at 4.75 and 2.5 Dutch guilders respectively.<sup>169</sup> It appears likely that this was a holistic market approach by the Company that was aimed at adapting to the prevailing market conditions in Makassar. Therefore, the rationale that informed the revised prices of the Company must be perused in the context of broader market phenomena. We understand from Laarhoven's thesis that the Indonesian batik came to gradually replace Indian chintz during the course of the eighteenth century. The VOC's logical response to the above market scenario was by focusing on imports of plain and undecorated varieties of Indian cotton textiles with the aim of carving for itself a niche market in Southeast Asia since the plain and cotton cloth varieties such as guinee, salemore, percallas and betilles were the most in demand. More importantly, the coarse and plain cotton textiles generated appreciable profit margins for the VOC. Based on the above prices fixed by the VOC, it appears reasonable for the VOC to have set the market price of Bimilipatnam's plain-ordinary guinee cloth at 9 Dutch guilders, almost twice the price of chintzes procured from Patna and Kazimbazar. As posited by Steensgaard, this was one of the ways in which the VOC as an institution interacted with the market. The symbiotic relationship between price developments and orders placed reflect the Company's behavioral characteristics, the two crucial components of which, according to Steensgaard were "flexibility and planning".<sup>170</sup> Through this institutional framework we can explain the raising of orders for Coromandel textiles from 48 packets in 1765 to 70 packets in 1770 (see table 3.1). Out of the 70 packets of Coromandel textiles ordered in 1770, 37 packets of plain and undecorated guinee cloth and 10 packets of plain betilles were ordered. The annual sales of Coromandel textiles in

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<sup>169</sup> NA: VOC: 3210, Venduroll van zodanige Compagnie's Lijwaaten, 37.

<sup>170</sup> Niels Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century: The East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 141.



‘1770-1771’ in Makassar shows that the VOC sold 3864 pieces of Coromandel textiles that led to sales profits of 11740.97 Dutch guilders.<sup>171</sup>

The decline in the biennial average sales of Coromandel textiles continued into the 1770’s during which the VOC sold 1501 pieces for 9263.00 Dutch guilders. The Company’s policy in the 1770’s continued to focus on trading in the plain textile varieties the most important of which was the guinee cloth imported from Bimilipatnam. In this period, the VOC sold an average of 1291 pieces for 12645.90 Dutch guilders. Bimilipatnam and Nagapattinam remained the two most important sources of procurement of this variety. In the year 1775-1776, the VOC sold 262 pieces of guinee cloth that included both the ordinary bleached and the English sorts, for a profit margin of 51% and 800 pieces of guinee cloth from Nagapattinam for a profit margin of 55%.<sup>172</sup> In the period 1780-1782, the decline continued further still.

In the late eighteenth century, Coromandel textiles still formed the bulk of Indian textile imports into Makassar. The VOC’s Indian textile sales in Makassar were dominated by textiles procured from Coromandel. Bimilipatnam and Nagapattinam continued to be the two most important ports of shipment on the Coromandel coast for exports to Makassar. In the 1770’s and 1780’s, the VOC’s factories in Kazimbazar and Patna in Bengal, and Surat in Gujarat were chief sources of procurement of Bengal and Gujarat *chintzes* respectively. While Coromandel textiles featured consistently throughout the century, Bengal and Gujarat textiles were playing second fiddle in the overall imports and sales of Indian textiles in Makassar. Among the Bengal textiles imported in Makassar, the *chintzes* dominated the overall imports and sales.

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<sup>171</sup> The volume and value of annual sales of Coromandel textiles pertains to only one ‘book year’. The number of pieces of Coromandel textiles sold (3864) and the corresponding sales profit (11740.97) suggest that the sales were remarkable in one book year. It is likely that the VOC’s fixing of prices and the subsequent raising of orders led to such impressive sales.

<sup>172</sup> NA: VOC: 3465, Generaal Rendement 1775-1776, 311.

