



*Volume 15, Issue 1 (Winter 2023)*

# Locating the Madras Kerchief in Global Textile Trade: Convergences Between Connecting Threads and the Dutch Textile Trade Project

Part I: *Researchers in the Field*

Victoria de Lorenzo, Avalon Fotheringham, Deepthi Murali, Meha Priyadarshini

---

Recommended Citation:

Victoria de Lorenzo, Avalon Fotheringham, Deepthi Murali, Meha Priyadarshini, “Locating the Madras Kerchief in Global Textile Trade: Convergences Between Connecting Threads and the Dutch Textile Trade Project,” *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 15:1 (Winter 2023)

DOI: [10.5092/jhna.2023.15.1.4](https://doi.org/10.5092/jhna.2023.15.1.4)

Available at <https://jhna.org/articles/locating-the-madras-kerchief-in-global-textile-trade-convergences-between-connecting-threads-and-dutch-textile-trade-project/>

Published by Historians of Netherlandish Art: <https://hnanews.org/>

Republication Guidelines: <https://jhna.org/republication-guidelines/>

*Notes: This PDF is provided for reference purposes only and does not contain all the functionality and features of the digital images embedded in the online publication. Instead, the illustrations follow the text. This PDF provides paragraph numbers as well as page numbers for citation purposes.*

ISSN: 1949-9833

# Locating the Madras Kerchief in Global Textile Trade: Convergences Between Connecting Threads and the Dutch Textile Trade Project

Victoria de Lorenzo, Avalon Fotheringham, Deepthi Murali, Meha Priyadarshini

*This essay presents collaborative research related to the National Endowment for the Humanities-Arts and Humanities Research Council grant-funded project [Connecting Threads](#), a website that brings together academics and curators across the United Kingdom and the United States who seek to contribute to wider decolonization work in the humanities and engage communities whose contributions to global cultures of textiles and fashion have historically been ignored. The Connecting Threads research team uses the [Dutch Textile Trade Project](#)'s data and web applications to deepen understanding of the Madras kerchief, a large checked cotton square cloth that circulated in Afro-diasporic communities in the Caribbean during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.*

- 1 Connecting Threads ([connectingthreads.co.uk](http://connectingthreads.co.uk)) is a collaborative digital humanities project aimed at foregrounding the influence of overlooked actors in the shaping of history through fashion. It does so by concentrating on the consumption of Indian and imitation Indian fabrics by Afro-diasporic communities in the Caribbean during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The project is currently investigating the history of the Madras kerchief, which continues to be fashionable even today (fig. 1). Indeed, Madras has become a national symbol in parts of the Caribbean, while in India it serves as an emblem of heritage textile craftsmanship.
- 2 The apparent simplicity of this large checked cotton square contrasts with the complexities of its global popularity. Although established demand in West African and Afro-American markets contributed financially to the mass production of Madras kerchiefs imitations in Europe, the literature has left unattended the agency of South Indian lower-caste weavers and the tastes of African and African-diasporic communities in shaping global connections. Supported by a National Endowment for the Humanities-Arts and Humanities Research Council (NEH-AHRC) grant, Connecting Threads brings together academics and curators across the United Kingdom and the United States who seek to contribute to wider decolonization work in the humanities and engage communities whose contributions to global cultures of textiles and fashion have historically been ignored.<sup>1</sup>
- 3 Although Connecting Threads focuses mostly on the British Empire, it is in conversation with the Dutch Textile Trade Project. Historian Chris Nierstrasz has demonstrated that in order to understand the British East India Company's evolution as a major textile trader, it is necessary to

attend to the development of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and their mutual rivalry within a global context.<sup>2</sup> Both *Connecting Threads* and the Dutch Textile Trade Project foreground textiles as a means of understanding how people and places were connected in this era of the “merchant empires.”<sup>3</sup> Both projects are also committed to highlighting connections that have thus far not received much attention. In the case of *Connecting Threads*, we are doing this by focusing on a particular type of Indian textile that was consumed by specific populations in the Caribbean. The Dutch Textile Trade Project presents data that brings together Dutch East India Company (VOC) and West India Company (WIC) textile trade records, allowing users to see how places like the Coromandel Coast in India, Batavia, and Dutch Guyana were connected in the early eighteenth century. In what follows, members of the *Connecting Threads* team have outlined the ways in which we find the Dutch Textile Trade Project to be useful for us and to the study of textile history and global connectivity in general.

