The production of batik in eighteenth century Java

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

Because of the geographical location of the Indonesian island Java, it was soon exposed to the well-developed textile industry on the Indian subcontinent, leading to an extensive exchange of textiles. Java established a small scale indigenous resits dyeing industry, named batik. Over the centuries, batik developed to high artistic levels on Java and unlimited pattern variations were created. But, most of the circulating textiles in Java were imported from India. By the end of the seventeenth century, the demand for Indian textiles vanished, and the indigenous Javanese textile industry emerged fast. Some argue that the demand for Indian textiles at the end of the seventeenth century had decreased by the impoverishment of the Javanese after years of Dutch dominance. But, I argue that the Dutch had an important role in providing stimuli in the eighteenth century, which eventually led to the commercialisation and growth of the batik industry in the nineteenth century. With developments such as inventions as the cap and canting pen, available artificial dyes, Dutch stimulation of Chinese migration who participated in the textile industry and the Indo-European female entrepreneurs who started batik commercial centres as a reaction to the high global demand for batik, the fabric was able to evolve as we know it in current times.

Keywords: batik, textile design, resist-dyeing, commercialisation, Indian Ocean, Java.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

"Under Sukarno, the first president of the new republic, the government assisted the batik industry "…". Sukarno promoted batik as national dress and, "…" encouraged the development of Batik Indonesia, a style incorporating North Coast colors and Central Javanese patterns. " (Stephenson 1993, 111).

Highly stimulated by President Sukarno after World War II to create a "Batik Indonesia" in an attempt to create an autonomous image for the newly independent country, *batik*[1] production was stimulated, and Javanese batik garments became the new national dress (Stephenson 1993, 111-112). Batik is seen as a tool of expression for many Indonesians and is an essential part of Indonesian cultural heritage today.

Batik is the generic term used to refer to the process of fabric dyeing in combination with the technique of wax application. The fabric is prevented from absorbing dye by the application of wax on the fabric. The special technique of wax application on fabric makes the production of complex prints possible. The batik prints reflect socio-economic, cultural, and political dynamics that were influenced by the constant foreign influence on the island of Java over the centuries. In the eighteenth century batik enjoyed a prominent position in Javanese culture and local batik production increased during this period. In the nineteenth century batik became a global trade commodity, developing into one of the most outstanding decorated textiles in the region of Southeast Asia.

Western interest in batik grew over the past two centuries, showing an increase in amounts of scholars starting to research the origin of batik, the function of the cloth in everyday Indonesian life, and the spread of batik over the world. Yet, the factors stimulating batik production in the eighteenth century, and the commercialisation of batik in the nineteenth century have not been

[1] A method of pattern printing on cotton cloth using wax on the parts with no colour.

researched in depth. Researching batik is of relevance because it is of Indonesian symbolic value and offers an entry point into understanding the making of heritage in postcolonial Indonesia. However, the pride of Indonesia's art has been dying out for centuries, which makes researching this topic even more important (Rabin 1990, 14). The role that batik represents in forming Indonesian heritage evolved to new levels when UNESCO recognized the Indonesian batik as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, resulting in Hari Batik Nasional (National Batik Day), celebrated every October 2nd. With batik as a national icon, it supports economic development in Indonesia with a reduction of unemployment and stimulating the tourism sector (Steelyana 2012, 13). Also governmental promotional strategies as "*hari batik*"[2], stimulate many Indonesians to wear the batik *sarong*[3] and *kain panjang*[4] , both honouring and celebrating the ancient tradition of using batik in everyday life (Shamasundari 2017) (Steelyana 2012, 13).

Figure 1: Aristocrat couple wearing the kain panjang.

[2] To wear batik clothes once a week.

[3] Printed tube skirt originating in Indonesia. It is made by cutting pieces of batik in straight lines and sewing these together.

[4] Shirt-like garment made of a piece of fabric that is decorated with a batik print.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that contributed to the rise of batik production in the eighteenth century that led to commercialisation and the growing popularity on a global scale of batik in the nineteenth century. The principal question that will be addressed is: What factors contributed to batik production in Java in the eighteenth century and how did this translate into the global commercialisation of batik in the nineteenth century?

1.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1.1 JAVA, CENTER OF MARITIME TRADE

It is stated by Jan Wisseman Christie's study on textile production in the Indonesian Archipelago that the Javanese weaving industry had evolved during the ninth century (Wisseman Christie, 1993). Over the following centuries, foreign trade stimulated the indigenous evolution of batik in Java. The Chinese and Indian merchants had a particular role in importing finished textiles, natural dyes that were not available in Java and teaching the Javanese foreign textile production methods such as *kumitar*[5].

The research by Barbara Watson Andaya on the developments of the cloth trade in the Indonesian Archipelago in the seventeenth and eighteenth-century provide a good insight into the European trade with the Indonesian Archipelago, and the importance of cloth in the region (Andaya 1989). When the Portuguese and the Spanish arrived in the Indonesian Archipelago at the beginning of the sixteenth century for the first time, they experienced a long-standing trade network between the Indian subcontinent and the Indonesian Archipelago, in which cloth had a central position as a key product of exchange. By the time that the *EID*[6] and the *VOC*[7] were established respectively in 1600 and 1602, both were aware that without cloth, the spices from the East Indies, - mace, pepper, nutmeg-, were not obtainable. Therefore, when the VOC fleet was sent out for the first time to the

[5] An expensive batiked cotton, originating in India.

[6] English East India Companies.

[7] Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (nl), Dutch East Indies (en).

Indonesian Archipelago in 1604, they first went to India to trade cloth. Dutch cloth facilities were established on the East coast of India, specifically in Coromandel, to produce cloth for the Indonesian Archipelago's high demand (Andaya 1989, 38-40). The Dutch established a monopoly in the spice trade through armed conflicts. And when the Dutch found out that profits between 100 to 200 percent could be made by selling Indian textiles to spice producers, a monopoly in Indian cloth was initiated as well. Only Indian textiles imported by the East India Company could be sold in the Dutch ruled Indonesian region. It should be noted, that the Dutch completely ignored the existing Javanese textile production, because the profits that could be made from this were too small (Laarhoven 2012, 1,3). The symbolic and economical value that was attached to cloth in the Indonesian Archipelago made textiles important to consider for the Dutch since the textiles were an appropriate gift when trading, a tool to be used when rewarding, or a symbol of homage. On top of this, textiles were used as currency since it had established its advantage over *picis*[8], because textiles were longer-lasting, interchangeable, and did not devaluate.

