HumaNetten

Editor-in-Chief: Hans Hägerdal
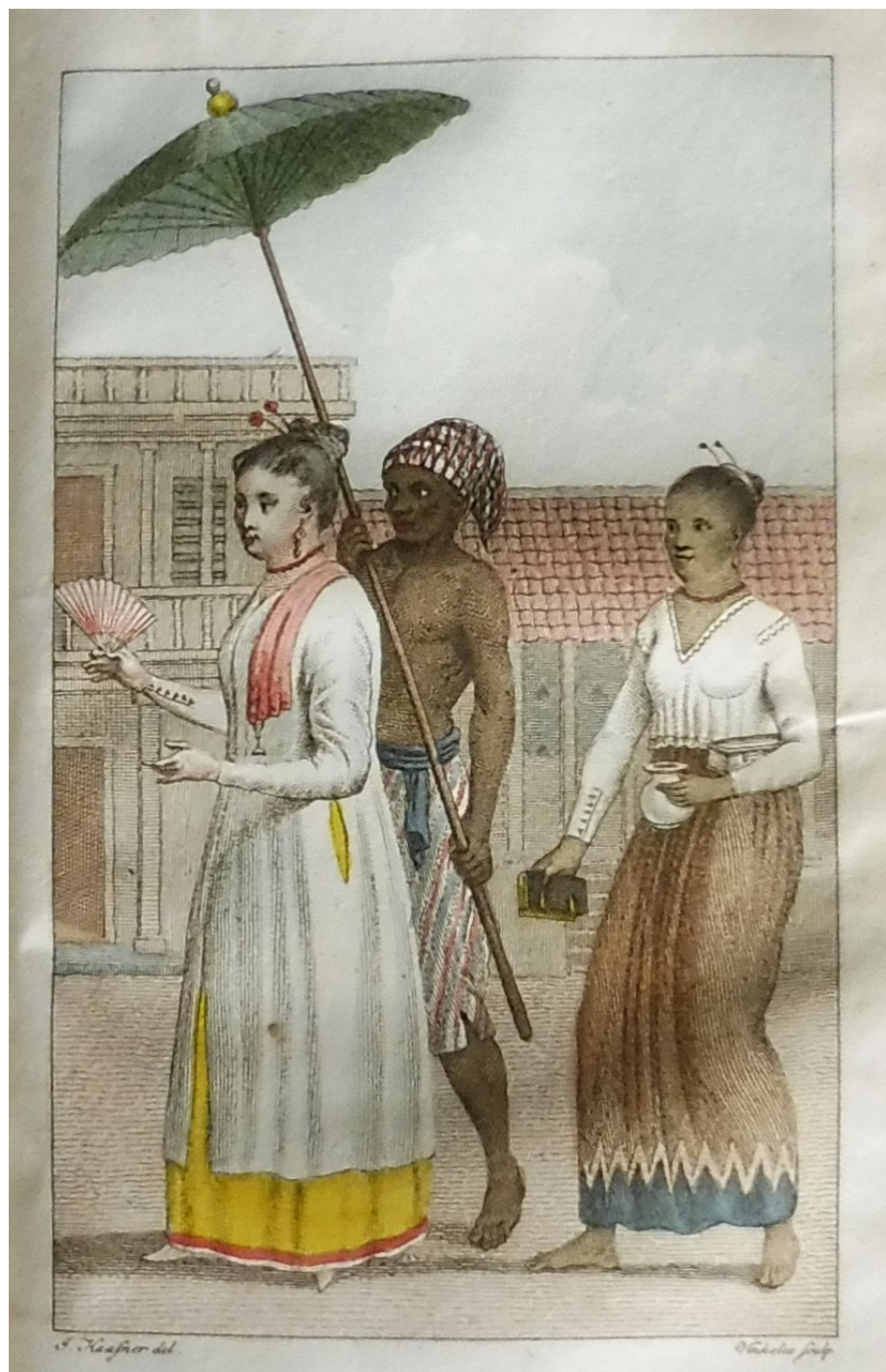
HUMANETTEN

Nummer 47 Hösten 2021:
Enslavement in the Indian Ocean World

INNEHÅLL:

An asterisk (*) indicates that quality control has been undertaken through the system of
double blind peer review.

General foreword

As summer is turning into autumn, Sweden's oldest online journal launches its 47th issue, this time with a mainly international profile. Since the creation of the university in its present form eleven years ago, a large number of workshops and conventions have been held that involve scholars from various parts of the world. In September 2017, a workshop on the theme "Enslavement in the Indian Ocean World" convened in Kalmar, that involved twenty scholars from nine countries and four continents. The event is inductive of the increasing academic attention to a dark side of the human experience, namely slavery. However one defines a slave – and there are several definitions – the ownership over other people's lives and work has a history that far exceeds the Graeco-Roman world and the Atlantic scene, known to the public through movies such as *Spartacus* and *Amistad*. Not least, bondage and slavery have been realities in the maritime world of the Indian Ocean since ancient times. Of the papers presented at the Kalmar workshop, four are published here. These studies, by Michael Charles Reidy, Lodewijk Wagenaar, Filipa Ribeiro da Silva and Akanksha Narayan Singh, will be presented in detail in a separate introductory essay by Hans Hägerdal. Together, they highlight the human consequences of European colonialism in East and South Africa, and South Asia, and the multifaceted forms of slavery that flourished in the Indian Ocean World and have left traces into modern times.

Apart from the main theme, Hanna Söderlund, Josefine Wälivaara and Karin Ljuslinder contribute with an analysis of a slightly more cheerful subject, namely humour. In their study "'Handikapptoaletten hade de som förråd' – Att utmana funktionsnormativitet med humor", the authors discuss the potential of humour to highlight and challenge norms that are often taken as granted. They do this by analysing conversations between people with disabilities, found in a podcast from the 2010s. Lastly, Robert Walldén and Annika Langwagen discuss reading strategies in a Swedish primary school in "'Man förstår nästan allt!' Läsförståelsearbete med faktatexter i årskurs 4". Here, they report from a classroom study undertaken in an "exposed area" with many immigrant pupils, conducting subject-integrated work with non-fiction texts and reading strategies in the class.

For the editorial board
Hans Hägerdal

Enslavement in the Indian Ocean World: Introducing a Theme

Hans Hägerdal

Slavery. The word has, for a modern audience, almost exclusively negative connotations. Only the most outlandish and extremist figures may seem to endorse the idea of ownership over the body and work of another human being.[1] At a closer look, slavery, in the sense of coerced and unfree labour, is nevertheless highly present in modern societies, even in relatively affluent ones. According to a report from 2014, as many as 35,8 million people around the world live in slave-like conditions, actually more than ever in human history.[2] Such estimates depend on how one prefers to define "slavery", which is a notoriously difficult term to pinpoint. It is nevertheless clear that patterns of ownership over other humans constitute a recurring theme in recorded history. It is often associated with the classical age of Greece and Rome, and with the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the early-modern era, but in fact slavery appears in most human societies, at one point or another. Joseph C. Miller has rightly pointed out that Western ideas of slavery as a system are insufficient to understand the multiple forms of "slavery" that are found in human cultures. While avoiding a definite definition of the contested "slave" term, he questions the idea of slaving (the acquisition and allocation of coerced labour) as a system, or even a set of systems, and rather characterizes it as a series of strategies coming out of peculiar historical contexts, thus steadily in flux. In Miller's model, slaving has been historically propelled by actors operating from positions of marginality in relation to society leaders – merchants, raiders and others who strive to amass social capital and enhance their positions in society.[3] This global omnipresence makes serious analysis of the dynamics of slaving the more vital and challenging. What factors tend to reduce humans to strongly subservient status, and what are the dynamics of handling and allocating them? How do ideological, religious, social, economic and political factors interplay to maintain slaving systems?

A good way to start is to look at the dynamics evolving in a particular historical region, and this thematic issue comprises four studies detailing slavery in various Indian Ocean contexts. In fact, the Indian Ocean World is interesting as a historical category from several points of view, in spite of its

---

[1] Dick Harrison, *Slaveri. En världshistoria om ofrihet. Forntiden till renässansen* (Lund: Historiska Media, 2006), 29.
[2] Marcel van der Linden, "Dissecting Coerced Labour", in Marcel van der Linden & Magaly Rodriguez García (eds), On Coerced Labour: Work and Compulsion after Chattel Slavery (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2016), 293-322.
[3] Joseph C. Miller, *The Problem of Slavery as History: A Global Approach* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2012).

vast dimensions. While our thinking in historical regions is still often tied to ideas of continents and parts of continents, there is a growing awareness among scholars of the networks crisscrossing the seas, and their importance to explain historical processes in the adjacent lands. The monsoon system and a number of related environmental factors have pushed this vast expanse into certain historical trajectories.[4] Agricultural production, seaborne access, and consequently trading flows, arise from the seasonal character of the monsoon winds and precipitation and have fostered early connectivities across the ocean. As an ultimate consequence of this, enslaved Africans found their way to India or Southeast Asia, while Balinese and Timorese people could equally well end up toiling on the plantations of the Mascarenes.[5] The relatively accessible nature of the Indian Ocean sea routes also made for the early intervention of outsiders. Muslim groups settled along the Swahili coast by the ninth century, Indian seafarers made an impact in Southeast Asia since the early centuries of the Christian era, and Europeans established outposts in increasing numbers after c. 1500. The period and places covered by the four articles in this issue were in particular imprinted by the hegemonic ambitions of European colonial organizations – Portuguese, Dutch, British and others. In all these enterprises, the enslavement and allocation of enslaved people had a large role. In other regions, African and Asian raiders were the more active in acquiring captives through warfare and raiding. Examples of this are the eastern part of what is now Indonesia, Madagascar, and the hinterland of Mozambique; the two last-mentioned are dealt with in the studies of Michael Reidy and Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, where the interesting connections between indigenous and European slaving are also highlighted.

---

[4] Gwyn Campbell, "Introduction: Bondage and the Environment in the Indian Ocean World", in Gwyn Campbell (ed.), *Bondage and the Environment in the Indian Ocean World* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, Springer Nature, 2018), 1-2.
[5] Hans Hägerdal, "At the Margins of the Indian Ocean World: South Asian Migrants and Early Modern Colonialism", in Kristina Myrvold & Soniya Billore (eds), *India: Research on Cultural Encounters and Representations at Linnaeus University* (Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2017), 180-181.

Map 1. The Indian Ocean World. VOC map from about 1700, entitled "Nieuwe Wassende Graadige Paskarte van Oost Indien". Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fil:VOC_Octrooigebied_1.jpg.

Then, what was the rationale for this trafficking over the centuries? Already the numbers that can be estimated for the Indian Ocean World indicate that considerable economic interests were at stake. This is connected to demographic structures; in large areas of the Indian Ocean World, labour was scarce, rather than land.[6] Although the numbers are much more conjectural than for the Atlantic Middle Passage, millions of people from East Africa, South and Southeast Asia were traded over the period 650-1900, often to long-distance destinations.[7] As apparent from the studies published here, there was a large market for domestic slaves. Often, this was bound up with status issues: the well-to-do in indigenous as well as colonial European households could have hundreds of slaves as a matter of displaying one's own

---

[6] Anthony Reid, Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce. Volume One: The Lands Below the Wind (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 129.

[7] Richard B. Allen, "Human Trafficking in Asia before 1900: A Preliminary Census," International Association for Asian Studies Newsletter, no. 87, October 2020.

importance in society.[8] But there was also another dimension to it. European settlers founded or took over plantations that produced cash crops such as sugar and spices, notably in the Mascarenes and the Banda Islands.[9] In their need for a steady supply of manpower, they parallel the infamous West Indian plantations in part. Even they were, however, only a minor part of the picture, since commercial slave-driven plantations were also found in places outside the European sphere, like Zanzibar, Pemba and the Persian Gulf region, producing spices and dates for the global market.[10]

It is important to note that there was not one particular type of slaving regime in the Indian Ocean World, nor do the local terms exactly correspond to the European word "slave" (*escravo*, *slaaf*, *esclave*, etc.). The great variety of forms has been mapped in the works edited by Gwyn Campbell, who has pioneered the study of slavery in the geographical framework of the Indian Ocean.[11] The free versus unfree distinction made in Roman law is not entirely relevant here. Rather, we are confronted with degrees of un-freedom, where some categories might be akin to what was called serfs in medieval and early-modern Europe. Typically, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) made no real distinction between slave (*slaaf*) and serf (*lijfeigen*) in their writings, and the confused European nomenclature is often misleading. Enslavement could happen in several ways, which was partly reflected in the way "slaves" were treated. According to Anthony Reid, speaking in a Southeast Asian context, debts were the most prominent reason for the loss of personal freedom, though it was often understood that this condition only lasted as long as the debt remained unpaid.[12] Other slaves inherited their status, or were sentenced to slavery as the result of criminal acts or witchcraft. An important source was political unrest: capture in warfare or through slave raiding. While the regions adjacent to the Indian Ocean had several strong states in the pre-colonial era, there was also a variety of petty kingdoms, collapsed realms, and stateless areas with no organization above village level. Political fragmentation led to raiding, both internally and by outsiders, and the consequent capture of manpower.[13] Religious affiliation also made a difference: for Christians as well as Muslims, enslavement of co-religionists was formally discouraged. Reality was often very different from theory, however, as shown by James

---

[8] Hans Hägerdal, *Lords of the Land, Lords of the Sea: Conflict and Adaptation in Early Colonial Timor 1600-1800* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012), 275.