## Textiles and Global History

- 4 Scholars in a variety of disciplines have argued for the importance of textiles, especially Indian cotton textiles, to the expansion of European maritime empires. Some have looked at the issue from an economic history perspective, considering the volume of textiles exported to Europe and the impact this had on industries in Europe and South Asia.<sup>4</sup> More recent research has considered the trade of these textiles by European companies to Africa, where they were a key commodity for the transatlantic slave trade.<sup>5</sup> Scholars interested in the cultural impact of the movement of these goods have considered how fashions changed in the places where these textiles were introduced.<sup>6</sup> One of the most important contributions of the Dutch Textile Trade Project is the possibility of bringing these different strands of scholarship on the economic and cultural history of textiles together.
- 5 Scholars will be able to use the information provided by the project to consider the numbers and types of textiles that moved between different sites in the Dutch empire and then match that data with visual and material sources, such as textile samples, paintings, and prints. This will serve to deepen both types of analyses: economic historians will be able to assess how qualitative factors such as color, pattern, and texture impacted these exchanges, and art historians will have access to the kind of quantitative data necessary to support arguments predicated on visual sources. This latter point is a particularly important one for the *Connecting Threads* project, as we rely on European depictions of life in the Caribbean to try to understand what types of textiles were consumed by the African diasporic population in the region.
- 6 One well-known source of such depictions are the works of Agostino Brunias (ca. 1730–1796) who painted life in the ceded islands of Dominica, St. Vincent, Grenada, and Tobago (fig. 2). Brunias was commissioned to present life in these islands as idyllic, thereby encouraging investment in plantations by the British, especially in the wake of the abolition movement.<sup>7</sup> The problematic patronage of Brunias’s work complicates any use of his paintings to identify what people might have actually worn and how. However, with the help of data provided by the Dutch Textile Trade Project, we can begin to assess to what extent the visual record is accurate. The data helps us see the sheer number of Indian textiles that were in circulation in the world in the

eighteenth century and also to trace specific categories of cloth, such as guinea cloth, from South India to Dutch Guyana in the Americas. We know that the various East India Companies followed similar patterns of trade, exchanged many of the same commodities, and competed for the same markets. The Dutch data provided by the Dutch Textile Trade Project can help projects like ours use information about the types of textiles and their volumes to be more confident in our assertions about the types of Indian cloth available in the Caribbean and circum-Caribbean—especially as, to date, we have found a dearth of surviving pre-nineteenth-century examples of Indian cloth with documented provenance linked to the Caribbean.

## Textiles, Terminology and the Dutch Textile Trade Project Dataset

- 7 Textile history studies are rife with challenges of terminology. Any one textile type may have dozens of names across different production and consumption markets; the characteristics of that textile may fundamentally change depending on time, place, and agent; imitations, both overt and covert, may complicate understandings of origin and definition; and, as with all consumption histories, records themselves are not infallible. Contemporary traders and consumers themselves were subject to mistakes of terminology and understanding. As a result, researchers are often limited to informed guesswork, patched together from whatever consistencies they are able to glean across extant identified examples, trade records, swatch books, contemporary accounts, and visual depictions. Such has certainly been the experience of our project team in researching the history of the Madras kerchief.
  
- 8 As such, a database that enables access to both value and volume data, as does the Dutch Textile Trade Project, offers researchers the extraordinary opportunity to undertake substantial comparative analysis in a way that is rarely possible in textile history. The ability to view all the trade names found across years of Dutch textile trade both challenges and illuminates our understandings of the cloth being traded. Take, for example, the differentiation between guinea cloth and gingham in the ledgers, which confirms that these fabrics were delineated for the purposes of the Dutch trade. In style and substance, the two types of textiles may have—in some contexts—been very similar, and indeed the two terms are often conflated in discussions of checked and striped trade cottons from India (ginghams at times being a category of so-called “guinea cloth/guinea stuffs” and at others being distinct from it).<sup>8</sup> The overlaps and differences in the destination markets of these two varieties, as seen in the database, might support either categorization. According to the database, guinea cloths were sent to Angola, Benin, Ghana, Guyana, Indonesian Timor, Iran, Jakarta, Japan, Java, Maluku, Mauritania, the Netherlands, Sri Lanka, Sumatra, Malaysia, and Yemen, while gingham was sent to essentially the same markets, excluding those of Angola, Benin, Ghana, and Guyana. This might suggest that either gingham were considered distinct from guinea cloth when it came to the West African market, or that—for that market—a clerical differentiation was not made between the two. Further exploration of the modifiers listed for the gingham and guinea cloth orders, as included in the database, can shed light on these distinctions, as the Dutch Textile Trade team has already proven through their excellent explorations of terminology in their visual textile glossary.

