

IN HEVIGEN WOEDE...

Part I: *GROOTE CATRIJN*: EARLIEST RECORDED FEMALE BANDIET AT THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE - A STUDY IN UPWARD MOBILITY

*This is what it means
to be a slave: to be abused and bear it,
compelled by violence to suffer wrong...*

- EURIPIDES, *Hecuba* (c. 425 BC), tr. William Arrowsmith

Summary

Groote Catrijn is the Cape of Good Hope's first recorded female convict (bandiet) and founding mother of the *SNYMAN* family. Legally handicapped, this female figure came to play a key role in early Cape colonial society. A preponderance of shared antecedents are traceable for descendants of the early Cape community, given the small gene pool. *Groote Catrijn*'s genealogical and cultural contribution to the generally misconstrued 'white' / 'settler' / 'colonist' / 'coloured' population of Southern Africa is therefore considerable. A slave from Paliacatta, assaulted sexually, she kills her man in self-defence in Batavia, she is pardoned, her death sentence is commuted and she is banished to the Cape as slave for life. Impregnated first by the chief of the garrison and then by an unruly soldier, Governor-General of the Council of India, Joan Maetsuycker, again *freely pardons* her releasing her from slavery. She then marries a free black settler. In pursuit of upward mobility, we witness a significant metamorphosis of her legal status: privately-owned slave and concubine, convict, Company slave, Christian, wife of a Free Black and slave owner. Circumventing her legal disability, however, she and her offspring do not necessarily achieve greater social acceptance.

Introduction

Groote Catrijn has a unique position in early Cape colonial society. She was the first recorded female convict to be forcefully removed to the *VOC*-occupied Cape of Good Hope.¹ Furthermore, her genealogical contribution to the people of Cape colonial origin is phenomenal.² She has been, however, extremely elusive. Despite the ongoing retrieval and documentation of key historical figures in the Cape's marginalised communities, *Groote Catrijn* until now has generally defied detection in the records. Only by rendering thoroughly the available archival records has it become possible to reconstruct more about this formidable woman, who appears at times to have even escaped detection during her own lifetime.³

¹ A.J. Böeseken. *Slaves and Free Blacks at the Cape 1658-1700* (Cape Town, 1977), 20-21. Böeseken, however, incorrectly states that the records do not give any details about her criminal past. Until now her story has not been cohesively accounted for in terms of available records. R.C.-H. Shell in his *Children of Bondage* (Johannesburg, 1995), makes no mention whatsoever of this important slave figure.

² Many people of early Cape colonial origin are likely to have at least one descent, if not multiple descents, from *Groote Catrijn*, via initially, the Snyman family given the consanguineous realities of early Cape settlement. The writer for example, has 5 traceable descents from her through his paternal grandmother Hester Maria Johanna Upham, nee Basson (1895-1930) and his maternal great-grandmother Iconetta Christina Dale, nee Marais (1883-1963), she being one of his most prolific ancestors.

³ The writer is presently documenting all recorded women at the Cape during the first 25 years of colonial occupation. This exercise is proving to be invaluable in terms of identifying more fully individuals such as *Groote Catrijn*.

Paliacatta : where it all started...

*Groote Catrijn*⁴ was born into an indigenous slave-owning society sometime after 1631 in Paliacatta (the present-day Pulicat) - a VOC trading post on a lake north of Madras on the Indian sub-continent's Coromandel Coast and washed by the waters of the Bay of Bengal.

At the time of her birth Paliacatta⁵ had already been in Dutch hands for at least 22 years. It had been occupied in terms of concessions made by local rulers. The Dutch manned a fort Het Casteel Geldria there from 1609 until 1795. Thereafter the factory fell into the hands of the British. Up to the 1680's Pulicat was the VOC's headquarters and main military force on the Coromandel Coast and initially the principal European factory in South-East Asia.⁶ During the 186-year Dutch rule, the settlement (together with the numerous other British, Danish, French, and Portuguese trading posts in India and Ceylon) helped to deliver the Indian sub-continent of its spices, cotton and human chattels.

Pulicat is situated in the traditional Indian province of Dravida with Pulicat lake being shared by the two present-day (predominantly Hindu) states of Telegu-speaking Andhra Pradesh and the Tamil-speaking Tamil Nadu. Pulicat itself lies in the northern-most part of Tamil Nadu so that in all likelihood *Groote Catrijn* could have been a Tamil-speaking Hindu. Traditional to this predominantly Hindu Dravidian region are the caste system, polyandry, matriarchy and untouchability. Given the cosmopolitan nature of Pulicat and centuries of transcontinental human contact, we can never be certain about her racial and cultural make-up.

The indigenous caste -system facilitated the transport of slaves from the Indian sub-continent by the various European East Indian Companies. *Groote Catrijn* herself is likely to have been an untouchable or pariah - a victim of this caste-system.⁷ Pariah-status, together with debt-bondage and prisoner-of-war captives are all plausible grounds for the enslavement and easy forced removal from the Indian sub-continent of unfortunate individuals such as *Groote Catrijn*.

Johan Nieuhof, who visited Pulicat in 1662, gives us a contemporary description of this fortified, cosmopolitan VOC trading base and its inhabitants:⁸

The Dutch East-India company has a strong fort here, with four bastions of stone work call'd Geldria, of which they have been possess'd ever since the year 1619. Without the

⁴ *Groote Catrijn* (literally 'Big Catherine' or 'Catherine the Elder') undergoes numerous metamorphoses, name-wise, throughout the records. Throughout this article she will generally be referred to by her informal name. In the records she is mostly referred to without any ascribed provenance: Catharien, Catharijn, Catharina, Cathryn, Catrijn, Catrijna, Catrina, Catrine, Chatarina & Katrijn. At other times she appears as *Groote Catrijn*, or *Groote Catrina*. Finally she appears with varying provenances: Catharina van Batavia, Catharina van Bengale/n, Catharina van de Kaap, Catharina van Mallabaar, Catharina van Paliacat / Paliacate / Pallacatta / Palicat / Paliecatte & possibly Catharina Wasserman (?).

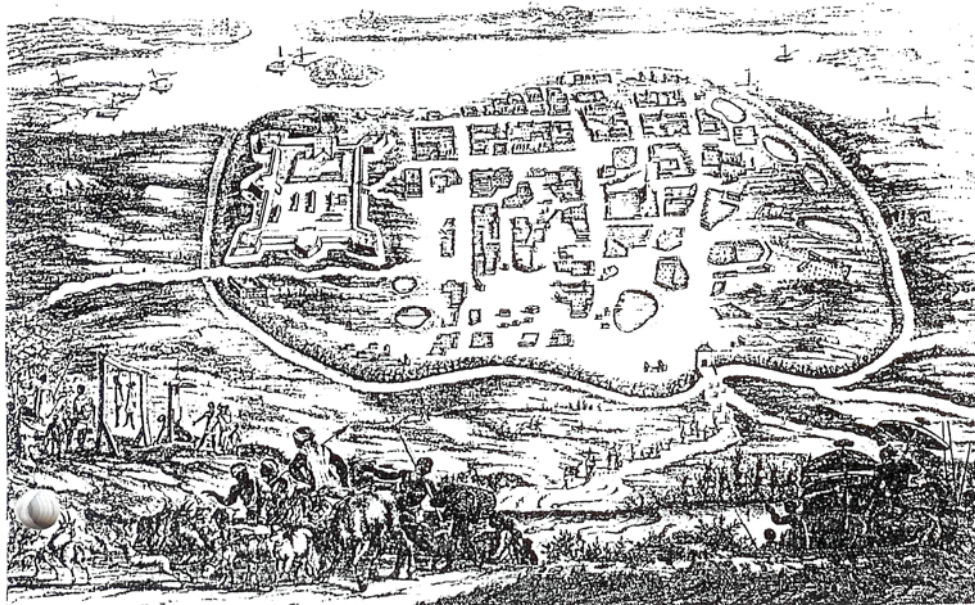
⁵ The name is recorded variously throughout the records as: Paleacatta, Paleacatte, Paliacatta, Paliacatte, Palicatte, Palleacata, Palliacatte and Palliecatte.

⁶ J.I. Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade 1585-1740* (Oxford 1991). 103 & 331.

⁷ The caste system in India is an ancient one and was considered a divine institution consisting of warriors (*Kshatryas*), priests (*Brahmans*), peasants (*Valsyas*), subjugated peoples and those of mixed blood (Sudras), and those without caste (Pariahs).

⁸ Johan Nieuhof, *Travels to the East-Indies, 1653-1670* (Singapore, 1985), 213-4.

castle is a plantation or town, which to the land-side is defended by an earthen wall, which is but indifferently kept, but the houses within are very close and well built. It is inhabited partly by Hollanders, partly by jentives⁹ or pagan natives; the last of which live for the most part upon trade with painted and white callicoes and linen. The rice which grows in this countrey in great plenty, is as well as all other sort of grains brought weekly to the market here. The fort is on one side wash'd by a river, which swells very high in the rainy season, when the merchandizes may be unloaden here by the help of lighters. But in the summer season the river being quite dry'd up, the goods are forc'd to be carried ashore on their backs. This river abounds in fish in the wintertime, most of which die in the summer, which makes the inhabitants catch them, before that time, and dry them in the sun, and so transport them to other places. The north Monzon begins here in October, and holds all the November and December, with such violence, that the ships can scarce ride in the road. In January the Monzon changes, and the fair season returns...As to the city of Paliakatte, its inhabitants are for the most part Mestices and Kastices. Mestices are such whose parents were married with foreigners: as for instance, when an Hollander marries an Indian woman, or an Indian man a Dutch woman: but the children of the Mestices are called Kastices. Thus many of the natives, especially of the Thioles have married Dutch women, as on the other hand, several Hollanders are married to women of the Thioles, from whence is come a numerous offspring of Mestices and Kastices. Many Bramans, Banyans and Panekayers, or Thomists and Jews live here, of great traffick; for every month comes hither the Kaffila or caravan of Agra. The Banyans and Jews are the chiefest of all the traders here, this city being a place Golconda, Suratte and Cambaia by land; both Christians and Mahometans bring to this place their merchandizes from the Red-Sea, the Persian Gulph, From Suratte, Goa, Malabar, Sumatra and Malacca. There is great plenty of fish at Paliakatte, and a neighbouring country furnishes them with all sorts of provisions.



The City of PELLACATA with its CASTLE

⁹ From the Portuguese gentiam. The peculiar Cape term of abuse for a prostitute: jintoe / jintoo / jentoe / gentoo, is very likely also to be a derivative.

