

TEXTILE RESEARCH CENTRE LEIDEN

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2023



Tin model of a frame loom from Mali, used for the traditional narrow-width bands of cloth. TRC 2023.1212.

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2023 and the TRC Leiden: Chairman's comments

Once again 2023 was a year of change, developments and many plans for the TRC.

In a much broader context, the year was seeing a significant development in how textiles are perceived, especially in light of sustainability and the horrendous waste with respect to the deliberate dumping of vast quantities of textiles and garments. This has to change and education is going to be an important method of changing attitudes in a practical manner.

TRC's emphasis on education, knowledge, interaction and the passing on of skills is plain to see in the range of activities that have taken place over the year. TRC's events included 5-day courses, as well as workshops on diverse themes such as pre-industrial sewing, tablet weaving, velvet making, and embroidery. In addition, the TRC presented a series of workshops on bobbin lace making.

Events have also included a Romanian blouse day, organised by the Romanian community here in the Netherlands in order to discuss, explain and gain inspiration from one form of textile, an embroidered blouse. Once again textiles have the power to bring people together, as everyone has experience of textiles and clothing in some form or other.

The popularity of textiles and clothing and the desire to learn more can be seen in the number of actual visitors to the TRC. They were coming from as far apart as Australia and Canada, not to mention China and Japan. The key will be making this thriving institute more well-known within the academic world, as well as the commercial and 'domestic' spheres, so that an even wider range of people (no matter their age group) can enjoy working with textiles and dress.

The growth of the TRC Collection is impressive. The encyclopaedic nature of this invaluable resource was again helped by Citizen Culture at its most active and direct source. People from all over the world offered

textiles and dress to the TRC. It was not always easy to refuse donations! The broad base of the collection is now gathering depth and people were coming from many parts of the Netherlands as well as the rest of the world to see and learn from the items stored here at the Hogewoerd 164.

Similarly, the TRC library was also growing in depth and diversity as more and more books were being added to this important research tool. There are now, by the end of 2023, over 7000 registered books and many more to be added.

The TRC Blogs were continuing to be a popular method of online communication that cannot be underestimated. Blogs were published every few days and were written by various TRC members and visitors. The blogs covered a wide range of design, historical, political, social and technical subjects. It is becoming more and more important to keep in touch with each other and the internet is a significant method of doing this which we want to explore even more.

Textiles and dress studies in all their many different and varied forms are essential to understanding cultures and societies around the world. As well as providing a source of inspiration for creativity and artistic innovation. More importantly, they can so easily bring people together.

And yes the perennial problem of not enough space was a major issue in 2023 and one that will probably continue into 2024. Nevertheless, the staff of the TRC was doing an amazing job in making sure that more and more activities are added to the TRC calendar and that its resources were available to as many, interested people as possible.

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The Stichting Textile Research Centre, Leiden

The *Stichting* ('Foundation') Textile Research Centre was established in 1991 with the stated aim of supporting the academic research of archaeological and anthropological textiles and dress, and their presentation to a general public. The most important part of our work is the building up and study of a textile and dress collection. These garments are available for teaching, research and exhibition purposes.

The Board

Per 1 January 2023 the board is made up of the following:

Chairman: Prof. Bas ter Haar Romeny

Treasurer: Prof. Olaf Kaper

Secretary: Dr. Karel Innemée

General board members: Prof. Lammert Leertouwer and Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood (Director).

International Advisory Board

Dr. Ruth Barnes (Yale University, USA); Carol Bier (Berkeley, USA); Prof. J. Eicher (University of Minnesota, USA), Prof. John Fossey (Montreal Museum of Fine Art, Canada), Dr. Dale Gluckman (San Francisco, USA), Prof. Michael Hahn (Leeds University, England, ret), Mrs. Widad Kawar (Amman, Jordan), Prof. Reinier Munk (Amsterdam University, ret), and Dr. John Peter Wild (Manchester, England).

Permanent staff and volunteers

Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood continues as the director of the TRC. She is a specialist in embroidery and Middle Eastern textiles and dress. For 2023, the volunteers included: Shelley Anderson, Heloise Bellouard, Beverley Bennett, Marije Boerma, Olivia Buchan, Susan Cave, Alice van Duijnen, Rose Groen, Augusta de Gunzbourg, Rebecca Hix, Naoko Kikuchi, Renske Langendijk, Maria Linkogle,

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The TRC is a Cultural ANBI

From 2013 the TRC is officially recognised as a cultural ANBI ("Culturele ANBI"). It means that individual gifts by Dutch citizens are tax deductible for 125% for a private person and 150% for a company.

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Since 2022 the TRC has been awarded an Erasmus+ Accreditation in the field of adult education for the programme period of 2021-2027.

Erasmus+ is the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport. Nuffic, the Dutch organisation for internationalisation of education, is the Erasmus+ programmes' national agency and is responsible for evaluating the submissions.

The Erasmus+ Accreditation is a tool that TRC Leiden can use to gain further access to cross-border exchange and cooperation. It is a recognition of TRC Leiden's plan to implement high quality mobility activities, as part of a wider effort to increase the quality of non-formal adult education that our organisation provides and to make it relevant to the needs of society at large.

A large part of our plan involves increasing the participation of adults of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds in the education of textile skills and the concept of dress and identity.

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The TRC and online activities

The TRC has its own website, which was designed and is being maintained by Joost Kolkman and in doing so he is supported by Coen van der Geest. The site carries a wide range of information about the TRC, including its aims, annual reports, donation information, possibilities to loan objects or to hire complete exhibitions, short items of current interest, the library catalogue, the objects catalogue, TRC

Needles, the TRC Blogs, etc. The website information is usually given in both Dutch and English.

The website is kept up-to-date by Willem Vogelsang who throughout 2023 has been continually adding new items, removing old items and working on the TRC's large digital project TRC Needles (see below).

TRC Collection: Work is progressing on bringing the TRC Collection fully online. By December 2023, over 44,000 objects were included in the catalogue, and the vast majority of them have been described and photographed. The database is already proving to be an asset to everyone concerned.

TRC Library: Thanks to the hard work of the library team, the TRC Library catalogue went online in August 2015. By late December 2023, well over 7000 titles are included in the library catalogue, with cross-references, book reviews and recommendations. The library team has worked very hard getting this all ready and the list of books in the collection is being up-dated on a regular basis (more details are given below about the Library). See more below.

TRC Images: We now have another group working on *TRC Images*, which is a much smaller database that includes the TRC collection of images (postcards, photographs, even stamps) relating to textiles and costume from around the world. If you have any suitable items that you are willing to donate to the TRC please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

TRC Needles: TRC Needles is a digital encyclopaedia of decorative needlework and has now been online for just over some three years. *Needles* currently includes nearly 3000 entries and more and more information and partners are agreeing to help with the entries and providing information and/or photographs. We range from the modern stitch poetry of Janet M. McDonald Davies (New Zealand) to early archaeological finds of embroidery from China.

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TRC and social media

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of Willem Vogelsang,

interest in the TRC on Facebook is growing rapidly and every week brings more and more subscribers to the TRC Facebook page. By the end of 2023 there were more than 14,000 followers of TRC Facebook. The site is in Dutch and English and includes news about all the recent developments and events at the TRC, plus some personal comments about items on display or in the TRC collection.

During 2023, Shelley Anderson ran a Pinterest page for the TRC. Pinterest features images of textiles and garments from the TRC's collection and activities.

In 2021 several TRC volunteers started a TRC Instagram page. In 2023 this was continued and we now are followed by over 12,000 people. This page is designed to show TRC objects with very short stories.

In addition, at regular intervals the TRC publishes a newsletter that includes a brief update of events and a list of forthcoming activities. The newsletter is published in both Dutch and English.