- 9 For the Connecting Threads project, the dataset allows us to pose a diverse range of questions regarding the cotton textiles that we are examining, especially checked textiles and kerchiefs such as guinea cloth, gingham, and rumal (*roemaal*) (fig. 3). These questions range from analyzing how many of these textiles were exported from the Indian subcontinent to other parts of the world to visualizing the ebb and flow of circulation of these textiles over the first quarter of the eighteenth century in VOC-engaged markets. For example, we learn that there was an almost equal enthusiasm in sourcing gingham from regions that lay within Bengal (14,6434 pieces) and the Coromandel regions of Southeastern India (18,7009 pieces), while only one entry shows it being sourced from the western Indian major port of Gujarat (three hundred pieces). This was not the case with some of the other textiles, like guinea cloth, that when sourced from India were sourced mostly from Southeastern India but were also sourced in large numbers possibly from various centers in Southeast Asia. While economic historians have generally identified VOC activity in India as being rooted in their strongholds on the eastern part of the subcontinent, the details of which textiles were being sourced from where is an important contribution from this dataset that challenges ideas about where the VOC was active in the Indian subcontinent and across Asia and Africa.
- 10 More significantly for our project, the dataset allows us to access descriptive data from VOC archives that help fill gaps of knowledge surrounding some of these textiles. For example, we get a sense of how Europeans were identifying and classifying textiles for export, which then helps us disambiguate the use of terms that upon first analysis may appear to be used interchangeably. From the VOC dataset, it becomes clear that a textile like gingham was classified not only by quality—*fijn* (fine) or *gemeen* (ordinary)—but by many other categories as well: design (*effen* [plain], *geruit* [checked], *gestreept* [striped]); color (*rood* [red], *dronggangs* [brown-red]); or where they are from (*effen Bengaals* or *effen Coromandels*). We learn that not only were textiles exported as is but also stitched, as seen in gingham materials marked as *fijn geruit onderbroek* (fine checked underclothes) or *onderbroeken* (underclothes). While there is a differentiation of gingham as fine and coarse, it is not marked as anything but cotton, whereas guinea cloth—also marked as fine, coarse, and raw—is classified as linen in addition to these other categories. This gives us further ways to distinguish between these textiles and disambiguate available records from other East Indian Companies and cloth traders from India and other regions that were engaged in the trade of these textiles.

## Madras Kerchiefs and Dutch Textile Trade Project

- 11 The scale and scope of the Dutch Textile Trade Project dilates the context that Connecting Threads deepens. Connecting Threads has identified in the Madras kerchief a vehicle to qualitatively foreground hitherto marginalized south-to-south connections. However, the Madras kerchief was just one of the hundreds of categories of Indian cottons traded across Europe, Africa, the Americas, and Asia that radically transformed global fashions (and history). The broader context is quantitatively affirmed by the Dutch Textile Trade Project. Its infographics, based on a systematic examination of the VOC and WIC commercial routes,

communicate at once the growth and composition of the highly competitive early-modern long-distance trade in which the Madras kerchief thrived as a product.