[9] Markus Vink, "'The World's Oldest Trade.' Dutch Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean in the Seventeenth Century,' *Journal of World History* 14, no. 7 (2003): 131-77.

[10] Titas Chakraborty and Matthias van Rossum, "Slave Trade and Slavery in Asia – New Perspectives", *Journal of Social History* 54, no. 1 (2020).

[11] See especially Gwyn Campbell (ed.), *The Strucure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (London: Frank Cass, 2004).

[12] Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, 131.

[13] An illustrative case is discussed by Rodney Needham, *Sumba and the Slave Trade* (Monash: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Working Papers, 31).

Warren in his classic work *The Sulu Zone*.[14] The different sources of enslavement often made for a variety of terms for coerced labour within one and the same society. In West Sumbawa in present-day Indonesia, for example, there were three categories: the *tau marisi* who were similar to serfs, the *budak pusaka* who were enslaved due to internal conflicts and debts, and the *abdi* who came from the outside and had few rights.[15]

One may also note the connections between the slave systems. In post-1980 research about slavery, a rough distinction is often made between *open* and *closed* forms.[16] Open types of slavery are characterized by a social bond between the slave and his or her owner. The slave tends to be a member of the household, and might be integrated in a family. Descendants of slaves acquired via capture, purchase or debt may be assimilated in the dominant group after a few generations, which is facilitated if there are no great physical differences.[17] One may take the example of Timor, where societies were strongly hierarchical but at the same time based on small lineage-based settlements where a category of bonded labour (*atan* in Tetun language, *ate* in Dawan, translated in Portuguese and Dutch reports as *escravos*, *slaven*, slaves) worked the land. They were not clan property but rather served individual households, generally the elite.[18] At least in parts of Timor, these people could not be sold. Under certain circumstances a slave could be adopted and inherit the clan name of his master.[19] Ethnographic research from areas that came under colonial surveillance at a late stage points out the father-child relationship that evolved as an *atan* was internalized in a household.[20] A Portuguese survey of customary right from 1869 argued that "the slaves in Timor as those in Arabia, are treated like persons in the family; they are not *objects* like the case in Roman law and in the exploitation in North and South America".[21] This would appear to concur with the common if debatable notion that slavery in the Indian Ocean World was "mild" in comparison with the Atlantic type.[22]

---

[14] James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007).

[15] W.G. van der Wolk, Memorie Soembawa, 1941. H 1087, KITLV Archive, Leiden.

16 Gwyn Campbell, "Introduction: Slavery and Other Forms of Unfree Labour in the Indian Ocean World", in Campbell (ed), *The Structure of Slavery*, xv-xviii.

17 Anthony Reid, "'Closed' and 'Open' Slave Systems in Pre-Colonial Southeast Asia", in Anthony Reid (ed.), *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia* (St Lucia, London and New York: University of Queensland Press, 1983), 156.

18 Alexander Un Usfinit, *Maubes Insana* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2008), 81; Herman Joseph Seran, *Ema Tetun* (Kupang: Gita Kasih, 2007), 120.

19 Affonso de Castro, *As possessões portuguezas na Oceania* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1867), 319-320.

20 B.A.G. Vroklage, *Ethnographie der Belu in Zentral-Timor, Erster Teil* (Leiden: Brill, 1953), 550; Seran, *Ema Tetun*, 120-121.

21 *Adatrechtbundels XXXIX, Gemengd* ('s-Gravenhage: M. Nijhoff, 1939), 470.

22 Campbell, "Introduction: Slavery" xxiii.

On the other end of the binary is the closed type where a slave is and remains an essential outsider, in Indian Ocean contexts often in relatively static and labour-intensive societies.[23] In European contexts, they are property in the sense that they can be bought and sold, and there is a legal free-unfree distinction that is often underlined by physical differences. This is associated with slave markets and transports of human cargo over great distances. The open-closed distinction might be useful as a binary of ideal types in the Weberian sense; however, as detailed studies have proliferated in recent decades, a more complex picture of Asian slave-keeping societies has emerged. Local systems of bondage and slavery that tied people to a master, household and work task, existed *both* alongside and in interaction with systems where slavery was commodified and often inter-regional.[24] As noted by Peter Boomgaard when speaking of Indonesia, rather than finding a general theory of the widespread enslavement, one may look at the hazards of pre-modern society, which made for a high degree of uncertainty in daily life: war, raids, gambling, debts, and so on.[25]

There is no express prohibition against ownership of humans in either world religions or pre-modern political systems, and abolition came lately to the Indian Ocean World. The widespread practice of slaving among European, African and Asian groups made abolitionist activity problematic. From a legal point of view, slavery was ended by the European colonial powers in the course of the nineteenth century, but it was a slow demise. Britain set the agenda by abolishing the institution in the territories of the East India Company in 1843, and the other powers followed suit in the next decades.[26] However, as discussed by Akanksha Singh in this issue, coerced labour survived in various forms, and does so until this day. In indirectly ruled territories, slavery lasted into the twentieth century, and the same goes for countries that survived formal colonization – Yemen and Saudi Arabia formally abolished slavery as late as 1962.[27]

The essays in this issue of *HumaNetten* provide fascinating cases of all this. They all analyze places where European colonialism and shipping had made inroads: South Africa-Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Mozambique, and India. They demonstrate how European traders, administrators and settlers interacted with local economic and social structures, often making for an element of hybridity in the colonial contact zones. In this, they continue the

---

[23] Reid, "'Closed' and 'Open' Slave Systems", 156, 161.

[24] Alexander Geelen, Bram van den Hout, Merve Tosun, Mike de Windt and Matthias van Rossum, "On the Run: Runaway Slaves and Their Social Networks in Eighteenth-Century Cochin", *Journal of Social History* 54, no. 1 (2020): 66–87.

[25] Peter Boomgaard, "Human Capital, Slavery and Low Rates of Economic and Population Growth in Indonesia, 1600-1910", *Slavery and Abolition* 24 (2003): 90.

[26] Dick Harrison, *Slaveri. En världshistoria om ofrihet. Från 1800 till nutid* (Lund: Historiska Media, 2008), 538.

[27] BBC, *Slavery in Islam*, https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/history/slavery_1.shtml (accessed 13-9-2021).

path of research begun by scholars such as Gwyn Campbell, Richard Allen and Matthias van Rossum, which has seen a steady outpour of books and articles in the last few decades.[28] This ongoing research will no doubt remedy the two "curses" associated with the field. The "curse of the Atlantic" has made many people watch slaving around the world through the lens of trans-Atlantic slave trade, downplaying or disregarding the climatic, cultural and economic factors that led Indian Ocean slaving into partly different trajectories. Secondly, scholars afflicted by "the curse of the particular" have produced deep studies of geographically delimited slave economies without seeing them in larger and comparative contexts.[29] This is currently being remedied by scholarly networks such as ESTA (Exploring Slave Trade in Asia) which organize conferences and workshops and include Asian, African and Western scholars.

The four contributions to the issue have been arranged in a rough chronological order. The first article by *Michael Charles Reidy* studies part of the extensive slave trade in the south-western part of the Indian Ocean World in the early-modern era. Although a number of historians have reconstructed aspects of these trades over the last forty-five years, our knowledge about this traffic remains far from complete, a historiographical shortcoming which Reidy addresses. He draws on a range of archival sources, especially the instructions issued to ship captains and trade journals, to expand our current understanding of the dynamics of European, and identify the formation of Dutch slave trading policy on the island.

Secondly, *Lodewijk Wagenaar* takes a look at the workings of the colonial contact zones. In this study, he examines how slavery and slaves were viewed in late-eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Ceylon or Sri Lanka. The island had been partly colonized for hundreds of years, fostering a hybrid society in the coastal towns. The era studied by Wagenaar witnessed the dramatic transition from Dutch to British rule. The author's investigation makes use of hitherto unused sources to explore how attitudes about bonded labor changed during an era of increasing abolitionist activity in the Indian Ocean, changes that involved the complex interplay between indigenous and European ideas about forced labor.

The third contribution by *Filipa Ribeiro da Silva* takes us back to Africa. Similar to Ceylon, coastal Mozambique has a long history of colonial settlement which engendered routines of co-habitation between Portuguese, Africans and external Muslims settlers over the centuries. Ribeiro da Silva draws on the demographic data provided by hitherto unused household and estate surveys to explore the dynamics of enslavement in three nineteenth-

---

[28] See, for instance: Gwyn Campbell, ed., *Bondage and the Environment in the Indian Ocean World* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, Springer Nature, 2018); Richard B. Allen, *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean, 1500-1850* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015); Matthias van Rossum, *Kleurrijke tragiek: de geschiedenis van slavernij in Azië onder de VOC* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren).

[29] Cf. Allen, *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean*.

century Mozambican towns. The patterns are amply illustrated by a set of statistical tables. These data lead her to argue that different forms of slavery co-existed in the studied communities.

Lastly, *Akanksha Narayan Singh* reassesses the type of slavery that existed in nineteenth-century British India and describes how slavery was formally abolished in the East India Company possessions in 1843. As she observes, the legal abolition of slavery did not, however, bring an end to such coerced labor, and slavery in effect continued to exist in various forms and places until well into the twentieth century. In so doing, she questions the conventions inherent in most discussions about slavery in India such as the belief that it was relatively mild and paternalistic and restricted largely to South India.

The four articles published here began as papers presented at a lively workshop in Kalmar, Sweden, in September 2017, also entitled "Enslavement in the Indian Ocean World".[30] Our thoughts go to the late Joseph C. Miller, the great synthesizer of global slavery studies, who offered insightful comments to the papers discussed at the workshop. Publication of the issue has been enabled through a generous contribution by the Linnaeus University Center for Concurrences in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies (Concurrences, for short), a vibrant interdisciplinary milieu with an interest in the power configurations and discriminatory practices that have shaped the modern world.

Bibliography

Adatrechtbundels XXXIX, Gemengd ('s-Gravenhage: M. Nijhoff, 1939).

Allen, Richard B., *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean, 1500-1850* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015).

Allen, Richard B., "Human Trafficking in Asia before 1900: A Preliminary Census," *International Association for Asian Studies Newsletter*, no. 87, October 2020.

BBC, *Slavery in Islam*, https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/history/slavery_1.shtml (accessed 13-9-2021).

Boomgaard, Peter, "Human Capital, Slavery and Low Rates of Economic and Population Growth in Indonesia, 1600-1910", *Slavery and Abolition* 24 (2003): 83-96.

Campbell, Gwyn (ed.), *The Strucure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (London: Frank Cass, 2004).

Campbell, Gwyn (ed.), *Bondage and the Environment in the Indian Ocean World* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, Springer Nature, 2018).

Castro, Affonso de, *As possessões portuguezas na Oceania* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1867).

Chakraborty, Titas, and Matthias van Rossum, "Slave Trade and Slavery in Asia – New Perspectives", *Journal of Social History* 54, no. 1 (2020): 1-14.

Geelen, Alexander, Bram van den Hout, Merve Tosun, Mike de Windt and Matthias van Rossum, "On the Run: Runaway Slaves and Their Social Networks in Eighteenth-Century Cochin", *Journal of Social History* 54, no. 1 (2020): 66–87.

Hägerdal, Hans, *Lords of the Land, Lords of the Sea: Conflict and Adaptation in Early Colonial Timor 1600-1800* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012).

Hägerdal, Hans, "At the Margins of the Indian Ocean World: South Asian Migrants and Early Modern Colonialism", in Kristina Myrvold & Soniya Billore (eds), *India: Research on Cultural Encounters and Representations at Linnaeus University* (Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2017), 162-187.

Harrison, Dick, *Slaveri. En världshistoria om ofrihet. Forntiden till renässansen* (Lund: Historiska Media, 2006).

Harrison, Dick, *Slaveri. En världshistoria om ofrihet. Från 1800 till nutid* (Lund: Historiska Media, 2008).

Linden, Marcel van der, "Dissecting Coerced Labour", in Marcel van der Linden & Magaly Rodriguez García (eds), *On Coerced Labour: Work and Compulsion after Chattel Slavery* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2016), 293-322.

Miller, Joseph C., *The Problem of Slavery as History: A Global Approach* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2012).

Needham, Rodney, *Sumba and the Slave Trade* (Monash: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Working Papers, 31).

Reid, Anthony, "'Closed' and 'Open' Slave Systems in Pre-Colonial Southeast Asia", in Anthony Reid (ed.), *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia* (St Lucia, London and New York: University of Queensland Press, 1983), 156-181.

Reid, Anthony, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce. Volume One: The Lands Below the Wind* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988).

Rossum, Matthias van, *Kleurrijke tragiek: de geschiedenis van slavernij in Azië onder de VOC* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren).

Seran, Herman Joseph, *Ema Tetun* (Kupang: Gita Kasih, 2007).

Usfinit, Alexander Un, *Maubes Insana* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2008).

Vink, Markus, "'The World's Oldest Trade.' Dutch Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of World History* 14, no. 7 (2003): 131-177.

Vroklage, B.A.G., *Ethnographie der Belu in Zentral-Timor, Erster Teil* (Leiden: Brill, 1953).

Warren, James Francis, *The Sulu Zone: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007).