Groote Catrijn at Batavia: the trial

Either a slave by birth, or later enslaved and dispensed with by her own or other people to the Dutch, we find her in 1656 in Batavia.¹⁰ There it was *Groote Catrijn*'s lot to belong to the free woman *Maria Magdalena*. Her owner is described as the *vrije vrou ende juvrouw ten desen stede*. Her lack of surname indicates that she herself was a non-European woman, either local or freed elsewhere and locally known as a *mardijcker*.¹¹

The events leading up to *Groote Catrijn*'s life-long banishment to the Cape of Good Hope are preserved in two detailed judicial documents from Batavia that were copied from the Sententieboek¹² of the Batavian Council of Justice and which accompanied her on her voyage of exile to the Cape.¹³

In these documents we learn that at the time of her conviction, Pulicat-born¹⁴ *Catharina* appeared to be about 25 years old.¹⁵ Her physical size may well have contributed to this judicially ascribed estimation. That she was already large at that stage (her size being inferred from her nickname) seems possible judging by the force she employed when fighting off her assailant.

Appearing before the Council of Justice at the Castle at Batavia on a charge of manslaughter, *Groote Catrijn* as prisoner was able to relate – *of her own free will* – the events that lead up to the charge being brought against her.

She and the late *Claes van Mallebaerse*¹⁶ (during his lifetime the slave of the Honourable Company's stable master *Sieur Hendrick Christoffel Loser*) had already for one and a half years committed *vleeschelijcke conversatie* as husband and wife.¹⁷ This relationship, first compounded sometime in mid-1654, was to terminate abruptly at about two o'clock on the afternoon of 8 October 1656.

On that eventful day we find *Groote Catrijn* arriving at the garden of *Claes*' master and owner, situated at the Rijswijk Fortress outside of Batavia, with a pot of cooked, but cold, pig meat. It appears that *Claes* had requested the food and, in any case, it seems that *Groote Catrijn* was keen that he should share the meat with her.

Her expedition, however, was abortive. *Groote Catrijn*'s offerings were politely refused by *Claes*,¹⁸ who had already eaten his midday meal.¹⁹ Her concubine²⁰, *Claes*, however, then

¹⁰ The present-day Jakarta on the island of Java, Indonesia, captured by the Dutch and used as the VOC's chief port in the East.

¹¹ From the Bahasa / Malay *mardeka* meaning free.

¹² i.e. Sentence Book.

¹³ Cape Archives (hereinafter CA), Council of Justice (hereinafter CJ) 281. No 44, Case of Catharina van Paliacatte. 16 Nov. 1656. 5-7. Extracts from the Sentence Book are dated 16 Nov. 1656 and 18 Nov. 1656 respectively and were extracted on 25 Nov. 1656.

¹⁴ ...*geboortich van Palliacatte*...

¹⁵ This estimation appears to be based on her physical appearance alone (*na aensien omtrent 25 jaeren*).

¹⁶ *Claes* was a slave from the Coast of Malabar (i.e. the west coast of the Indian sub-continent).

¹⁷ ...*'t sedert een en den half jaer geleden...als man ende vrou vleeschelijcke conversacie gehouden hebbende*...

¹⁸ ...*door hem beleefdelijck geweigent*...

turned on her in anger. A scuffle ensued, abuse was hurled, with *Claes* finally grabbing hold of *Groote Catrijn* and assaulting her sexually.²¹

When they had separated, a grounded²² *Groote Catrijn*, fearing the worst, grabbed hold of an angular hay ladder (trestle) used for the horses and hit *Claes* violently (...in hewigen woede...) against the droop of his belly almost connecting his manhood. One can rightly ask whether his genitals were actually the intended target and whether *Groote Catrijn* missed her mark. The force of the impact caused *Claes's* bladder to burst and four days later he died on the night of 11/12 October 1656.²³

Groote Catrijn had taken a life. The law insisted on reciprocity as a deterrent to others²⁴ and so the Council of Justice felt compelled to comply with the demands and the *Concens ad mortem* in spite of the accused prisoner's *voluntary statement*.²⁵

On 16 November 1656 *Groote Catrijn* was condemned to be tied to a stake and strangled (more correctly garrotted) until dead and her property confiscated.²⁶

Being a slave and legally incapable of owning any property, it is not clear why the court deemed it necessary to confiscate any property. As a convict *Groote Catrijn* ceased to belong to the free woman Maria Magdalena and her *slave-status* changed to that of a *Company slave*.

Did confiscation of her property in effect mean confiscation of Maria Magdalena's property, viz. *Groote Catrijn* herself?

Groote Catrijn's death sentence appears to have been a technicality, however. She was pardoned by Governor-General Joan Maetsuycker two days later on 18 November 1656. In the Pardon she is referred to *Catharina van Mallebaer* whereas when originally sentenced, she is mentioned as *Catharina geboortich van Paliacatte*. Her sentence was commuted. She had acted in self-defence and did not have the intent to kill *Claes* at the time of the scuffle. Her sentence was consequently altered and she was banished for life to the *Caep de Boa Esperance* to serve for the term of her natural life as a *Company slave* there.

Bandiet for the term of her natural life at the Cape

Groote Catrijn arrived at the Cape on 21 February 1657 on board the *Prins Willem*. The ship was part of the return fleet that left Batavia on 4 December 1656.²⁷ It was in this same return

¹⁹ ...sijnde a/s hebbende van ee vooren sijn middach mad genuccichr...

²⁰ ...haer bijsit...

²¹ ...is sijn gevangenedaer van aen eerst:[genoemd]e haer bijsit eerst in wo[o]rden ende daerna handse gemeen geworden scheldende alvorens sijn ge:[vange]ne denselven ende bij vouginge op'e onbeleefsche ten woeden enden mooi gesoent ofte vleeschelijck bekent sulcx genoemd *Claes* van haer gebeeten...

²² ...op'd aerde neder geseten wesend...

²³ ...ende soo als gescheiden waeren op'd aerde neder geseten wesene heeft bij gevang:[ene]n haer ontsienoch te gevreest en t'oorwegen gemoede een groot houckige hoij leer van de perde op te vatten en daarmede genoemde *Claes* soodanich tegens het hangen van sijn buijck omtrent sijn mannelyckh:[eij]t te werpen, het desselfe blaes gebarsten synde meer genoemde *Claes* daer van des nachts tusschen elfden ende twaelfden den selven maenddesen werelt is overleden...

²⁴ ...tot afschrich van andere...

²⁵ ... vrijwillige bekentenis...

²⁶ ...aen een pael gebonden ende mee een touw soodanich gewurcht te worden, datten de dood na volcht met confiscatie haer den goederen...

fleet that her life-long friend Mooij Ansel²⁸ van Bengale arrived at the Cape to be sold to Commander van Riebeeck.²⁹

The Prins Willem brings you three convicts. Two have been banished to Robben Island for a series of years, and the female slave for the term of her natural life at the Cape.

She joined the *Chinaman* 'tSincko. He had also been banished to the Cape for life on 10 December 1653 and arrived there on board the *Haes* on 17 July 1656.³⁰ Together they appear as *bandieten ende Kettingasten* in the Muster Roll of May 1657.³¹ Thereafter she appears as one of the slavinnen...bij den Commandeur...

Groote Catrijn's convict existence took on a new dimension. She would have been one of the very few freely-available, non-aboriginal women/non-male sexual receptacles for the new colony's rampant, burgeoning (but fluid) adult male population, both European and slave. In 1657 she was one of the settlement's 15 imported women, seven of whom were already married and legally *free*.³² The other seven were all slave women, and like *Groote Catrijn*, in the ironic and precarious position of being sexually free, yet still in bondage.

Groote Catrijn is again mentioned as *Catharina van Palliacatta swartin* in the Muster Roll of 15 February 1658 together again with the *Chinaman* 'tSincko still as convicts banished for life.³³

In the Muster Roll of 5 March 1659 *Groote Catrijn* appears (as *Chatarina van Paliecatte*) together with two other black convicts-for-life from Batavia: *Susanna* and *Domingo*.³⁴ This time the personage Harrij Hottentoo, chief of the Goringhaicona, is also mentioned as a convict for life, but on Robben Island, so that *Groote Catrijn* found herself in curious company in terms of criminal classification.

Unfortunately the muster rolls for 1660, 1 March 1660 and 1 April 1662 respectively, do not list the Cape's convict population. Only the garrison is listed. We do, however, catch a glimpse of *Groote Catrijn* in the Muster Roll for 1662. Here she is listed as one of the Cape's 4 convicts:

²⁷ H.C.V. Leibbrandt. *Precis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope: Letters and Documents Received 1649-1662, Part I* (Cape Town, 1898), 322 (4 Dec. 1656).

²⁸ Also known as *Ansla* and as *Angela van Bengale*. *Ancilla* is Latin for slave girl, servant girl or maid servant. She was later wife to the burgher *Jagt*, i.e. Arnoldus Willemsz van Wesel, progenitor of the Basson family. She was from Bengal and was obtained here at the Cape from M:r Kemp together with another female slave *Domingo* [sic] from Bengal.

²⁹ The fleet consisted of the *Prins Willem*, *Het Wapen van Amsterdam*, *West Vriesland*, *Amersfoort* and *Dordrecht* which left Batavia on 4 December 1656 under the command of admiral Matthys Crab, vice-admiral Pieter Hackius (later to become commander of the Cape) and rear-admiral Pieter Kemp.

³⁰ Leibbrandt, 'Letters & Documents Received', 116-119 & 126-7 & 'Riebeeck's Journal', &c (Jan. 1659-May 1662), Part III, Appendix: Ships Arrivals, ii.

³¹ CA, VC 39, 11 (1656-1699); Leibbrandt, 'Letters Despatched from the Cape 1652-1662', III, 290,293 & 297. *Monsterrolle van d'officieren, matroosen, ende soldaten bescheijden in't fort de goede Hope, aen Cabo de Boa Esperance de laesten Maij 1657, 1658 & 1659*. The two are listed as follows: *Bandieten ende Kettingasten te weten*:

Chinees }
Catarina van Paliacatte, swartin } *al haar lewen*.

³² Six of these were European and one a free black woman.

³³ ...*banditen en Kettinghasten...al haar lewen...*

³⁴ *Bandijten ende Kettinghasten ...Swartes voor al haar lewen van Batavia*.

Susanna and Catharina from Batavia for life, a Chinaman³⁵ for another 4 years and Gerrit Gerritsz from Lier for 1 and ¾ years for misdemeanours committed at the Cape.³⁶

Van Riebeeck was delighted to receive convicts from Batavia, not because of what they had done, but because he was hopeful that more work could be got out of them. Clearly it was initially expedient for the virgin colony not to stigmatise convicts to any great extent.³⁷

The year 1662 was the start of a disruptive pattern of short-term commanders at the Cape for the next 20 years after the first commander Van Riebeeck's departure. With each change in command *Groote Catrijn* lost a surrogate family. The disruptive effect occasioned by so many commanders may also have adversely affected *Groote Catrijn*'s ambiguous position as Company slave-cum-convict for life. It did not take long before successive commanders could no longer account for each and every slave's and convict's personal circumstances and that before long *Groote Catrijn*'s convict status probably become blurred and superseded by mere Company slave-status. This explains possibly her later second pardon and emancipation.