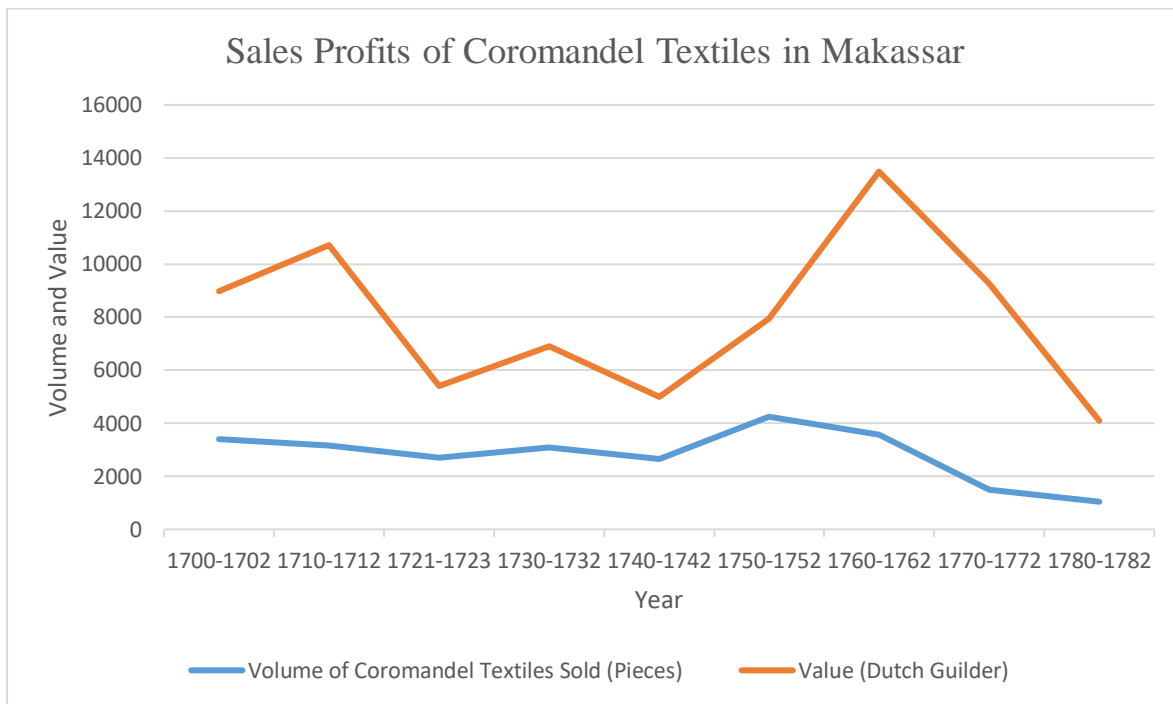
Manufactured out of either cotton or silk, the dimension of Bengal *chintzes* ranged anywhere between 2.5 and 28 meters. Among the Gujarat textiles, the two varieties that featured consistently include *chintzes*, and cotton blankets or cotton cloths. The Gujarati *chintzes* were procured predominantly from Surat.

Table 3.5: The VOC's Sales Profits on Coromandel Textiles in Makassar

Year	Pieces	Sales Profits	
		Indian Guilders	Dutch Guilders
1700-1702	3397	13408.39	8972.89
1710-1712	3162	15995.75	10704.35
1721-1723	2697	8071.80	5401.35
1730-1732	3090	10301.60	6893.83
1740-1742	2658	7457.83	4990.78
1750-1752	4246	11582.10	7931.42
1760-1762	3578	20150.84	13484.93
1770-1772	1501	13841.90	9263.00
1780-1782	1042	5118.98	4095.18

Sources: NA: BGB: 10751, 10752, 10757, 10758, 10762, 10767, 10768, 10772, 10773, 10775, 10766, 10784, 10783, 10790, 10795, 10796, 10800.

Graph 3B: Graph illustrating the trend in the VOC's Sales Profits of Coromandel Textiles in Makassar with respect to both volume and value.