Wellfelt, Emilie, "Meddelanden: Enslavement in the Indian Ocean World, Kalmar, 8–9 september 2017", *Historisk tidskrift* 138, no. 1 (2018): 176-177.

Wolk, W.G. van der, Memorie Soembawa, 1941. H 1087, KITLV Archive, Leiden.

VOC Slave Trading Strategies on the Madagascar to Cape Slave Route, 1676-1781[1]

Michael Charles Reidy

Introduction

The island of Madagascar, which is situated in the southwestern reaches of the Indian Ocean, opened its markets to Dutch, French, English and Portuguese slave traders from the late 1630s until the nineteenth century, after interacting with Arab traders for over 500 years. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) systematically established its principal slave route from Madagascar to the Cape of Good Hope from 1676 to 1781 through navigation, diplomacy and trade. The Dutch slave trade – *den slavenhandel* – from Madagascar to the Cape was developed through the orders and instructions (*instructiën*) of the VOC's Directors, the Heren XVII. The Heren XVII formulated their instructions in cooperation with the colony's administrators, slave-commissioners (*commiesen*[2]) and ships' officers. Ships' instructions, together with the Heren XVII's 'letters of credential' (*credentiale brieven*), empowered Company officials to enter into contracts and agreements within the area granted to the VOC in Article 35 of the Company's trade charter by the States General of the Dutch Republic.[3] The captains and merchants of successive Company slave voyages consulted the instructions[4] and ships' journals (*skeepsjoernalen*) of previous voyages – charting latitude and

[2] The merchant in charge of the VOC slave voyage was called the *commies* or "commissioner." The English equivalent of *commies* is "supercargo" or "merchant."

[3] Yvette Ranjeva-Rabetafika, René Baesjou and Natalie Everts, "Of Paper and Men: a note on the Archives of the VOC as a source for the history of Madagascar," *Itinerario* 24, no. 1 (2000): 45-59, 54n74.

[4] The National Archives in Cape Town (hereafter CA), South Africa, Political Council (*Politieke Raad*) (C) Series Vol. 2244, "Register op instructies, 1657-1784": 1-139 ["Register of instructions, 1675-1784"] (hereafter CA C 2244) contain a list of ships' "Instructions" (*Instructies* (Afrikaans)), "Register of papers" (*Register van papieren*) and crew lists for VOC slave voyages to Madagascar, Anjouan (also called *Anzuany*, *Anjuan* and *Johanna*) and Rio de la Goa from 1656 to 1786. CA C 2361, "Skeeps-en ander joernale": 69-87 and CA C 2243, "Journals kept on board the different ships on their several voyages & expeditions since the year 1615 till 1793": 3-18, which is an English copy of the Dutch inventory, most likely compiled by Willem Stephanus van Ryneveldt, on Macartney's request, in 1798. Rafael Thiebaut made CA C 2361 available to me.

longitude, reckonings, landfalls as well as encounters at sea and on land – in the execution of their slave voyages and the planning of future expeditions.[5] This article seeks to explain how the VOC at the Cape developed its slave trading strategies on the northwestern coast of Madagascar from the late seventeenth century through to the landmark voyages of the *Leijdsman* (1715)[6] and *Brak* (1741) of the eighteenth.[7] These voyages, along with the *Herstelling's* 1732 voyage to Salida, in west Sumatra,[8] determined VOC slave trading on the island until the *Jachtrust's* final voyage closed the slave route from the Cape to Madagascar in 1781.

Secondary literature

The Heren XVII's instructions, along with the Company's *credentiale brieven*, are among the earliest expressions of Dutch foreign policy in the South-West Indian Ocean region. The importance of ships' instructions in the VOC slave trade from the Cape to Madagascar has been addressed by James C. Armstrong and Piet Westra in their annotated translation of the *Leijdsman's* two trade journals of 1715.[9] Alfred and Guillaume Grandidier, Maurice Boucher, Robert Ross, Stephen Ellis and Solofo Randrianja and Dan

---

[5] Hans Haalmeijer, *Pinassen, Fluiten en Galjassen: Zeilschap van de Lage Landen – Kustvaart en Grote Vaart*, (Alkmaar, Holland: De Aak bv., 2009), 158-59. A ship's speed was determined by timing the movement of a log of wood, tied to a piece of rope, from a given position on the tide to the stern: hence the word "logbook." I am grateful to Graeme Tipp, Volunteer Assistant at the *Cutty Sark*, Royal Museums Greenwich, for explaining "logbooks" to me. The VOC forbade the use of logs, according to Captain Bligh's report in 1792. Therefore, the entries of the EIC's watch are called logbooks; while the captain's log on VOC voyages is called a *dagregister* or *skeepsjoernaal*.

[6] James C. Armstrong and Piet Westra, *Slave Trade with Madagascar: The journals of the Cape slaver* Leijdsman, *1715* (Cape Town: Africana Publishers, 2006). Westra has translated both of the *Leijdsman's* trade journals from eighteenth century Dutch to English.

[7] Archives Den Haag (hereafter HA), Netherlands, VOC Series, Access Number 1.04.02, "Inventaris van het archief van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC), 1602-1795, Deel I/E.5.b: *Overgekomen brieven en papieren uit de Kaap de Goede Hoop aan de Heeren XVII en de kamer Amsterdam*" ("Letters and Papers Despatched from the Cape of Good Hope to the Seventeen Lords and the Amsterdam chamber" (1651-1794)), HA vol. 4149 *Brak skeepsjoernaal* (4 May to 25 December 1741): 241-458 (hereafter "HA 4149, *Brak* (1741)"). See Alfred and Guillaume Grandidier, *Collections des ouvrages anciens concernant Madagascar* (COACM) vol.6, "Voyage du besteau De *Brak*," 1741 (Paris: Comité Madagascar, 1913): 52-196. The *Brak's instructie* appears in HA vol. 4144, "Instructie meede gegeeven aan de Ovenlede van den Hoeker de Brak gaande na Madagascar" (hereafter "HA 4244, *Brak instructie* (11 October 1740)"): 128-41. See https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02 for digitized scans of HA VOC 1.04.02 *Overgekomen brieven*: *instructiën, skeepsjoernale* and *skeepsrollen*. The VOC outfitted over fifty slave voyages from the Cape to Madagascar from the 1640s to 1786, including 12 from 1740 to 1781. This article draws on the TANAP *Resolusies* (*Resolutiën*) of the Political Council of the Cape of Good Hope (hereafter C), http://databases.tanap.net/resolusies/ (Retrieved 1 October 2020). See appendix for a complete list of the collections containing ships' instructions and ships' journals at the South African National Archives, in Cape Town, and the Netherlands Nationaal Archief, at Den Haag.

[8] The *Herstelling* was despatched from Batavia to purchase Malagasy slaves for the Company's gold mines at Salida.

[9] Armstrong and Westra, *Slave Trade.*

Sleigh and Piet Westra have published lengthy translations of VOC ships' journals and extracts from ships' journals in scholarly articles and books.[10] The above works spotlight individual slave voyages, or clusters of voyages, but do not explain how these voyages relate to the VOC slave trade to Madagascar as a whole. It is not surprising, therefore, that Westra and his co-authors have failed to notice the repeated use of the *Brak's* instructions, issued on 11 October 1740, on nearly a dozen Company slave voyages from 1741 to 1781.[11]

Armstrong has estimated the importation of some 2,820 slaves, out of thirty-three of some forty VOC slave voyages, outfitted at the Cape from 1654 to 1784, along with terse descriptions of the trade during the VOC era.[12] His account of the VOC slave trade has been expanded upon by Robert Carl-Heinz Shell and Nigel Worden; while Sleigh and Westra's account of slave-commissioner Johan Godfried Krause's three slaving expeditions, on the *Neptunus* (1760) and *Meermin* (1762 and 1766), portrays the VOC slave trade to Madagascar as haphazard, rather than strategic.[13] Yvette Ranjeva-

---

[10] Alfred and Guillaume Grandidier, COACM vol.6, "Voyage du besteau De *Brak*," 1741: 52-196; Maurice Boucher, "The Voyage of a Cape Slaver in 1742," *Historia* 24, no. 1 (1979): 50-58; Robert Ross, ed., "The Dutch on the Swahili Coast, 1776-1778: Two Slaving Journals, Part 1," [trade journal of the *Zon* (2 May 1776 to 25 April 1777)] *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 19, no. 2 (Boston University African Studies Centre, 1986): 305-60; and "The Dutch on the Swahili Coast, 1776-1778: Two Slaving Journals, Part 2," [trade journal of the *Jachtrust* (29 June 1777 to 25 January 1778)], *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 19, no. 3 (Boston University African Studies Centre, 1986): 479-506; Stephen Ellis and S. Randrianja, "Les archives de Compagnie néerlandaise des Indes orientales et l'histoire de Madagascar. L'expedition du navire de la Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (V.O.C.) Le *Schuylenburg* – Septembre 1752," in I. Rakoto, ed., *La route des esclaves* (Paris: Harmattan, 2000), 47-73; and, Dan Sleigh and Piet Westra, *The Taking of the Slaver* Meermin *1766* (Cape Town: Africana Publishers, 2013).

[11] See Westra's translation of the Council of Justice's "extract" of the *Meermin's* instruction from 1766 in Sleigh and Westra, *Meermin*, 122-23. This extract of the *Meermin's* instruction is a verbatim copy of a large portion of the *Brak's* instruction.

[12] James C. Armstrong and Nigel A. Worden, "The Slaves, 1652-1795," in Richard Elphick and Hermann Giliomee, eds., *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1820*, 2nd ed. (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1989): 109-68, 112. Jame*s* C. Armstrong, "Madagascar and the Slave Trade in the Seventeenth Century," *Omaly Sy Anio (Hier et aujour d'hui)* 17-20 (1983-84): 211-32. See also Markus Vink's summary of the VOC slave trade, "'The World's Oldest Trade.' Dutch Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of World History* 14, no. 7 (June 2003): 131-77.

[13] Robert C.-H. Shell, *Children of Bondage: A Social History of the Slave Society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994), Ch.2 "The Tower of Babel: The Slave Trade and Creolization," 40-65; and Nigel A. Worden, "Indian Ocean Slavery and its demise in the Cape Colony," in Gwyn Campbell, ed., *Abolition and its Aftermath in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 29-49 and *Slavery in Dutch South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). See also Robert C.-H. Shell, ed., *From Diaspora to Diorama: A Guide to the Old Slave Lodge* (Cape Town: Nagpro, 2013). Nigel A. Worden, "Indian Ocean Slaves in Cape Town, 1695-1807," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 42, no. 3 (2016): 389-408, 400: Nigel Worden gives an alternative figure of 3,753 for the number of slaves imported at Cape Town (cf. James J. Ravell's unpublished, "The VOC Slave Trade Between Cape Town and Madagascar," (Leiden, 1978)).

Rabetafika, René Baesjou and Natalie Everts explored a number of ways in which the VOC's *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren* (letters and papers despatched from the Cape) can be mined for valuable information on the VOC slave trade from Madagascar to the Cape and Batavia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[14] Anna Boëseken, Robert Shell and Karel Schoeman have been unable to neatly bridge the VOC's seventeenth century slave trade from the Cape to Madagascar with that of the eighteenth century.[15] The main shortcoming of the existing literature on the VOC slave trade from the Cape to Madagascar is the absence of analysis between the two main phases of the trade: from the *Voorhout* to the *Leijdsman*, 1676-1715; and the *Leijdsman* to the *Jachtrust*, 1715-81. Though the VOC slave trade to Madagascar constitutes what Nigel Worden calls a "small proportion of the whole" Indian Ocean slave trade to the Cape,[16] the VOC instructions and trade journals identify the meeting-point between Company slave traders and other participants on the coast of Madagascar.[17] Arne Bialuschewski, Stephen Ellis and Jane Hooper have described the political economy of various kingdoms and chiefdoms of Madagascar in relation to European trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[18] Bialuschewski has described how the highly organized and structured markets of northwestern Madagascar regularly supplied enslaved people to the English, Dutch and French after 1638.[19] Hooper's study expands on the traditional assumptions that Madagascar functioned mainly as a slave market during the European colonial era by describing the significant role the island played, with a heavy weighting on English East India Company (EIC) records, in the sale of rice and beef in the provisioning trade of the greater Indian Ocean.

---

[14] Ranjeva-Rabetafika, Baesjou and Everts, "Of Paper and Men," 47. See also 1n7 and appendix. The authors write, "The instruction of October 1740 marked the beginning of two decades in which the Company concentrated on trading on the western coast." This article is an attempt to show how that strategy came about, as well as demonstrate the importance of the *Brak's* instructions in the Company's slave trade to Madagascar, through their repeated use, from 1741 to 1781.

[15] Anna Bōeseken, *Slaves and free blacks at the Cape, 1658-1700* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1977); Karel Schoeman, *Early Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1717* (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2007) and *Portrait of a Slave Society: The Cape of Good Hope, 1717-1793* (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2012).

[16] Nigel Worden, "Indian Ocean Slaves," 397.

[17] See also Andrew Alexander, "Negotiation, trade and the rituals of encounter: an examination of the slave trading voyage of De *Zon*, 1775-1776," *Kronos: Journal of Cape History* [Cape Town] 33 (November 2007): 84-111. Alexander's "close reading" of the *Zon's* trade journal limits his study to a microhistory of the *Zon's* voyage and other related voyages.