The strategic position of Java linked the island with the international maritime trade network, which spread from China and Japan to South Asia and the Middle East (McIntosh 2019, 115). Since the nineteenth century, the theory of diffusion became a topic of debate and was used to refer to the spread of innovation and ideas. Cultural diffusion is best considered as a process by which objects, ideas, motives and symbols are spread by groups of individuals. This could either happen within a single culture, named intracultural diffusion, or from one culture to another culture, named intercultural diffusion (Hann 2013, 12-14). Often, when the diffusion occurred and the new processes were implemented, the original process or idea metamorphosed into new forms (Banerjee 2016, 3). The ports of Sumatra and Java were essential in this trade route and must have been centres of cultural and product exchange, contributing to the development of the Javanese batik as a result of diffusion.

[8] Short-lived, common currency, introduced by the Chinese in the seventeenth century.

1.1.2 TEXTILE IMPORT AND BATIK PRODUCTION

In 'The textile industry in Southeast Asia, 1400-1800' by Kenneth R. Hall, he states "It is incorrect to characterize Southeast Asia's textile industry as locally induced, but it is equally inappropriate to attribute its development exclusively to external stimuli" (Hall 1996, 87). In Java, before the seventeenth century, local textile production was low. The imported Chinese and Indian cloth was of such high quality and well-priced, that it was more beneficial to buy imported cloth rather than the expensive Javanese batik, which was mainly bought by the elite. Moreover, the belief that locally produced textiles were spiritually possessed made them unsuitable to cut and stimulated the import of non-possessed cloth from overseas. Still, local craftmanship was never fully replaced. When Indian production facilities began to produce larger numbers of white fabrics with consistent qualities from the end of the seventeenth century, the local Javanese batik production began to emerge. Stimulated by high quality imported Indian cloth, Javanese artisans produced higher amounts of batik textiles. Hall suggests the term "consumer batik", referring to batik that was produced with the imported white fabrics and industrialized spun yarn from India. While the consumers of batik had once been exclusive to the elite, from the eighteenth century the consumer batik was no longer exclusive to the upper layer of society.

The textile production in the Indonesian Archipelago during Dutch occupation from the sixteenth century until WWII has been investigated by Pierre van der Eng (Eng 2012). He investigates the textile industry in pre-war Indonesia and argues that during the period of Dutch prominence in the Indonesian Archipelago from the sixteenth century to the World War II, the Javanese textile industry did not decrease as is suggested by Dick and Williamson (Dick 1993) (Williamson 2005). Also, Ruurdje Laarhoven suggests in her research 'A Silent Textile Trade War: Batik Revival as Economic and Political Weapon in 17th Century Java', that the Dutch monopoly of the Indonesian economy during the seventeenth century did not impoverish the Indonesians. Instead, this was a period of flourishing trade that stimulated the Javanese batik production.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Indonesia was mainly dependent on the imported cloth from India, but there are various accounts on textile production in Java and textile exports from Java, that underline that the imported Indian textiles did not exterminate Javanese textile production. A large number of small-scale production facilities that produced a wide range of batik design varieties were seen in Java over the centuries of Dutch dominance. From the eighteenth century onwards imported chemical dyes were used in the production of batik, wax substitutes were applied, new stamping technique such as the *cap*[9] was applied often and the low-cost Western Europe imported cottons all stimulated the export of batik cloth in the nineteenth century.

1.1.3 BATIK DESIGN

Batik and its wide range of design representations have been researched by many, starting in the early nineteenth century. The first European person to write about batik was Sir Thomas Raffles in *the history of Java* (1817) after he was positioned on the island of Java when it was captured from the Dutch during the Napoleonic wars (1811-1814) (Raffles 1817). More than fifty years later, van Rijckovorsel spent four years in Java, where he collected batik. The obtained collection was donated to the Rotterdam museum for further research and the batik collection was used multiple times during exhibitions on colonial folk art during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. A monograph that appeared in 1900 on batik by G. R. Rouffaer and Dr. H. H. Juynboll and the research done on behalf of the Dutch colonial government by S. M. Pleyte and J. E. Jasper on Indonesian folk art with a focus on batik broadened the early knowledge of batik in the West. These four Western researchers provided the cornerstone for modern-day batik research by providing fabric databases and writing down the crucial information on batik and the production of the fabric which were needed to be able to do further research within the field (Elliott 2013). A modern approach to batik design is taken in the bibliographic essay by Nina Stephenson (Stephenson 1993). She discusses the

[9] Stamp with a pattern, used for the production of batik, came up in batik production in the early nineteenth century.

publications on batik of the last two centuries, including artistic, sociological, anthropological, historical, philosophical, and religious concerns on batik to be able to explain the Javanese textile in the context of the past, present, and future. Stephenson concludes that the attempt to categorize batik is not possible, caused by the wide diversity of batik designs and the unclarity of the origin of batik.

Many researchers have attempted to research the origin of batik. A generally accepted theory on the origin of Batik is that batik fabrics and the batik resist dyeing technique spread to the Indian subcontinent by Egyptian traders (Spée 1977, 12), (van Roojen 1993, 11-12). This, because the oldest batik fabric residues were found in Egypt originating in the fifth and sixth centuries (Spée 1977, 12). Ruurdje Laarhoven bundles different approaches on the origin of batik, concluding in her research that there are two schools on the origin of batik: (1) those who believe J.A. Loeber Jr.'s point of view, that Batik was an Indigenous Indonesian development, and (2) those who choose the side of G.P. Rouffaer, who believes that batik finds its origin in Indian influences on Java from the Silandra and Sanjaja periods. With this attempt, references are made to Indian textiles such as chintz and patola that are produced with *resist dyeing*[10] a technique similar to batik (Laarhoven 2012, 4). By contrast, Stephenson proposes that even though a variety of theories regarding the origin of batik in Java has been proposed, the matter will probably never be resolved. This is caused by the lack of written sources and existing ancient textiles, vanished by the tropical Indonesian climate.

1.2 PROPOSED HYPOTHESIS

Over the nineteenth century, knowledge on batik developed, after the first research on batik by Sir Thomas Raffles was published in 1817. Batik increased in importance and enjoyed growing

[10] Method of dyeing by tying or covering the woven fabric with a dye-resistant substance to prevent this from absorbing colour.

global demand, caused by industrialization and new inventions that resulted in the commercialisation of batik. But, the new developments on batik and the production of the fabric in the nineteenth century are often not connected to the expansion of the batik industry in the eighteenth century. In this context, it will be of relevance to research batik in the eighteenth century, and the developments that led to the commercialisation of batik in the nineteenth century.