The 1770's and 1780's witnessed imports and sales of Coromandel and Gujarat textiles into Makassar while Bengal textiles were largely absent from the annual sales lists in the 70's and early 80's. In the year 1783-1784, Bengal textiles did not feature in the sales list of Indian textiles auctioned in Makassar.<sup>173</sup> This was primarily because the VOC focused on the imports and sales of white calicoes obtained from Ceylon. These were classified under Ceylon's textiles (*Ceylonse Lijwaaten*). These white calicoes included 215 pieces of plain and undecorated guinee cloth procured from Tuticorin on the Coromandel coast and 120 pieces of Ceylon's plain guinee cloth procured from Jaffnapatnam.<sup>174</sup> Although Ceylon was not a renowned textile manufacturing region, the VOC, owing to its strong political presence in Ceylon, shipped white

<sup>173</sup> NA: VOC: 3673, *Generaal Rendement 1783-1784*, 53.

<sup>174</sup> NA: VOC: 3673, *Generaal Rendement 1783-1784*, 54.

calicoes from the Coromandel coast to the island of Ceylon for bleaching and painting.<sup>175</sup> Indigenous Chetty Hindu and Chulia Muslim merchants also participated in the textile trade with Ceylon. The Chetty traders had settled in the port towns of Jaffna, Galle and Colombo and relied on Tamil Hindu intermediaries who acted chiefly as brokers in commerce. Ceylon benefited from imports of Coromandel textiles because it helped consolidate its peasant economy. The coarser varieties of textiles were consumed by the peasants, the women preferred the painted varieties and the finer muslins were consumed by the affluent sections of the society.<sup>176</sup>

The VOC's sales of Bengal textiles in Makassar begin to increase gradually from the year 1785/1786. The sharp drop in the Company's Coromandel textile sales in 1785/1786 and 1786/1787 was principally because of the Company's focus on the sales of Bengal and Gujarat textiles. Nearly 300 pieces of *chintzes* from Bengal and Gujarat were sold on which the Company made a profit of 600 Dutch guilders. In 1785/1876, 194 pieces of Bengal *chintzes*, out of which 192 were imported from Kazimbazar, were sold for a profit of 578 Dutch guilders while in 1786/1787, 251 pieces of Bengal *chintzes* out of which 250 pieces were procured from Kazimbazar were sold for a profit of 535 guilders.<sup>177</sup> Throughout this decade, the white calicoes imported from Coromandel, Bengal and Gujarat were the most profitable among the different textile varieties sold in Makassar. Although the VOC imported and sold large quantities of Coromandel textiles when compared to Bengal and Gujarat textiles, sometimes higher profit margins were registered on textiles from Gujarat and Bengal. This was because the VOC focused on shipping only the two most profitable varieties of Bengal and Gujarat textiles to

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<sup>175</sup> Nierstrasz, *Rivalry for Trade in Tea and Textiles*, 158.

<sup>176</sup> Archisman Chaudhuri, "From Camp to Port: Mughal Warfare and the Economy of Coromandel, 1682-1710," PhD Diss., (Leiden, Leiden University, 2019), 118.

<sup>177</sup> NA: VOC: 3732, *Generaal Rendement*, 145.

Makassar. In the 80's, only the *chintzes* from these two regions were imported. The Company's decision to import only *chintzes* appears to have been conscientious and sensible. The figures corresponding to the profit margins (table 3.5, page. 86) corroborate the above argument. Similarly, the Company's relentless pursuit of importing large quantities of the plain guinee cloth from Coromandel appears also to have been a calculated decision. The insistence on importing this variety particularly from Bimilipatnam seems reasonable since ordinary guinee cloth from this factory allowed the Company to make high profits. Among the Company's factories on the Coromandel coast that exported plain guinee cloth, Bimilipatnam was the chief factory, followed by Nagapattinam, Sadraspatnam and Jagannathapuram. The Company's factory in Porto Novo was renowned for the colored variety of guinee especially the blue variety.