[18] Arne Bialuschewski, "Pirates, Slaves, and the Indigenous Population in Madagascar, c.1690-1715," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 38, no. 3 (2005), 401-25; Stephen Ellis, "The history of sovereigns in Madagascar: new light from old sources," in Didier Nativel and Faranarina V. Rajaonah, eds., *Madagascar revisitée: en voyage avec Françoise Raison-Jourde* (Paris: Karthala, 2009): 405-31; and Jane Hooper, *Feeding Globalization: Madagascar and the Provisioning Trade, 1600-1800* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2017).

[19] Bialuschewski, "Pirates," 40.

Nigel Worden has remarked that scholars have increasingly recognised the importance of "Indian Ocean Asian and African slave trading networks" in the shaping of contemporary politics in South Africa's Western Cape region.[20] Patrick Harries, on the other hand, highlights the importance of eighteenth and nineteenth century slave traffic from Mozambique in the formation of culture among the descendants of slaves in Cape Town and the Western Cape.[21] Harries has also investigated Cape Town's role in the assistance, and, later, the abolition, of European slave traffic between the South-West Indian Ocean and the Atlantic. Moving away from the concerns of South African historians, Stephen Ellis, Jane Hooper and Rafael Thiebaut have consulted VOC ships' journals to support their conclusions on politics, encounter and commerce at Madagascar.[22] Hooper and Eltis have demonstrated the relationship between the transatlantic slave trade and the Indian Ocean in their analysis of slave voyages from the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database in 2013.[23] They estimate that one-fifth of all transatlantic slave voyages during "the early period" (ie. the late seventeenth century) were from ports of embarkation in the South-West Indian Ocean,[24] and further conclude that the passage between New York and Madagascar, "must have been one of the largest slave trading routes in the history of the world."[25] Gregory O'Malley has noted, in support of this thesis, that slave voyages from Southeast Africa accounted for an estimated 9 percent of Africans carried to

[20] Worden, "Indian Ocean Slaves," 405. See also Nigel Worden, "Slavery and amnesia: towards a recovery of Malagasy heritage in representations of Cape slavery," in Ignace Rakoto, ed., *L'esclavage à Madagascar: Aspects Historiques et Résurgences Contemporaires* (Antananarivo: Institut de Civilisations – Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie, 1997): 51-63, 54. Worden identifies these two broad phases of the VOC slave trade from the Cape to Madagascar.

[21] Patrick Harries, "Middle Passages of the Southwest Indian Ocean: A Century of Forced Immigration from Africa to the Cape of Good Hope," *The Journal of African History* 5, no. 2 (July 2014): 173-90 and "Mozambique Island, Cape Town and the Organization of the Slave Trade in the South-West Indian Ocean, c.1797-1807," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 42, no. 3 (2016): 409-27. See also Pedro Machado, "A Forgotten Corner of the Indian Ocean: Gujarati Merchants, Portuguese India and the Mozambique Slave-Trade, c.1730-1830," in *Slavery & Abolition* 24, no. 2 (2003): 17-32 and *Ocean of Trade: South Asian Merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean, c. 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[22] Jane Hooper, *Feeding Globalization*; and Rafael Thiebaut, "Traites des esclaves et commerce néerlandais et français á Madagascar (XVIIe-XVIIIe siécles)," unpublished PhD. Thesis (Sorbonne University Paris and the Free University Amsterdam, 2017); "De Madagascar à Sumatra: une route négrière peu commune. Le voyage du navire *Binnenwijzend* de la VOC en 1732," *Afriques* [online] no.6 (21 December 2015): 1-63. URL: http://journals.openedition.org/afriques/1805; and, "The Role of "Brokers" in the Dutch Slave Trade in Madagascar in the Eighteenth Century," in Preben Kaarsholm, Manoel João Ramos and Iain Walker, eds., *Fluid Networks and Hegemonic Powers in the West Indian Ocean* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Internacios do Instituto de Lisboa, 2017): 37-64. Thiebaut has made extensive use of Dutch and French ships' journals in his research.

[23] Jane Hooper and David Eltis, "The Indian Ocean in Transatlantic Slavery," *Slavery & Abolition* 34, no. 3 (2013): 353-75.

[24] Ibid., 367.

[25] Ibid., 358.

North America from 1671 to 1710,[26] at a time of increased slave transactions at the Cape.[27] The Cape of Good Hope's geographical position, therefore, placed the port of Cape Town (Table Valley) within the ambit of both transatlantic and trans Indian Ocean slave routes. Richard B. Allen's revision of Alfred and Guillaume Didier and Jean-Marie Filliot's quantification of slave traffic from the ports of East Africa and Madagascar to the Mascarene Islands, along with his description of the Mascarenes role as a staging-post for the slave trade from the mid-eighteenth century, marks the first significant departure from the traditional scholarship on the slave trade in the South-West Indian Ocean region.[28] Rafael Thiebaut has also improved our understanding of the extent of Mascarene slave traffic on the island of Madagascar by identifying at least 458 French voyages to the island from 1720 to 1769, though many of these voyages were exclusively engaged in the provisioning trade.[29] Allen, Eltis, Harries, Hooper, Thiebaut and Worden are all informed by a transnational and interregional approach to slave studies in the Indian Ocean, and their quantitative findings expand upon the work of José Capela, Herbert Klein and Manolo Florentino due to their focus on intra-African slave trading networks in the South-West Indian Ocean.[30] The Cape of Good Hope was considered the "masterlink of connection between the western and eastern world" [31] before the appearance of steam and the opening of the Suez Canal. The Cape, therefore, played an integral role in transatlantic forced migrations and slave voyages across the South-West Indian Ocean, and greater Indian Ocean beyond.

---

[26] Gregory E. O'Malley, *Final Passages: The Intercolonial Slave Trade of British America, 1619-1807* (Williamsburg, Virginia: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), Figure 2., 110.

[27] Schoeman, *Early Slavery*, 94.

[28] Richard B. Allen, "A traffic of several nations: the Mauritian slave trade, 1721-1835," in V. Teelock and E.A. Alpers, eds., *History, Memory and Identity* (Mauritius: University of Mauritius, 2001), 157-77; "The Mascarene Slave-Trade and Labour Migration in the Indian Ocean during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in Gwyn Campbell, ed., *The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 33-50; "The constant demand of the French: The Mascarene Slave Trade and the World of the Indian Ocean and Atlantic during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of African History* 49, no. 1 (2008), 43-73; and, *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean, 1500-1850* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015), 88-89: Allen has considerably revised the count of slave voyages to the Mascarene Islands from 600 to 950.

[29] Thiebaut, "Traites des esclaves," "*Tableau 53: Expédities françaises à Madagascar aux xviiie siècle*," 482.

[30] José Capela, *O Tráfico de Escravos nos Portos de Moçambique, 1733-1904* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2002); Manolo Florentino, *Em Costas Negras: Uma história do tráfico de escravos entre a África e o Rio de Janeiro (séculos XVIII e XIX)*, (São Paulo: Companhia Das Letras, 1997); and, Herbert S. Klein, *The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978).

[31] CA A 455, Dundas-Melville Papers, "Macartney's Description of the Cape colony" (1798).

Ships' instructions and ships' journals[32]

Captain Woodes Rogers observed that the colonial government at the Cape had sent a slave voyage to Madagascar every other year when he docked the *Delicia* at Table Bay in 1713.[33] Rogers, who was commissioned by the English Royal Navy to capture pirate ships off the eastern coast of Madagascar, had ambitions to establish a 'factory' at Madagascar for the exportation of slaves to New York, the West Indies and the Cape.[34] On 29 November 1797, Willem Stephanus van Ryneveldt, the colony's attorney-general (*fiscaal*), informed the first British governor of the Cape, Earl George Macartney,[35] that the VOC had sent out a slave expedition every two to three years from the beginning of Dutch rule. Van Ryneveldt, who oversaw the Company's municipal slave workforce, warned Macartney that the colony's grain and wine production would languish, and then totally decay, should he forbid the importation of slaves into the occupied colony.[36] The governor's personal secretary Sir John Barrow consulted VOC shipping rolls and inventories in the drafting of his unpublished manuscript *Sketches of the Political and Commercial History of the Cape of Good Hope* (1796): the first major writing to include a comprehensive history of slavery and the slave trade in Dutch South Africa.[37] Barrow, who supplied Macartney with a list of VOC slave voyages, declared "*prohibition* of the usual trade" (i.e. the VOC slave trade) to be one of the first changes implemented by the British at the Cape.[38] The VOC's precise record of shipping rolls (*scheepsrollen*), ships' instructions and ships' journals, however, provides a unique inventory of at

---

[32] See appendix. The greater portion of VOC trade journals and instructions are available online at: https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02.

[33] David Cordingly, *Spanish Gold: Captain Woodes Rogers and the Pirates of the Caribbean* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011), 115.

[34] British Library (BL) India Office Records (hereafter IOR)/D/93 f.511 (Minutes of EIC Directors) and IOR B 154 f.22, Captain Woodes Rogers to Sir Hans Sloane, 7 May 1716, Sloane Collection no. 4044, f.155.

[35] Lord Macartney (14 May 1737 to 31 May 1806) was governor of the Cape from May 1797 to November 1798. Macartney, like the VOC's administrators, prohibited slave traffic to the east of the Cape in order to protect the EIC's trade charter in the Indian Ocean. This prohibition prevented the outflow of grain to the French at Mauritius during the Napoleonic Wars and discouraged unlicensed trade, private trade and piracy east of the Cape.

[36] CA Accessions (A) A 455 BP 12 (10), W.S. van Ryneveldt, "Replies to the Questions on the Importation etc. of Slaves into the Colony; Proposed by His Excellency the Earl of Macartney, etc. dated 29 November 1797 (presented to the Cape Archives (CA) by G.W.A. Mears, "the original mss. destroyed by fire")." Willem Stephanus van Ryneveldt (1765-1812) was the colony's *fiscaal* from 1795 to 1809. The *fiscaal* was the Chief of Justice and public prosecutor during the VOC era. The *fiscaal*, after the *secunde* (second-in-command), was the third most senior official at the Cape during VOC rule.

[37] Brenthurst Library, Johannesburg, Oppenheimer Collection, MS 61/3, Sir John Barrow, *Sketches of the Political and Commercial History of the Cape of Good Hope* (1 December 1796) (unpaginated).

[38] Ibid.

least forty Company slave voyages to Madagascar and East Africa during the VOC era.[39]

The Heren XVII ordered Simon van der Stel[40] and his Political Council (*Politiecquen Raad*) to purchase slaves at Madagascar for the Cape; and to send a number of those slaves to Batavia (Jakarta), on a "yearly" basis, before the *Westerwijk's* voyage, in 1685.[41] Copies of the ship's instructions were kept – along with trade journals from earlier expeditions, the Heren XVII's mandate (*reglement*) dated 22 November 1685, [42] cargo inventories and a 'register of papers' (relevant to the voyage) – in the master's cabin of the Company's ship[43] and at the office of the secretary of the Political Council at the Castle of Good Hope. Ships' captains took charge of the voyage at sea; and slave-commissioners, who were usually junior merchants, conducted the trade commission on land. The captain's diary (*dagregister*) documented the expedition's outgoing and incoming voyages; while the slave-commissioner's ship's journal was a detailed account of the party's trade commission.[44] Cooperation between the ship's captain, senior officers and slave-commissioners determined the success of a slave voyage; and the leaders of VOC slave expeditions made collective decisions, in consultation with the ship's instructions, on their ship's council or *skeepsraad*.[45] In 1663, for example, the commander of the Cape of Good Hope Zacharias Wagenaer[46] blamed the failure of the VOC's early slave voyages on the lack of cooperation between captains and slave-commissioners – a slight on Jan van Riebeeck, the first commander of the Cape.[47] Charles Barrington, the supercargo who had chartered the Danish West India Company ship

---

[39] CA C 2361 and CA C 2243. VOC slave expeditions returned to the Cape via Rio de la Goa and, later, Terra de Natal (the Natal coast), from the mid-seventeenth century. The Company despatched slave voyages to Zanzibar, Pemba and Ibo after 1770.

[40] Simon van der Stel (14 October 1639 to 24 June 1712) was appointed commander of the Cape of Good Hope in 1679. Van der Stel was appointed first governor of the Cape in 1691, and retired in 1699. He was succeeded by his son Willem Adriaan van der Stel. Simon and Willem Adriaan were of mixed Indian and Dutch descent.

[41] Pieter van Dam, *Beschryvinge van de Oostindische Compagnie*, XLVII, "orders van de XVII voor den slavenhandel," Bijlage II, (Amsterdam, 1701): 668-70. Van Dam was an advocate (*avocaat*) of the VOC's Amsterdam chamber. Van Dam's "Description of the East India Company" is a history of the VOC from 1602 to 1701.

[42] The Heren XVII's *reglement* or "regulation" stipulated how slaves were to be managed and treated during the slave trade.

[43] Frequently called "*het permanent schip*" (the "permanent ship") in the records. The Heren XVII supplied the settlement with a ship for the slave trade from the time of Jan van Riebeeck. The Company's ship was used to carry freight between the settlement's ports during the off season.

[44] François Renier Duminy was both slave-commissioner and captain of the *Meermin* (a different ship from the *Meermin* of 1766) from 1781 to 1786.

[45] The VOC made the keeping of minutes or "resolutions" by the ship's council mandatory after 1741.