The central hypothesis for this thesis will be on the Dutch dominance in the Indonesian Archipelago during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the reasons why the Dutch had a significant influence on the Javanese textile production as is suggested by Pierre van der Eng and Ruurdje Laarhoven who researched respectively the Dutch dominance in the Indonesian Archipelago. This thesis on the factors that contributed to batik production in the eighteenth and nineteenth century in Java, could add to the statement of positive Dutch stimulus in regards to Batik production in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

1.3 RESEARCH METHOD

The methodology applied for this investigation of the proposed research question on the factors that contributed to the batik production in Java in the eighteenth century and how these factors are translated in the commercialisation of batik in the nineteenth century will include an analysis of secondary literature on the subject of batik. This will be combined with a short detailed analysis of batik designs from Java based on a selection of visuals to understand foreign influences on design, and the development of production methods of batik that were caused by the industrial revolution in the mid-eighteenth century. [11]

[11] The attendance of the online symposium "Textiles on the Move", 6-9 October 2020 will provide further enrichment on the subject. Lectures specifically on batik: 8th of Oct. 2020: Unexpected Consequences: The Re-Discovery of the Javanese Batik Collection of Thailand's King Rama V (r. 1868-1910) lecturer: Dale Carolyn Gluckman. 9th of Oct. 2020: The Storytelling Pattern of Batik Kompeni at Cirebon Coastal Region. Lecturer: Nuning Yanti Damayanti Adisasmito

1.4 STRUCTURE

This thesis contains three chapters that will be used to answer the main research question. The four chapters will be followed by a conclusion which will provide an answer to the main research question: **What factors contributed to the batik production in Java in the eighteenth century and how did this translate into the commercialisation of batik in the nineteenth century?**

In chapter 2 batik will be defined, and further explained. The function of batik will be discussed, as well as the social dimension that batik has in the everyday cultural context in Java. The traditional production of batik will be highlighted. In chapter 3 the developments that batik experiences in the eighteenth century will be discussed. Besides the new inventions within the batik industry, also the context of time will be explained, with subjects as the industrial revolution, growing Chinese migration to the Indonesian Archipelago, and the downturn of the VOC, as these were crucial factors for the batik industry in Java. Also, the growing Dutch influence in the Indonesian Archipelago and their increasing influence on the traditional art of batiking is named. The growth in local Javanese demand is explained by naming events of the Dutch who monopolized Indian textile export to the Indonesian Archipelago.. In chapter 4 batik in the nineteenth century is discussed. All-year-round production was made possible, enabling batik to commercialise. The growing foreign demand in batik led to new Javanese non-traditional batik designs. Also, the growing importance of batik production on a global scale is explored, with Java as large importer of English cotton and the export of batik to new consumer markets, such as Sri Lanka. This will be followed with a concluding chapter, providing an answer to the main question, and listing subjects for further research. The glossary and bibliography can be found after the conclusion.

CHAPTER 2 BATIK IN JAVA

Java is the global centre of batik. The popularity of batik has been celebrated by many, mainly because of the durability of the paint that is fixed on the fabric by the use of the resist dyeing method, which creates endless options of batik prints. An in-depth examination of batik is provided in this chapter, discussing terminology on batik, the different designs, the social context of batik, and production techniques, providing the base for further research in upcoming chapters.

2.1 BATIK DEFINED

The origin of the word batik is not clear and does not exist in the old Javanese language. When Sir Thomas Raffles published his research in 1817 about Java, he did not mention any source or statement on the origin of the word batik, because he was not able to trace it down. The earliest written statement on batik is found in a Dutch bill from 1641, however, references to painted cloth in Javanese texts can be traced back to the twelfth century (Banerjee 2016, 24). The more explicit mentioning of 'tulis' as a technique of decoration on finished batik cloth in late twelfth-century *sima*[12] inscriptions, provide the suggestion of the local Javanese definition and its existence. Most likely, batik is related to the word titik (translated into modern Malay or Bahasa Indonesia as dot, point, or drop), and to Ambi (translated as to write, finding its roots in Malay and Bahasa Indonesia) (Spée 1977, 15).

2.2 BATIK DESIGNS

In the Indonesian Archipelago, batik patterns showed taste, or perhaps the village someone came from. Categorizing batik patterns was a foreign matter. Sir Thomas Raffles mentioned hundreds of different designs in his research on Java in the early nineteenth century. By the enormous amount

[12] Tax grant inscriptions of Java.

of different batik fabrics that he had collected over his stay of almost five years in Java, Raffles concluded that the technique of batik had a high level of sophistication and that it must have been produced in Java for a considerable long time to have reached this high quality. Raffles made a first academic attempt in categorizing the Javanese batik designs based on the region of production, noticing the difference between the North Coast designs and the batiks produced by the courts of the sultanates in central Java. It was in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century that batik designs were categorized and further explained in terms of design elements, but the variety of different categories has been radically simplified in the academic world until recently. This is seen in the research by Rouffaer and Juynboll during the start of the twentieth century on batik who collected more than 3000 batik varieties, describing and categorizing them in simply five generalized patterns, and eight distinctively Javanese patterns. Also, researchers Laurens Langewis and Frits Wagner have written:

"Batik art has never made full use of the possibilities in the field of decoration. By far most patterns adhere to decorations built upon a strictly metrical basis. It is only in the best examples of the semen patterns that the rhythmical plays a more important part. But if we examine the total ornamentation of these patterns more closely, they, too, are usually found to consist of a few homogenous parts." (Langewis, Wagner 1964, 48).

From the sixteenth century, when the Dutch started to categorize batik for purposes of class differentiation often the new developments in batik were stated as ‘bad taste’. The remarkable form of art and the combination of influences from different parts of the world were often ignored in academic research. Only recently, the wide variety of designs in batik is celebrated.

Javanese batik is usually divided based on the production region, resulting in two varieties: classical batik, and *pasisir*[13] batik (Stephenson 1993, 109-110). Batik produced in the Central

[13] The North oast of Java.

Javanese court cities Yogyakarta and Surakarta is often referred to as classical, following clear instructions on batik production (van Roojen 1993, 19). The main production regions were the sultanates of Yogyakarta and Surakarta. Surakarta batik distinguishes itself with often featured golden browns against a cream coloured background, creating a subtle effect. Yogyakarta batik is bolder, with dark browns and blues against white backgrounds. The sultanates decided on batik patterns, resulting in strict usage of patterning and colour usage. The motifs and symbols that were used on the batiks have specific meanings and are connected with philosophy. Most of these symbols were prohibited for commoners to wear.