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TRC Blog: Textile Moments

The TRC has its own blog pages called *Textile Moments*, or more commonly the TRC Blog. This page is used by members of the TRC or indeed anyone else, who has a story to tell about textiles, clothing, exhibitions, pictures, and so forth. Some of the items given later in this report are based on blogs published in 2023.

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The Library

Over the years the TRC has built up a collection of nearly 7000 registered books relating to textiles and dress. Thanks to the generosity of people there are about another 1,000 books that need to be registered.

Many of these books were catalogued in 2023 thanks to the efforts of various volunteers, especially Roos Groen. The library is divided into the following sections:

- General reference book
- Museum collections, displays, conservation and so forth

- Textile techniques
- Textiles, fashion and dress theory
- Regional, international
- Dutch regional

With the dedicated work of the various TRC librarians, more and more books are being registered, put on the shelves, and added to the [Library online database](#) (based on authors/titles, not scans of the actual books), which now covers well over 7,000 titles. In particular, we would like to highlight three different collections of books arriving at the TRC.

The first was a donation of books by the Eva Andersson, director of the Centre for Textile Research, The Saxo Institute, Copenhagen University, from their impressive series of academic books about textiles and garments with ancient and archaeological themes, such as *Iconic Costumes: Scandinavian Late Iron Age Costume Iconography*; *Gods and Garments: Textiles in Greek Sanctuaries in the 7th to the 1st Centuries BC*; *Textiles and Clothing along the Silk Roads*, etc. We would like to thank Eva for organising this gift.

Then we were given three boxes of books by René Lugtigheid, a Dutch textile conservator and lecturer who is retiring. This was a mixed group and some of the books we do not have, others will be placed in the TRC Shop, with permission of René. It is her way of supporting the work and activities of the TRC.

The third group consists of books about textiles and garments from Estonia. These were organised by Merle Ernits, a long-term friend of the TRC from Estonia and who is also organising a study trip to Estonia for TRC staff in order to learn more about textiles and dress from this part of Europe.

Thanks to these and other donations of books the TRC Library is increasing and developing into a major source for the study of textiles and dress. The publications are available for study at the TRC rather than for loan. Please note, alas, we do not send books to readers via the post.

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TRC Gallery

The TRC Gallery is used to hold temporary exhibitions about textiles and dress. Access to the exhibitions is free of charge.

In 2023 various events and exhibitions were held in the gallery and further details about these can be found below.

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The TRC Shop

The TRC Shop occupies a small area at the rear of the Gallery. It is not the main business of the TRC, but allows us to sell items that would either not be suitable to keep in the main collection or are duplicates of items we already hold.

Citizen Culture at Work

Citizen Culture is a development whereby groups of visitors from different backgrounds work together with volunteers at the TRC to gain a better understanding of textiles and dress from specific parts of the world in order to explore the stories behind the objects! In this context, various events took place at the TRC in 2023. One of the related projects is outlined below:

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New TRC project: Engaging Textile Heritage Communities through Citizen Culture

We are happy to draw attention to the latest project at the Textile Research Centre, Leiden, with the title 'Engaging Textile Heritage Communities through Citizen Culture'. It is co-funded with the sum of 20,000 euros by the national *Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie* and runs from April 2023 until October 2024.

For this particular TRC project we invited three groups of women from a variety of textile heritage communities to share knowledge about textiles and textile related objects from their respective

communities and now included in the TRC collection. Each group meet various times to discuss textiles and garments from their respective communities. They organise a workshop of their choosing, plan a small presentation and set up the presentation itself.



A group of women with a Middle Eastern background discussing Syrian garments. Photograph by Maria Linkogle.

The project is aimed at supporting heritage activities of groups with different cultural backgrounds, thereby stimulating closer cooperation among and between these groups. Participants will develop multiple perspectives on the value and meaning of their textile heritages, and participants will have a voice in the interpretation, appreciation and representation of that heritage.



A group of women with a Turkish background discussing Turkish garments. Photograph by Maria Linkogle.

When the groups have completed their mini presentations, the three groups will come together to share the knowledge of their respective heritages. They will choose a theme that ties the textile groups together and prepare for an exhibition and a workshop, lecture or study day based on the theme chosen by all participants.

As a research centre, the TRC has technical and historical knowledge of the objects in the collection, but we can get a more complete body of knowledge about the items from the people who themselves, or have seen family members, make or wear or use the textiles.

With their help, we can build more complete stories about our textiles, as well as make more connections with different communities. This is what we call Citizen Culture at TRC.

Although this knowledge gathering and sharing with the bearers of the culture is not a new concept to the TRC, it is the first large project we have created based on this concept and we appreciate the support and trust from the *Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie*.



A group of women with a Middle Eastern background at the TRC discussing Syrian garments. Photograph by Maria Linkogle.

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Lace, Leiden and the TRC

On Saturday, 26 August 2023, we had the first of a series of sessions with the aim of sorting out the TRC's collection of hand and machine made lace. This was another TRC activity within the context of Citizen Culture at Work. And by lace we mean "a textile patterned with holes which are created by the manipulation of threads" (Earnshaw 1984:91; see below), which is a very broad definition that includes a wide range of techniques, from needle forms and bobbin laces to crocheted, knitted, knotted and tatted techniques, not to mention machine made examples!

The TRC Reference Lace Collection currently stands at over 1000 pieces of lace. Some are small samples, others are complete items such as collars, lappets and shawls. They range in date from the early 19th century to the present day. The collection not only includes samples of lace, but also the tools and patterns required for lace making, such as bobbins, threads and pillows, crochet hooks, netting and tatting shuttles, as well as discs for making Tenerife lace.

In addition, in the main TRC collection there is a range of lace objects such as Belgian, Dutch and French lace caps. There are also garments embellished with lace, such as lace bags, fans and parasols.



Sample of Irish crochet lace (TRC 2007.0674).

Setting up the Reference Lace collection was started in 2006 and for a while we were helped by Olga Ieromina, to sort out the various types, something that requires specialist knowledge since there are so many variations and combinations. After Olga moved jobs, etc, she was stopped helping at the TRC and we did our best to sort things out, but we were much very aware that more experienced help was needed.



A collar made from Tenerife lace, late-19th century (TRC 2020.0462).

For the last few years we have been running bobbin lace workshops at the TRC, given by Gon Homburg (member of the Administrative Council of OIDFA (International Bobbin and Needle Lace Organization), and board member of OIDFA Nederland.

We have also been talking about setting up a group to help check and add details to the TRC Collection database. By we, we mean a group from the OIDFA Nederland, the Dutch chapter of an international lace organisation, which includes

both experienced teachers and people learning bobbin lace of various types and indeed at various levels.



Studying samples of lace at the TRC, Saturday 26 August 2023. Photograph by author.

For the first session there were four lace makers at the TRC, Riet Delescen, Gon Homburg, Annemieke Solleveld and Caro Thé. This session was used to develop a working method, to see the extent of the ‘challenge’ and to suggest possibilities for how the collection can be presented and used.

Four boxes (out of over forty) with about 100 samples were sorted according to technique, such as chantilly, guipure, Le Puy, Bruges, Brussels appliqué, Bucks point, tape laces, as well as a piece of ‘s Gravenmoer, etc.

One of the questions that was raised is: why is the TRC collecting all these samples, some of which are not well made? Once again I stressed that we are not an art gallery filled with beautiful items. One of our core activities is the study of textile techniques, including understanding, identifying and the passing on of knowledge, and for that to take place it is necessary to have a wide range of examples.

The next meeting took place on the 6th January 2024 and our joint aim is to make the TRC Lace Collection an international level facility that is not stuck behind glass, but is a handling collection that can be used by anyone who is seriously interested in learning more about the wide variety of lace forms that have and are being produced and used.