The causes for the overall decline of the textile trade of the Dutch East India Company have been studied extensively and occupy significant ground in the existing historiography. This thesis does take into consideration, the numerous causes as outlined by historians. However, a detailed discussion on the same is beyond the scope of this study. On the basis of the quantitative data presented in this thesis, we can conclude that the VOC focused primarily on the plain and undecorated cotton textiles. From the above table, it is clear that textiles from both Bengal and Gujarat continued to be imported into Makassar during the late eighteenth century. The VOC made decent profit margins on chintzes from Bengal and Gujarat. But the demand for chintzes was minimal when compared to the demand for plain and undecorated cotton textiles. Overall, the orders placed for Coromandel textiles, the imports of Coromandel textiles into Makassar via Batavia and the sales profits made by the VOC in Makassar during the eighteenth century reveal that the rationale of the VOC to trade in plain and undecorated cotton textiles was adequately aimed at ensuring adaptation to the prevailing market conditions in Makassar that began to be altered as early as the late seventeenth century.

Table: 3.5 Distribution of Indian Textiles by the VOC in Makassar in the late 70's and 80's.

C- Coromandel Textiles ; G- Gujarat Textiles ; B- Bengal Textiles

Year	Pieces Sold			Purchase Price			Selling Price			Sales Profits			Profit Margin		
	C	G	B	C	G	B	C	G	B	C	G	B	C	G	B
1775/1776	1501	44	-	12459	249	-	19246	429	-	6786	180	-	54.5%	72%	-
1778/1779	1162	-	-	7850	-	-	12506	-	-	4656	-	-	59%	-	-
1781/1782	412	80	-	1945	380	-	3332	650	-	1386	269	-	71%	66.75%	-
1782/1783	290	339	23	1659	1398	93	2918	2444	139	1258	1040	46	75%	74.5%	-
1783/1784	426	288	-	3887	792	-	6148	1454	-	2261	662	-	50%	75%	-
1785/1786	78	177	194	749	736	647	1101	1306	1226	352	569	578	47%	79%	89%
1786/1787	70	136	251	1355	634	906	1953	986	1442	597	352	535	44%	50%	59%
1789/1790	770	878	344	7124	3109	1283	10436	5356	1955	3312	2247	672	46.5%	76.4%	52%
1790/1791	982	29	449	8635	184.2	1520	13159	274	2534	4523	90	1014	52.25%	49.25%	66.75%
1791/1792	1213	641	479	7847	1813	1649	11765	2819	2770	3917	1006	1121	56%	55.5%	68%

Sources: NA: VOC: Generaal Rendement: 3465, 3552, 3623, 3648, 3673, 3732, 3760, 3905, 3939, 1971.

## Conclusion

The quantitative data presented in this thesis is clearly suggestive of the gradual decline of the VOC's intra-Asian textile trade between Coromandel and Makassar during the eighteenth century. There is a visible decline of the VOC's exports of Coromandel textiles to Batavia and exports of Coromandel textiles from Batavia to Makassar during the eighteenth century. Although the VOC made every effort to minimize private imports of textiles in Makassar, it never quite managed to completely put an end to it. The Wajorese and Mandarese traders continued to import contraband goods into Makassar during the eighteenth century. The causes for the decline of the VOC's trade in Makassar, particularly the VOC's textile trade, were stated explicitly by the harbormaster Jan Hendrik Voll. Voll's report revealed that the VOC was not successful in containing the Buginese and Mandarese. What was even more important was the emphasis he had laid on the discontentment of the local traders in Makassar with the rising prices and inferior quality of Indian textiles sold by the VOC. However, Voll's report, written in 1768, must be examined against the backdrop of the decline of the VOC's textile trade to Makassar especially around the 1750's and 1760's. The task given to Voll to examine the Company's declining textile imports and sales was an attempt by the Gentlemen Seventeen to reassess the Company's policy on the trade to Makassar. However, the VOC's policy on its trade in Indian textiles, particularly Coromandel textiles, to the Indonesian Archipelago during the eighteenth century was a response to the changing dynamics of demand and supply that had occurred as early as in the late seventeenth century.