Batik from the North Coast region is named pasisir batik and is produced in main batik cities such as Pekalongan and Lasem (van Roojen 1993, 22). Important harbours were located on the North Coast, resulting in a high variety of foreign influences arriving. This was of influence to the batik designs, resulting in batik with a more commercial pursuit, and tradition is less important, taking a more free approach to pattern. The motifs used in pasisir batik have less symbolic meaning since the artists were allowed to use any symbolic figures they found aesthetically fitting, because of the absence of strict court regulations. Early pasisir batik had strong Indian influences, originating from patola, and sarasa textiles. Indian motifs seen on the pasisir batik are trees, flowering vines around circular ornaments, and centrally placed flowers. Over time, when more Chinese merchants settled in the North Coast region, Chinese influences became more visible. Red dyes and Chinese motifs such as snakes, dragons, and tigers made their entry in batik. Also, floral designs, based on Chinese porcelain were often used as inspiration for batik motifs.

2.3 BATIK IN ITS SOCIAL CONTEXT

Cloth in the Indonesian Archipelago had many symbolic values and functioned differently in many ways compared to the West. The cloth was important for economic and political

circumstances, having a high “use-value” and “exchange-value” (Laarhoven 1994, 57). The importance of textiles in a social context finds its origin in the centuries of Indian textile trade with the Indonesian Archipelago, in which textiles had obtained a symbolic value. Besides the value of exclusivity, translated in society as power and status, Indian textiles were a reliable medium of exchange and were often ascribed with talismanic values (Guy 1998, 10). Batik was believed to protect against evil forces, securing good fortune and prosperous life. The cloth was implemented in events of the cycle of life. Boys would be dressed in batik during and right after circumcision, since batik was thought to cure the pain. Also, *batik kraton*[14] was worn as bridal attire. Other occasions that batik was often used for was during pregnancy, birth and burial. The amount and quality of used batik during the ceremonies was based on the person's age and the wealth of the family. Moreover, batik was granted a religious role, being used to heal the sick and used during religious ceremonies in temples.

2.4 TRADITIONAL BATIK PRODUCTION

Centrally located in the Archipelago, Java attracted many traders from the surrounding region who left their mark on the production of batik (Laarhoven 2012, 1). The North Coast functioned as a major entrepot for spices and other commodities, and also the inland Sultanates had become wealthy by successful trading. From the end of the seventeenth century, Chinese junks had become increasingly important for the production of batik. Flat cotton, silk textiles, needles, bundles of raw silk, embroidery and gold thread were imported by the Chinese and used in the batik production. Also, Chinese merchants married local women, taking part in the local Javanese businesses, which were often textile-related (Kwee 2015, 156).

[14] Royal batik.

Batik production during the *'boom years'*[15], was mainly a women's job. Women were expected to take care of the home while men went out to trade. Javanese textile production was there for established in households. Traditionally, batik production was not a full-time occupation and was only done between harvest and planting season. Almost every household had a weaving loom on which the females of the family produced woven cloth for their usage. Women had important tasks during the production process of batik which consisted of spinning, weaving, embroidering, painting and sewing (Laarhoven 2012, 6). Moreover, women controlled the quality of the textiles, the ordinary consumption of textiles, as well as the ceremonial use. Also, women controlled the quality of textiles. In other words, women controlled the whole batik production process and trade.

In the Indonesian Archipelago, from the tenth century, cotton was produced but the quality was rather rough. The smoother Indian cotton became the preferred textile for batik production. The cottons were divided into four qualities: *primissima*[16], *prima*[17], *biru*[18], *merab*[19] (van Roojen 1993, 27) The preparation of the fabric before the wax application is the young women's task, consisting of four stages: (1) cotton fabric is thoroughly rinsed, (2) cotton fabric is soaked in vegetable oil to make the fabric receptive to the dye, (3) the cloth is starched to prevent the wax from permeating too deep, (4) creases are removed from the fabric traditionally done by pounding a wooden mallet on the fabric. Now, the fabric is ready for waxing, which is done by older women with more experience. *Polas*[20] are used for the process of copying a pattern on the fabric. Only very experienced artists are allowed to wax patterns from memory.

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[15] By Anthony Reid defined years of economic success in the Indonesian economy before 1600, in which Indonesians had attained remarkable wealth.

[16] Highest quality cotton, used for the most elaborate designs.

[17] Second-grade quality cotton.

[18] Literary translated as 'blue', third-grade quality cotton.

[19] Literary translated as 'red', fourth-grade quality cotton.

[20] Batik design example, often drawn on paper of white cotton. They circulated within a family for centuries and are prized possessions.

Batik can be categorized into two types. The first type of batik is *batik tulis*[21] , created with the traditional method. The wax is applied with a *canting pen*[22], the (pre) drawn pattern on the fabric is overdrawn with wax, and after the wax is applied identically on the other side of the fabric in the same pattern. The second type is *batik cap*[23], which refers to the process of wax application with a cap. This method is cheaper and faster and is often believed to be inspired by Indian block printing techniques. The cap technique was a reaction to the European industrialization of the textile industry and eventually led to the modernization of the batik industry in Java in the nineteenth century.

2.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter has addressed the discussion on defining batik and the idea of categorizing the wide variety of batik designs. The origins of the word batik and the ongoing attempts of Western academics to categorize batik designs proved to be a difficult task. This, because batik is difficult to categorize, and the variety of batik designs is continuously emerging, since batik is so adaptive to new (foreign) influences.

[21] Batik produced with the canting method.

[22] Instrument used for drawing on fabric with liquid wax. It was invented in the early seventeenth century.

[23] Batik produced with the cap method.

CHAPTER 3 BATIK IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Prior to the eighteenth century, batik was produced on a small scale, and the production process took a long time, often at least one harvesting season. Batik experienced popularization in 1642 as part of the *Javanization*[24] - a campaign run by the ruler of Jambi who was in need of the Mataram's favour. But it was only from the 1670s that Indian cloth imports to Java decreased substantially. What followed was a century of developments that made the Javanese batik industry emerge. In this chapter the eighteenth century and its context of time will be discussed, followed by the factors that stimulated the batik industry and the type of batik designs that newly emerged during this period.

3.1 EIGHTEENTH CENTURY - CONTEXT OF TIME

By the eighteenth century, the Dutch had established a strong trade network in Java to acquire Indonesian trade commodities such as spices, sugar and rice. The Indian textiles that were produced in Dutch production facilities in Coromandel were used to acquire the Indonesian goods. Indian textile production for local Indian use was different from the textiles that were produced for export. The Indian cloth from the Coromandel coast was specifically produced for the Javanese market, taking into consideration the Javanese taste in imported cloth (van Roojen 1993, 15). The Javanese enjoyed bright colours, flower patterns and textiles that were printed on both sides. Until the 1660s, almost 100% of the purchased and produced Indian textiles by the VOC were for Asian trade with the Indonesian Archipelago. However, by the end of the seventeenth century, 2/3 of the produced Indian textiles were sent to Holland, caused by the growing demand for Indian *chintz*[25] and

[24] A campaign by the ruler of Jambi in favour of the Javanese Mataram sultanate. The ruler of Jambi ordered everyone appearing before him to wear Javanese dress (which is batik).