- 12 The chronological focus of the Dutch Textile Trade Project (currently 1700–1724, with plans to expand) is complementary to *Connecting Threads*. In particular, the absence of items labeled as Madras kerchiefs in the Dutch context for the given period informs our findings. At present, we have not identified Madras kerchiefs (named as such) in any of the consulted sources prior to the 1760s and 1770s. The seeming terminological gap in both research projects aligns with investigations on the French East India Company and French Indian Colonies, including the early study by G. G. Jouveau-Dubreuil, who claimed that the Madras kerchief was only adopted after 1750 because “from 1600 until 1750 they were always called Pulicat handkerchiefs.”<sup>9</sup> Legoux de Flaix, meanwhile, stated that by the end of the eighteenth century the term “Madras kerchief” was mistakenly used to talk about Pulicat kerchiefs, despite none being manufactured in Madras.<sup>10</sup> Yet, by the 1770s, sources distinguish between Madras and Pulicat kerchiefs.<sup>11</sup> What all these findings suggest is that “Madras kerchief” may be a constructed marker whose origins we should probably pin down to the mid-eighteenth century, in connection with the development of import-substitutions by European manufacturers marketing their products as Indian, and with mercantile companies disputing their grip over textile-producing regions in India and over the Atlantic markets. In contrast, what the Dutch Textile Project has identified are kerchiefs labeled as bandannas and rumals (roemaals) from Bengal and the coast of Coromandel.<sup>12</sup>
- 13 Despite the absence of Madras kerchiefs in the Dutch Textile Trade Project database, we have been able to use the data to explore which textile names resonate most with our understanding of these textiles as they existed at the time, such as gingham and guinea cloth. Using these names, we are further able to track what proportion of the selected textiles were exported through Dutch operations year by year, and to some extent where they were exported (allowing for unknown quantities traded as re-exports). By comparing these data with the data collected by us and others on the British East India Company trade, as well as early forays into the French East India Company trade, we are able to fill in a picture of how Madras kerchiefs changed hands and, by extension, find more clues as to their design, production, and consumption histories.

## Conclusion

- 14 The textiles examined in *Connecting Threads* and the Dutch Textile Trade Project are culturally composite products. We can see this in the Madras kerchief, whose definition can only be understood as a result of a process in which producers in Southeastern India (fig. 4), European traders, and global consumers equally participated, either freely or forcefully, in furnishing it with meaning and value. Yet objects such as the Madras kerchief have remained outside the focus of a myopic scholarship and public knowledge. Together, both projects offer scholars, students, and connoisseurs tools to challenge Eurocentric historiographic traditions. By mapping global circulations, highlighting diverse markets, and setting paintings in dialogue with textile swatches, the Dutch Textile Trade Project displaces center-periphery art-historical discourses. It advances the “horizontalization” of art history’s hierarchy of artifacts.<sup>13</sup> *Connecting Threads* unfolds the

history of the Madras kerchief as a shared space where eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Indian weavers met Black Caribbean consumers. Together the two projects intervene in and disrupt Eurocentric tropes in the writing of (fashion) history.

- 15 The Dutch Textile Trade Project is impressive for the amount of data collected, and the intended accessibility of this data through the platform interfaces make this project's goals even more laudable. The visualizations generated by the platform give users aerial views of decades of international trade while providing multiple "ways-in" to engage with deeper research—the ultimate objective for any public humanities resource. Overall, this tool will be valuable to any researcher grappling with tangles in textile history.

## Biographies

**Victoria de Lorenzo** is a research assistant for *Connecting Threads* and a PhD candidate in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures at the University of Glasgow. She is a textile historian interested in revealing the dynamics of the material world by attending to the materiality of textiles as agents of economic and cultural change in processes of circulation from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. Her thesis, titled "Connecting Threads: The Transnational Textile Trade between Nineteenth century Britain and the Spanish-speaking World," employs a transnational approach and combines business records with other archival and material evidence to trace the reciprocal impact of textile traders, recipient societies, and intermediaries in the Anglo-Hispanic textile trade between the 1830s and 1914.

[v.delorenzo.1@research.gla.ac.uk](mailto:v.delorenzo.1@research.gla.ac.uk)

**Avalon Fotheringham** is a co-investigator at *Connecting Threads* and curator of South Asian textiles at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Fotheringham's research focuses on Indian textile production and circulation in the nineteenth century, especially the establishment and growth of museum-based sample collections in support of industrial manufacturing. She is especially interested in histories of textile technologies and design change in South Asia. Her recent research has included examining the introduction and reception of early synthetic dyes, American cotton and African indigo in India, and their consequences to Indian textile production. Her most recent publication is a chapter entitled "India as Designer to the World" in the forthcoming volume, *India in Fashion* (Rizzoli Publishing, 2023).