Pieter Everaerts

From this time onwards we find *Groote Catrijn* also being referred to as *Catharina van Bengale* in the records right up to the time of her first marriage in 1671 and thereafter.³⁸

We will see later that she marries as *Catharina van Bengalen* in 1671, appearing as such together with her husband as members of the church congregation in 1676; but appears in the muster rolls thereafter variously as *Catrina van Palicat* (1672), *Catharina van de...* [left blank] (1673), *Catrijn van Paliacat* (1674), *Cat. van Paliacate* (1675), *Catr.[in]a v.[an] Paliacata* (1677), *Catrijn van de* [left blank] (1678), *Catharina van Palicatta* (1679) and *Catharina van Paliacatte* (1682).

We first learn of her child-bearing lot when a moribund, but well-connected, Pieter Everaerts from Cruijssaert made provision for the payment of f150 to the unborn child of *Catharina from Bengal* - if born alive, otherwise the money was to go to his family in the Netherlands - in his will dated 13 March 1664.³⁹ He expired three days later on Saturday 15 March 1664 having endured for some time much pain caused by a bladder stone and other complications.⁴⁰

³⁵ He was *Ythcho Wancho* (also found as *Ijtschio Wancho*), who left Batavia on 15 December 1659 on board the *Arnhem* arriving at the Cape on 11 March 1660.

³⁶ ...over delecten aen de Caep gepleeght... see A.J. Böeseken, *Uit die Raad van Justisie.. 1652-1672* (Pretoria 1986), 157 note 496.

³⁷ Leibbrandt, 'letters Despatched' III, 157 (6 April 1660).

³⁸ Why her ascribed provenance changed at this stage is not entirely clear. The ascribed provenance of slaves at the Cape, however, was seldom consistent. Furthermore van Paliacatta is understandably interchangeable with van Bengale as Pulicat, being situated on the Coromandel Coast and the Bay of Bengal, and is easily superseded by Bengal as a larger and more widely used geographical concept. We also know that Pulicat was initially the main Dutch fortified trading post on the Coromandel Coast, and also for Bengal, before being replaced by Negapatnam in the 1680's (see Israel, 'Dutch Primacy', 331).

³⁹ J.L. Hattingh. 'Kaapse Notariële Stukke waarin Slawe van Vryburgers en Amptenare vermeld word (1658-1730)'. I, *Kronos*, 14 (1988). 58 (13 Mar. 1664).

⁴⁰ ... In de verleden nacht is Pieter Everard vaendrigh en hooft van de militie deser Fortresse comen t'overlijden, hebbende geruijmen tijt herwaerts ellendigh met 'et graveel en ander accidenten gequelt geweest... (see A.J. Böeseken, *Dagregister en Briewe van Zacharias Wagenaer 1662-1666* (Pretoria, 1973). 137).

Groote Catrijn's relationship with the greatly respected Pieter Everaerts not only stood her in good stead, but the fact that her former lover was prepared to formally acknowledge the paternity of the unborn infant – albeit only at the brink of death - seems indicative of a stable relationship of sorts.

Pieter Everaerts began his distinguished Company career serving in the VOC militia in India and his time there undoubtedly gave him and *Groote Catrijn* something in common to talk about. He arrived at the Cape on 17 November 1658⁴¹ as corporal commanding of the flute *De Harp*⁴² and was appointed as corporal there with a salary of f20 per month on 1 March 1659. He rose rapidly in the ranks: wachmeester on 2 May 1662 with a salary of f25 per month finally succeeding the deceased Jan van Harwaerden from Seventer as sergeant and ensign and head of the garrison with a salary of f36 per month. His promotions were motivated with due consideration being given to his vigilance and bravery shown on various occasions.⁴³ Not only did he take part in various expeditions into the unexplored interior, but he also served as a member of both the Council of Policy and the Council of Justice - although his illicit intercourse sexual and otherwise, with the convict Groote Catrijn does seem somewhat unexemplary for a member of the Cape's two highest governing bodies.⁴⁴

Pieter Everaerts was buried on Monday 17 March 1664 with full military honours⁴⁵ having left *Groote Catrijn* carrying the unborn baby.

The will made no provision for either Groote Catrijn's or their unborn child's manumission. Since they were the property of the Company, however, Pieter Everaerts was in no position to free them. The f150 left to *Groote Catrijn*'s unborn child would have become the property of the Company as slaves could not legally own any property. The money would have been set aside by the Company for the benefit of the child in keeping with the wishes of the deceased testator.

That a child was born by an expectant *Groote Catrijn* some time after 12 March 1664 is certain. We find her baptising not one, but possibly two, children on 6 September 1665 according to the Cape's first baptismal register.⁴⁶ Both are recorded in a list of more female slaves' children of the Honourable East India Company: the mother Catharina whose child is named Petronella and again later in that same list the mother Catharina whose child is named Anthony respectively.⁴⁷

No evidence of any other Company slave named Catharina could be found in the records at the time, so that the possibility cannot be discounted that both Petronella and Anthony were *Groote Catrijn*'s children.⁴⁸ We do know for certain, however, that Petronella was indeed

⁴¹ He had left Zeeland on 31 May that same year.

⁴² ...corporael commandant van 't fluijtschip *de Harp*...

⁴³ ...ten reguarde van sijn vigilantie en dapperheijt in verscheijde gelegentheden bethoont...

⁴⁴ See Böeseken, 'Raad van Justisie', 131 note 383.

⁴⁵ ...der achter achtenniddaghs te vijff is de voorn.[oemde] [ie Pieter Everaerts) vaendrigh na krijgsgebruijck begraven, hebbende deselve all de officiers en schippers der presente 6 schepen die laerste eer bewesen en hem uijtgeleijde tot aen sijn graf gedaen...

⁴⁶ CA, VC 603: G1/1 Doopregister 1665-1695. 2.

⁴⁷ *Noch van de Slavinnen kinderen der Ed.[ele] oostyndische Compagnie:...de moeder Catharina diens kind is genaamt Petronella ... de moeder Catharina diens kind is genaamt Anthony...*

⁴⁸ Significantly, however, the children are baptised on the same day in a mass baptism. They are recorded separately and do not follow the one entry after the other.

Groote Catrijn's daughter. This is corroborated in later records. Whether Anthony was *Groote Catrijn*'s son and whether both he and Petronella were Pieter Everaerts' children remains uncertain. The writer, however, suspects that at least Petronella was the unborn child in question mentioned in Pieter Everaerts' will. She appears to have been given a feminised form of her father's name as a first name.

Everaerts' posthumously born daughter, baptised Petronella⁴⁹, survived but died in childbirth in 1682 after giving birth to a baby daughter also called Petronella fathered by a soldier.

The chances that *Groote Catrijn* was already the mother of other children before 1664 cannot be excluded. Since the time of her one and-a-half years of cohabitation with Claes from Malabar, she would have been of childbearing age. We do not know whether *Groote Catrijn* left any children behind in Batavia. According to the Cape's muster roll of 16 April 1657, no slave children are listed so that it seems almost certain that *Groote Catrijn* did not arrive with any children. That she could have borne other children at the Cape between April 1657 and 1663 remains a distinct possibility given the limitations of contemporary contraceptive methods and the general shortage of women.⁵⁰

When *Groote Catrijn* commenced her relationship with Pieter Everaert is not known, but it could have started any time since his arrival at the Cape on 17 November 1658.

Groote Catrijn appears to have baptised two more children (father/s unknown) on 2 October 1667 and 13 November 1667 respectively. The first child Susan is referred to as a child of a Company slave woman called Catharyn⁵¹ and was baptised together with another child named Anthoni.⁵² The baptism of these 2 infants was witnessed by the Honourable Councillor Sieur Victor.⁵³ *Groote Catrijn*'s other child is recorded as Louis (a slave child of the Honourable Company), and his mother is merely listed as Cathrijn.⁵⁴ Once again Sieur Victor was witness to the baptism.⁵⁵

Christoffel Snijman's *un-immaculate conception*

⁴⁹ As adopted daughter of Anthonij Jansz van Bengale, she was known as Petronella van Bengale, having adopted his toponym.

⁵⁰ The exasperating task of identifying, not only the children of slave mothers, but also establishing their paternity and maternity in early Cape records is frustrated by the fact that baptisms for the period April 1652 - 23 August 1665 (i.e. a period of just over 13 years) were not initially collectively and consecutively documented. With the arrival of Joan van Arckel as first permanent minister in 1665, a rough list of the Cape's first baptisms prior to August 1665 was drawn up. It is not known how complete this list was. The situation is aggravated by the disappearance of this list. A transcription of this list, however, is in existence listing only children's names and baptismal dates. I am indebted to Margaret Cairns for this crucial information. The only other source, but incomplete, since slave baptisms (only the act itself) were seldom included, is the Company journal. This mentions from time to time baptisms that took place during this early period.

⁵¹ No provenance is given.

⁵² Mother is recorded as Grietje, a Company slave.

⁵³ He was the *kranckbesoeker* Gerrit Victor from Amsterdam. See CA, 'Doopregister', 4:...den 2 octob:[er] twee Comp.[agnie] slavinne kinderen het ene wiert genaemt Anthoni, de moeder Grietje, het ander Susan de moeder Catharyn tot getuyge stont in persoon van den E[ele] Raet S.(ieur] Victor...

⁵⁴ No provenance given.

⁵⁵ CA, 'Doopregister' ,4:...den 13 nov.[ember] een slavinne kindt van de E.[ele] Compagnie wiert genaemt Louis de moeder heet Cathrijn tot getuygen stont in persoon van den E[ele] raet S.(ieur] Victor...

Regular nocturnal activity on the part of a distracted sentry inside the living quarters of the Fort's washerwoman - the Company slave familiarly known to all as *Groote Catrijn* - resulted in the conviction on 30 July 1667 of Hans Christoffel Snijman. He was convicted for leaving his post as sentry *te slapen sijn ten woonplaets van sekere bekende swarte meijt*. His sentence entailed flogging and banishment to Robben Island for two years with the forfeiture of two months' salary *pro fisco*.⁵⁶ But it was *Groote Catrijn* who was left, yet again, carrying the baby...

Hans Christoffel Snijman⁵⁷ (also found as Hans Christoffel Snijder or Schneider) hailed from Heidelberg in the Palatinate and is first mentioned in the records as a soldier under the Chamber of Rotterdam in 1665 together with Arnoldus Willemsz.⁵⁸ From the very time of his arrival he appears to have constantly fallen foul of the law.