[46] Zacharias Wagenaer (10 May 1614 to 12 October 1668) was the second commander of the Cape from 6 May 1662 to 27 September 1666.

[47] Jan Anthoniszoon van Riebeeck (21 April 1619 to 18 January 1677) was the first commander of the Dutch settlement of the Cape of Good Hope from 6 April 1652 to 1662.

Grevinden af Laurvigen in 1737, proclaimed that the company's charter and ship's instructions had invested him with authority over the slaver and its English and Danish crew, much to the chagrin of the Danish captain Holst who told him, "I am not your servant!"[48]

When the Dutch warship the *Amersfoort* seized 250 slaves from a Portuguese caravel off the coast of Angola in 1658, the captors did not know how to take command of the vessel because the ship's instructions were missing from the captain's cabin. The VOC adopted the instructions issued to Dutch West India Company (WIC) slavers ("Instruction for the captains in the service of the West Indian Company's slave trade") in 1675 on its slave trade from Madagascar to Batavia, Salida and the Cape.[49] In 1685, advocate Pieter van Dam, who had studied WIC transatlantic slave voyages from the 1620s and 1630s, issued further instructions on the slave trade from the Cape to Madagascar.[50] The use of WIC ships' instructions by the VOC, therefore, connects the transatlantic slave trade with the slave trade of the South-West Indian Ocean (Cape Town and Mauritius) and greater Indian Ocean (Ceylon, Salida and Batavia).[51] Van Dam's instructions were the basis of nearly all seventeenth century slave voyages despatched from the Cape; and certain standard instructions were incorporated into the *Brak's* seminal instructions of 1740. The Company Directors imparted Company policies on navigation and the management of ships' personnel and slaves, as well as trade policies, with their *instructiën*. The *Brak's* instructions were the product of forty years of VOC slave voyages to Madagascar (1676 to 1715) and were included, in whole or in part, on Company voyages until 1781. Ships' instructions were presented to ships' captains and slave-commissioners prior to their departure for Madagascar by either the governor, *secunde* or the secretary at the secretary's office at the Castle of Good Hope. The slave-commissioner Hendrik Frappé[52] described the importance of the authority of the

---

[48] Danish National Archive (DNA) (Rigsarkivet) 446, "Het Vestindisk-Guineisk kompagni, Charles Barrington," 218 1737-1742 (hereafter, "DNA 446, Charles Barrington, loose papers") and "Barrington's trade journals, charter party and ship logbooks," 220, no. 2 1737-1738, "Logbook no. 1," 46. The Danes later mutinied against the English, and threw Barrington down the ship's hatch. See also Maurice Boucher, "An Unexpected visitor: Charles Barrington at the Cape in 1737," *South African Historical Journal* 13, no. 1 (University of South Africa: Pretoria, 1981): 20-35.

[49] Armstrong and Westra, *Slave Trade*, 31n82: "*Instructie voor de schippers, die in dienst van de West-Indische Compagnie op de slaefhandel vorende*" (1675).

[50] Van Dam, *Beschryvinge*, 668.

[51] Schoeman, *Slave Society*, 96-97. Schoeman explains how the WIC slave trade was of far greater size than the VOC Cape to Madagascar slave trade, with the Company ferrying at least 330,000 slaves to Dutch possessions across the Atlantic during the eighteenth century. The WIC outfitted at least 383 slave voyages from 1674 to 1740, and carried at least 30,000 enslaved Africans from Africa to the New World during the decade 1720-29.

[52] Armstrong and Westra, *Slave Trade*, 135n4. Hendrik Frappé (c.1678-1747) was born in Amsterdam, and served the Company in Batavia before his arrival at the Cape in 1706. Frappé was appointed slave-commissioner of *Leijdsman* in 1715 and was later appointed superintendent of the Slave Lodge from 1717-33. In 1734, he returned to Holland with his

Leijdsman's instructions in his journal entry at Anjouan (Nzwani) dated 1 September 1715:

> Having deliberated and considered the matter, we decided not to make any payment for the aforementioned debentures [owed to an Arab merchant by officers of the *Schoonhouwen* (c.1711)] because we knew nothing about them and *it was not authorized.* It could not have been expected of us, *because no subject may act on own authority, and in addition we had our honoured instruction according to which we should act* [emphasis added].[53]

Otto Lüder Hemmy[54] referred to the "high orders," and, therefore, gravity of the Honourable Company Directors' instructions during the *Brak's* first voyage to the northwest coast of Madagascar in 1741.[55] When the *Meermin* foundered at Soetendaals Valley, near Cape Agulhas, after a shipboard revolt in 1766, the Cape Council of Justice (CJ), or *Raad van Justitie*, found the ship's captain Gerrit Christoffel Müller guilty of abandoning his command, having leapt overboard with the *Meermin's* papers tied around his waist.[56] Müller vehemently denied the charges of carelessness, neglect of duty and disobeying of instructions brought against him. He had considered rowing to shore on the ship's pinnace, but refrained from doing so, understanding the seriousness of abandoning his command.[57] Müller testified that the third mate Daniel Carel Gulik had not seen the instructions, though Gulik testified that he had asked Müller to show them to him.[58] Müller and Gulik were stripped of rank, dismissed from the Company and expelled from the colony for neglecting their instructions and for the loss of the *Meermin* and some thirty slaves and other Company property. Pieter Knollendam, the *Leijdsman's*

---

family and, in 1743, he came back to the Cape as a free burgher. In 1744, he was appointed bookkeeper of the Company's butchery.

[53] Ibid. Hendrik Frappé's trade journal for the *Leijdsman*, Sunday 1 September 1715, 85-87. The *Leijdsman's* instructions were issued on Tuesday 18 June 1715. The expedition set sail on Thursday June 27 and returned to Table Bay on Thursday 21 November 1715. The slaves were disembarked on Friday 22 November 1715.

[54] D.W. Kruger and C.J. Beyers, eds., *Dictionary of South African Biography* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1977), 385. Otto Lüder Hemmy was born in Bremen in May 1710 and died at Cape Town on 29 January 1777. Hemmy occupied a number of posts in the upper echelons of VOC officialdom at the Cape. He presided over the *Meermin's* trial in August 1766. Hemmy became a member of the Political Council in 1769, after being appointed senior merchant at the Cape. He was promoted to the office of *secunde* in 1773, putting him in charge of the reception, management and provisioning of vessels calling at the Cape, especially French slavers and the VOC return-fleets. He spent his retirement on his large wine estate, Alphen, in Constantia, Cape Town. Hemmy's four VOC slave voyages on the *Brak* from 1741 to 1744 are omitted from the *Dictionary of South African Biography.*

[55] HA 4149, *Brak* (1741), Thursday 28 September 1741, 390.

[56] Sleigh and Westra, *Meermin*, 83. See also 149n61: Gerrit Müller was from Diepsteede in the German duchy of Hanover. He was married to Magdalena, daughter of Jan van Smittenberg and his free black wife, Helena Bakker van de Caab, on 20 November 1763.

[57] Michael Charles Reidy, "Book review of Dan Sleigh and Piet Westra's *The Taking of the Slaver Meermin, 1766*," (2013), *Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa* [Cape Town] 68, no. 1 (June 2014): 119-22, 120.

[58] Sleigh and Westra, *Meermin*, 120.

captain, told Henrik Frappé and Willem van der Lint that he had not received the journals of the previous voyages from the secretary of the Political Council prior to the expedition's departure for Madagascar, which would have compromised his command should an incident have occurred during the voyage.[59] The EIC, like the VOC, considered the preservation of the ship's "logg [*sic*] Book" to be of utmost importance. Both Captain John Balchen of the *Onslow* (1740) and Stephen Cobham of the *Edgebaston* (1741) were instructed to keep their logbooks and diaries, as expressed by the clerk, in "a Proper Place," have them copied by an officer and "to take care, That this Book be delivered, together with your own and the Chief-mate's Original Journals to the said Honourable Court, at your return to England."[60]

The Cape's first slave-commissioner, sent to the Kingdom of Ardra (in Benin) on the *Hasselt* in 1658, was instructed by the Heren XVII to keep a "pertinent journal" (*pertinent joernaal*) of his expedition.[61] He was ordered to draft three copies of the journal after the voyage: for the Directors in Amsterdam; the Batavian colonial government; and the secretary of the Political Council at the Castle of Good Hope. Ross notes that three attested copies of the ship's journal were despatched from the Cape to the Netherlands: for the Heren XVII; the Amsterdam chamber; and the VOC's equipage master.[62] The *dagregisters* or *skeepsjoernalen* deposited at the Amsterdam chamber are the only VOC trade journals to survive the clear-out of the Company's Amsterdam archives during the late nineteenth century. The *fiscaal* kept records of the admission of slaves from Company voyages at the Cape, but these records, sent to the Netherlands during Dutch rule, are now lost. The EIC Directors obliged Captain George Bagwell of the *Hertford* to keep "an exact Diary" of all his activities at Iongoeloe (Young Owl), on the northwest coast of Madagascar, in his instructions dated 26 October 1730. Bagwell was instructed, as conveyed to him by Josiah Childs, to enter, "therein a particular Account of every days Transactions, together with a Narration of your treating with the Kings and People of the said Island and the Presents you may be obliged to make, with the Reasons delivered to the Deputy Governour [*sic*] and Council at Fort Marlborough aforesaid, but keep the original and deliver the same to us on your return," along with accountant

---

[59] Armstrong and Westra, *Slave Trade*, 49-50. On 18 June 1715, Frappé and his assistant van der Lint were perplexed when Knollendom claimed that he had not received the copybooks of the recent slave voyages which the ship's instructions had necessitated him to study. The party were forced to determine the prices of slaves on the advice of Malagasy interpreters.

[60] IOR Maritime Series (hereafter MAR)/D/164C, *Onslow* (1740), logbook frontispiece signed by Captain Balchen and EIC Secretary, Josiah Childs, 19 November 1740.

[61] Pieter van Dam, *Beschryvinge*. See also Andre Martinus van Rensburg, "The secret modus operandi used to obtain slaves from Guinea for the Cape: the ship *Hasselt*, 1658," *Familia* 38, no. 2 (2001): 78-92; Ranjeva-Rabetafika, Baesjou and Everts, "Of Paper and Men" (see 1n3); and Ross, "Two Trading Journals, Part 1 [the *Zon* (1776-77)]," 307.

[62] Ibid. The equipage master was responsible for inspecting ships and ships' crews in the harbour at Table Bay, in Cape town. The equipage master also settled the wages of sailors, living and dead.

William Oaker's ledger of costs incurred during the voyage.[63] The trade journal was both a report and a record of the slave voyage and slave trade: to be consulted by the Directors in the Netherlands; the colonial authorities at the Cape; and officers who would be engaged in future slave voyages. It is, therefore, not surprising that the VOC slave-commissioner Otto Hemmy asked the king of Boeny to write a letter to the Heren XVII to explain why the king had not supplied him with the number of slaves he had requested of him in 1741.[64]

---

[63] IOR/MAR/B/106ff., "Orders and Instructions Given by the Court of Directors of the United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies To Captain George Bagwell, Mr Richard Taylor and Mr William Oaker," (hereafter "*Hertford*, Instructions (1730)") 26 October 1730, 19.

[64] HA 4149, *Brak* (1741), 22 September 1741, 415: Otto Hemmy had Maheyningerivo, king "of the northern part of the Island Madagascar" ("*van't noordegedeelte op 't Eyland Madagascar*"), write a disclaimer addressed "at the Dutch factory at Boeny" ("*int hollands factorÿ op Boheenna de 29 Oct:1741*") to the *Heeren XVII* stating that the king provided Hemmy with "no more than a number of 60 'lusty' slaves" ("*niet meer als een getal 60 flux Lyfeyngenen*").

PERSIA

SHIRAZ

Persian Gulf

Muscat

MECCA

CAMBAY

SURAT

Red Sea

MASAWA

Goa

ADEN

Arabian Sea

CALICUT

COCHIN

Ceylon

MOGADISHU

BRAVA

Lamu Archipelago

PATE

MALINDI

MOMBASA

Swahili Coast

Comoro Islands

Mozambique Island

Highlands

Boina Bay   Mahavavy

SENA

Madagascar   AMBOHIMANGA

Mascarene Islands

Menabe   Mauritius

St. Augustine Bay

Natal

Map 1. The western Indian Ocean World

The slave route from the Cape of Good Hope to Madagascar, 1676-1781

The VOC slave trade to the Cape was confined to points of embarkation along its primary slave route from Mauritius, Madagascar, Anjouan and Rio de la Goa Bay (Maputo) from the time of *'t Waterhoen's* slave voyage, in 1663, until the time the Dutch abandoned their Mauritian outpost in 1715. The Company's ships usually set sail for Madagascar in May or June (late spring)[65], purchased slaves on the island during the winter months; then harnessed the southern hemisphere's summer monsoon winds from Madagascar in November, stopping at the Comorian island of Anjouan for provisions, or Rio de la Goa, on the southeastern coast of Africa, for more slaves, before returning to the Cape. These slave expeditions stopped at Mauritius for "a variety of necessary materials and provisions," for example the *Westerwijk* (1685), before proceeding to Madagascar for slaves.[66] Mauritius was also a convenient refreshment stop for VOC ships carrying slaves from Madagascar to Batavia between 1663 and 1715. The Company slave trade was confined to Rio de la Goa from 1721 to 1731, but the VOC re-established the slave route from the Cape to Madagascar with the *Brak* in 1741. Company-sponsored slave voyages later called at Madagascar and Anjouan, then proceeded to the ports of East Africa, from Malindi, on the northern coast, to the Natal coast, in the south, from 1776 to 1786.