[a.fotheringham@vam.ac.uk](mailto:a.fotheringham@vam.ac.uk)

**Dr. Deepthi Murali** is a principal investigator on *Connecting Threads* and a research assistant professor at the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History New Media (RRCHNM) at George Mason University. Murali is an art historian of South Asia specializing in transcultural decorative arts and littoral artistic practices and encounters in South India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Her current digital art history projects examine the history of production and circulation of eighteenth-century Indian cotton textiles across the world. In addition to *Connecting Threads*, she is conducting another digital art history project, *Digital Chintz*, which examines new methodologies in the field of digital art history working with museum collections and museum metadata.

[dmurali2@gmu.edu](mailto:dmurali2@gmu.edu)

**Dr. Meha Priyadarshini** is a principal investigator on *Connecting Threads* and a lecturer in early modern history at the University of Edinburgh. Priyadarshini's research covers the areas of global history, material culture studies, colonial Latin American history and the emerging field of global Asian studies. In addition to *Connecting Threads*, she is currently working on another textiles-based project on fashion and identity in the Spanish Empire. Her most recent publication is a chapter entitled "Fashion and the Maritime Empires" in the forthcoming *Cambridge Global History of Fashion: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2023).

[Meha.Priyadarshini@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Meha.Priyadarshini@ed.ac.uk)

## Illustrations

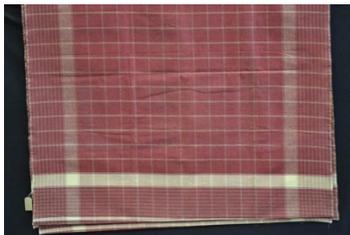


Fig. 1 Chetty, Bahla Goororapah (manufacturer), Length of eight Madras kerchiefs, 1855, Chennai, India (made), woven cotton, 72 x 92 cm (approx.), Victoria and Albert Museum, London, inv. no. 4887(IS) (© Victoria and Albert Museum)



Fig. 2 Agostino Brunias, *Linen Market, Dominica*, ca. 1780, oil on canvas, 49.8 x 68.6 cm, Paul Mellon Collection, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut, inv. no. B1981.25.76 (artwork in the public domain)



Fig. 3 Swatchbook from *De Vrouwe Maria Geertruida*, pp. 2–3, Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Tweede West-Indische Compagnie (WIC), 1.05.01.02, inv. 179



Fig. 4 Artist unknown, *Weaver and his Wife, Thanjavur, India*, ca. 1800, opaque watercolor on paper, 41.4 x 28 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, inv. no. AL.8940N (© Victoria and Albert Museum). The painting is one of a set of 14 that depict castes and occupations in India. It shows a cotton-weaver and his wife preparing the warp threads for weaving by brushing them with a starch or rice paste to make them easier to weave. This painting belongs to a genre of paintings made by Indian artists for the British, known as Company Paintings.

## Bibliography

Affichette de Vente de Lorient, 1777, Service Historique de la Défense, Département Marine Lorient.

Alpern, Stanley B. “What Africans Got for Their Slaves: A Master List of European Trade Goods.” *History in Africa* 22 (1995): 5–43.

Anderson, Carrie, and Marsely Kehoe, with Talitha Maria G. Schepers, Jennifer Henel, and Morgan Schwartz, Dutch Textile Trade, [HTTPS://DUTCHTEXTILETRADE.ORG](https://dutchtextiletrade.org).

Bagneris, Mia. *Colouring the Caribbean: Race and the Art of Agostino Brunias*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017.

Eicher, Joanne. *Global Trade and Cultural Authentication: The Kalabari of the Niger Delta*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2022.

Elkins, James, ed. *Is Art History Global?* London and New York: Routledge, 2007.

Establet, Colette. *Répertoire des tissus indiens importés en France entre 1687 et 1769*. Aix-en-Provence: Institut de recherches et d'études sur les mondes arabes et musulmans, 2017.

Guy, John. *Woven Cargoes: Indian Textiles in the East*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 1998.

Honychurch, Lennox. "Chatoyer's Artist: Agostino Brunias and the Depiction of St Vincent." *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society* 50, no. 1 (2004): 104–128.

Irwin, John, and P. R. Schwartz. *Studies in Indo-European Textile History*. Ahmedabad: Calico Museum of Textiles, 1966.

Jouveau-Dubreuil, G. G. "Le commerce des tissus indiens de l'Inde Française." *Revue historique de l'Inde française* 8 (1952): 224–233.