* Pat Earnshaw (1984). *A Dictionary of Lace*, Aylesbury: Shire Publications Ltd

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Romanian Blouse Day at the TRC

In 2022 the TRC was given a number of Romanian blouses by Monique Amsel from Paris. At the time we wrote a blog about this donation. In order to gain more information about these embroidered garments a special meeting was held by members of the Romanian community living here in the Netherlands.

On the 8th April 2023 the resulting Romanian Blouse Day at the TRC was open to anyone interested in the subject. In fact, there were seven Romanians and nine ‘others’ (mainly Dutch, but also including American, Chinese and English participants). And throughout the day other people, Romanian and Dutch, popped in to see what we were doing and to talk about their blouse experiences.

The day was started with a brief introduction to the TRC, followed by a word about the Amsel collection by Monique Amsel herself, who had come over from Paris especially for Blouse Day, and then co-organiser, Monica Brinza, gave a talk about the origins and main regional types of Romanian blouses.

Later in the day Monica gave a PowerPoint presentation about the basic construction of and placement of decoration on Romanian blouses. Two of the Romanian participants came in blouses they had made and embroidered themselves, giving us valuable insights into the making of these iconic garments.

There were three large tables set in the TRC Gallery and workroom, and each table had two knowledgeable participants and two newcomers to the subject. Embroidered blouses and dresses were put onto the tables and examined, and notes made on a paper form concerning materials, construction, names of patterns, their symbolic meaning, etc. All this information will be included in the TRC Catalogue of objects.



Monique Amsel showing a new donation to the TRC. Romanian Blouse Day, 8 April 2023. Photograph Maria Linkogle.

Hands were washed before handling the blouses, but no gloves were worn as so much information concerning the materials (mainly locally produced hemp and linen cloth for the older blouses) comes via the touching of the objects. In addition, a number of garments were put on mannequins, as these garments are 3-dimensional and in order to understand the importance of the embroidered sleeves and the position of the embroidery it was helpful to see them in the round.

Many details arose as a result of the various discussions. We had not understood, for example, that the embroidery on some blouses is divided into three sections, representing the air, ground and water. The lines of embroidery down the sleeves are literally known as rivers.

Some people were also talking about hemp and flax currently being re-introduced into parts of Romania as part of a sustainability process, but also that climate change has meant that some traditional areas for these plant crops are no longer suitable.



Monica Brinza showing a Romanian embroidered dress from the TRC collection. Romanian Blouse Day, 8 April 2023. Photograph Maria Linkogle.

We also had a discussion about the types of Romanian blouses now housed at the TRC, but also the types we do not have and how to get them. We also want to have samples of the different ground materials, threads, tools, etc. We need these in order to make a representative collection of these iconic garments. In addition, we need far more details about the girls and women who made these blouses and stitched the embroideries. Who were they, how did they work, where did their inspiration come from, and when did they wear the garments? These are just a few of the many questions we have.



Romanian Blouse Day, 8 April 2023. Photograph Maria Linkogle.



Romanian Blouse Day, 8 April 2023. Photograph: Maria Linkogle.

During the discussions, participants with friends and family in Romania or with holidays planned this summer all offered to help make such a comprehensive collection, with an emphasis on getting the stories behind the objects. Where did the cloth come from, what is it called, why was it suitable for a blouse, when were different colours worn? Citizen Culture at work!

And when we have gone through all of the relevant garments and acquired new garments and materials, we want to produce a catalogue of the TRC's Romanian blouses, with details about materials, constructions, stitches, meanings, etc.

There are also plans for an exhibition about these garments to be held at the TRC, also made available to travel to other museums and similar institutes.

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International group of women from *Huis van de Buurt* *Morschwijk*

On Monday, 27 November 2023, the TRC welcomed an international group of women from *Huis van de Buurt Morschwijk* in Leiden. This is an informal group of women living in the Morschwijk, a neighbourhood of Leiden.

The women originally come from Colombia, India, Indonesia, Morocco and Suriname.



Visit by group of women from the Morschwijk, Leiden, to the TRC. Photograph by Maria Linkogle.

The meeting started with an introduction to the TRC by its director, Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood. This led to a discussion about dress and identity, one of the main themes of the TRC's work: We study what men and women wear in order to say, consciously or not, who they are or who they want to be. After the introduction, a tour was given of the current Fashion of the 1920s exhibition. Afterwards we had lunch when we further discussed dress and identity.

A number of our guests talked about their knowledge and experience with making their own clothes and about decorating clothes with embroidery for their own bridal outfit. After lunch we looked at specific textiles from the large TRC Collection. The women enjoyed telling each other more about the textiles that they recognised from their country of origin.

One of the participants later told us: "I thought it was wonderful. It went very nicely. We heard a lot about different things, so I really enjoyed it and also being together with all the other ladies."

The TRC was pleased to welcome the group, thanks to a subsidy from the *Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie* for our current, much-larger project: Engaging Textile Heritage Communities through Citizen Culture.

Local and national cooperation

The TRC is actively working with various groups and institutes in Leiden to promote textiles and dress studies in all their many different types and styles. A few of these forms are given below.

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Philippine connections

On 22 April we had a visit of HE J. Eduardo Malaya, the Ambassador of the Philippines to The Hague, together with Dr Stephanie Coo and Carlos González. They are interested in the Philippine collection that was given to the TRC a few years ago by Ruurdje Laarhoven, a Dutch academic living in the US, who worked for many years in the Philippines. Dr Malaya also saw the TRC's mini-exhibition on wooden shoes and has promised a Philippine version that is worn indoors.



Ikat cloth from Mindanao, Philippines, 20th century (TRC 2022.2914).

Stephanie Coo is interested in the idea of setting up a regional dress institute and collection in the Philippines and is visiting various institutes to get ideas. We have offered the assistance of the TRC in giving practical advice in how to set up and run a small knowledge centre of this type.

Dr Coo would very much also like to come again to the TRC for a few weeks in order to see our Philippine textiles and garments and to help update the data on these pieces. It would also provide her with an opportunity to see and experience the running of a knowledge centre.

The idea of being able to offer a 'Researcher in Residence' position for one to four weeks was very appealing and would mean we could add depth to the TRC Collection by being able to have specialists look at various aspects of our textiles, dress and accessories collection.

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International Quilt Festival, Nantes, France



Volendam mannequin against the background of a quilt with Dutch-inspired designs. Nantes, April 2023.

Beverley Bennett, our shop manager and quilt guru, has been participating in an international quilt festival in Nantes (France) between 19-22 April 2023.

The festival was called *Pour l'Amour du Fil* ('For the love of thread') with the theme 'The Netherlands from every angle'. Beverley had three quilts on display, while the TRC lent three mannequins dressed in Bunschoten-Spakenburg, Marken and Volendam regional dress.

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The TRC, Leiden, and the rest of the world

On 3 May 2023 the TRC took part in an event, organised by HE Dato' Nadzirah Osman, Ambassador of Malaysia (The Hague), at the Malaysian Residence in Wassenaar.



'A journey through ASEAN textiles', Malaysian Residence, Wassenaar, 3 May 2023.

The event was a get-together of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) ambassadors and spouses and other distinguished guests to discuss ASEAN textiles and dress, preservation of craft skills, and the passing on of knowledge.

There were various ambassadors and partners present from, among others, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, Sri Lanka, as well as Costa Rica and Germany. The guest of honour was Liselot Hoornweg, wife of the Dutch Foreign Minister.

I was asked to give a 45 minute talk entitled 'A journey through ASEAN textiles', a theme that was expanded to include the historic role of over 2000 years of Asian, especially Indian, textiles in the international trade via Africa, the Red Sea coast and the Eastern Mediterranean (many people know of the Silk Road, but the 'Cotton Road' was equally important and continues to the present day!).