[25] Indian fabric that is painted on both sides named the tapi-cindai and tapi-sarassa.

non-chintz[26] fabrics in Europe. Javanese demand in Indian textiles perished, visible in figure 2 providing information based on the Company's bookkeeping in Batavia on imported chintz to non-chintz. textiles. The decreasing trend of Indian textile sales in Java is visible.

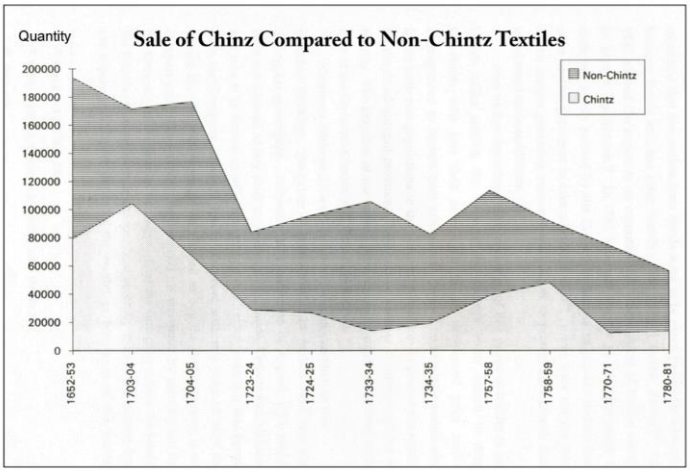

Figure 2: sale of Chintz compared to Non-Chintz textiles (1652-1780).

The decline in Indian textile exports to Java during the seventeenth and eighteenth century can be traced back to a variety of reasons. First, the VOC had questionable trade policies, which had an inauspicious effect on the Javanese economy. The Company had exploited the Javanese high demand for Indian textiles to its fullest for the Company's financial advantages (Laarhoven 1994, 64). This resulted in the Javanese not being able to afford the same amounts of imported Indian textiles as in previous times. Also Reid argued that as a result of European expansion in the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century, the Javanese had become impoverished (Reid 1980, 451). This resulted in a decreasing turnover of Indian textiles to Java. Secondly, the participation of the Javanese in the long-distance trade was reduced when the Dutch acquired trade monopolies. In 1677, by providing military assistance to the Mataram ruler, the Dutch acquired the monopolistic rights over the imports of Indian textiles on the North coastal ports of Java. In 1705, Pakubuwana I provided another monopoly on textile imports to Java for the Dutch. Now, the Javanese were almost fully dependent on Dutch imports of Indian textiles. Unfortunately, often the Dutch were not able to

[26] Indian fabric that is provided in a range of varieties, including plain, striped, checkered, muslin, or luxury textiles.

satisfy the Javanese textile demands. Thirdly, the prices of the Indian textiles that were exported to Java increased. Fewer competitors because of the VOC monopoly on the trade of Indian textiles that the Indonesian Archipelago which made the prices rise (Arasaratnam 1984, 129-131). Also, the less supply of Indian textiles due to problems of war on the Coromandel Coast, and Indian textiles that became *en vogue*[27] in Europe from the 1680s inflated the prices even more. As shown in the trade figure of table 3, the private trade from Batavia to the North Coast of Java decreased. The non-VOC private import of Indian textiles to Batavia fell from 57,970 pieces in 1685 to 1,919 pieces in 1740 (Nagtegaal 1996, 148). The table does not include numbers of the textiles imported by the VOC. But, these should be even lower than the numbers of private traders, since the VOC made use of middlemen (Kwee 2005, 9). As a result of the lowering interest of Indonesians in Indian fabrics, the VOC saw its profits decrease tremendously since the Asiatic trading partners of the VOC no longer accepted the Indian textiles as a form of exchange in the pepper and tin trade. In the spice trade, Indian textiles retained their position until mid-eighteenth century, however only very small margins were reached as a result of the diminishing Javanese demand in Indian textiles (Jacobs 2000, 61).

year	quantity (rix-dollars)	year	quantity (rix-dollars)	year	quantity (rix-dollars)
1672	37,893	1695	26,923	1720	14,043
1675	38,857	1700	8,440	1725	8,820
1680	41,234	1705	4,838	1730	7,635
1685	57,970	1710	7,844	1735	3,015
1690	41,143	1716	4,635	1740	1,919

Figure 3: Exports of Indian textiles from Batavia to the Pasisir by private traders, in Dutch rix-dollars.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the industrial revolution took off in England in order to be less dependent on non-English textile industries and started to imitate the Indian textiles that had been very popular from the 1680s (Davidson 2012, 10). Previous to the mid-eighteenth century, cotton only accounted for a very small proportion of Europe's textile industry. The industry was mainly

[27] Trendy, in fashion.

focused on wool, linen, and partly on silk and hemp. Eventually raw-cotton and cotton yarn became very desirable trade goods as the Western textile industries emerged. India became the main raw cotton producer for the Lancashire textile mills. America developed into the main competitor of India, by competing with a very strong North-American type of cotton and cheap labour from its slavery past (Riello 2005, 10-11). This competition led to low raw cotton prices, and with new machine production, prices for finished cotton products decreased fast. India had changed to a raw cotton production country, leaving the finishing cotton products industry to the English.

The VOC suffered a setback during the second half of the eighteenth century. Changing demands in commodities led to new trading plans. From the start of the eighteenth century, the Dutch started to buy Javanese cotton yarn, as there was a reasonable market in India and Holland (Nagtegaal 1996, 24). During the rise of the industrial revolution, the demand for cotton yarn increased and cotton yarn-spinning centres emerged. Java became the main exporter of cotton yarn, besides having a well-developed batik industry. But, the VOC had financial troubles and in the second half of the eighteenth century went into decline. The Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, from 1780-1784 hit hard in the business and profits of the VOC and it nearly went bankrupt. Another setback for the Company was when Dutch governor Jacob Eilbracht had to hand over the Coromandel trade posts to the British in 1795. Despite various attempts to recover, the VOC became insolvent and was handed over to a government committee on the first of March 1796. On the 31st of December 1800, the VOC was officially stated bankrupt.