Joyeux-Prunel, Béatrice, and Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann. "Introduction." In *Circulations in the Global History of Art*, edited by Catherine Dossin, Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, and Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, 1–23. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015.

Kayoko, Fujita. "Japan Indianized: The Material Culture of Imported Textiles in Japan, 1550–1850." In Riello and Parthasarathi, *Spinning World*, 181–204.

Klein, Herbert S. "Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Slave Trade." In Tracy, *Rise of Merchant Empires*, 287–310.

Kobayashi, Kazuo. *Indian Cotton Textiles in West Africa African Agency: Consumer Demand and the Making of the Global Economy, 1750–1850*. London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

Kruger, Colleen E. "Guinea Cloth: Production and Consumption of Cotton Textiles in West Africa Before and During the Atlantic Slave Trade." In Riello and Parthasarathi, *Spinning World*, 105–126.

Kriz, Kay Dian. "Marketing Mulatresses in the Paintings and Prints of Agostino Brunias." In *The Global Eighteenth Century*, edited by Felicity A. Nussbaum, 195–210. London and Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.

Legoux de Flaix, Alexandre. *Essai historique, géographique et politique sur l'Indoustan, avec le tableau de son commerce . . .* Vol. 2. Paris: Pougin, 1807.

Lemire, Beverly. *Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660–1800*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Masaki, Toyomu. "Indian Guinée Cloth, West Africa, and the French Colonial Empire 1826–1925: Colonialism and Imperialism as Agents of Globalization." *Economic History of Developing Regions* 37, no. 2 (2022): 101–127.

Metcalf, George. "A Microcosm of Why Africans Sold Slaves: Akan Consumption Patterns in the 1770s." *Journal of African History* 28, no. 3 (1987): 377–394.

Nierstrasz, Chris. "From 'Sits' to 'Spices': Dutch Interactions with the Global Circulation of Indian Textiles." *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 15, no. 1 (Winter 2023), [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.5092/JHNA.2023.15.1.6](https://doi.org/10.5092/jhna.2023.15.1.6).

———. *Rivalry for Trade in Tea and Textiles: The English and Dutch East India Companies (1700–1800)*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Ormrod, David. *The Rise of Commercial Empires: England and the Netherlands in the Age of Mercantilism, 1650–1770*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Parthasarathi, Prasannan. *The Transition to a Colonial Economy: Weavers, Merchants and Kings in South India, 1720*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Prakash, Om. *European Commercial Enterprise in Pre-Colonial India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Riello, Giorgio, and Prasannan Parthasarathi, eds. *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles 1200–1850*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Riello, Giorgio, and Roy Tirthankar, eds. *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500–1850*. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

Thomas, Sarah. "Envisaging a Future for Slavery: Agostino Brunias and the Imperial Politics of Labor and Reproduction." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 52, no. 1 (2018): 115–133.

Tracy, James D., ed. *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World 1350–1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Wellington, Donald C. *French East India Company: A Historical Account of Record of Trade* (Oxford: Hamilton Books, 2009).

## Endnotes

- 1 The collaborative grant program is called "New Directions for Digital Scholarship in Cultural Institutions," and its aim is to advance digital scholarship in cultural institutions through collaboration with academic institutions in the United Kingdom and the United States. The *Connecting Threads* project is a collaboration between the University of Edinburgh and George Mason University, and we are working with the collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Glasgow University Archives and Special