*Mrs Le Thi Hien Anh, wife of the ambassador of Vietnam, with the author, 3 May 2023.
Photograph by Rebecca Hix*

The most popular TRC item to be shown during my talk was a so-called Manilla embroidered shawl, which has long historical embroidery roots in China. This type was exported to ASEAN countries centuries ago, especially to the Philippines (hence the name Manilla shawls), then onto Spain (the colonisers of the Philippines).

In Spain they were turned into the famous mantilla shawls. Then from Spain the Manilla and mantilla shawls went onto Central and South America, and in an interesting twist via Palestinian workers in the Americas, this type of shawl then went to Palestine where it is still an important element of traditional Bethlehem dress! That is the power of textiles and dress – to link cultures in all their many aspects together!



Manilla shawl, from Spain, with Chinese-style embroidery, and made and exported via Manilla on the Philippines (TRC 2012.0015).

There were various stalls with textiles from Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand; some of the textiles and garments were very different, while others were similar, again stressing how textiles reflect our joint cultural heritage experiences.

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The Leiden connection of Norwich textiles

In June 2023 the TRC hosted a two-day visit of a group from Britain, who were in the Netherlands to visit the *Kunstmuseum*, The Hague, the *Lakenhal* in Leiden as well as the Leidse Deken, where the weaving of blankets in Leiden is being re-introduced (see above), and the TRC.

The British group included Mary Schoeser (textile historian and author), Michael and An Nix (textile historian and author), Meg Andrews (antique textile and costume dealer), Pat Frost (Christie's Auction Costume and Textile department consultant), Bridget Long (university lecturer and former Quilters Guild director), Keren Protheroe (Liberty's archivist), Anna Buruma - curator at the Central St Martins Museum & Study Collection, and Frank Gardiner (former film costumier and textile historian), all of whom are connected by a deep knowledge and love of textiles and dress in all their many forms.

We were asked in advance if it was possible to get out a range of textiles and garments from the TRC Collection for examination. The requested items included 18th century chintz garments, an Empire dress, as well as two Dutch patchwork skirts (feestrokken) that date to 1948. We also had a 'picnic' lunch during which personal work and experience, textiles in general and the future of the TRC were animatedly discussed.

The afternoon saw one of our guests, Dr Michael Nix, giving a public talk about the trade and personal links between Norwich in East Anglia, England, and the Netherlands, especially Leiden. These links date back to the sixteenth century and included spinners, weavers as well as polishers

(calanderers) who travelled back and forth between the two countries.



Woven sample of striped camlet from the Norwich area, England, 18th century. Camlet was a worsted cloth exported in large quantities to the Netherlands (TRC 2021.3328).



Woman's indoor or morning cape with hand painted chintz design. India and the Netherlands, c. 1745 (TRC 2014.0064).

It was fascinating to see the depth of the trading links, even down to a change in the types of boats (wherries) used in Norfolk that moved from square sails to angled-shaped sails typical of the Netherlands. The production of say and bay (*saai* and *baai*, worsted textiles), and how families could be traced for two or more generations in Norwich through their Dutch/Flemish names were also discussed.

The TRC Gallery was full for the lecture and those who attended included weavers, historians, curators, etc. And as can be imagined, the range of questions during and after the talk indicated people's fascination with this significant, but forgotten aspect of British/Dutch/Flemish textile history.



Dr Michael Nix, Norwich, talking about Norwich textiles and their historical links with Leiden and the Netherlands. Photograph by Maria Linkogle.

Following the lecture people also had the chance of seeing a mini-exhibition in our main workroom about 18th century Norwich textiles based on items from the TRC's (small) collection.



Discussing the Van Gerwen collection at the TRC, Friday 30 June 2023. Photograph by Gillian Vogelsang.

Friday saw some of our British friends come back to the TRC to look at the Van Gerwen collection of over 100 velvets and silks that were given to the TRC in 2011. This donation was made after the closure of the *Van Gerwen Museum of Medieval Religious Art*, Valkenswaard, in 2008.

Most of these textiles date from the 16th to 18th century, although the majority of the silks are 18th century in date. There are silk examples from France, Italy and Spain, and possibly some from the Habsburg Empire (basically Austria and Germany). Some of the designs and colour

combinations are well-known, others were new to the participants of this event.

The group went through the whole of the van Gerwen collection and the conclusion was reached that this collection needs to be more publicly known, which would require serious research, including technical analyses (such as fibre DNA, dye, metal thread, weave and loom forms, and finishes), and the study of design and development, as well as looking for evidence of the potential uses of some of these textiles based on seams, hems, wear, etc. In other words an in-depth look at pre-industrial silk weaving in Europe. A theme that would be suitable for a PhD subject!

The TRC Collection

There are two main factors that make the TRC Collection a little different from some traditional museum collections. Firstly, it is an active collection and people are encouraged to come and look, take photographs and use the items, rather than the objects being stored 'for ever' in boxes. Secondly, we are not concerned with collecting only beautiful items, we are interested in the story behind them. Something that may look 'ordinary' takes on a new dimension when its social, technical and economic context, the story behind the object, is taken into account.

To help people understand the diversity of the TRC Collection, the database of the collection has gone online on 1st July 2016. Since then, we have added thousands (literally) of items. Not every item is described in great detail nor are there photographs of everything. But every week new and extra details, as well as images were added. By the end of December 2023, there were over 44,000 objects included in the catalogue.

The collection emphasises not only the objects, but also the stories behind them. The TRC Collection is based on three specialisations: (a) regional textile techniques and technology, (b) dress and identity worldwide, and (c) the Reference Collection. The technique and technology focus deals with items such as hand spindles from around the

world, (small) looms, such as back strap looms from Peru and Indonesia, and Bedouin horizontal ground looms from Jordan, as well as textiles (woven and non-woven forms), etc., associated with specific groups or countries.

In contrast, the dress and identity specialisation deals with the concept of what people wear and do to their bodies in order to say 'I am' or 'I would like to be'. This focus includes garments, headwear, footwear and accessories (such as jewellery, bags, fans, parasols, etc).

None of these items have to be beautiful or masterpieces of their type for them to be included in the TRC Collection. In fact, we prefer to look for what is typical, technically interesting, and/or have a background story/context, rather than being exceptional or elitist. Which is not to say we turn our noses up at a lovely item!

The third specialisation within the TRC Collection is the Reference Collection. All the pieces in this part of the TRC Collection come with the question – 'What is ...?', such as what is wool, what is flax, what is a twill weave, what is velvet, what is discharge printing, what is embroidery?

The Reference Collection currently includes about 10,000 items. The majority of these are 20th century to the present day in date and come from many sources. We are deliberately including a range of fibres and structural forms (such as woven, knitted, non-woven fabrics) that are used for modern textiles. We have just added examples of, for instance, cupro, elasthan, modal, nylon, and tenzel. Some of these materials are knitted, while others are woven.

The Reference Collection can be used for many purposes. In recent years, sustainability has become a buzz word, and many textiles are currently advertised as being bio-, sustainable, green, etc. But actually, how many can be classified as such? Cupro, for example, is sometimes sold as sustainable because it is made of cotton lint, a waste product of the cotton industry. Yet the range and quantity of chemicals used to make cupro is staggering, so much so that its production in the US has been banned!

Similarly, a TRC blog about modern 'leather' has given an indication of some of the problems associated with this product. The TRC collection can be used to study these 'new' textiles.

But what can be further gained by having a reference collection? The textiles are there for comparative purposes, for help visually and structurally with defining terms so that the TRC main database is consistent in the use of terminology, to be used for educational purposes during courses, study days and workshops, as well as providing a source of inspiration.

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Acquisitions, purchases and gifts: some of the stories behind the objects



Costume print, France, from 'Costumes de différents pays' (c. 1797), by Jacques Grasset de Saint-Sauveur (1757-1810) (TRC 2023.0004).

The TRC now regards it as normal for people to pop in or contact us otherwise, every week, with items for the collection or things to appear in the post. But what is the TRC Collection's policy?