The father of the child had just returned from banishment to Robben Island⁵⁹ after being convicted for assault⁶⁰ and a group desertion in which a hostage had been taken⁶¹ in 1665. He was punished with 19 others on 4 December 1665. Disgruntled with unacceptable hard labour and danger in the work place, they had taken one Jan Barentsz hostage and left for the interior. They were sentenced to be chained to each other in twos while others were chained to wheelbarrows, condemned to work for 3 months with a daily wage.

He appears to have been tolerated somewhat by the authorities and it is not clear whether he actually served a second sentence on Robben Island. Curiously he appears in the church register as a fellow communicant⁶² with *Groote Catrijn* and Mooij Ansela on 29 April 1668/9 at the time of his son's birth and *Groote Catrijn*'s own joint baptism with an already manumitted Mooij Ansela on 29 April 1668.⁶³ Thereafter he disappears completely from the records. Despite his propensity for desertion, what became of this man is still unknown.

Groote Catrijn's illegitimate son was baptised Christoffel on 9 March 1669 and witnessed by Mooij Ansela⁶⁴. The child's paternity was no secret. He was named directly after the father. Throughout his life he identified himself by his father's surname, as did his own children.

op...Catrijns versouck...

With Hans Christoffel Snijman relegated to Robben Island, *Groote Catrijn* found her company monopolised by other menfolk and also the focal point of a gambling incident in

⁵⁶ CA, CJ I. No 238 Case of Hans Christoffel Snijman. 30 July 1667, 366-368 & C 327, Attestation, 55.

⁵⁷ He also appears once as just Christoffel Snijman.

⁵⁸ Arnoldus Willemsz Basson from Wesel in Cleves (progenitor of the Basson family) future husband of Mooij Ansela. CA. VC 39, 11, Monsterrol 1665.: *Hans Christoffel Snijder van Heydelberg soldaat...*

⁵⁹ ... *op't Robben eylant gecommandeert als gebannen: Hans Christophel Snyman...* CA. VC 39,11 Muster Roll. 1666.

⁶⁰ CA, CJ 1, No 160, Case of Hans Christoffel Snijman. 3 Oct. 1665, 292. He was sentenced to paying 3 pieces of eight *pro fisco* for having provoked an assault on his person.

⁶¹ CA, CJ 1, 296; Böesecken, 'Raad van Justisie', 159-160 & Böesecken, 'Dagregister: Wagenaer', 233.

⁶² *Communicanten alhier bevonden...*, CA. vc 603: G 1/1, Lidmatenregister, 1665/6 & vc 39, 11, Muster Roll (1666).

⁶³ ...*zijn gedoopt na gedaen belydenisse twee bejaerde personen. waer de een genaeme wiert Angila de andere Catharien...* CA, VC 603, G 1/1. Doopregister, 29 Apr. 1668, 4.

⁶⁴ ...*een soontje van Groote Catrijn wiert genaemt Christoffel tot getuigen stont Angila...* CA. VC 603, G 1/1, Doopregister 9 Mar. 1669, 5.

which two officers, Cornelius van Benthem⁶⁵ and Aurelius Probenius⁶⁶ had illegally won money off Catrijn.⁶⁷ On 5 September 1667 they were obliged to each pay Rds 25 to her.⁶⁸

Although gambling was forbidden by law, *Groote Catrijn* and her two male friends had indulged in a game of cards. In the course of the evening *Groote Catrijn* had lost Rds 80. Perhaps this had been money won on previous occasions when her luck had held. Her male friends and co-gamblers probably boasted about their winnings or *Groote Catrijn* had made her losses known. The matter soon came to the attention of the officials. The three gamblers were summoned to appear before the Council of Justice. The two men were obliged to pay Rds 25 each to *Groote Catrijn* thereby reducing her loss to Rds 30. They also had to pay a fine of six pieces of eight for having infringed the laws against gambling. Although they had stated in their defence that *Groote Catrijn* had asked them to play with her⁶⁹, she was neither fined nor punished. Possibly the Council thought that her loss of Rds 30 would be sufficient punishment.

This is not the first time that the authorities will appear to be somewhat kindly disposed towards *Groote Catrijn*. Her popularity with the garrison and VOC officialdom become increasingly evident in the records with even her living quarters providing a convenient backdrop for nocturnal recreation with other men.

Groote Catrijn was again involved in a judicial enquiry the following year. On 7 March 1668 we learn from an interrogatory and sworn statement by her friend the Free Black Anthonij from Japan⁷⁰ that his hearsay evidence against the former secunde Hendrik Lacus, who was being charged with corruption, fraud and the appropriation of Company property, actually derived from none other than *Groote Catrijn* and others.⁷¹ Together with Zara,⁷² the *Duijtse Hottentotinnen*, and a fellow slave woman Marij⁷³ (both servants in the Lacus household), *Groote Catrijn* had mentioned to Anthonij that a certain box with money⁷⁴ had been taken by the engineer Pieter Dombaer van der Gouw to Ceylon, presumably on Hendrik Lacus' instructions.

In response to the question: *Whether he knew what goods had been sent from here?*,⁷⁵ Anthonij is recorded to have responded by saying: ...Said that he had heard from *Grae*⁷⁶

⁶⁵ *corporael van d'adelborsten*.

⁶⁶ adelborst from Basle, Switzerland.

⁶⁷ Also called *Catarina van Bengale*.

⁶⁸ CA, CJ I, Case of Cornelis van Benthem & Aurelius Probenius. 5 Sep. 1667. 377 & Böeseken, 'Raad van Justisie', 178.

⁶⁹ ...*De ged[ae]ch[h]ens voor antwoord dat op voorsz Catrijns versouk wel mat haer ge[s]peelt, maer niet merckelijck gewonnen hebben...*

⁷⁰ Although clearly signing his name Antoni van Japan, he is referred to in the document as *Anthonij de Chinees*.

⁷¹ ...*Grae Catrijn... en andere*. In this document she is also referred to as *Catarijn*. Böeseken, 'Raad van Justisie', 204 & CA, CJ 2952, Case of Hendrik Lacus van Wesel, 7 Mar. 1668, 2 14- 2 17.

⁷² Zara is first mentioned in the records on 31 October 1667 as the *huijsvrouw (sic) d'Hottentotonne Zara* of the slave belonging to Hendrik Lacus, Louis from Bengale (*ziin slaaf genaemt Louijs*). The couple were allowed, temporarily, to remain in the disgraced Hendrik Lacus' service. Louis only became a free man once Lacus' fraud was convicted. He was given permission to buy his freedom by visiting Commissioner Isbrand Goske in 1671. In April 1672 he had not yet succeeded in doing so, but when Commissioner Arnout van Overbeeck was at the Cape, Louis requested the Council of Policy, submitting that he had now acquired some money and wished to buy his freedom. The Council agreed to allow him to do so for 50 reals of 8.

⁷³ She may have been Marij from Bali.

⁷⁴ ...*kasje met gelt...*

⁷⁵ ...*Off niet weet wat goederen van hier versonden ziin...*

⁷⁶ This appears to be an abbreviation of either Gro[ot]e or Gra[nd]e.

(sic) *Catrijn and others that one box had been sent away with Dombaer and that he knew nothing further...*⁷⁷ Again in reply to the question: *Whether he also held knowledge or had heard of any other goods that any money or things had been buried here, squandered or carried away?*,⁷⁸ he is quoted as saying: *Declared that the aforementioned box with money had been buried under his (ie Lacus] table, and knew nothing else except for what had been told to him by Zara, Marij) and Catarijn that a box went with Dombaer to Ceylon and that he knew of nothing that was suspect...*⁷⁹

Groote Catrijn was never summoned, however, to give evidence before the Council of Justice. That she was playing an active role in the Community despite her criminal past and lowly position, however, becomes clear from the records.

Groote Catrijn was to again be the focal point of another trial. The records inform us about a soldier Nicolaas Phlegel, yet another Swiss from Basle, whose curiosity and forced entry into her sleeping quarters⁸⁰ resulted in him being charged. He was sentenced on 26 August 1671 for leaving his post as sentry at the entrance to the living quarters of the Commander of the Fort⁸¹ and for having stolen bread that had already been previously stolen.⁸² He was accused of having no scruples about being thoughtless and negligent by leaving his post and going to the place of a certain female slave called *Catharina from Bengal* here inside the Fort under the staircase leading up to the wall. Arriving there he forced open the door by means of a large stone and stole two freshly baked loaves of bread which had just been stolen beforehand and left concealed on the table by a certain male slave in the Commander's kitchen. The accused is said to have *stealthily* stolen the stolen bread and after the guard had been replaced, he divided it amongst his friends who had indulged themselves with *doubly* stolen goods.⁸³

Unfortunately his absence, amongst other things, had been noticed. He was summoned to appear before the Council of Justice. The fiscal demanded a sentence of heavy corporal punishment and two years on Robben Island. This was changed to four months' banishment to Robben Island, without pay. Nicolaas's defence was that the bread he took had been stolen and that he had immediately returned to his post. But the Council considered his absence from such an important post a serious offence and sentenced him, in addition to a stay on

⁷⁷ ...*Segt gehoort te hebben van Grae Catrijn en andere een kasje met Dombaer sou weggesonden zijn, en verder niks te weten ...*

⁷⁸ ... *Off ook kennis heeft of van andere gehoort heeft dar alhier enig gelt of goet begraven, verdroken of anders weggebracht is...*

⁷⁹ ... *Verklaart dat voorsz kasje met gelt onder zijn tafel heeft begraven gehad, en anders nergens van te weten als dat van Zara, Marij en Catarijn heeft gehoort dat een kasje van Dombaer mee na Ceylon genomen was, dog van geen verdrenken te weten...*

⁸⁰ She is called *Catharina van Bengale* in the record. CA, CI I, No 408, Case of Nicolaes Phlegel van Basel, 26 Aug. 1671,705-6.

⁸¹ These were situated in the part of the Fort known as the Cat.

⁸² On 19 August 1671 he was *gecommandeert geweesc hier voor't ingaen van d'H[ee]r. Conunandeurs wonigh, genaemt d'Cat de gewoonlyjke schildwacht te houden...*

⁸³ ...*niet hadde geschroomt deselve als een ligtvaerdigh, onbedachtsaem mensch te verlaten ende sigh te vervoegeen ter woonplaatse van sekere Comp[agnie]s. slaevin en waster, genaamt Catharina van Bengale, hier binnen't Fort onder de trap met een groote steen van buijten toegedaen, t'openen ende uijt't selve twee vars gebacken taruw brooden, die aldaer op de taeffel verborgen laegen, en wijgh tijts te voren door zeker slaeff in d'H[ee]r. Commandeurs combuijs bescheyden, gestolen ende bedecktelyck in't aspect van hem ged.[aagd]e. daer nae toe gebracht waeren, wederom te stelen, oock nae dat van de schildwacht affgelost wasd, onder zijne cameraeden uit re delen, ende zulcx sigh met dubbelt gestolen goedr vrolijck te maeken....*

Robben Island, to the loss of a month's wages *pro fisco*. Furthermore, he had to sit for two days on the wooden horse with a weight of 5 lbs tied to each foot.