- Collections, and Cooper Hewitt Museum in New York, who are our first-phase institutional partners.
- 2 See Chris Nierstrasz, “From ‘Sits’ to ‘Spices’: Dutch Interactions with the Global Circulation of Indian Textiles,” *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 15, no. 1 (Winter 2023), [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.5092/JHNA.2023.15.1.6](https://doi.org/10.5092/JHNA.2023.15.1.6) in this volume, and Chris Nierstrasz, *Rivalry for Trade in Tea and Textiles: The English and Dutch East India Companies (1700–1800)* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
  - 3 James D. Tracy, ed., *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World 1350–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); David Ormrod, *The Rise of Commercial Empires: England and the Netherlands in the Age of Mercantilism, 1650–1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
  - 4 Prasannan Parthasarathi, *The Transition to a Colonial Economy: Weavers, Merchants and Kings in South India, 1720–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Giorgio Riello and Roy Tirthankar, eds., *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500–1850* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).
  - 5 For example, in the case of the French trade, Indian textiles represented “between 54 and 57 percent . . . of the total value of goods used to purchase slaves”; Herbert S. Klein, “Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Slave Trade,” in Tracy, *Rise of Merchant Empires*, 291. See also John Irwin and P. R. Schwartz, *Studies in Indo-European Textile History* (Ahmedabad: Calico Museum of Textiles, 1966), 12, 26; George Metcalf, “A Microcosm of Why Africans Sold Slaves: Akan Consumption Patterns in the 1770s,” *Journal of African History* 28, no. 3 (1987): 377–394; Stanley B. Alpern, “What Africans Got for Their Slaves: A Master List of European Trade Goods,” *History in Africa* 22 (1995): 5–43; Colleen E. Kriger, “Guinea Cloth: Production and Consumption of Cotton Textiles in West Africa Before and During the Atlantic Slave Trade,” in *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles 1200–1850*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Kazuo Kobayashi, *Indian Cotton Textiles in West Africa African Agency: Consumer Demand and the Making of the Global Economy, 1750–1850* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).
  - 6 Beverly Lemire, *Fashion’s Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660–1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); John Guy, *Woven Cargoes: Indian Textiles in the East* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1998); Fujita Kayoko, “Japan Indianized: The Material Culture of Imported Textiles in Japan, 1550–1850” in Riello and Parthasarathi, *Spinning World*, 181–203.
  - 7 Sarah Thomas, “Envisaging a Future for Slavery: Agostino Brunias and the Imperial Politics of Labor and Reproduction,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 52, no. 1 (2018): 115–133. For more on Brunias, see also Kay Dian Kriz, “Marketing Mulatresses in the Paintings and Prints of Agostino Brunias,” in *The Global Eighteenth Century*, ed. Felicity A. Nussbaum (London and Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 195–210; Lennox Honychurch, “Chatoyer’s Artist: Agostino Brunias and the Depiction of St Vincent,” *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society* 50, no. 1 (2004): 104–128; Mia Bagneris, *Colouring the Caribbean: Race and the Art of Agostino Brunias* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017).

8 Conflicting definitions of the terms Guinea stuffs, Guinea cloths, Guinea linen, and guinée across different trading companies, contemporary sources, and scholarly research has led to some confusion as to what the defining characteristics of this category (or categories) of fabric were. Even across a small sampling of relatively recent research, we find disparate understandings. Some authors have referred to “Guinea cloth” and “guinées” as specifically checked or striped cottons or linens: “Guinea cloth: a general term for a variety of low-cost, loom-patterned striped or checked cottons from western India” (Riello and Parthasarathi, *Spinning World*, 414). Om Prakash defines Guinea linen as a Coromandel Coast long-cloth dyed in bright colors with stripes and checks re-exported by the Dutch to the West Indies; Om Prakash, *European Commercial Enterprise in Pre-Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 175. Similarly, Joanne Eicher applies Guinea stuffs to different fabrics, primarily checked, destined for West African trade; Joanne Eicher, *Global Trade and Cultural Authentication: The Kalabari of the Niger Delta* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2022), 72. Other authors opt for the use of Guinea cloth or guinée as umbrella terms: “‘Guinea cloth’ was the name given to cotton textiles that Europeans exchanged for slaves, gold, ivory, pepper, and other commodities on the west coast of Africa in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. . . . ‘Guinea cloth -plain, piece-dyed, or loom-patterned cottons-’ (Kriger, “Guinea Cloth,” 105, 126); “Guinea cloth: usually narrow cotton goods, blue and/or white, striped or checked, made expressly for the African trade” (Alpern, “What Africans Got for Their Slaves,” 414). Colette Establet pulls together a number of primary sources to offer myriad definitions and types of fabrics revolving around the term guinée that could also be accompanied by a geographic epithet (“guinées de Masulipatam, de Pondichery”) and refer to piece-dyed blue, white, or checked cottons. Establet also acknowledges that, although rarely, guinées could also be named “sorte hollandaise”; Colette Establet, “Les Guinées,” in *Répertoire des tissus indiens importés en France entre 1687 et 1769* (Aix-en-Provence: Institut de recherches et d’études sur les mondes arabes et musulmans, 2017), 102, 105. Toyomu Masaki addresses the confusion, writing that guinée was “initially nothing more than a generic French term referring to cotton cloth sent to Africa,” and cites multiple possible descriptions of it as white, blue, red, striped, and checked, acknowledging that by the end of the eighteenth century guinée was almost “synonymous with blue cotton cloth”; Toyomu Masaki, “Indian Guinée Cloth, West Africa, and the French Colonial Empire 1826–1925: Colonialism and Imperialism as Agents of Globalization,” *Economic History of Developing Regions* 37, no. 2 (2022): 105. With a focus on the nineteenth century, Kobayashi specifies that guinée was “one type of guinea cloth,” a “dark-blue, fine cotton cloth produced along the Coromandel Coast in South India,” arguing that the “assumption that a guinée was identical to guinea cloth may be misleading” (Kobayashi, *Indian Cotton Textiles in West Africa*, 82, 113n3). In brief, the confusion appears to be embedded in the primary source material, as the definition seems to change depending on the era, production origin, trader, destination, and definer, and as contemporary identified swatches include checked fabrics as well as plain and striped. Likewise, sources conflict on the definition of gingham, which is sometimes plain, sometimes checked, sometimes striped, sometimes only red and white, sometimes only white and blue, sometimes defined by doubled warps and wefts,