3.2 FACTORS THAT STIMULATED BATIK IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Javanese textile production increased over the eighteenth century. Batik production emerged from locally based production in small quantities at the end of the seventeenth century, to considerably large quantities of batik exported to as far as Europe during the eighteenth century (Kwee 2015, 150-151). Chinese immigration was actively stimulated by the Dutch in the eighteenth century. Before the eighteenth century, Chinese traders had been settling in relatively small numbers

on the Indonesian island. During the eighteenth century, it is notable that relatively high numbers of Chinese settlements appeared, mainly along the Javanese North Coast. The Chinese traders took important positions in local economies. On the North Coast of Java, they became a rapid force in textile trade and small-scale manufacturing of batik. With growing textile production centres and larger volumes produced due to more efficient production methods, Java emerged as a textile exporter to the surrounding Indonesian islands. Chinese traders also began to apply a credit system to peasant households in return for guaranteed deliveries of textiles (Kwee 2015, 164-165). More fortunate Chinese merchants would also collect taxes over the collected textiles, named tjap tjap. This way, the Javanese textiles became very desired commodities, since the tax money on the textiles was high. Due to irregularities in the tjap tjap system, it was abolished in the late 1740s, but it had given a considerable large boost to the batik industry.

Javanese demand for Indian textiles had perished by the absence of Indian textiles in Java, and the misunderstanding of VOC officials on the Javanese demands for Indian textiles. It can be assumed, that due to the crisis of Indian import textiles, indigenous batik production techniques improved. Batik had to evolve in technique, to be able to replicate the Indian textiles. Over the centuries, Indian textiles had become an essential part of Indonesian 'tradition'. When the Indian textile import stopped in the eighteenth century, the Javanese decided to preserve the tradition of Indian textiles in Java, and started to produce batik with Indian references in batik pattern designs. Moreover, with growing Dutch dominance, the preservation of Indonesian traditions became increasingly important for many, which resulted in a Javanese demand and preference for locally produced batiks.

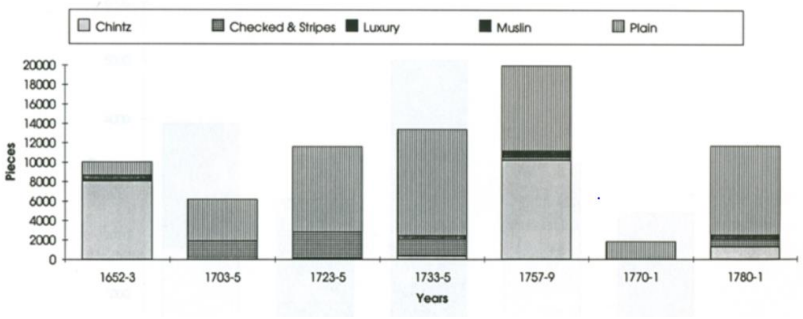

Figure 4: Textile sales on the North Coast of Java (1652-1780).

British plain white cottons were exported to Java in high numbers from the mid-eighteenth century onwards as visible in figure 4. The position of India as main cloth exporter to Java was replaced by the English textile industry. The new textile industry that had evolved in Western Europe during the industrial revolution, was in search of a new market to supply them with the English produced cloth for affordable prices. The Javanese market became one of the largest importers of English white plain cottons. Also, new artificial dyes arrived in Java which were imported by the Dutch (Patria 2016, 127). A combination of natural and artificial dyes brought new colour varieties, enabling a wider colour scheme for batik designs. The innovation of a small, copper crucible with a bamboo handle and narrow application spout for wax came into use in the mid-eighteenth century, named the canting. With the smooth machine-made cloth from England (artificial) resits-dyes held better on the fabric, making the Javanese batik production grow rapidly.

3.3 NEW EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BATIK

After all the developments that had taken place in the eighteenth century, new forms of batik emerged in Java. Surrounding regions of Java became more dependent on the Javanese batik since Indian textiles imports had perished. As the Dutch prominence increased, the class differentiation in the Indonesian Archipelago became more important and specific differences between layers of the Indonesian population were established by the Dutch. To maintain good

relationships with the Javanese elite, the Dutch made special regulations for the nobility and specific batik patterns became prohibited for commoners to wear (Haake 1989, 816).

The Javanese produced, just as the Indians had done, based on the preferences and demand of their clientele. This resulted in new batik designs such as a so-called “Banda-type” (Kwee 2005, 18-19). The newly established batik type was then named after the region it was produced for. Over time, batik became a method of preserving the tradition of the usage of Indian textiles in the Indonesian Archipelago. The Javanese batik industry reinvented these traditions by applying Indian aspects to the Javanese batik as a way of reconstructing the Indian textiles. The replication of the Indian designs into the batik style was not to copy these but to maintain and preserve the tradition of Indian textiles in Java (Banerjee 2016, 28). Most of the influences that were used during the batik production were based on the chintz, and *patola*[28] fabrics from India. Most important to consider in the Javanese batik is the *kepala*[29] in combination with the *tumpal*[30]. The tumpal is a typical Indian design feature visible in figure 5 and figure 6. In figure 7, two batik designs from the eighteenth century are represented, featuring the Indian tumpal. Moreover, Indian design features such as colour use, lines and geographical forms were implemented in eighteenth century Javanese batik in order to reconstruct the Indian textiles.

[28] Is a double ikat woven sari, from Gujarat, India. Also named a ritual heirloom.

[29] So-called 'head' of the sarong. The kepala is stitched at the sarong to form a tube.

[30] The 'head' of the cloth. It consists of a row of triangles, which can be facing each other, or a single row.

Figure 5: Ceremonial cloth, with the design of hunting on a madder ground. Gujarat, India/Sulawesi, Indonesia, eighteenth century. Kyushu National Museum.

Figure 6: Patola ceremonial cloth and sacred heirloom. A double ikat with natural dyes from India, eighteenth century. National Gallery of Australia.

Figure 7: Two batiks from the eighteenth century from the collection by Thomas Stanford Raffles. Similar batiks, but the kepala with papan are differently placed.

3.4 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Javanese demand in Indian textiles had vanished caused by increased prices, lesser availability and low qualities of the Indian fabrics that were imported by the Dutch. The combination of Chinese migrants who participated in the Javanese textile industry, cheap imported British plain cottons, the availability of artificial dyes and the usage of the cap in the production process were indicators for the emergence of the batik industry. Also, the fact that the preference for Indian textiles had not vanished, stimulated the batik production to reproduce Indian textiles as batik variations.