One wonders how two loaves of bread, stolen by one of the slaves in the Commander's kitchen, found their way into the very heart of *Groote Catrijn's* locked *woonplaetse*? This is not the first time that her abode served as a backdrop for illicit activities.

We learn from the above incident that *Groote Catrijn* was compelled to slave away at the Fort as a washerwoman.⁸⁴ The close proximity of her quarters to those of the Commander indicates that she probably slaved as personal washerwoman to the various commanders and their families. By this time the majority of Company slaves were housed in a separate slave lodge. Being singled out in this way may have been due to not only good fortune, but also her own personal attributes - whatever these might have been.

Groote Catrina Comp:[agnie] slaefinne doch christ. [en]...

A turning point in *Groote Catrijn's* life came on 29 April 1668. Affirming her Christian faith, she was jointly baptised in adulthood⁸⁵ simply as Catharien together with her friend, companion and former co-slave in the Van Riebeeck household, Mooij Ansela. Her friend was already a free woman.⁸⁶ Together they appear as communicants found here⁸⁷ from 1668 onwards.

Groote Catrijn's own joint baptism with the influential and free Mooij Ansela⁸⁸ is particularly significant. Both women appear to have been popular enough to be informally mentioned in the church records as if even future readers would automatically know who they were.

On 3 June that same year *Groote Catrijn* (called Catrine this time), as a Company slave but Christian⁸⁹ witnessed the baptism of Mooij Ansela's fourth illegitimate child named Pieter.⁹⁰ Later that month (25 June) she again became godmother to Theuntje, the daughter of her friends the free blacks Anthoni de Later from Japan and Annicke from Bengan.⁹¹ This time she is mentioned as *Groote Catrina* in the record.

This is the first time that we find *Groote Catrijn* mentioned as such. That she had become a regular and socially-acceptable feature in Cape society becomes increasingly clearer in the records. She is mentioned mostly by her first name only by virtue of the fact that she was well known to all. If not mentioned simply as Catharina, or even more intimately as *Groote Catrijn*, she now seldom appears with her name qualified by her ascribed provenance (e.g. van Paliacatta or van Bengale).

⁸⁴ ...waster...

⁸⁵ bejaarde persoon

⁸⁶ ...den 29 April [1668] zijn gedoopt na gedaen belydenisse twee bejaerde personen, waer de een genaemt wiert Angila de andere Catharien...

⁸⁷ ...Communicanten alhier bevonden

⁸⁸ See Böeseken. 'Slaves & Free Blacks', 79-81, for background on her.

⁸⁹ ...doch christen...

⁹⁰ ...Den 3 junius [1668] : Een soontje van Angila wiert genaemt Pieter tot getuijgen stond Catrine compa[g]n:[ie]slavinne doch christen...

⁹¹ ...den 24 juni [1668]: Een dochter van Anthoni Japan en Anniecke syn huysvr.[ouw] wiert genaemt Theuntje tot getuygen stont *Groote Catrina Comp:[agnie] slaefinne doch christ.[en]...*

On 9 March 1669 *Groote Catrijn* presented for baptism yet another child to the Cape congregation: Christoffel, with her friend Mooij Ansela this time reciprocating as godmother.⁹²

As was the general custom, no mention of the child's paternity is made. A curious feature about this particular baptismal entry is the fact that neither Christoffel's nor his mother's slave status are mentioned.

Did *Groote Catrijn* gradually become free by virtue of her uninterrupted passing for a free person? Did she become free as mother to enslaved children entitled to be freed in adulthood in terms of their biological fathers being white, Christian and free men? These questions are important in view of *Groote Catrijn*'s future marriage; also the fact that Christoffel is never once referred to as a slave in the records.

The child Christoffel was later to be called (and to call himself) Christoffel Snijman. He thereby confirmed and made it known to the world at large that he was the biological son of Hans Christoffel Snijman from Heidelberg.

The fact that his biological father also came to be listed as a communicant and member of the Cape congregation at about this time is indicative perhaps that he and *Groote Catrijn* were already living together as common law man and wife. Could this have been a reason for *Groote Catrijn* opting for baptism at the time she did while still a Company slave?

One thing is certain: Christoffel's paternity was no secret.

Anthonij Jansz van Bengale

Groote Catrijn's reunion with Hans Christoffel Snijman must have been short-lived for soon afterwards she is constantly associated with the free black and free burgher Anthonij from Bengal. Hans Christoffel Snijman disappears completely from the records. Did he expire suddenly or did he finally opt for removal from the Cape, either back to Europe or to some other colonial clime? Thus far nothing else in the records has come to light regarding this man.

Already on 14 September 1670 *Groote Catrijn* appears together with Anthonij from Bengal as witnesses to the baptism of Maria, the daughter of Elizabeth from Bengal.⁹³ The appearance of *Groote Catrijn* together with the newly-baptised Anthonij⁹⁴ as a couple prepares us for their impending marriage.

One wonders about the legal problems they would have faced: a mardijker wishing to marry a convict-cum-Company slave banished-to-the-Cape-for-life and mother of at least two known illegitimate offspring.

She married *Anthonij Jansz van Bengale*⁹⁵ on 20 December 1671.⁹⁶

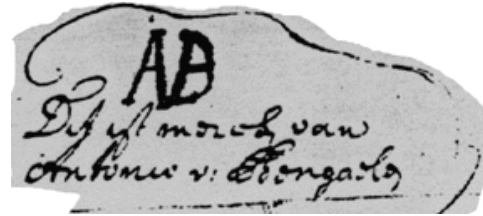
⁹² ...den 9 maart [1669] : Een soontje van *Groote Catrijn* wiert genaemt Christoffel tot getuigen stont Angila...

⁹³ CA. VC 603. G 1/1. Doopregister. S.

⁹⁴ He had been baptised as an adult just two days earlier.

⁹⁵ Also known as *Anthonij de Later* (curiously also found as de la Terre). He signed his name with the letters AB.

By this time her legal status had become so blurred that her life-long banishment had conveniently been overlooked. The ever-changing commanders in the new colony and the corruption, together with *Groote Catrijn*'s upwardly-mobile and irrepressible presence, could be reasons for such an expedient oversight.



Commissioner Isbrand Goske's Memorie of 12 March 1671 provides the clue. Why did he, at that specific time between the time of Anthonij's baptism (12 September 1670), a prerequisite for marriage, and the wedding (20 December 1671), specifically order convicts banished to the Cape to be recorded separately from slaves?⁹⁷

Onder des Comps. lijfeigenen sullen bij 't grootboeck geen Indiaanse swarten door de justitie hier gebannen, overgedragen, neen, maar alleen in 't journaal als gecondemneerdens genoteert werden, met aanwijzing van waar gecomen sijn, tot voorkoominge dat bij verschantsinge van administrateurs, de selve voor geen slaven getransporteert, en 's Comps. lijfeigenen verduijstert mogen werden.

By marrying a free black, she was finally a free woman in the legal sense. It is as if the Cape authorities turned a blind eye. There is no record of any formal pardon or release from her sentence as life-long exile-cum-Company slave before or immediately at the time of her marriage. Given the chronic shortage of womankind at the Cape and the consequent promiscuity that prevailed, perhaps the authorities were relieved to see *Groote Catrijn*'s situation stabilise. Her marriage freed the Company of the singular burden of supporting her illegitimate children. Perhaps she had earned her freedom in a way that made orthodox methods seem pointless. Her popularity, and the word is used the broadest sense possible, must have stood her in good stead and one cannot exclude any influence or role that Anthonij might have had to play in securing her legal freedom finally.

When Commissioner Isbrand Goske visited the Cape, he initiated reforms that directly affected the fate of *Groote Catrijn*'s *halfslag* children. In a memorandum dated 13 February 1671 he ordered the formation of Positive Orders including the following instructions:

to prevent the communication between Europeans and female slaves, male and female slaves were to be united as man and wife, but not formally married, until baptized and instructed in their mutual obligations; breach of both engagements were to be punished, with this difference, that those of married females should be punished according to law; but the heathen at discretion, according to the nature of the offence; Company slaves were to be forced to attend prayers; children, the progeny of Europeans and slaves, of whom 12 were then at school were to be taught, and particular care to be taken that they were not alienated, so as to remain in constant

⁹⁶ ...den 20 Xber [1671] Anthoni de Later jong s[warm[an] van Bengalen met Catharina van Bengalen... CA. VC 605. G 1/1 Marriage Register. 20 Dec. 1671. 76.

⁹⁷ See Goske's Memorie in A.J. Böeseken, *Memorien en Instructien 1657-1699* (Cape Town, 1966) 113 (1868).

*slavery, but that they might in due time enjoy the freedom to which, in the right of the father, they were born.*⁹⁸

Judging by her friend and co-slave Louis van Bengale's later claim that he had been given permission to buy his freedom by the same visiting commissioner, there appears to have been a blanket manumission of sorts for at least *Groote Catrijn*, Anthonij and Louis.

Louis van Bengale's manumission appears to have been possible due to the temporary banishment to Robben Island of his discredited owner, Hendrik Lacus. *Groote Catrijn*, it will be recalled, would have been an important source of damning evidence. Was she, like Louis, rewarded for her contribution?⁹⁹

Goske's stipulations appear to have been specially tailored to *Groote Catrijn*'s circumstances. Only as late as 1679 was there again such an officially recorded marriage between two free blacks.¹⁰⁰

Her concubinage with Anthonij was soon officially sanctioned and the couple were duly instructed in preparation for their pending marriage. Already on 12 September 1670 Anthonij had been baptised.¹⁰¹ He and *Groote Catrijn* appear as a couple two days later as joint witnesses to the baptism of the illegitimate daughter of Elisabeth van Bengale¹⁰² who later married the Japanese widower Anthonij.¹⁰³

Groote Catrijn's legal status was finally clarified ex post facto. In an extraordinary letter dated 6 January 1672 and despatched to Batavia we learn that she had been freely pardoned and released from slavery. Permission had been given her to marry a Free Black, which marriage promptly took place.¹⁰⁴

In this letter to Batavia *Aen Joan Maatsuycker Governor-General Raaden van Nederlants India*, the Cape authorities informed the Governor-General that the instructions that she be freed from slavery and that she be allowed to marry the Free Black Anthonie de Later van Bengale had been carried out:

...Aen Catharina van Paliakatta 1656 bij de hooge Regerenge tot Batavia van de doodt gepardonneert en voor eeuwich in slavendienst aan de Caap gebannen hebben, op UEd:le orderen vrijdom vergunt en van de slavernije onslaege, mitsgaeders toegestaen,

⁹⁸ D. Moodie, *The Record* (Cape Town 1960), 309.