European slave traders were supplied rice, cattle and slaves in exchange for Spanish reals, firearms, gunpowder, flints, beads and cloth by the Sakalava (on the northwestern coast), Merina (in the central highlands), Betsimisaraka (on the eastern and northeastern coastlines) and other small kingdoms at Madagascar from 1596 to 1810. King Tsimenata ousted the Islamic Antalaotra merchant community[67] – who purchased 2,000 to 5,000 slaves a year at Madagascar – from Mazalagem in 1685, thus asserting his dominance over the northwestern coastal region of Boeny.[68] Stephen Ellis and Jane Hooper have described how the Sakalava kings secured further control of the slave trade on the northwestern side of the island through marriages to prominent Islamized and Arabic trading families from the Swahili coast and Oman before the arrival of the English, Dutch and French in the 1630s.[69] The Sakalava expanded their interests to the east coast when King Tokaf's senior

---

[65] The direct journey from Madagascar to the Cape took about a month (five to seven weeks).

[66] C 17, Friday 5 October 1685 (retrieved 1 October 2020), 75-78.

[67] This community had slave trading links with the Comoros, Swahili coast and Arabian peninsula.

[68] Armstrong and Westra, *Slave Trade*, 11; and Thomas Vernet, "Slave trade and slavery on the Swahili coast (1500-1750)," in B.A. Mirzai, I.M. Montana and P. Lovejoy, eds., *Slavery, Islam and Diaspora*, (African World Press, 2009), 60.

[69] Stephen Ellis, "The history of sovereigns," 418. See also Jane Hooper, *Feeding globalisation*, 74. Hooper attributes Sakalava influence to tributary relationships with other communities; intermarriage between powerful families; and kinship ties between the Sakalava and various military, religious and political leaders.

advisor, Ratsimilaho, on the claim of taking back ancestral lands, formed the Betsimisaraka confederation in 1716.[70] The leaders of the Dutch voyages of the *Tamboer* (1694) and *Soldaat* (1696) reported that the rulers of Mazalagem were of Arab origin, though the Sakalava have been identified as distinctively Malagasy.[71] Otto Hemmy wrote in 1741 that King Maheyningerivo honoured the presence of European slave traders with Portuguese, English, French, Dutch and Danish flags at his palace in Maravoay.[72] St. Augustin's Bay, Toliara and Bombetoka Bay were the island's prominent export markets for slaves at this time. French, English,[73] Arabs and sometimes Dutch (as in the voyages of the *Neptunus* (1760) and the *Meermin* (1762-63)) also traded on the eastern coast of the island from Cape Sainte-Marie, situated at the southernmost point of the island, to Antongil Bay, in the north.[74]

The Cape of Good Hope and the Madagascar slave trade, 1638-1710

Adriaan van der Stel, the first Dutch commander of Mauritius, sent the *Welsing* and several other vessels on half a dozen slave trading expeditions from Mauritius to Antongil Bay (on the northeastern coast of Madagascar), and on to Batavia, from 1638 to 1645.[75] Van der Stel signed a treaty with the Portuguese which limited Dutch activity from the ports of Southeast Africa to Rio de la Goa after 1641.[76] Early VOC-sponsored slave voyages from the Cape to Madagascar stopped at Mauritius for food, water and wood, from 1663 to 1715. Adriaan van der Stel's son, Simon, was appointed commander of the Cape in 1679. Simon van der Stel and his son, Willem Adriaan, firmly

---

[70] Bialuschewski, "Pirates," 423; Ellis, "Sovereigns," 425; and, Hooper, *Feeding Globalization*, 84. Bialuschewski, 424, states: "Prior to 1724 the ports of the east coast had been virtually cut off from colonial markets, as there were few if any vessels from slave vessels." At least fourteen English slavers stopped at the Cape en route from Madagascar to the North American colonies and the West Indies from 1714 to 1723, making Bialuschewski's claim untenable. The Betsimisaraka confederation disintegrated upon Ratsimilaho's death, in 1750.

[71] Armstrong, "Madagascar," 215.

[72] HA 4149, *Brak* (1741), Tuesday 21 August 1741, 355.

[73] Royal Museums Greenwich, Caird Library, London, LUB/39/28, Basil Lubbock "List of East India Company Ships." Lubbock documents at least eighteen EIC voyages that called at The EIC sent at Madagascar from 1732 to 1764.

[74] Thiebaut, "Traite des esclaves," 156. The French conducted 134 slave voyages on the east coast of the island and 33 on the west coast; while the Dutch conducted 19 voyages on the east coast and 39 on the west coast.

[75] Pier M. Larson, "Enslaved Malagasy and 'Le Travail de la Parole' in the Pre-Revolutionary Mascarenes," *Journal of African History* 48, no. 3 (2007), 459 and Armstrong, "Madagascar," 230. Larson provides 1638 as the date of the first of these voyages. Adriaan van der Stel was the commander of the Dutch settlement of Mauritius from 1640 to 1645. His grandson, Willem Adriaan van der Stel (24 August 1664 to 11 November 1733), was governor of the Cape from 1699 to 1707. See Anna Bōeseken, *Slaves and free blacks*, on the van der Stels and their activity as agents for English slave traders at the Cape from the c.1679 to 1707.

[76] Schoeman, *Early Slavery*, 11; and Edward A. Alpers, "The French Slave Trade in East Africa (1721-1810)," *Cahiers d'études africaines* 10, no. 37 (1970), 86. Alpers writes that Portuguese Royal decrees of 8 February 1711 and 5 October 1715 forbade foreign traders from trading at Portuguese possessions.

established the VOC's slave trade to Madagascar by outfitting at least 16 slave voyages between 1679 and 1707.[77] The van der Stels forged a small dynastic empire rooted in slave importation from Madagascar to Batavia, Salida and the Cape, through their patronage of the VOC slave trade and the private sale of slaves as agents for English slave traders at the Cape.[78] The slaves purchased by the VOC at Madagascar were employed on the Company's fortifications, garrison, roadworks, docks and Company Gardens. Slaves were also employed in the homes of VOC officials and sold to the colony's free burghers as labourers on their grain, wine and stock farms. VOC slave trading in the South-West Indian Ocean began in earnest, however, when the Heren XVII commissioned Hubert Hugo to explore Madagascar, the Comoros Islands and Rio de la Goa on the *Boogh* and *Pijl* in 1672. Hugo advised the Directors that the northwestern coast of Madagascar was most suitable for slave trading.[79] The separation of VOC and WIC slave trading interests was established after the *Hasselt's* voyage to Popo in 1658, though several requests were made to the Heren XVII for the purchase of slaves west of the Cape until the early 1730s. The VOC, however, recognised Madagascar's potential as a supplier of slaves for the Cape and Batavia when a Dutch warship captured an English slaver with a cargo of 182 slaves, from Mazalagem, in 1672.[80] The Heren XVII thereafter instructed the Cape administration to purchase slaves from the northwestern coast of Madagascar to supplement the settlement's supply of slaves from the VOC's return-fleets.

The *Voorhout* opened the VOC's slave route from the Cape to Madagascar with a lading of 279 slaves from Mazalagem and Maningare River,[81] near the bays of Boina (Lahifotsy's River) and Bombetoka, in 1676. Pieter van Dam issued the *Hasselt's* instructions, which had been drafted for use in West Africa in 1658, for both the *Westerwijk* (1685) and *Jambij's* (1686) expeditions to Madagascar.[82] The Commander and his council consulted the logbook of the English Captain Edwards, who was transporting slaves from Mozambique and Malindi to Boston and St. Lawrence in 1675. Slave-commissioner Abraham van de Bougaard consulted the instructions of the English slaver the *Elizabeth*, which was captured by a Dutch warship near Anjouan in 1678, prior to the *Soldaat's* expedition to St. Augustin's Bay and

---

[77] The *Voorhout* (1676 and 1677), *Hassenbergh* (for Salida, 1677), *Elizabeth* (for Salida, 1678), *Hoogergeest* (for Salida, 1681), *Sillida* (for Salida, 1682), *Baaren* (1685), *Jambij* (1686), *Tamboer* (1694), *Standvastigheid* (despatched from Batavia, 1695), *Soldaat* (1696 and 1697), *Peter & Paul* (1699), *Noordgouw* (1701 and 1702) and *Ter Aa* (1706).

[78] Willem Adriaan van der Stel was expelled from the Cape in 1707 on charges of corruption and misuse of public office. Amongst numerous charges of corruption, the wayward governor employed Company slaves on his wine estate Vergelegen, 50 kilometres east of Cape Town.

[79] Schoeman, *Early Slavery*, 111.

[80] Armstrong and Westra, *Slave Trade*, 11.

[81] Maningare, known as "New Mazalagem" or "New Massaly," was situated near Boina Bay or Lahifotsy's River. Bombetoka Bay, to the north of Boina Bay, was situated on the river mouth of the Betsiboka estuary, and was called "Old Mazalagem."

[82] Van Dam, *Beschryvinge*, 668-70.

Toliara, in 1696. [83] The leaders of the slave voyages of the *Sillida* and *Eemlant* were issued with "the Journals of the *Elisabeth* and other ships despatched in the trade," as well as instructions, nautical charts and "course directions" in January 1682. [84] Simon van der Stel and his council made two Dutch copies, as well as an English copy, of a portion of the *Phillip's* logbook, a New York slaver which docked at Table Bay with a human cargo of 130 slaves from St. Augustin's Bay and Boina Bay, in December 1682. [85] Simon van der Stel questioned Captain James Barry on the geography of the "west side" of the island, his trade goods and any "accurate descriptions from his journal." [86] Van der Stel purchased copies of Barry's logbook for "water-vats, sailing equipment and water-pumps" and made copies of "daily entries" ("*daeglijxce aanteekiningh*") of the ship's course and trade dealings on the northwest coast of Madagascar. The English captain reluctantly sold van der Stel two slaves whom the governor intended to employ as translators during the voyages of the *Bharen* (1685), *Westerwijk* and *Jambij.* [87] While Captain Barry had recommended the use of guns, gunpowder, flints and gold coin in exchange for slaves, [88] the supercargo of the EIC's *Caesar* informed Simon van der Stel in February 1687 that Mexican silver was in "high demand" there. [89] Van der Stel and his council also consulted the *Loyal Merchant's* papers and the instructions of the *Harwich*, [90] in 1698, before dispatching the *Peter & Paul* (1699) and the *Noordgouw* (1701) for Madagascar. VOC officials at the Cape made use of their own journals, instructions and maps after 1700. The VOC, however, provided the leaders of slave voyages with English maps of Madagascar" (ie. add "of Madagascar") until 1786.

The VOC slave trade to the Cape, 1715-1781
Abraham Cranendonk, the colony's second-in-command, and "chief administrator of the slave trade," requested that the slave-commissioners of the *Leijsdman* consult the cargo manifests of the *Noordgouw* (1701) and *Ter Aa* (1705 and 1707) for the stocking and provisioning of their voyage on 21

---

[83] St. Augustin's bay, which is situated on the mouth of the Onilahy river, is 35 kilometres south of Toliara, which is situated on the southwestern coast of the island.

[84] CA C 325, VOC Directors (Amsterdam chamber) to Simon van der Stel and the Political Council (Cape of Good Hope), 1 January 1682, 7.

[85] Armstrong, "Madagascar," 200; see also, HA vol. 4018, "Extract úÿt seeker Engelse dagregister gehoúden bÿ James Barree supercargo: op 't Engelse schip de fillip," 2 April 1682 (hereafter, "HA 4018, *Phillip* (1682)"): 174-95. The *Phillip* may have belonged to prolific New York slave trader Frederick Phillipse.

[86] C 16, 13 December 1682, 42-44. The *Philip* left Madagascar on 12 April 1682 and arrived at Table Bay, under Captain James Barry, on 22 October 1682. See also CA C 325, Simon van der Stel and the Political Council to the VOC Directors, 1 June 1682, 76-81.

[87] Bōeseken, *Slaves and freeblacks*, 77.

[88] CA C 325, 77-78.

[89] C 18, Monday 10 February 1687, 112-15.

[90] HA 1639, "Cabo de Goede Hoop a˚ 1700," Letter from Adriaan van der Stel (governor of the Cape) and Willem van Outhoorn (governor-general of Batavia), 22 March 1700: 37-38.