- sometimes a pure cotton fabric, sometimes a mix of cotton and silk, and sometimes a specialty of Bengal while at others a famous Coromandel good.
- 9 “Mouchoirs appelés ‘paliacate’ ou ‘Madras.’ Ce n’est pas sans émotion que nous allons parler de ces célèbres foulards qui rendaient les femmes des Antilles si belles naturellement plus belles encore. . . . De 1600 à 1750, on les a toujours appelés ‘mouchoirs de Paliacatte’.” This and all subsequent translations by the authors. G. G. Jouveau-Dubreuil, “Le commerce des tissus indiens de l’Inde Française,” *Revue historique de l’Inde française* 8 (1952): 229. See also Colette Establet, “Mouchoirs et stinkerques” in *Répertoire des tissus indiens importés en France entre 1687 et 1769*. Establet describes pullicat handkerchiefs, referring to Legoux de Flaix, who, in turn, claims that they are mistakenly named Madras (see n. 10); Wellington lists handkerchiefs (mouchoir) in his appendices, which include items auctioned by the Compagnie des Indes as well as summaries of textile imports for the period between 1717 to 1769. However, Wellington mentions neither “Madras” nor “Pullicat,” nor are they included in his textile glossary. Donald C. Wellington, *French East India Company: A Historical Account of Record of Trade* (Oxford: Hamilton Books, 2009).
- 10 “Dans le Pérou, au Mexique, dans les différentes îles des Antilles, depuis la créole européenne jusqu’à la plus chétive esclave négresse, ou la mulâtresse élé gante, toutes aiment à se parer la tête d’un mouchoir de Paliacate, que très-improprement on nomme quelquefois un madras, puis qu’il ne s’en fabrique pas un seul dans la ville de ce nom.” Alexandre Legoux de Flaix, *Essai historique, géographique et politique sur l’Indoustan, avec le tableau de son commerce . . .* (Paris: Pougin, 1807), 2:62.
- 11 “On exposera en vente à l’Orient, le 15 Septembre 1777 . . . toutes les Toileries de l’Inde venues depuis la dernière vente par les différents Vaisseaux arrivés du Bengale, de la Côte de Coromandel . . . Marchandises de l’Inde . . . Piec. Mouchoirs de Surate, de 10 à la pièce . . . Dito façon Madras Dito div . . . Gingans de Madras . . . Mouchoirs Masulipatan div de 8 & 12 à la pièce . . . dito Paliacate très-fins de 8 & 12 à la pièce.” *Affichette de Vente de Lorient de 1777*, Service Historique de la Défense, Département Marine Lorient.
- 12 Carrie Anderson and Marsely Kehoe, with Talitha Maria G. Schepers, Jennifer Henel, and Morgan Schwartz, *Dutch Textile Trade*, accessed January 26, 2023, [HTTPS://DUTCHTEXTILETRADE.ORG](https://dutchtextiletrade.org).
- 13 Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel and Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, “Introduction,” in *Circulations in the Global History of Art*, ed. Catherine Dossin, Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, and Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 1–23. For a discussion on the globalization of art history, see James Elkins ed., *Is Art History Global?* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).