⁹⁹ Louis' manumission, however, was interrupted by the tragic suicide of his concubine, the *Duijtse Hottentotin* Zara on 18 December 1671, just two days before *Groote Catrijn*'s wedding day. The corpse had been found by *Mooij Ansela* and Francois Champeller van Ghent, the latter being one of the men who had absconded with Hans Christoffel Snijman and other soldiers previously and jointly charged for desertion and abduction.

¹⁰⁰ This was the marriage of *Grusias van Angola, alias Jackie met Maria Everts van de Cabo de boa Esperance*.

¹⁰¹ *...den 12 sept: [ember] een bejaart persoon, wiert genaamt Anthoni van Bangale...* CA. VC 603. Doopregister 12 Sept. 1670, 5.

¹⁰² *...den 14 sept [ember] : een dochterche van Elisabeth van Bangale, wiert genaamt Maria tot getuyge stonden Anthoni en Catharyn...*

¹⁰³ They married 5 November 1673.

¹⁰⁴ CA: C 496. Uitgaande Briewen. 10 (6 Jan. 1672). [NEW NUMBER C 1340 (Polttieke Raad: uitgaande Briewe)] now page 11 (formerly page 10). See also CA. MK Jeffreys Collection. A 1657, vol. 24. Jeffreys' summary is misleading, however: "In 1656 condemned to death but pardoned and sent to Cape for life sentence. Freely pardoned & released from slavery. Permission given her to marry free black, which promptly took place".

omme den seker Vrije Zwart Anthonie de Later van Bengale to mogh trouwen, gelijk oock allereets daerop is gevolgt.

It appears that Maetsuycker had himself given orders for her second pardon and made provision for her to marry. Did Anthonij arrive as a mardijker at the Cape armed with a letter from Maetsuycker? Had Anthonij or *Groote Catrijn* appealed personally to Maetsuycker himself? No official request appears to have emanated from the Cape.

Christoffel Snijman's new step-father has the unique distinction of being the first known free black at the Cape of Good Hope to purchase land and become a registered landowner. This is in contradistinction to his mother's Japanese friend Anthonij being the first recorded free black to be granted registered land.¹⁰⁵

He purchased 100 sheep, a stuk tuingrond higher up in Table Valley and an erf (with a house) in Zeestraat from the free burgher Jacob Cornelisz Roosendael from Amsterdam¹⁰⁶. By 31 May 1673 he was already experiencing difficulty in paying the outstanding amount of the original purchase price and the family had to squat on empty land in Bergdwarstraat (the present-day St George's Mall). The land was finally granted to him on 12 February 1675.¹⁰⁷ On 1 June 1676, he was again granted *in leen* another garden.¹⁰⁸

Since *Groote Catrijn* had become his concubine, he may, in terms of Goske's recommendation, have been conveniently positioned to be freed as well. It is not known whether he was a Company slave or whether he belonged to either the commander or even the discredited secunde Hendrik Lacus. He may have arrived at the Cape as a mardijker from Batavia which would place him in the very unique position of being the first black settler and colonist in South Africa.¹⁰⁹

As adoptive father to the illegitimate half-siblings, Petronella and Christoffel, the childless, but enterprising, Anthonij was to play a vital role in the respectable upbringing of these two genealogically-significant children. After his death, his liquidated estate was able to provide monies for the further education of Christoffel Snijman in *lesen, schrijven en te leeren* thereby explaining adequately the literacy evidenced in various existing specimens of Christoffel Snijman's flamboyantly fashionable signature.

The family's upwardly-mobile existence in a modest dwelling in Zeestraat, and thereafter in Eerste Bergdwarstraat appears to have been marred by few incidents of any alarming import except for Anthonij's increasingly precarious economic situation. There were numerous civil claims against him. He had purchased a slave called *Maria from the Coast of Malabar* on 27 April 1676 and again on 12 August 1678 purchased *Paul van Malabar*.¹¹⁰ This latter slave, was later flogged and branded for harbouring a pregnant Company slave *Calahowa van Madagascar* in his room for 3 days.¹¹¹ He also had the use of the slave *Baddou van Bali*.¹¹²

¹⁰⁵ See M.G. Upham, 'The First Recorded Chinese & Japanese at the Cape', *Capensis*, No 2 .of t997, pp.10-22.

¹⁰⁶ Böeseken, 'Slaves & Free Blacks', 64-66. 67-69.; H.L. Hattingh. 'Grondbesit in die Tafelvallei. Deel 1, Die eksperiment. Grondbesit van Vryswartes, Kronos, 10 (1985), 43.; Hattingh, 'Kaapse Notariele Stukke 11', 16.

¹⁰⁷ Böeseken, 'Slaves & Free Blacks', 93-94; Hattingh. 'Grondbesit van Vryswartes', 45.

¹⁰⁸ Hattingh, 'Grondbesit van Vryswartes', 42.

¹⁰⁹ This aspect has received little attention by researchers. We know that there were calls by Cape commanders to their superiors for such people to be sent.

¹¹⁰ Hattingh, 'Kaapse Notariele Stukke II', 25 & 35.

¹¹¹ Böeseken, 'Slaves & Free Blacks', 90.

¹¹² Hattingh, 'Kaapse Notariele Stukke II', 26.

He was never able to pay back money owing to the late governor Johan Bax's widow¹¹³ and was even sued by fellow free blacks *Jackie Joy*¹¹⁴ and *Anthonij Vrijkaffer*¹¹⁵ and also for an outstanding debt to *Manuel van Bengale*.¹¹⁶

The various civil claims resulted in the authorities declaring him to be a *persona non grata*, in all but name. His request for the family to emigrate to Batavia was gladly approved. *Groote Catrijn*'s life-long banishment at the Cape does not appear to have even been a consideration.

*Anthonij van Bengale vrij ingeseten alhier in de vergadering versocht hebbende om met zijn familie naer Batavia te trecken, dat hem (ten opsichte d'E. [dele) Comp [agni]e. maar tot laste streckt en voor d'gemeene borgerij gans onnut en oock om verscheyde wichtige redenen alhier geentsints noodigh) is geconsenteert, also hier seer wel can werden gemist...*¹¹⁷

The family also gained notoriety when suing their neighbour, Dirck Ringel, *in't doden van de eendt gaande op vrije straat van Swarr Anth:[oni]o van Bengale*. It appears that it would have been Christoffel Snijman and Petronella who went running to *Groote Catrijn* to report that they had witnessed their duck waddling down the street with a knife in its back.¹¹⁸ Their neighbour not only had to compensate the family for the loss of their duck and for the costs of the court case, but Dirck Ringel also had to labour for one month *ad opus publicum*.

A slightly improved economic situation (mostly the proceeds from their distillery and garden produce), however, appears to have confined them to the Cape. (Or was it *Groote Catrijn*'s resurrected past; the fact that she had previously been forbidden to return to Batavia?) Thereafter the couple managed to avoid any serious criminal detection. Only twice does Anthonij appear in the records on 3 June and 17 June 1680 for minor misdemeanours: hunting out of season (his dog had killed a steenbok) and cutting wood without a permit. He was acquitted for the latter case.¹¹⁹

On 7 April 1680 *Groote Catrijn* and her husband witnessed the baptism of the baby daughter named Elisabeth of their slave Maria from the Coast of Malabar. They appear as Catharina Anthonii.¹²⁰

In the Muster Roll for 1682 the entire family, father, mother, son and daughter appear for the last time.

The untimely death of Petronella appears to have possibly coincided with, or occurred soon after, the deaths of both Anthonij and *Groote Catrijn* sometime before 17 December 1682 when Anthonij's inventory was drawn up.¹²¹ That she died whilst labouring to bring her illegitimate daughter into the world seems unlikely, as there is no mention of her decease at the time of the child's baptism.

¹¹³ Aletta van Hinloopen. Hattingh, 'Kaapse Notariele Stukke II', 24 Aug. 1678, 35.

¹¹⁴ Also known as *Jacqje van Angola*.

¹¹⁵ Also known as *Anthoni van Angola*.

¹¹⁶ Böesekeken, 'Slaves & Free Blacks', 91 & 100.

¹¹⁷ A.J. Böesekeken, Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, II 1670-1680, 15 Mar. 1680, (Cape Town 1959), 324.

¹¹⁸ CJ 2, Civil Case: Anthonij van Bengale contra Dirck Ringel, 1 Aug. 1674, 9.

¹¹⁹ Böesekeken. 'Slaves & Free Blacks'. 113-114.

¹²⁰ CA. VC 603. G1/1. Doopregister.

¹²¹ Petronella was nursed by *Lijsbeth van Angola* (wife of the *free black* Manuel van Angola) for 9 days.

The child was baptised Petronella on 13 December 1682. The parents are given as Willem Jansen corporael en Petronella voordogter van Anthony van Bengale. The baptism was witnessed by Catharina Wassermaker, presumably *Groote Catrijn* herself.¹²²¹²³ There is no mention of Anthonij as a witness. Was Anthonij already dead or too ill to witness the baptism?

We shall see later that three payments (starting already on 3 February 1683) for nursing and feeding costs for the baby - and by non-members of the family, were paid from of the estate of Anthonij. These appear, however, to have been terminated already by 28 September 1683. Where was *Groote Catrijn* to take care of her own granddaughter? On that very same day, Simon van der Stel authorised the payment from the estate for two little casks of blacking for a coffin (dootkissen). What would the reason be for such gubernatorial intervention?

Were Anthonij, *Groote Catrijn*, Petronella senior and Petronella junior all victims of some pestilence? How else do we explain the non-existence of estate papers for *Groote Catrijn* before or after the death of Anthonij, the separate and erratic filing of the estate papers (likely incomplete) and that only Christoffel Snijman inherits as universal heir to his adopted father's estate, but which in actual fact is a joint estate? How do we explain the disappearance of *Groote Catrijn* from the records - also the tax rolls?

After 12 years of marriage, a doubly-bereft *Groote Catrijn*, had she survived, would have been left to fend for a newly-born-but-soon-to-die illegitimate grandchild-in-arms and a 14-year old Christoffel Snijman.