CHAPTER 4 NINETEENTH CENTURY BATIK PRODUCTION AND TRADE

The Javanese batik industry had experienced considerable growth in the eighteenth century. Java had become the main island in the Indonesian Archipelago for the production of batik. The growing Indonesian demand for batik had made all-year-round batik production possible. In the nineteenth century, foreign influences became more important in the batik industry, and stimulated the commercialisation of batik. Batik became one of the main trade commodities of the Indonesian Archipelago.

4.1 COMMERCIALISATION OF BATIK

Until the late eighteenth century, batik production took place in rural-based cottage industries, in which households engaged as a production facility for small quantity batik productions (Laarhoven 1994, 19). But, from the early nineteenth century larger commercial batik centres developed in the Pasisir (van Roojen 1993, 21). Batik was no longer produced only for personal use but transformed into a product of trade. The foreign interests in the Javanese batik industry increased. When Java was occupied by the English between 1811-1816, the English made an attempt to increase Javanese demand in the British produced *imitation-batik*[31] (Speé 1977, 21). But this was not of success, because of the low quality of English imitation-batik and the high production costs for the imitation-batik leading to high prices. When the Dutch reclaimed Java in 1816, the Dutch continued to develop the batik industry that was previously set up by the English. Javanese batiks and batik artisans were sent to Holland to teach the Dutch the art of batik. Within a few years the Dutch were able to produce imitation-batik in a shorter time, in decent qualities for lower prices than the Javanese batiks, with a specially made machine named the rouleauxpressingmachine.

[31] Batik produced by Western textile factories and inspired by the traditional Javanese batik.

In Java, the traditional batik industry commercialized as a reaction to the growing Western imitation-batik in the nineteenth century (Speé 1977, 21). The British and Dutch continued to export increasing large amounts of plain woven cotton from Western factories to Java (van Roojen 1993, 21). The machine-produced cottons were smooth and even cheaper than in the eighteenth century, allowing further development of high-quality batik. One of the reactions to the growing commercialisation of batik in the West was a movement of extremely fine and difficult hand-drawn batik designs (Speé 1977, 21). These hand drawn fine designs were impossible to be reproduced by machines in the same high quality as it was done by hand. The special batiks that were produced according to the traditional production methods were exclusively waxed on the purest and high-quality cottons, which was not done in the production of imitation-batik because that was too expensive. Another reaction in order to be able to compete with the Western imitation-batik was the Javanese attempts to reduce the batik production time (Speé 1977, 21). The invention of the *tjap*[32] enabled the Javanese to produce batik by stamping the batik designs on the cotton fabric, followed by paint coverage. The production time of batik was reduced immensely. Batik designs that took three months before the usage of the tjap, now took one day only. Also, the application of synthetic dyes, imported from India by the Dutch reduced the production process of batik substantially. With synthetic dyes, the process of dyeing was reduced to hours.

During the 1830s, Batik became a popular activity among Indo-European women (van Roojen 1993, 22). They were the first who brought batik production from the village to the urban workshops to increase efficiency. Often the urban workshops were on the grounds of their house, where batik was produced based on European taste. The most well-known Indo-European batik entrepreneur is Eliza Charlotta van Zuylen, who is famous for her approach to *Batik belanda*[33] (Veldhuisen 1993, 12). Batik belanda is known for its representations of bouquets and flowers, according to Dutch

[32] Copper stamp used in batik production and was invented in the nineteenth century.

[33] Batik which was made in Indo-European batik manufactories and had adapted European patterns and motifs.

preferences (Hochstrasser 2013, 148). A few decades later, the Chinese followed by starting batik production centres to produce designs based on Chinese, but also European and Javanese demand. New batik patterns were adapted, such as *the dot batik*[34] and the adaption of the *tree of life design*[35], which both relate to Indian textile designs. Over time, batik designs started to mix and became more hybrid. The city of Pekalongan, on the North Coast of Java, became the centre for the mixed style batiks and developed into the main commercial batik production centre from the 1880s until the 1940s. In contrast, the batik makers in the centre of Java remained with their classical batik patterns.

4.2 EXPORT OF BATIK

The Dutch were considerably supportive of the Javanese batik production and started to export large quantities to Holland (van Roojen 1993, 23). The export and trade of Javanese batik to other regions of the Indonesian Archipelago and the globe was supported by the relatively stable climate of the second half of the nineteenth century, and the optimization of the global infrastructure which allowed products to be traded fast and easy. The spread of sizeable communities of Chinese, Arabs, Europeans and Eurasians created a market for a variety of both new hybrid batik patterned fabrics and classical batik fabrics. The Javanese batik producers who were quick in adjusting new batik patterns to the often changing customer demands and the expansion of commercial batik production centres made batik a favourable trade product.

For the large numbers of batik that were exported, considerable high numbers of plain-woven cottons and yarn were imported from the Western European factories to the Indonesian Archipelago. As seen in figure 8, from the total amounts of imported cloth and yarn, most went to

[34] Indian Coromandel Coast cloth design that was adapted on batik since the Indian textile industry had collapsed in the eighteenth century.

[35] A specific design with leaves, flowers and birds growing on top of the mountain. It has mystical importance for both Indians and Indonesians.

Java since Java was the largest producer and exporter of batik, the need for cheap and plain cotton cloth from the West was high.

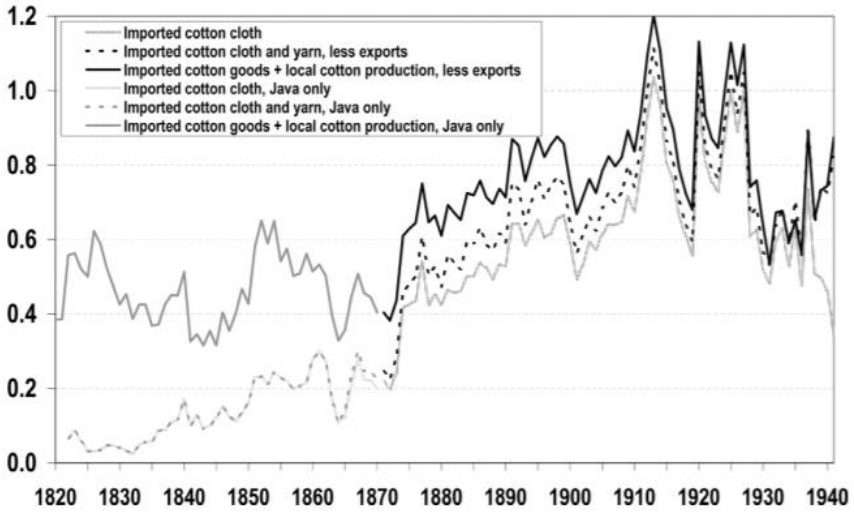

Figure 8: Textile industry in colonial Indonesia 1820-1941 (kilograms, cumulative) note: 1820-1870 refers to Java as a whole and 1871-1941 to Indonesia as a whole.