Considerable time was spent in 2023 thinking about and defining the nature of the collection, how it is to be used and the collection policy in general. The phrase that most closely catches the 'spirit' of the collection is 'a broad-based encyclopaedic collection', that reflects the diversity of the textiles in general. All of this means we do not specialise in one small area of textile and dress studies, but we reflect textiles and dress in all their glorious depth and width. We thus collect samples of all possible textile

techniques, uses, forms of decoration, materials, and all other aspects related to the world of textiles and dress.

The following descriptions of some of the items added to the TRC Collection in 2023 have been ordered roughly according to subject matter. The descriptions and comments about these objects are intended to give an idea of why these items were accepted into the collection and how they will be used. Most of the descriptions were also reflected in more detail in the various TRC blogs published in 2023.

Below is a selection of the items donated to the TRC in 2023 and a little about their backgrounds.

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Historical textile and fashion prints

During 2023 the TRC acquired a number of antique prints as part of its Print and Photographs Library (part of the visual library). These prints will be used to illustrate various mini-exhibitions (actual and digital), several publications (notably the *Bloomsbury World Encyclopedia of Embroidery*), as well as lectures and workshops on the themes of textiles, their production and use.

One of the late 18th century prints (TRC 2023.0004), for example, depicts a woman knitting with four knitting needles, while a cat plays with a ball of knitting yarn, and a dog and a parrot look on. The print comes from *Costumes de différents pays* by the French encyclopaedist Jacques Grasset de Saint-Sauveur (1757-1810).



Print of an embroiderer, from Jan Luyken's *'Spiegel van het Menselyk Bedryf'* (Amsterdam 1694) (TRC 2023.0002).

Another group of prints depicts various trades in late 17th century Amsterdam, from the famous book by Jan Luyken (1649-1712) and his son Casper (1672-1708), called *Spiegel van het Menselyk Bedryf* (1694, Amsterdam). The book was reprinted on various occasions in the 18th century. A number of the prints depict textile and related professions, such as the wool sorter, weaver, tapestry seller, embroiderer (TRC 2023.0002), and rope maker.

Each print includes an image of the particular occupation, and above and below the print a moralistic poem. We hope to get the complete range of textile and related crafts prints, as they provide a wealth of information about tools, equipment and working practices of pre-industrial Amsterdam and indeed elsewhere.

We have also recently acquired a number of French fashion plates from the 1850s and 1860s (most of them have a date just under the main image) that depict very fashionable women and children in the latest Parisian modes. These prints will be very useful to show how these and other items were used in the 19th century.

There are also prints that depict dress and identity themes from various cultures around the world. Care has to be taken with these, as it is not always clear if the etcher/artist had actually seen the garments and how they were worn, or whether they were copied from other publications or indeed totally made up.

One example of this group of prints is called the “Femme Samoïede” (TRC 2023.0023) from *Costumes de différents pays*, by Jacques Grasset de Saint-Sauveur.

And why do we want actual copies of these prints rather than simply downloading them off the internet? Well, not everything is available in a high resolution form needed for publications and exhibitions. In addition, more and more people and institutes ask copyright fees and sometimes these prices are simply too high for most individuals or groups such as the TRC in Leiden.

But apart from these somewhat prosaic arguments, let's be fair: it is wonderful to physically see and admire these early prints.



Costume print, "Femme Samoïede" ('Samoyedic woman'), from 'Costumes de différents pays' (c. 1797), by Jacques Grasset de Saint-Sauveur, France, late 18th century (TRC 2023.0023).

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TRC accepts large part of the collection of the former *Museum voor Naaldkunst, Winschoten, the Netherlands*

In early 2023 the TRC was contacted by Hennie Stevan-Bathoorn and Sjoerd Stevan from the former Museum voor Naaldkunst, Winschoten in the northeastern part of the Netherlands. They had run a private museum for needlework and related lace techniques, in all of their many different forms. Due to their age, the museum was closed in 2016 and since then they have been trying to identify suitable new homes for different parts of the collection.

Their question was - would the TRC be interested in a donation of textiles, patterns and tools, in total some 6,500 objects. equipment and related items. Since the initial contact we went to Winschoten various times and have been discussing and thinking hard about this potential donation, with the owners, with our staff at the TRC and with other interested parties. Space (or rather lack of) at the TRC was the most important discussion point. After the various debates we decided yes, this

donation was something for the TRC, as it would give extra depth to our own collection.

Fortunately, nothing in the donation from Winschoten is large, in fact many of the items are very small and take the form of needles, scissors, thimbles, buttons, hooks and eyes, threads, lace bobbins, knitting sheaths and sticks. There are also sample sheets and coloured threads from specific companies, and machine lace samples from the early 20th century.



Berlin wool work chart for slippers, Germany, mid-19th century (TRC 2023.2278).

There was also a large selection of Dutch, Belgian and German school samples dating from the late 19th century to the 1960s. And there were sewing samples of seams, hems, patching, mending, and of course different lace, knitting and embroidery techniques.

There are, for example, over 25 roll samplers (*pronkrol*) that were made by girls in various schools in Belgium, the Netherlands and western Germany in the 19th century until the 1960s. These were used as 'certificates' to show a girl's sewing and needlework skills when applying for a job.

Within the donation there are also many embroidery patterns, including Berlin wool work charts, some of which date from the 1840's, although most date from the 1850's to the 1880's. There are also several pairs of embroidered slipper vamps, which together with

the charts will make an interesting mini-exhibition.



French print with the production process of machine-made needles (TRC 2023.2348).

In addition, there are numerous embroidery transfers, and printed charts from various magazines and booklets that date from the early 20th century onwards.

The donation was picked up on the 29th October 2023 and, based on an initial division, we think about 2000 items will be added to the TRC Collection. By late 2023, 400 items were included on the TRC database, including prints, most of the Berlin wool work charts, Dutch knitting sheaths, Tenerife lace equipment, and tatting tools.

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Bequest of Indonesian and other textiles by Rens Heringa

In December 2022 we announced the sad news of the death in Leiden of the well-known, Dutch textile curator and historian, Rens Heringa (1932-2022).

As noted, Rens grew up in Twente among textile producers, and from the early 1950s lived for many years in Indonesia. She has long been a *grande dame* in the field of Indonesian textiles and Indonesian batiks in particular.



Hand resist dyed (batik), cotton cloth. Indonesia, 20th century (TRC 2023.0573).

Over the years Rens has helped the TRC with textiles, advice and suggestions with respect to its Indonesian textile collection, and although Rens is no longer around, her connections with the TRC continue.



Long women's blouse (kebaya) in a pale yellow chiffon, machine embroidered, Indonesia, 20th century (TRC 2023.0554).

To our surprise it turned out that Rens had included the TRC in her will and this donation included 55 Asian textiles and garments, from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, as well as one West African piece (TRC 2023.0553 - TRC 2023.0606).

These textiles represent a variety of techniques, notably batiks, ikats, decoratively woven as well as embroidered items. In addition, there are eleven blouses (*kebaya*) from Indonesia that are

decorated with batik, (machine) embroidery and beads.

All of these textiles and garments were photographed and put online in the TRC Collection with the text “Rens Heringa bequest”.

In addition, there were over thirty books about Asian textiles, in particular about Indonesian textiles and dress. They have been added to the TRC Library. We would like to thank Rens for her generosity and thoughtfulness, it is appreciated.

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Married woman’s outfit from the Karen in Myanmar/Thailand

In 2023 we were approached by Ria Snoek, Leiderdorp, about an outfit for a married Karen woman living in Thailand, which was originally acquired by her husband, Dries Touw (1935-2021), a bryologist (a specialist in mosses).



A Karen woman in northern Thailand, along the border with Myanmar/Burma. Photograph by Dries Touw, 1965.