The joint estate reveals much about the household and double funeral arrangements, one for Anthonij and *Groote Catrijn* and the other for their daughter? It must have been a sad day for a traumatised and dismembered Christoffel Snijman to have to witness the public auctioning of virtually all the family's personal belongings. Not only their beds, but all their finery including underwear were auctioned for all the world to see ...*een reijgleijf...een doosje poppegoet...silver knopen...gespen...goude knoopjes...een ticktackbort...een naay kussen...6 paren schildereijtjes...een spigeltje...2 goude oorringetjes...een root armosijn pack...een satijn pack kleeren...twee sluyers...een wit onderkleet...*

The inventory (drawn up 17 December 1682) reveals that the estate was finally liquidated to the amount of f608: 9: 12.¹²⁴

In April 1683 a *Notitie* of items purchased and the costs thereof was drawn up by the later banished *gerechts bood Godfriedt Meijhuijsen*¹²⁵ and the total amount of f159: 12: 8 subtracted from the proceeds of the liquidated deceased estate. Listed are items acquired for the burial of both father Anthonij and voordogter Petronella. Alimentary necessities such as sugar, brandy, vinegar, oil, butter, beer, eggs, wine, mutton and fire wood were purchased. One pound tobacco was purchased for the pall bearers (*aen taback voor de dragers*). Baas

¹²² DRC/A: G1 1/1 Doopregister 28.

¹²³ **6 June 2009: Actually Catharina Wagenmakers, aka Catharina Vrijman, per Facebook note from Mansell. She was married to Andries Beijers/Beyers, progenitor of the Beyers family. DR.**

¹²⁴ CA. MOOC 14/212 (1683), estate papers of Anthony Jansz van Bengale; MOOC 22/2(a) Verscheide boedel cedullen, boedel van Anthony van Bengale (1683). These miscellaneous incomplete (?) papers are stored in a loose envelope in the Cape Archives. These have been meticulously transcribed by the writer and form the basis of much of *Groote Catrijn*'s present reconstructed biography.

¹²⁵ From Magdeburg, He purchased from the estate of Anthonij Jansz van Bengale and was also closely associated with the Beijer family.

Dous was paid f6 for digging the two graves (...voort maecken van 2 graeven) and f12 was paid for the *aenspreken van twee begraefnissen*. Clothing and sewing materials for the occasion included ...*chits, mouris...een flagge doeck...* ribbon, cotton and a pair of shoes while f4 was claimed *voor stroffagile ent maecken van een riljghlijf* and f7:00:0 *voort maecken vant kindergoet*.

Also found amongst the estate papers is a receipt for cash paid to the Saxon Andries Beijer to cover alimentary costs for the child of Petronella van Bengale:

*Ick ondergeschreve Andries Beijer erkenne ontvangen te hebben van de Secretaris van de Weescamer Roelof Backer voor her alimenteren van't kint van Petronella van Bengale voor tijt van een maant de somma van vier Rd:s
In't Casteel d'goede Hoop Adij 13 Juny 1683
Dit is het X merck van voorsz: Andries Beijer¹²⁶*

Unable to sign himself, his name appears as Andries Baeijer. He arrived aus Saxen as a soldier at the Cape in February 1672 *op't schip 't Wapen van der Gouw*.¹²⁷ In 1672 he was a knecht for the wagon maker Cornelis Wijcksteijn.¹²⁸

Prior to that, similar receipts, dated 3 February and 16 March and again on 28 September of that same year, bear the mark of one Catrijn. She was the wife of Andries Beijer, who was the former slave woman Catharina van de Caap:

Ick ondergesch. bekenne ontfangen te hebben van Roelof Backer Sec= van de weescamer vier R:xs voor een m: costgeld ten behoeve van't kint van de dogter van Anthonie van Bengale. In't Casteel de goede hoop den 3n feb: 1683 dit, is het X merck van Catharijn.

The Company's master wagon maker, Andries Beyer¹²⁹ married his wife, a former slave and already foster mother to Petronella's baby, on 21 March 1683.

Andries Baieck [sic] jonghman Baes wagenmaker van de E.[ele] Comp.[agnie] en Catarina [sic] geboren [sic] aen de Caep de boa Esperance.¹³⁰

The incomplete and existent estate papers for Anthonij do not indicate at all that *Groote Catrijn* inherited from the estate. There is mention of Christoffel Snijman, however, now a major in the eyes of the law, being paid out and taxed on his *vaderlyck erfdeel, mijn ouders erfdeel and mijn geheele erf portie* and that her son referred to himself on 8 April 1691 *als universele erfgenaam mijn Vader Anthonie van Bengale zal.[i]g[e]r in zyn leven mede Vry borger alhier...*

¹²⁶ See also G.C. de Wet, *Die Vryliede en Vryswanes in die Kaapse nedersetting 1657-1707* (Cape Town, 1981), 12.1.

¹²⁷ Böesecken, 'Raad van Justisie', 388-389 & CA. CJ 282. No 436, Case of Pieter de Neijn 5 April 1672 (but see declaration dated 17 Feb. 1672), 27-29.

¹²⁸ CA, VC, 11. He appears together with *Pieter Mijsener* and *Jan Wijbrant*.

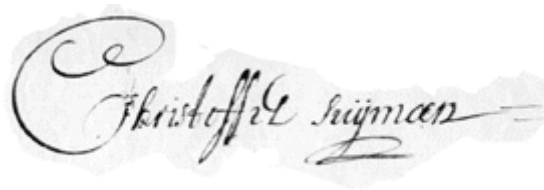
¹²⁹ J. Hoge, *Personalialia of the Germans at the Cape 1652-1806* (Cape Town. 1966), 30.

¹³⁰ CA, VC 603, G 1/1 Trouregister, 83. For some obscure reason C.C. De Villiers & C. Pama, *Genealogies of Old South African Families* (Cape Town 1966), I, 51 list her as Catharina Vryman. The name Vrijman could not be located in any of the records searched by the writer.

On 2 January, 16 July and 10 November 1690 Christoffel Snijman signed one of many receipts issued by the Secretary of the Orphan Chamber, Roelof Backer *wegens mijn vaderlyck erfdeel zal. [i]g[e]r Anthonie v [an] Bengale om mij daar voor te belasten and tot afcortingh van mijn ouders erfdeel*. He received his final payment from his adoptive father's [and mother's] estate in March 1691 and on 8 April that same year.

Groote Catrijn appears to have died sometime between December 1682 and February 1683 at the age of approximately 51 years. Unfortunately we do not know the causes and sequence of the multiple deaths that left Christoffel Snijman without any family.

Her quiet withdrawal from *stage centre* and final exit, although not specifically mentioned in any official records, appear to have been no less dramatic and exceptional when contrasting her initial dramatic entrance into the historical record and her personal impact on the Cape colonial scene.



PART II: Christoffel Snijman¹³¹: his curious origins and ambiguous position in early Cape colonial society.

This key *stamvader* has been a conundrum for some time amongst local genealogical researchers and some historians. He has been of particular, but limited, ethnocentric interest. This is because of the *incorrect* assumption that he was one of the very few recorded early Cape colonial inhabitants of *non-white paternity*¹³², not only to sire a prominent white-looking *Afrikaner* family, but also to permeate the initial *whiter-shade-of-pale French-speaking Huguenot* refugee community at the Cape.

Unravelling the mystery sheds important light on this ascribed 'progenitor' of one of the largest colonially-induced Cape of Good Hope families. Christoffel Snijman's many descendants (in both the female and male lines), like that of so many of his Cape contemporaries, still amount to a major proportion of South Africa's current genetically-linked Afrikaans- and English-speaking minority population of eur-afric-asian settler-refugee-aboriginal-slave-convict heritage.¹³³

The exceptionally high degree of consanguinity amongst this group (which transcends the deceptive and presumably *politically incorrect* categories of so-called *Afrikaners* and *English-speaking whites* and [*Cape*] *Coloureds*) due to a limited gene pool, has received scant attention by geneticists, genealogists, historians and even politicians.

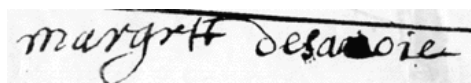
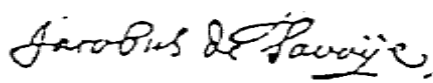
By 1690 Christoffel Snijman had already married the daughter of the prominent Huguenot

¹³¹ The name has *been* found variously as Senaimant, Senaymant, Sciman, and Snijman in the records consulted.

¹³² ie paternity in the *biological* sense. Christoffel Snijman's biological father, however, was *not* the *free black Anthonij Jansz van Bengale*, but his *adoptive* father.

¹³³ Undoubtedly there must be by now a constant *diaspora* of his descendants further afield in southern Africa and the rest of the world.

refugee Jacques de Savoye¹³⁴, Marguerite-Therese de Savoye¹³⁵, and commenced farming at *Sandvliet*, Grootte Drakenstein.¹³⁶

Marguerite-Therese de Savoye's signature and that of her father, Jacques de Savoye.

Jacques de Savoye

Christoffel Snijman's father-in-law was a prominent Huguenot refugee and *heemraad* from Ath in Hainaut Hanegouwe, Spanish Netherlands (now Belgium). After an attempt on his life, he sought refuge in the Netherlands in 1687 and arrived 26 April 1688 at the Cape on the *Oosterlandt*. Together with him came his second wife, Marie-Madeleine le Clercq from Tournai/Doornik, Flanders, his mother-in-law Antoinette Carnoy (widow of Philippe le Clercq) and his two daughters by his first wife (Christine du Pont), Marguerite-Thérèse (later the wife of Christoffel Snijman), Barbe-Thérèse, and his son by his 2nd wife, Jacques junior.

The family was accompanied by the Nortier brothers as *domestiques*. Prior to seeking refuge at the Cape, Jacques de Savoye had been a prominent merchant in Ghent, Flanders. He later settled in Cape Town after giving up his farms *Vrede-en-Lust*, *Simondium* and *Leeuwenvallei* in the Wagenmakersvallei (Wellington) after experiencing financial difficulties since 1702. At the time of the *free burgher* resistance to the government of WA van der Stel, *the aged refugee Jacques de Savoye, had also been arrested and made to stand trial with others for his share in the movement*. He finally declared himself to be without means and left the Cape of Good Hope (and his creditors) in March 1712 for the Netherlands on the *Samson* together with his wife and mother-in-law. He and his wife returned again later and both died at the Cape.

Confrontation at Drakenstein

How Christoffel Snijman managed to marry above his station is a burning question inviting much speculation. He remains one of the very few *halfslag* Cape-born and slave-born men to have taken a European wife. This was also the year of the unforgettable confrontation at the Drakenstein church between Christoffel Snijman's famous father-in-law and the Huguenot minister, Pierre Simond.