From the point of view of demand (*eisen*), there was a visible lack of demand for the finer and painted varieties of Coromandel textiles in Makassar. Conversely and more importantly, the orders placed for Coromandel textiles by the VOC's Makassar establishment reveal that the Company focused on importing large quantities of plain and undecorated cotton textiles into Makassar. This is corroborated further by the Company's relentless pursuit of

importing ordinary guinee cloth into Makassar. The orders placed for some of the other plain varieties included bethilles, salempores and percallas. The painted and colored types remained largely insignificant to the Company's annual cloth sales in Makassar during the eighteenth century when compared to the sales of plain and undecorated varieties. This is ascribed primarily to the demand factor in Makassar.

The demand factor is attributed to the indigenous response of Southeast Asians to the VOC's monopolistic commercial practices, particularly with regard to imports of Indian textiles into Southeast Asia. The narrative of the impoverishment of Southeast Asians advanced by Anthony Reid has been critically challenged by a host of scholars including Ruardje Laarhoven. From the late seventeenth century onwards, Southeast Asians resorted to indigenous production of textiles. This is considered to be the chief cause for the decline of imports of finer varieties of textiles from Coromandel and Gujarat. The indigenous production of cloth is evidenced chiefly by the rise of batik production in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, the process of batik manufacture or *batikking* was predicated on an adequate supply of plain and undecorated cotton textiles. The raw materials needed for the batik technique were procured either locally or imported. The raw materials imported included the ordinary bleached varieties of muris, bethilles, guinee, salempores and percallas. Ruardje Laarhoven has given credence to the notion that the VOC may have assumed the role of a supplier of raw materials to aid the indigenous production of batik in the Indonesian Archipelago. Therefore, the VOC's textile trade to Makassar must be situated within the larger framework of the textile trade to the Indonesian Archipelago that witnessed a notable absence of imports of finer varieties of textiles from Coromandel and Gujarat.

The VOC was aware of the shift from the Southeast Asian consumption of Indian textiles to the consumption of locally woven textiles. The Company responded to this shift by significantly reducing its imports of finer, printed and painted varieties of Coromandel and



Gujarat textiles, notably *chintz* that came be challenged by the indigenous *batik* cloth. The VOC's decision to import minimal quantities of *chintz* into Makassar can be considered to have been conscientious. On the other hand, the plain and undecorated varieties of Indian textiles were traditionally considered popular in Southeast Asian markets where the demand was the greatest and profit margins lucrative. Therefore, the VOC decided to focus on trading in plain and undecorated cloth varieties from India. This is indicative also of the VOC's rationale in adapting to changing market conditions and regional developments. The Company's response suggests that it never lost sight of the nature of demand for Indian textiles during the eighteenth century. Whereas the indigenous production of batik catered to the local demand for finer varieties of textiles, the VOC carved out for itself a niche market in plain and undecorated Indian textiles in Makassar during the eighteenth century.

## Glossary

betilles	muslins; the word betilles means 'veiling'
chintz	printed or glazed cotton fabric
ell	unit of measurement of cloth; one ell was 45 inches in length
guinee cloth	A textile variety that belongs to the subgroup of longcloth. A standard piece of guinee cloth was 37 yards in length.
gingam	striped variety of cotton textiles woven with double-threaded warps and wefts
malmal	fine muslin
muris	staple cotton cloth; usually exported from Coromandel

percallas	closely woven plain fabric
rumal	linen used as handkerchiefs
salempore	A staple cotton cloth, usually 16 yards in length
tapi-sarassa	popular variety of cloth; used for making skirt

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3905, 3939, 8199, 13512, 13516, 13519, 13525, 13530, 13534, 13539, 13551, 13554,  
13558, 13563, 13568

Boekhouder-Generaal te Batavia (BGB)

10751, 10752, 10757, 10758, 10762, 10767, 10768, 10772, 10773, 10775, 10766,  
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