The Karen are an indigenous ethnic group from eastern Myanmar (Burma) and western Thailand.

The outfit consists of a top (TRC 2023.0187), a skirt (TRC 2023.0189), a head cloth (TRC 2023.0190), and a shoulder bag (TRC 2023.0188). The top is made from two lengths of black, hand woven cloth sewn together and then decorated with squares and stars in satin stitch, as well as applied Job’s Tears seeds (Coix family).



Dries Touw, in the jungle along the Thailand/Myanmar border, 1965.

The outfit is characteristic for various groups of Karen women. Many of the Karen originate in Myanmar (Burma) and became refugees in Thailand following the start of the Karen conflict in Myanmar that has been ongoing since 1949.



Cotton, hand embroidered top from among the Karen, Myanmar/Thailand, 1965 (TRC 2023.0187).

According to various entries in Dries Touw’s expedition diary, the Karen outfit now in the TRC Collection was bought on 21 December 1965 in the village of Sap Aep, Thailand.

It was noted in the extract from Touw’s diary that he took photographs, and the TRC has been given scans of various relevant images. These include Karen men and women in various forms of regional dress, as well as one with a Karen woman weaving with a back strap loom, of the type mentioned in the diary.

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A tin model of a weaver and his loom, and more textiles from Mali

In early August 2023, Prof Rogier Bedaux, a long time friend, supporter and indeed an original Board member of the TRC, gave the TRC a variety of African textiles and related objects.



Factory woven (tabby weave) cloth, hand resist dyed (tie-dyed), machine embroidered. Mali, late 20th century (TRC 2023.1196).

Prof. Bedaux used to be curator for Africa in the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden (now known as the *Wereldmuseum Leiden*) and has long been interested in textiles and was responsible, for example, for the initial excavations and publication of the Tellem textiles from Mali, which are some of the oldest, provenanced textiles in West Africa.

The items donated by Prof. Bedaux included woven cloth, resist dyed forms (tie-dye; TRC 2023.1197 and TRC 2023.1198) and block printed (TRC 2023.1206), two embroideries, one hand (TRC 2023.1209) and one machine form (TRC 2023.1196), as well as six bazins of various colours.

Bazin is a form of polished damask cloth that is often woven in Austria and Germany and exported to West Africa. Some of the bazins in the donation are decorated with rows of small, direct printed motifs made from carved, wood and calabash skin blocks that are about 8 x 8 cm in size (such as [TRC 2023.1201](#) to [TRC 2023.1204](#)).

Bazin is very popular for clothing in West Africa and recently we had some examples of this type of cloth on display in the TRC's exhibition about

textile trade links between Asia, Africa and Europe.

Among the Mali items was a small model (TRC 2023.1212) of a weaver at work, on a loom which is made out of old tin and aluminium cans, especially insecticides. The weaver is working at a horizontal frame loom with two heddles worked with feet treadles. The warp threads are wrapped into a large coil.



Model of a man working at a frame loom made from old pieces of tin cans and metal strips. Mali, 2004 (TRC 2023.1212).

The width of cloth being produced is narrow and reflects the forms often produced using traditional West African looms of this type. Among the Mali textiles in the donation, for example, there were hand woven textiles made up of numerous bands that ranged from 4.5 cm (TRC 2023.1205) to 12 cm (TRC 2023.1206) in width.

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Chinese lotus shoes, and a lotus shoe ashtray

Quirina Vreeburg, Haarlem, is slowly giving the TRC her collection of Han and Manchu Chinese textiles, garments and accessories. The first few boxes came in early 2023 and contained skirts, panels, and gowns.

In another group of items there were three boxes of items, mainly filled with embroidered pieces, including garments, panels, bags and 25 pairs of Chinese shoes, plus a single, tiny shoe (see below).



Pair of embroidered tiger boots for a boy, China, 20th century (TRC 2023.1248a-b).

Among the shoes are modern baby examples (TRC 2023.1249a-b), tiger shoes for a boy (TRC 2023.1248a-b), and a pair of Manchu shoes with high horse-shoe shaped heels (TRC 2023.1265a-b). There is also a pair of Mao-period shoes (TRC 2023.1256a-b).

But most fascinating are the eleven, brightly coloured pairs of lotus shoes for women who had bound feet. We have written blogs earlier on this subject (such as a blog written by Monica Chen from Heidelberg University, on 25 May 2022), and also published an online exhibition, but the Vreeburg family donation means we now have an even more varied collection of this genre of shoes and boots. They include forms from the Jiangsu and Zhejiang region (TRC 2023.1254a-b), as well as Shandong style (TRC 2023.1245a-b).



Pair of miniature lotus boots, early 20th century (TRC 2023.1245a-b).

A feature of these shoes and other lotus shoes are the beautifully quilted soles that are sometimes decorated with lines, but on other occasions with complex geometric shapes. These soles were meant to be seen when the wearer was sitting or laying on a bed or bench of some kind.

For many, these shoes are also a symbol of the practice that lasted for over 1000 years of deliberately crippling girls in search of 'beauty' and 'refinement', as well as a 'good marriage', not to mention what is perceived by most as a particularly painful means of dominating girls and women, which was banned decades ago in China and elsewhere.

There is one item, however, that we found perplexing. It is the single shoe (TRC 2023.1267a-b), decorated with couched gold thread motifs. The shoe has an inner element made out of metal, which was clearly made to fit the shoe, but at the same time it can easily be removed. It puzzled us and then we remembered reading some years ago about lotus shoes being made into ashtrays and here before us was one such example!



'Ashtray' lotus shoe, early 20th century (TRC 2023.1267a).



Metal ashtray to go into lotus shoe, TRC 2023.1267a (TRC 2023.1267b).

Ashtray shoes were made for both the Chinese market and the international tourist trade. This particular example probably dates to the early part of the 20th century.

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A young woman's memory box from liberated Tilburg, the Netherlands, 1944-1945

In November 2023, Jeantine van de Ven, Leiden, came to the TRC with several bags and boxes of textiles and other objects that belonged to her mother, Marianne Rutten (1924-2021). Among the items was a small cardboard box (TRC 2023.2567) that led to various thoughts and reflections.

More specifically, it is a memory box that reflects life for one young woman in 1944 and 1945. The contents of the box were assembled by Marianne, who was born and brought up in Tilburg in Noord-Brabant, which lies in the south of the Netherlands and was one of the first Dutch cities to be liberated from the Nazi Germans in 1944.



Marianne Rutten (1924-2021), photographed in c. 1942.

It would appear that when the *Prinses Irene Brigade* (the Netherlands), the 15th Scottish Infantry Division and other troops arrived in Tilburg in October 1944, there were 13 days of serious fighting, but once the Germans had been forced out there were some large, public parties and the Scottish infantry provided pipe band music.



Uniform of the Prinses Irene Brigade, c. 1944 (TRC 2023.2567.02).

It also became accepted for the soldiers to give their dance partners a memento, such as a cap badge, the rank pips from the shoulder and the regimental/country patch from the upper sleeves of a uniform tunic. And in the memory box there are examples of all of these. Some of the badges were given directly to Marianne, others were collected from friends.

In addition to the items mentioned above, there were other objects from this period of Tilburg's history, namely some orange coloured daisies (TRC 2023.2567.35a-b). These flowers are called *margriet*, in Dutch, and they represent Princess Margriet (born in 1943, a granddaughter of Queen Wilhelmina; reign: 1890-1948) and the Dutch resistance.



Coin brooch, with the head of Queen Wilhelmina, the Netherlands, c. 1944 (TRC 2023.2568).

There are also several items made from Dutch silver coins from the 1930's, which were a forbidden form of currency during the German occupation (1940-1945) and reflected a form of patriotism and resistance.