Over the years of Dutch dominance, the Javanese batik was exported to a small variety of regions. It was not until the commercialization of batik in the nineteenth century that batik became exported on a large scale, since prior to the nineteenth century batiks were more expensive and produced in smaller quantities making the fabric less suitable for large scale export. Often new batik varieties developed and a batik industry of its own was established in the regions where batik was exported to. A well-known, small scaled batik industry developed in Sri Lanka. Originally, batik production was practiced by female aristocrats of the central Lankan kingdom and eventually the craft was introduced to the artisan classes. They developed the Sri Lankan batik designs. Banishment and exile were a vital part of the Dutch colonial rule in the Dutch Indies. It is assumable that batik production techniques were transmitted from Java to Sri Lanka during the process of banishment of Javanese royals. This, because Javanese batik was often produced by the courts of the sultanates in central Java. Unique for Sri Lankan batik is the representations of humans and animals, which is not seen in Islamic countries that produce batiks such as Indonesia. Also, Indonesian batiks were

transported to the African West coast on a small scale from the seventeenth century onwards by the VOC. As the Dutch saw a large potential African market when imitation batiks were produced in the nineteenth century, exportation of (imitation) batiks increased to a large scale to the West coast of Africa (Rovine 2009, 48). By implementing African customer demands, specific African batiks were developed. Following an intensive integration progress of the Dutch produced resist-dyed fabrics, it has now become an important part of African textile identity and tradition (Wronska-Friend 2018, 1).

4.3 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Batik had become an important trade commodity as a result of commercialisation, which was foremost caused by the development of the Javanese batik industry in the eighteenth century. But it was not until when Indo-European female entrepreneurship started to increase their interest in batik in the 1830s, that batik was widely spread over the globe. Batik was only able to become so popular, because of a combination of the eighteenth century and nineteenth century factors, resulting in the spread of the traditional art of batik as a modernized version that had become a favoured textile on a global scale. In this approach, the important role of the Dutch should not be forgotten.

CONCLUSION

The Dutch attempted to take advantage of the high demand for Indian textiles that was caused by the ancient importance of textiles in the Indonesian Archipelago. The colonial urge to profit had led to the Dutch monopolization of Indian textile imports to the Dutch Indies. Soon after Javanese demand in Indian textiles vanished and was replaced by the local, already existing batik industry. This was not because the Javanese became too impoverished under Dutch rule, leaving the Javanese unable to pay for the Indian textiles as some suggest. It was the Dutch VOC that was unable to meet the Javanese Indian textile demand, exporting only low quality Indian textiles in unwanted patterns to the Indonesian Archipelago. The Javanese demand in Indian textiles was replaced by the emergence of the Javanese batik industry in which the Indian textiles were reproduced. The growing demand and improvements of the batik manufacturing resulted in the commercialisation of batik, in which the Dutch and English played a considerable important role. The Javanese batik industry was able to develop into a key player in textile export in the nineteenth century, because of the bankruptcy of the VOC, the short time of English occupation of Java and because of the British industrial revolution resulting in the availability of smooth white cottons that suited perfectly for the production of Javanese batik. In other words, because of Dutch domination in Java, the batik industry was able to commercialise and spread over the globe as an important trade commodity and beloved fabric in many countries.

Further research should be done on batik that emerged during the commercialisation of batik in the nineteenth century. The spread of batik to different regions of the world and the role of the Dutch in this should be investigated. Moreover, the different batik patterns that were developed by mainly female batik entrepreneurs from the mid-nineteenth century until the World War II should be looked at with extra attention.

GLOSSARY

Batik: A method of pattern printing on cotton cloth using wax on the parts with no colour.

Batik belanda: Batik was made in Indo-European batik manufactories and had adapted European patterns and motifs.

Batik cap: Batik produced with the cap method.

Batik kraton: Royal batik.

Batik tulis: Batik produced with the canting method.

Biru: Literary translated as 'blue', third-grade quality cotton.

Boom years: By Anthony Reid defined years of economic success in the Indonesian economy before 1600, in which Indonesians had attained remarkable wealth.

Cap: Stamp with a pattern, used for the production of batik, came up in batik production in the early nineteenth century.

Canting pen: Instrument used for drawing on fabric with liquid wax. It was invented in the early seventeenth century.

Chintz: Indian fabric that is painted on both sides named the tapi-cindai and tapi-sarassa.

Dot batik: Indian Coromandel Coast cloth design that was adapted on batik since the Indian textile industry had collapsed in the eighteenth century.

EID: English East India Companies.

En vogue: Trendy, in fashion.

Hari batik: To wear batik clothes once a week.

Imitation batik: Batik produced by Western textile factories and inspired by the traditional Javanese batik.

Javanization: A campaign by the ruler of Jambi in favour of the Javanese Mataram sultanate. The ruler of Jambi ordered everyone appearing before him to wear Javanese dress (which is batik).

Kain panjang: A shirt-like garment made of a piece of fabric that is decorated with a batik print.

Kepala: So-called 'head' of the sarong. The kepala is stitched at the sarong to form a tube.

Kumitar: An expensive batiked cotton, originating in India.

Merab: Literary translated as 'red', fourth-grade quality cotton.

Non-chintz: Indian fabric that is provided in a range of varieties, including plain, striped, checkered, muslin, or luxury textiles.

Patola: Is a double ikat woven sari, from Gujarat, India. Also named a ritual heirloom.

Pasisir: The North Coast of Java.

Picis: Short-lived, common currency, introduced by the Chinese in the seventeenth century.

Prima: Second-grade quality cotton.

Primissima: Highest quality cotton, used for the most elaborate designs.

Polas: Batik design example, often drawn on paper of white cotton. They circulated within a family for centuries and are prized possessions.

Resist dyeing: Method of dyeing by tying or covering the woven fabric with a dye-resistant substance to prevent this from absorbing colour.

Sarong: Printed tube skirt originating in Indonesia. It is made by cutting pieces of batik in straight lines and sewing these together.

Sima: Tax grant inscriptions of Java.

Tjap: Copper stamp used in batik production and was invented in the nineteenth century.

Tree of life: A specific design with leaves, flowers and birds, growing on top of the mountain. It has mystical importance for both Indians and Indonesians.

Tumpal: The 'head' of the cloth. It consists of a row of triangles, which can be facing each other, or a single row.

VOC: Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (nl), Dutch East Indies (en).

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