Jacques de Savoye had been censured by the Rev. Simond for failing to confess to the Drakenstein congregation his previous bankruptcy in the Fatherland.¹³⁷ The famous feud between De Savoye and Simond reached a vocal climax on 19 November 1690 at the Huguenot Church at Drakenstein, when a demented Jacques de Savoye, together with his

¹³⁴ For further interesting details on Jacques de Savoye, see J.L.M. Franken, *Die Hugenote aan die Kaap* (Pretoria 1978); M. Boucher, *French speakers at the Cape in the first hundred years of Dutch East India Company Rule: the European background* (Pretoria 1981) & 'Belgian Genealogical Sources: Schonamille and Savoye', *Familia* XIX/1982 No 3, 58-62 & De Wet, 'Die Vryliede en Vryswartes' & C.J. Beyers (ed.); *The Dictionary of SA Biography* (Durban, 1981), III, 210.

¹³⁵ She was born in Ghent (Oost Vlaanderen) and baptised at the Church of Sint-Jacobs, Vrijdagmarkt, Ghent on 4 September 1672.

¹³⁶ The marriage register for this period is missing.

¹³⁷ See Franken, 'Hugenote', 36-38 & 194-195.

daughter (*Margo*) and son-in-law (*Christoffel Senaymant*), assailed an unrelenting Pierre Simond with a barrage of abuse. The couple's firstborn had been denied baptism by the minister on the usual officious grounds that *procedure* had not been adhered to.¹³⁸

The names of the witnesses to the baptism (including that of Jacques de Savoye himself) had not been supplied in advance. This was the purported practice (*comme cela se pratique*). Christoffel Snijman had, however, already on 4 November 1690 gone in person to Simond's house to notify the minister. He only found Simond's brother-in-law¹³⁹ who allegedly made no mention of any godparents-to-be (*sans parler de parrain ni de marraine*).

Thereafter the parents arrived at the church. They presented their first-born for baptism with Jacques de Savoye (now a confirmed member of the Stellenbosch Reformed congregation) to *staan als peter van sijn eigen dogters kind*. Magnanimously expressing his willingness to baptise the child, Simond informed the congregation that he was not prepared, however, to accept Jacques de Savoye as godfather to the child. All hell broke loose...

*They then vented their anger to the minister in an outrageous manner, with cries and fulmination, hurling abuse of the worst kind calling him a false shepherd, an unworthy minister, hypocrite, two-faced, a papist, Jesuit, Judas, Kaffir, etc., saying that he did everything contrary to what he preached, threatening to avenge themselves, saying that they had good friends, that they would hound this beau petit Monsieur to the very end and bury him...*¹⁴⁰

Notwithstanding the mutual dislike that Simond and De Savoye had for each other, the likely racist undertones of Simond's actions and motives cannot be easily dismissed. The parents and their mixed-race child were also willy-nilly at the centre of this controversy. Did this public rejection and humiliation in any way influence De Savoye's *later* public, but expedient, rejection of his own *coloured* flesh and blood in a later petition to the *Heeren XVII*?

These are seemingly unconnected micro-historical threads that have received scant consideration when analysing early Cape race relations.¹⁴¹

The paucity of mixed race families in the Drakenstein congregation highlighted possibly the less-than-white appearance of slave-born Christoffel Snijman and his offspring. Did this perhaps put Marguerite-Thérèse de Savoye's *haute bourgeoisie*-family constantly between a rock and a hard place? Add to this the *bandiet-status un-enjoyed* by an illegitimate Christoffel Snijman's mother *Groote Catrijn*, compounded by her *untouchable* Indian *caste* origins?

It is not inconceivable that the recently deceased Groote Catrijn could even have been the very source of the humiliation and subsequent legacy of *denial* foisted upon some of her descendants.¹⁴²

¹³⁸The child was eventually baptised at an alternative congregation (Stellenbosch) on 10 December 1690 and named Jacobus Christoffel with Maria Magdalene la Clercq as witness.

¹³⁹ *i.e.* Louis de Berault.

¹⁴⁰ See Franken, 'Hugenote', 37-38 & 194 for the original French text and Afrikaans translation thereof.

¹⁴¹ See H.F. Heese's astute observation concerning the need to relook at the colonial populace's grievances against W.A. van der Stel's despotic rule from a multicultural point of view, in his *Groep Sonder Gense: Die Rol en status van die gemeente bevolking aan die Kaap, 1652-1795* (Bellville, 1984) 28, note 11.

¹⁴² See Heese. 'Groep Sonder Gense', 18.

On 22 January 1699 Jacques de Savoye, together with the *free black* Claasz Cornelisz, stood surety for his son-in-law Christoffel Snijman.¹⁴³ At this stage Jacques de Savoye had no qualms about associating *more than was absolutely necessary* with other non-whites.

...en al dat swart gebroeijsel onder ons wonende...

When we read the petition signed by Christoffel Snijman's controversial father-in-law, Jacques de Savoye (together with other disgruntled free burghers), concerning an increasing *swart gevaar*, we might recoil in enlightened horror when realising the glaring hypocrisy contained in this unashamedly racist document.

The petition, instigated by Adam Tas and co-signed by 14 other farmers in 1706, accused governor W.A. van der Stel and the *Heeren XVII* of advancing the interests of the aboriginal people who would attack all Christians, good or bad without distinction, and swamp them¹⁴⁴, and that not much more could be expected from the slaves ...

*en minder van de caffers, Moulattos, Mestiços, Castiços en al dat swart gebroeijsel onder ons wonende, en met Europeaanse en Africaanse Christenen¹⁴⁵ door huwelijken en ander vermengingen vermaagdschapt, dewelke in vermoogen, getal en hoogmoet t' onder uijterste verwonderingen aangegroeij. en neffens de Christen en tot allerhande wapenhandeling en krijgsoeffening tougelten. geven ons met duisterlijk daar haar trotse bejegeningen te kennen, datse ons, haar slaag waarnemende, wel den voet op de nek, souden konnen en willen setten, want dat Chams bloed is niet te betrouwen...*¹⁴⁶

Here was a man who publicly condemned, albeit somewhat indirectly, not only the *mixed race* and *heathen* origins of his daughter's slave-born husband (presumably already deceased)¹⁴⁷, but also that of his *own* grandchildren and later prolific descendants - *en all dat swart gebroeijsel onder ons wonende*.

Jacques de Savoye later took it upon himself to help proselytise the Cape's aboriginal population in 1709 by giving temporary shelter to the Danish missionary Johann Georg Boving¹⁴⁸ and interpreting on his behalf. Perhaps such activity was not unsimilar to other colonial attempts elsewhere, to *reduce the Savage Natives by Gentle and just manners to the Love of civill Society and Christian Religion*¹⁴⁹. Reconciling aboriginal colonial marginalisation with Boving's nonindigenous theology appears, however, to have had little impact.¹⁵⁰ Prior to this, however, indications are that he would have been directly involved, in

¹⁴³ De Wet, 'Vryliede & Vryswarte', 124.

¹⁴⁴ *...alle Christenen, soo goede als kwade, sonder onderscheid op't lyf vallen. en ens verdelgen...*

¹⁴⁵ Presumably only 'white' or white-looking, colonist offspring.

¹⁴⁶ KA 4035, Adam Tas, *et al.* - XVII, n.d., p. 1035. I am indebted to Dr Hans Heese for this reference. See also Heese, 'Groep Sonder Grense', 2B. An English translation appears in R. Elphick & H. Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society 1652-1840* (Cape Town, 1989). 542: *....Kaffirs. Mulattos, Mestiços, Castiços, and all that black brood living among us, who have been bred from marriages and other forms of mingling with European and African Christians. To our amazement they have so grown in power, numbers and arrogance, and have been allowed to handle arms and participate with Christians in... military exercises, that they now tell us that they could and would trample on us...For there is no trusting the blood of Ham, especially as the black people are constantly being favoured and pushed forward.*

¹⁴⁷ Christoffel Snijman was already dead by 1706/7 as his widow remarried her son-in-law's brother, the half-French/half-Dutch *Henning Viljoen* c. 1707. Unfortunately the marriage registers for this period are missing.

¹⁴⁸ Author of *Curieuse Beschreibung und Nachricht von den Hottentotten* (1712).

¹⁴⁹ The phrase deriving from a royal charter issued by British King Charles II to William Penn in 1680, is typical of the usual, but questionable, western hegemonic justification for colonisation and is quoted by Urs Bitterli, *Cultures in Conflict: Encounters Between European and Non-European Cultures, 1492-1800, Cultural Relationship as 'Holy Experiment'; The English in Pennsylvania* (Stanford, 1989), 115.

¹⁵⁰ H.C. Breidenkamp, 'Khoisan versus Hugenote 1688-1713', *Kronos, Journal of Cape History*, 16 (Nov. 1989), 28-29.

his capacity as head of the Burgher Infantry, in participating in devastating punitive raids against the aboriginal population during the frontier expansion of 1701-1703.¹⁵¹ In retrospect, we might wish to reconsider the testimonial of the Rev. François Simond of Flanders who had once declared that Jacques de Savoye's *life seemed a worthy example of purity and holiness*.

...Chams bloet is niet te betrouwen ...

The intolerant and racist wording of the petition co-signed by Christoffel Snijman's father-in-law, presumably soon after his son-in-law's timely death, conceivably reflects existing racial tensions of sorts at the time. What really prompted such an anti-*black* outburst is still not entirely clear. It may help to explain the diminishing influence of the free *black* community and an exodus of free blacks back to the hopefully more racially tolerant and cosmopolitan haven of Cape Town.¹⁵² Those that remained behind were doomed to become second-class citizens and labourers, so-called Bastards and Bastaart Hottentots - subordinate to their fellow free, but economically stronger, white looking and Christian neighbours.

Not surprisingly Christoffel Snijman's criminally and racially marred parental background and his un-immaculate conception and slave lodge birth are not unlikely to have at time placed him, and especially his seemingly *pariah*-phobic father-in-law, between rocks and hard places.

It remains, nevertheless, debatable to what extent a criminal record can be a passport to societal acceptance, or even acclaim.

Mansell George Upham

Special Acknowledgement:

A special thank you to my father William Mansell Upham, Margaret Cairns, Dr Dan Sleight, Janette Joubert, Amanda Hughes and, the late Peter Holden for their critical input.

¹⁵¹Bredenkamp, 'Khoisan versus Huguenote', 25.

¹⁵² See Heese's remarks in 'Groep Sonder Grense', 11 and in particular his comments concerning Hattingh's conclusion in 'Die Eerste Vryswartes van Stellenbosch' that no formal cases of discrimination existed. Few anthropologists would question the validity of Mavin Harris' statement that *ethnocentrism is a universal feature of intergroup relations* (see Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Vol. 1: Racial Oppression and Social Control* (London, 1994).