Another set of coins was used as pendants or possibly as a pair of earrings (TRC 2023.2567.34a-b). They were made from the thick, perspex glass from an aircraft and then someone had inserted small silver coins that date to the 1930's. Again as a symbol of Dutch patriotism and resistance.

Exhibitions at the TRC

Two exhibitions were held in the TRC's Gallery in 2023, the first was about Asian-African-European textiles, while the second one was about 1920s Western fashions.

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Asia-Africa-Europe: Textiles and trade exhibition

The theme of one of the main TRC exhibitions in 2023 was Asia-Africa textiles, and was organised as part of an international seminar week organised by the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden University. The IIAS week was from the 19th to the 23rd September 2022. The exhibition was opened on the 12th September of 2022 and lasted until the summer of 2023.



Fragment of a block printed textile using a resist technique, 14th century, from India, excavated at Quseir al-Qadim, Red Sea coast, Egypt (TRC 2020.0239).

The TRC exhibition looked at various aspects of the Asian-African-European trade in textiles, namely:

The medieval trade in Indian cotton textiles with block printed designs that were exported to Africa and Egypt, as well as the Mediterranean. On display were a small group of this type of textiles that date to about 1350 and derive from excavations at Quseir al-Qadim, Egypt.



George cloth from West Africa, c. 2022 (TRC 2022.2349). This cloth is named after the British fortress of St George, Madras/Chennai

The second theme was the George/Madras cotton textiles produced in Madras (Chennai), India, from the 17th century, specifically for the West African market where they were known as Georges. These textiles were also traded by Dutch companies and sent to Surinam and the West Indies, where they are still known as *Madras stof*. On display were so-called plain Georges-Madras (i.e. brightly coloured checks), as well as embroidered Georges.

Then came a section on wrap-around garments called kangas, which have been worn by women in East Africa since the late 19th century. Kangas are characterised by having a saying in Swahili that is printed on one edge of the cloth (for instance: "I am not tired yet. I love you very much").

Many of these textiles were printed in India especially for this vast African market, although nowadays kangas are mainly produced in Kenya and Tanzania. They remain extremely popular, as they allow women to express their thoughts and moods via the choice of a suitable saying and colour combination.

A tale of two companies looks at Vlisco and Jansen Holland wax prints, which for the last 150 years are associated with Helmond, a city in the south of the Netherlands. The wax prints remain a staple part of the West African textile market and of clothing for both men and women.

The last main section of the exhibition looked at *bazin*, a cotton damask cloth that is generally produced in Europe (the best come from Austria and Germany). They are often printed in Europe or sent to West Africa where many of them are resist dyed in various manners. The display included lengths of bazin cloths and complete garments for men.

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Head to Toe: 1920's fashion exhibition

On Thursday (28th September 2023) the TRC's latest exhibition of 2023 was officially opened to the public.

Gillian Vogelsang (director) welcomed everyone and was followed by the curator, Augusta de Gunzbourg. She explained the ideas behind the exhibition and how it was built up and she added extra details about various outfits and garments. The exhibition was opened by Yvonne van Delft, wethouder Cultuur Gemeente Leiden.



Yvonne van Delft (left), wethouder Cultuur Gemeente Leiden, and Augusta de Gunzbourg (right), curator of the exhibition. Photograph by Maria Linkogle.

The official element of the opening was followed by Augusta giving a general tour of the exhibition. She highlighted specific aspects, such as the change in women's body shape - with the emphasis moving from the waist to the hips, a wider range of materials becoming available and many women in general becoming freer with more personal money.



Augusta de Gunzbourg tells about 1920s fashion. Photograph by Maria Linkogle.

Over seventy items were on display and ranged from complete outfits, daily wear, afternoon tea dresses to evening wear (plus accessories such as necklaces, headwear, short capes and beaded bags), and a wide range of hats. There were also 1920's sports items, including swimwear, tennis dress and a ski outfit complete with 1920's wooden skis.



1920's garments at the exhibition 'From Head To Toe', TRC Leiden. Photograph by Gillian Vogelsang.

Items of underwear were also included, including bras, stockings and slippers, sewing equipment, and a selection of 1920's printed textiles. Most of these items form part of the TRC's extensive collection of textiles, dress and accessories.

Some research projects

A 1867 Dutch sampler with a fascinating biography

The TRC acquired in 2023 a small, linen and cotton sampler (TRC 2023.0185), 31 x 31 cm in size, which mentions the name of D.W. Kolman, aged 9, and the year 1867. The sampler came as part of a larger collection of textiles that were donated by a member of the Dekker family. She also kindly gave us some background information about the collection.

Most of the items, including the sampler, had belonged to the grandmother of the donor's husband. That was Henriette Dekker-Schuit, who was born in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) in 1886 and returned to the Netherlands with her husband and children around 1932. She died in The Hague in 1965. But what was her link to D.W. Kolman, aged 9 in 1867?



A Dutch sampler worked by D.W. Kolman aged nine, in 1867 (TRC 2023.0185).

Fortunately, Kolman is not a common Dutch name, and I quickly identified someone called Davina Wilhelmina Kolman (or Kollman), who was born on 16 May 1858 at Kortenhoef (near Hilversum, southeast of Amsterdam) to Hendrik Kolman and Johanna Voorn.

She would have been nine years old in 1867, and we may safely conclude that she was the one who worked the sampler. But we still do not know how her sampler ended up in the TRC Collection.



Davina Wilhelmina de Kloet - Kolman (1858-1937).

On 5 June 1880, so we discovered, Davina Kolman married a farmer named Jacobus de Kloet, also from Kortenhoef. Is it a coincidence that his father (although not married to his mother), who was called Elias Cornelisz Puttenaar (1791-1871), had been baptised on 2 June 1791 in the *Pieterskerk*, right in the centre of

the old town of Leiden, the domicile of the TRC? Davina, the sampler embroideress, therefore had a tenuous link with Leiden!

Davina and Jacobus had many children, who were all born in Kortenhoef. Jacobus died in 1928, and Davina in 1937.

None of the children married a person with the surname Dekker, so we still do not know how the sampler, worked by their mother Davina ended up in the Dekker family.

However, there is more information: on 21 June 1911 the eldest daughter – Jacoba Davina de Kloet (born in 1880/1881, she died in 1964) – married the painter Bernardus Antonie van Beek (1875-1941). This artist used to come to Kortenhoef to paint, and he settled there permanently in 1911. Jacoba de Kloet is not mentioned, but we may assume she was the reason why he came to live there.

And now we are getting close. One of their daughters was Davina Wilhelmina (Ina) van Beek (1916-2008). It so happens that Ina van Beek was the partner of Jeanette Dekker (born in Indonesia on 7 February 1925), who was the daughter of Henriette Dekker-Schuit (whose grandson married the woman who donated the sampler to the TRC).

That means we can now trace the sampler from the maker right through to the TRC: we may presume that the sampler, worked by Davina Wilhelmina Kolman (1858-1937) in 1867, was passed on her eldest daughter Jacoba Davina van Beek-de Kloet (1880/1-1964). From her the sampler went to her daughter Davina Wilhelmina (Ina) van Beek (1916-2008), and then to Ina's partner Jeanette Dekker (b. 1925), and hence it was passed on to the Dekker family and to Jeanette's nephews and nieces, and ultimately to the TRC.