May 1715.[91] Governor Maurits Pasques de Chavonnes and his council deliberated on the use of hired labour at the Cape two years later, and concluded that slave labour was cheaper than hired labour because "a herdsman, mason, wagon-driver or workman's apprentice" sold for twice the price of an unskilled slave.[92] The colonial administration's decision to continue to use slave labour at the Cape prompted the colony's free burghers to petition the government for a license to import slaves into the colony in 1719, but their request was refused.[93] The *Barneveldt's* voyage from Batavia to Madagascar, and on to the Cape, was the last Company slave voyage between Madagascar and the Cape until the *Brak's* 1741 voyage.[94] The VOC sent the *Barneveldt* on a reconnaissance voyage along the southeastern coast of Africa, yielding the 'Barneveldt Map' of Madagascar, in 1719.[95] The Company obtained slaves, however, from Rio de la Goa on snows and *galjoots* from 1723 to 1731, with the help of English logbooks during the early 1720s. The governor and council petitioned the Heren XVII in April 1739 for a ship for the slave trade to Madagascar, "where the slaves are beyond all doubt preferable to those to be found at Rio de la Goa."[96]

English merchants capitalized on parliamentary lobbying that led to the deregulation of the Royal African Company's (RAC) monopoly of the slave trade in the early 1690s.[97] The deregulation of the English slave trade precipitated a surge of English and American slave traffic at Madagascar – and, to a lesser degree, Mozambique – with "interlopers" (*enterlopen*) importing Malagasy slaves to the Cape, New York, Boston and the West Indies until the turn of the eighteenth century.[98] The establishment of the Bank of England in 1694 created a tide of 'bonded' capital which challenged land-based capital and the RAC's royal prerogative.[99] The EIC later issued

---

[91] Armstrong and Westra, *Slave Trade*, 15 and C 33, Noon Tuesday 21 May 1715, 68-70. The Political Council's *resolutiën* refer to Cranendonk as the "*hoofdadministrateur tot den handel van slaven.*"
[92] Schoeman, *Early Slavery*, 235. Chavonnes was governor of the Cape from 1714 to 1721.
[93] Worden, *Slavery in Dutch South Africa*, 42. See also C 89, Tuesday 25 March 1732, 72-90.
[94] Robert C.-H. Shell, "The Twinning of Maputo and Cape Town: The Early Mozambican Slave Trade to the Slave Lodge: 1677-1731," *Quarterly Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa* [Cape Town] 55, no. 3 (2001): 114-20, 115.
[95] CA C 2344, 12.
[96] Karel Schoeman, *Slave Society*, 126, (cf. C 110, 28 April 1739); and 124, in 1739 the Political Council described slaves from Delagoa Bay slaves as "murderous by nature and also very much inclined to thieving and absconding."
[97] The Royal Africa Company was established under the Royal prerogative of King Charles II, with the support of the English aristocracy, in 1660.
[98] William Pettigrew, *Freedom's Debt: The Royal African Company and the Politics of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1672-1752* (Williamsburg, Virginia: University of North Carolina Press, 2013). Pettigrew calls the lobbyists 'separate traders.' See Maurice Boucher, "The Cape and foreign shipping, 1714-1723," *South African Historical Journal* 6, no. 1 (November 1974): 3-29.
[99] Niall Ferguson, *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), 90. The establishment of the Bank of England reflects the change from land-

licenses at 10 percent interest in the cargo, which permitted the RAC, the South Sea Company (SSC)[100] and private merchant firms to trade at Madagascar from 1715 to 1723.[101] The SSC, established in the Corporation of the City of London in 1711, was awarded the Spanish *asiento* to import slaves to Rio de la Plata at the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, which enabled its directors to charter EIC vessels for the slave trade to Madagascar. The presence of English slave traders in the South-West Indian Ocean provided the VOC at the Cape with information on the Malagasy slave trade and a steady supply of slaves from the 1680s to 1710. English pirates migrated from the Caribbean to the South-West Indian Ocean region in the 1680s, trading in provisions and slaves between Matatan and Antongil Bay before the East India Act outlawed piracy in 1699. The act led to the granting of Royal commissions to the Royal Navy and privateers, like the *Delicia*, to seize pirate ships after 1700.[102] British Parliamentary legislation did not seem to accomplish much in the way of suppressing piracy, since Willem Adriaan van der Stel, French seafarer Godefroy de la Merveille and Captain Woodes Rogers reported that pirates were still active on the east coast of Madagascar during the first decade of the eighteenth century.[103] Parliamentary lobbying saw another rise in private English trade to Madagascar from 1715 to 1722 which, again, fomented piracy in the region. Decisive English and French naval action, coupled with Betsimisaraka military action, however, greatly reduced the threat of piracy on the eastern coast of Madagascar after 1731. Otto Hemmy did not call at Morondava and Iongoeloe on account of "English buccaneers," after King Maheyningerivo failed to deliver 1,000 slaves to him at Bombetoka Bay in 1741.[104]

The *Brak's* instructions (11 October 1740)

The Heren XVII provided the Cape government with its new Company ship, the *Brak*, in 1739.[105] The *Grevinden af Laurvigen*, however, arrived at Table Bay in 1737 before the *Brak's* maiden voyage to Madagascar in 1740. The ship's first mate consulted the *Sandberg's* 1731 logbook at the house of an English sailor, John White, in the hope of purchasing slaves at Île Saint-

---

based capital, which includes the ownership of slaves, to liquid capital in the form of bonds, as per the central bank's charter.
[100] IOR/E/I/17/ff.164-65v, 15 March 1726 and IOR/E/I/17 ff.205-05v: SSC applications for licenses from the EIC to trade at Madagascar.
[101] IOR/E/I/6 ff.275, 28 December 1715. The notorious Bristol slave trader William Heysham offered a 10 percent interest in outward bound cargo from Madagascar in return for an EIC license.
[102] Virginia Bever Platt, "The English East India Company and the Madagascar Slave Trade," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (October 1969), 553 and 555.
[103] Bialuschewski, "Pirates," 421 [cf. HA 4051, fols. 122-39, W.A. van der Stel to Heren XVII, 20 March 1705].
[104] HA 4149, *Brak* (1741), 391-92. Slave-commissioner Hemmy recalled the murder of captain Jan de Kooning during the *Barneveldt's* voyage in 1719 and an English captain, named Cook, who was forced to flee Morondava and Young Owl on account of "robbers."
[105] C 110, 28 April 1739, 33-42.

Marie: yet another example of the Cape's important role as a place where knowledge of the slave trade in the South-West Indian Ocean was exchanged between European slave traders.[106] Charles Barrington was advised by a Swedish veteran of the Madagascar slave trade to buy slaves at Matatan and Fort Dauphin, though he had also been encouraged to trade at Morondava on the southwestern coast.[107] The *Brak's* much-anticipated voyage, however, reopened the VOC's slave route from the Cape to Madagascar in 1741. Barrington also kept a copy of Drury's *Madagascar* in his cabin.[108]

The governor and Political Council, along with the *Brak's* captain, Jacobus van der Spil, studied the trade journals of the *Voorhout* (1676), *Tamboer* (1693), *Soldaat* (1696), *Noordgouw* (1701), *Leijdsman* (1715) and *Herstelling* (1732)[109] in the formulation of the *Brak's* instructions.[110] The *Leijdsman's* instructions, dated 15 June 1715, had ordered the expedition's "skipper," Pieter Knollendom, to study the Company's most recent slave voyages ("*laatsten handel*"); and the commissioners, Frappé and van der Lint, were instructed to purchase 300 slaves at St. Augustin's Bay, "Maratanga" and Maningare.[111] Governor Chavonnes and his council had received news that the English slaver *Clapham Galley* had recently purchased 300 slaves on the west coast of the island. The *Leijdsman* returned to the Cape on Thursday 21 November 1715 with 200 slaves and the colonial government was eager to duplicate this with the *Brak.* The *Brak's* instructions, therefore, begin by exhorting the ship's officers to retrace the route taken by the *Leijdsman* and *Herstelling*, where "each ship mainly kept her visit during her trade to Cape St. Augustin, Fort Dauphin and at the Maningare river or New Massaly, before Fommetokke." [112] The slave traders were instructed to consult the journals of the *Soldaat*, *Leijdsman* and *Herstelling* during the course of the expedition and to establish "friendship" with Malagasy kings and "potentates." They were ordered to purchase "lusty" males, between sixteen and twenty-four years of age, for employment on the Company's earthworks. The Political Council and VOC seafarers also studied the *Brak's* 1740 day register, after the vessel was forced to turn back on account of a strong current

---

[106] DNA 446, "Charles Barrington, loose papers" (unpaginated).

[107] Ellis, 423.

[108] Robert Drury, *Madagascar; or Robert Drury's journal, during fifteen year's captivity on that island* (London, 1729).

[109] Thiebaut, "De Madagascar à Sumatra," 50. According to Thiebaut, the leaders of the Batavia-bound slave voyage of the *Herstelling* carried the trade journals of the *Tamboer*, *Noordgouw* and *Leijdsman*; while the leaders of the *Binnenwijzend* had copies of fifty years of VOC slave voyages in the master's cabin during their 1732 voyage.

[110] HA 4144, *Brak instructie* (11 October 1740): 128-41. Jacobus van der Spil died during the *Brak's* 1742 voyage and was buried at Toliara.

[111] Armstrong and Westra, *Slave Trade*, 15. See also CA C 2341: 716-29, 718, 721 and 723. The *Leijdsman's* instructions are not as detailed as the *Brak's* instructions.

[112] HA 4144, *Brak instructie* (11 October 1740), 129: "*het Freguat De Lydsman in den jaar 1715 mitsgrs, het schip D'Herstelling A˚: 1732 ook niet meer zyn bezogt geworden elk bodem in tegendeel haaren handel meest aan d'Caab St Aúgústyn, 'T Fort dauphin en in d'rivier Mannigaren of Nieúw Masaline voor Fommetokke.*"

and stormy weather.[113] The *Brak* retraced the course of the *Leijdsman's* journey to Toliara, Maningare and Bombetoka Bay on the Directors' orders in 1741.[114] Otto Hemmy re-established the trade relationship that Frappé and van der Lint[115] had forged with King Tokaf, in 1715, during his encounter with Tokaf's successor, Maheyningerivo, twenty-six years later. Hemmy conducted two further expeditions on the *Brak*, in 1742 and 1744, and purchased a total of 200 slaves during the three voyages. Copies of the *Brak's* instructions accompanied at least seven slave voyages (the *Brak* (1741, 1742 and 1744), *Drie Heuvelen* (1753),[116] *Neptunus* (1760) and *Meermin* (1762 and 1766)) and it can be argued that these instructions determined the Company's slave trading policy at Madagascar until the last VOC slave voyage to Mozambique in 1786 (which stopped at Madagascar for provisions of rice and beef). It can be argued, therefore, that the voyages of the *Leijdsman* and *Brak* (1741) were the foundation upon which the VOC built its slave trade from the Cape to Madagascar from 1715 to 1781.

While the *Brak's* slave-commissioners established trade relations at Toliara and Bombetoka Bay, the French at Mauritius negotiated with the Portuguese to purchase slaves north of Cape Delgado, which led to the wholesale development of French slave markets at Quiloa, Querimba and Ibo on the Swahili coast. Otto Hemmy drafted a report on the slave trade at Toliara and Maravoay on 8 November 1741, which included advice from a French seafarer, Captain Seveille, who informed him that slaves were more readily available at Mozambique and that the "French fetched their best slaves from there," at forty Spanish reals for each adult male.[117] Seveille told Hemmy that Mozambicans were not "thievish and murderous," like the Malagasy, but traders required licenses from the King of Portugal to trade at Mozambique. The French slave trade from the southeastern coast of Africa and Madagascar after the 1720s drew other nations to East Africa, in the way the English had

---

[113] C 115, Tuesday 27 December 1740, 129-37. The captain and first mate were later admonished by the Political Council.

[114] HA 4149, *Brak* (1741), 3 July 1741, 262. Hemmy mentions how the *Leijdsman's* captain, Pieter Knollendom, had boarded a French slaver at Toliara with gifts of wine in 1715. When Captain Godlob Silo arrived at Toliara he complained that the maps and journals in his possession did not indicate where to drop anchor.

[115] Armstrong and Westra, *Slave Trade*, 135n6. Van der Lint arrived at the Cape from Delft, Holland, in 1711. He served as assistant-commissioner on the *Leijdsman*. He resigned from the Company in October 1715.

[116] HA vol. 4193, *Drie Heuvelen* (1753) *Skeepsjoernaal*, 26 May to 17 December 1753 (hereafter "HA 4193, *Drie Heuvelen* (1753)"): 3116-176.

[117] Ibid., 8 November 1741, 446: "*Wy kommen ook met voor by deesen nog net Weinig te seggen dat my van den Franchen Capt. Seveille versttaan hebben dat mosambique vrÿ wat beter slaven úÿt leevert als dit Eÿland end at zy franschen altoos haare beste slaaven daar van daan haalen, zynde de prÿs 40 sp:rl:p ider mans en vrouwen door elkander maar dat seer omstigtig aldaar dient te werk gegeen te warden, dewÿl het een dieftagtige en moordagtige natie is Staande de portugueesen ook niemant aldaar handel toe als met permissive van den koning.*"

done from 1670 to 1723.[118] The French engaged in the slave trade north of Cape Delgado in the 1740s, and, at the end of the Seven Years War in 1763, governor-general Baltazar Manoel Perreira do Lago and the French colonial governor of the Îsle de France escalated the slave trade from Mozambique to the Mascarene islands to unprecedented levels.[119] The VOC took advantage of the increased presence of French slavers at the Cape after 1773 through the provisioning and servicing of French vessels at Table Bay and the dispatching of Company slave voyages to the Swahili coast.