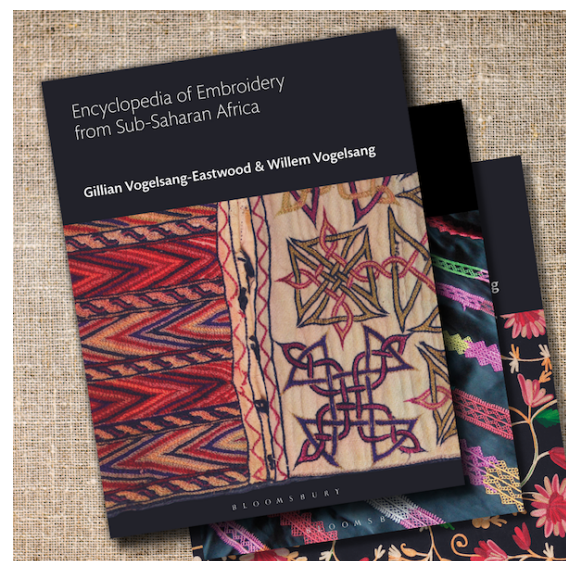
It is interesting to note that the parents of Davina who worked the original sampler, must have been poor: at the time of their wedding, her father was a labourer and her mother a housemaid. Yet this is a nicely worked sampler that required skills to

produce. It seems Davina received more than the bare minimum of needlework teaching.

The explanation may be that she seems to have been her parents' only surviving child: I found only one brother, Abraham, who died in 1862 at the age of ten months. They may have been willing to pay, in order to give their daughter the best schooling they could – and they may have been able to do so because she was the only surviving child. Of course, the nineteenth century was also big on charity and private initiative. It is quite possible that Kortenhoef had a good school for poor children, or some private charity teaching needlework.

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Publication of Volume Three of Bloomsbury's World Encyclopedia of Embroidery: Sub-Saharan Africa



Encyclopedia of Embroidery from Sub-Saharan Africa, Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood and Willem Vogelsang

In April 2023, volume three of the *Bloomsbury World Encyclopedia of Embroidery*, which covers sub-Saharan Africa, was published. The work was completed under the aegis of the TRC and edited by Dr Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, director of the TRC and also chief author, together with her husband, Dr Willem Vogelsang.

For centuries, the peoples of Sub-Saharan Africa have been producing domestic and professional embroidery to decorate themselves, their families, clients, homes and public spaces. Embroidery is an expression of artistic, personal, family, regional and even political creativity which has played an important role in the social and cultural lives of people throughout the region. It has also reflected economic and political changes over time as well as social, religious and artistic contexts.

This is the first reference work to describe the history of embroidery throughout Africa south of the Sahara from the early modern period through to the present. From quilted armour to embroidered caps and leather sandals, it offers an authoritative guide to all the major embroidery traditions of the region and a detailed examination of the material, technical, artistic and design dimensions of the subject.

Generously illustrated with 395 images (362 in colour) of clothes, accessories, and examples of decorated soft furnishings such as cushions, bed linen, curtains, floor coverings and wall hangings, the Encyclopedia is an essential resource for students and scholars of the subject.

This volume is part of the *Bloomsbury World Encyclopedia of Embroidery* series. The first volume, on embroidery from the Arab World, won the 2017 Dartmouth Medal, awarded by the American Library Association for a reference work of outstanding quality and significance.

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A Palestinian embroidery recently added to the TRC Collection and what it can tell

In 2023 a group of objects were donated to the TRC Leiden by the Dool family, Dordrecht, including an embroidered cloth that has since been identified as part of a Palestinian embroidered shawl (TRC 2023.0064). More specifically, it is very likely that it comes from Hebron, in what is now the southern West Bank and about 19 km south of Jerusalem. In the Hebron region such a shawl is called a *ghudfeh*. Furthermore, the piece

appears to date to c. 1900. But how did we come to these conclusions? In other words, what did the embroidery tell us?

There are various clues, namely, the ground cloth is hand woven and is made up of three lengths of cloth that are each about 36 cm in width and have slightly 'wobbly' selvedges (not the 'perfect' selvedges associated with machine made cloth). The width of the cloth is an indication that the cloth was probably woven on a horizontal loom (normal for the Levant) worked by one person. Such a three-piece shawl is common for Hebron shawls. The Hebron element is also suggested by the type of fringing at one of the transverse ends.



*Partial Palestinian shawl from Hebron, c. 1900
(TRC 2023.0064).*

The material for the ground cloth is cotton, rather than linen. Cotton was being introduced in Palestine from the late 19th century. The cotton probably came from either India or more likely Egypt.

The thread used for the embroidery is made of floss silk, which is an unspun silk form. In the early 20th century Palestine there was a move from floss silk to spun silk forms. By the 1920s another significant change took place when mercerised, spun cotton threads, especially those produced by the French firm of DMC, became more widely available and used. These were both cheaper and easier to use than floss silk forms. The type of thread would therefore suggest a date for the cloth prior to the early 20th century, and a

date from the late 19th century on the basis of the type of cloth.

It may be added in this context that most of the embroidery yarns at this time in the Levant came from Syria, especially from the Aleppo region, which had a long history of silk cultivation and the production of silk threads and woven cloth. Alas, this historic industry has been destroyed by the civil war that has plagued this region in recent years.



Detail of a Palestinian shawl from Hebron, c. 1900 (TRC 2023.0064).

The embroidery silks of the cloth under discussion were dyed with natural dyes, especially the dark blue (probably indigo) and a brick red (possibly either madder or pomegranate, but these identifications need to be confirmed). However, some bright pink silk threads were also used and this colour is associated with aniline dyes, a form of European artificial dye matter that became popular at the end of the 19th century. Often the early examples of aniline dyes were not colourfast and used to bleed when the textile was washed. In the shawl these threads show some bleeding.

Then we come to the stitches. Early to mid-19th century Palestinian embroideries tend to be made with a range of stitches including back stitch, cross stitch, satin stitch, stem stitch, trammed tent stitch, as well as couching. From the 1870s onwards European and American Christian missionaries introduced embroideries in their

schools and ateliers that were only worked with cross stitch.

By the end of the 19th century cross stitch had as a result become the most widely used stitch for the production of embroidery for Palestinian dresses, shawls, headdresses, etc. It appears to have become popular because this stitch was relatively quick to work. The cloth we are discussing has only cross stitches. It is also worth noting that it would appear that all the stitching of the cloth was carried out by one person, as there is no striking difference in how the stitches were worked.

And last, but by no means least, the patterns. The shawl includes a variety of geometric motifs including Cyprus trees, S-shapes, a large X-shape, as well as rows of blocks of repeating geometric forms made up of squares, themselves constructed from L-shapes. Such blocks are very characteristic for Hebron embroideries, but the S-shapes are often referred to as typically Ramallah in origin, while the large X-shape in the middle of the cloth is sometimes associated with Qastina in Gaza.

This leads to the question: did the maker of the embroidery see items from other parts of Palestine and copied them? Or was the Hebron motif repertoire more diverse than we now appreciate?

It is also noticeable that one of the long side bands is upside down, just like some of the stylised trees! We can only wonder what happened during the embroidery process and the sewing of the three bands of embroidered cloth.

All of these clues help to indicate where this piece comes from and when. It most likely is a Hebron piece produced around 1900. It is worth noting there is a very similar example of an embroidered Hebron shawl now in the British Museum (BM As1968,04.17) as well as piece of related embroidery (As1986,16.1), which have been dated to the 1920s-1930s, but I suspect, because of the use of floss silk for the complete example, that they may be earlier.

But how was it originally used? The cloth has been cut in half at some point and probably originally had an embroidered panel and fringing

along both transverse ends. I am not sure if it was cut up in order to sell the two halves separately. It is also possible that one half had been damaged or was stained and the cloth was repurposed as a cover, curtain or something similar.

We are slowly building up a Palestinian collection at the TRC (currently more than 135 pieces) and it is thanks to various groups and individuals that this aspect of Middle Eastern textile industry, and especially its embroidery, is properly represented. One thing that is becoming clear is that the TRC Collection is gaining depth and becoming more and more interesting, inclusive and indeed inspiring!

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The *Stichting* TRC will be happy to answer any questions that readers may have about our work. In addition, gifts of clothing, books and visual material are always welcome! And anyone wishing to help financially or take part in the activities of the *Stichting* should contact us at:

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