The instructions of the *Schuylenburg* (1752), *Drie Heuvelen* (1753) and *Meermin* (1766) contain verbatim extracts of the *Brak's* instructions of October 1740.[120] The *Drie Heuvelen* was despatched on its voyage to Madagascar with a number of Dutch and English maps and sea-charts, but, more importantly, with the entire collection of significant VOC trade journals from 1676 to 1752.[121] Captain Jacobus van der Spil's detailed maps of the bays of Toliara and Bombetoka – which describe suitable harbours, reefs, sources for fresh water and wood – were included in the *Schuylenburg's* register of papers. Hans Harmz, slave-commissioner of the *Hector* (1756), consulted a letter describing the bays of Madagascar, which the captain of the EIC's *Delawar* had drafted for Pieter Schoeneman, captain of the VOC's *Naarstigheijd*.[122] Dirk Westerhof followed in Otto Hemmy's footsteps during the *Drie Heuvelen's* slave voyage to St. Augustin's Bay, Toliara and Anpandre. Westerhof, like Hemmy, was instructed to trade in the vicinity of Tolaria, then to head north to "New Massaly" (Maningare), on the opposite side of the island to Fort Dauphin.[123]Johan Godfried Krause,[124] like Hemmy, wrote detailed accounts of his dealings with Malagasy kings, princes and interpreters at Toliara, Bombetoka Bay and Matatan, on the east coast, during the slave voyages of the *Neptunus* (1760) and *Meermin* (1762). The captains and merchants of two English slavers, the *Mercury* and the *Fly*, informed the colonial government that slaves were available at Maningare in 1765. The Political Council responded to their report by outfitting the *Meermin* for a voyage to St. Augustin's Bay and Toliara, after the loss of nearly half the Company's slaves to disease, in April 1765.[125] The VOC despatched nine

[118] Edward A. Alpers, "The French Slave Trade" and *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1976). See also, Allen, *European slave trading.*
[119] Alpers, "The French Slave Trade," 97.
[120] C 2344, *Drie Heuvelen instructie* (1753), 63-69. See 1n12 above.
[121] The *Voorhout* (1676), *Tamboer* (1694), *Soldaat* (1696), *Noordgouw* (1701), *Leijdsman* (1715), *Herstelling* (1732), the *Brak's* third voyage (1743) and *Schuylenburg* (two separate voyages dated 1752).
[122] CA C 2345, *Hector* (1756) "Register van papieren."
[123] Ibid., *Drie Heuvelen* (1753), Saturday 26 May 1753, 3118. "*In teegenstelling*" translates as "contrary" or "opposite."
[124] Sleigh and Westra, *Meermin*, 148n50. Krause was born in Lithuania. He arrived at the Cape in 1752 and was slave-commissioner of the *Neptunus* (1760) and *Meermin* (1762 and 1765-66). Krause was killed during the revolt aboard the *Meermin* on the morning of 18 February 1766.
[125] Ibid., 51-52.

voyages to Madagascar, in the aftermath of the *Meermin's* disastrous voyage, from 1766 to 1781. The Dutch sent the *Zon*, on the advice of French captains stopping at Table Bay, to East Africa in 1776.[126] The inclusion of a lengthy report from the *Zon's* 1776 trade journal in the Political Council's 1777 resolutions reflects, yet again, the importance of trade journals in the planning and outfitting of VOC slave voyages at the Cape.[127] The VOC signed a five-year contract with French mariner François Renier Duminy[128] in 1781 on account of his experience of the Malagasy slave trade and East Africa and his network of contacts on either side of the Mozambique Channel.[129] Duminy enabled the Dutch to transition their slave trade from Madagascar to East Africa during the 1780s.

Enslavement on the Malagasy coastline

A 'closed' system of slavery

Markus Vink lists three broad categories of slaves in the VOC world: prisoners of war, slaves from debt-bondage and those who were kidnapped ie. people coerced into slavery.[130] Hans Hägerdal has identified patterns of enslavement in the Timor region, in eastern Indonesia, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries based on Anthony Reid's model of 'open' and 'closed' systems of slavery.[131] Whereas 'open' systems of slavery contain elements of inclusion within family structures, 'closed' systems of slavery maintain the 'outsider' status of enslaved peoples. While enslavement in Dutch Timor involved elements of both 'open' and 'closed' systems of slavery, counter to Vink's generalisation, the VOC slave trade at Madagascar was based almost wholly on 'closed' systems of enslavement, with people violently coerced into slavery through warfare and kidnapping. So much so, that the Reverend John Ovington made the following observation in 1689:

---

[126] C 155, Tuesday 6 May 1777, 214-34; and Ross, "Two Slaving Journals, Part 1" [*Zon* (1776-77)]: 308-09.

[127] Ibid.

[128] François Renier Duminy (1747-1811) was the illegitimate son of a French Admiral who worked his way through the ranks of the French *Compagne des Indes* until its liquidation in 1765. Duminy was promoted to the rank of captain in the French private trade of the South-West Indian Ocean during the 1770s. He had vast experience of the South-West Indian Ocean slave trade by the time of his contract with the VOC in 1781.

[129] See Andrew Duminy, *François Renier Duminy (1747-1811): French Mariner and South African Pioneer* (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2005) and Loraine Maritz, "Die lewe en werk van François Renier Duminy, 1781-1811" (unpublished MA thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1994). Andrew Duminy draws heavily on Maritz's research.

[130] Vink, "'The World's Oldest Trade'," 153.

[131] Hans Hägerdal, "Warfare, bestowal, purchase. Dutch acquisition of slaves in the world of eastern Indonesia, 1650-1800," at the international workshop "Slavery in the Indian Ocean World" Centre for Concurrences and Postcolonial Studies (Växjö-Kalmar) and International Institute for Social History (IISH, Amsterdam), Kalmar, 9 September 2017, hosted by Hans Hägerdal (University of Linnaeus, Sweden) and Matthias van Rossum (IISH).

> [Madagascar] is govern'd by several Kings, Independent, and Hostile to one another, designing continually upon each others Territories, being possessed with that restless Spirit of Ambition, which allows as little Ease to a Man's self, as it does security to his Innocent Neighbour. And here too, as well as in *Africa*, where we landed; they compute their Wealth by the Numbers of their Slaves, and wage their Wars upon their accounts.[132]

The European trading Companies and merchant traders, however, facilitated these methods of enslavement through what Hägerdal calls "strategic demands" made by the VOC to kings, fuelled by the sale of firearms, gunpowder, flints and lead.

The slave-commissioners of the *Brak*, *Drie Heuvelen*, *Neptunus* and *Meermin* purchased prisoners of war and abductees from the warring Sakalava, Betsimisaraka and other belligerents between 1741 and 1766. The sale of prisoners of war, however, extends to the earliest slave voyages outfitted at Cape. The personnel of *'t Waterhoen* reported that St. Augustin's Bay had been impoverished by continual wars as early as 1663; and the slave-commissioner of the *Voorhout* described the war between the king of St. Augustin's Bay, Andian Mananya, and King Lahifotsy of Boina, in 1671.[133] Lady Anne Barnard, nominal first lady of the Cape at the turn of the nineteenth century, was told by the agent of the Irish slave trader Michael Hogan that the slaves she had seen in "pens" at Cape Town's foreshore had been purchased, "on the coast of Mosambique where this traffick [*sic*] took place that they kidnapd [*sic*] each other & the strongest or the most powerful sold the weakest for what they could get."[134] Barnard's simplification of the enslavement of Mozambicans describes a situation that was greatly exacerbated during the nineteenth century in the South-West Indian Ocean region. The captain of the EIC's *Swift* was guaranteed a supply of "100 to 150 or 160 or more slaves" on 21 March 1742, if he returned in May or June and remained at St. Augustin's Bay for two or three months, which suggests that he intended to forcefully procure slaves for the Englishman once the English had 'cruised' the east coast for enslaved people.[135] On 30 November 1740, Stephen Cobham, commander of the EIC's *Edgebaston*, made the following entry in his "diary" on the southeastern coast of Madagascar: "Betwixt 12 and

---

[132] John Ovington, *A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1696), 104.

[133] Ellis, "Sovereigns," 418. See also Armstrong and Westra, *The Slave Trade*, 146n126. Armstrong and Westra explain how King Lahifotsy's eldest son, Timmelarivo (called "Trimmonongarevo" by Robert Drury), reigned over Toliara and nearby regions for over thirty years. Timmelarivo met the *Leijdsman's* party at Toliara in 1715.

[134] Margaret Lenta and Basil le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape Diaries of Lady Anne Barnard, 1799-1800* 2, Van Riebeeck Society Second Series no. 30 (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1999), 69-70.

[135] IOR/Logbook (L)/MAR/B/616A, Henry Watts's logbook for the EIC's *Swift* (1741-42) (unpaginated).

one PM [*sic*], two canoas [*sic*] came to us from Tafass,[136] with four quarters of a calf as a present from King Masheba, who sent his Linguist to acquaint us that he had been at War and had two hundred captives and three hundred head of cattle and hoped we could anchor there and take them off his hands."[137]

Kidnapping was, by the time of the *Meermin's* voyage of 1766, the preferred method of enslavement at Madagascar, and incidents like the abduction and sale of the landowner Massavana, by King Ramanrasse of Toliara, were commonplace. When the CJ interrogated Massavana during the trial following the loss of the *Meermin*, he explained how he had been sold into slavery:

> I wore beautiful clothing, gold and silver on my body; and was asked by the King of Toliara to accompany him to the 'hooker' which brought me here, to view the vessel, which I did. The king had me bound up when we were halfway there, took the clothes, gold and silver off my body, and sold me to the vessel as a slave.[138]

Caravans of enslaved Malagasy were driven, in chains and stocks, from the interior to the coast, by the agents and representatives of kings and chieftains. The VOC slave-commissioner Constant van Nuldt Onkruidt reported in 1777 that the lands in the vicinity of Quiloa (northern Mozambique) were so barren that the inhabitants gave themselves over to the Sultan to be sold into slavery.[139] Klara Boyer-Rossol's account of two enslaved Makua, Kalamba (Josef) and Tananan (Mikal), gives some indication, albeit at a later time, of coercion into slavery in the highlands of Mozambique.[140] Boyer-Rossol's biographies, drawn from the writings of the Norwegian Christian missionary pastor, R.L. Aas, who was based in Morondava in the 1880s, describe how

---

[136] The village of Tafass was situated on a river mouth between St. Lucia and Matatan on the southeastern coast of Madagascar.

[137] IOR/L/MAR/622A Captain Stephen Cobham's "Commander's Journal" [countersigned by first mate Rob James] (hereafter "*Edgebaston* 1 (1740)"), Sunday 30 November, 50. See also IOR/L/MAR/622B *Edgebaston* Rob Veitch and Will Parks' "Deck Logg" (1740), "After noon" Sunday 30 November 1740, 93. The *Drie Heuvelen* arrived at the Cape was laden with a mixed cargo of 109 slaves and 11,971 kilograms of rice in 1753.

[138] CA CJ 693: 173-203, *Criminiele Proces-Stukken* 1766, 121: Massavana: "*Ant.* [*Antwoord*]: *ik heb skoone kleeding, en silwer aan mijn lyf gehad; en bij door den kooning van Toulier bij gevraagt, om niethend en naar boord van den hoeker geveerd bij waarmede naar herweeards te gaan om dat voortuig te besten het qee ik gedaan hebbende, heft des koning mij op de heft van den weg, laaten vastmaaken mijn goud silwer en kleeding, das ik aan mijn lighaam had afgenoomen, en mij als doer aan dat voortuijg as slaaf verkogt.*" See also Sleigh and Westra, *Meermin*, 121.

[139] Robert C.-H. Shell, "Slave Mortality on the Middle Passage to the Cape, 1688-1808," *Quarterly Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa* [Cape Town] 59, no. 3 (2005): 113-26, Shell, 103n30.

[140] Klara Boyer-Rossol, "Makua Life Histories: Testimonies on Slavery and the Slave Trade in 19th Century Madagascar," in A. Bellegamba, S.E. Greene, M.A. Klein, eds., *African Voices on Slavery and the Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 466-80.

enslaved people could be purchased three or four times after being tricked or coerced into slavery, like the young converts, Mikal and Josef.

Letters of credential, welcoming rituals, trade prospects

The outfitting of a Company slave voyage was costly and required the use of a ship, paid employees, provisions, ship's gear, timber, firewood, shackles, cooking equipment, specie, gifts and trade goods. The outfitting of a private slave voyage often necessitated the participation of multiple investors,[141] although a corporation like the VOC had the capacity to build and outfit its own ships for the slave trade. The court records indicate that the VOC was more concerned with the loss of its ship than the loss of slaves and crew after a shipboard revolt on the *Meermin* in 1766. The loss of 'merchandise,' or property, was also an issue for the Political Council when dysentery claimed the lives of 200 enslaved Africans on François Duminy's voyages to Ibo in 1784 and 1785. The VOC modified its merchant ships – yachts, frigates, *hoekers* and brigantines – for the slave trade by constructing slave quarters for male and female slaves from partitions or bulkheads as they neared their destination.[142] The *Westerwijk*, however, was purpose-built for the slave trade in 1685.[143] In 1752, the *Schuylenburg*, which replaced the *Brak* as the Company's ship, was outfitted with a large kitchen on the main deck, large pots for the preparation of meals for slaves and crew and air vents in the hold.[144] The *Meermin's* construction – which included slave quarters, crew areas and work spaces – was carefully designed for the embarkation of 300 slaves at Toliara and Maravoay in 1762 and 1766.[145] Albert van Breugel's experience as junior merchant and "packhouse master," for example, suited him to the post of slave-commissioner for the *Jambij* in 1686, because of his experience managing warehouses and trade inventories.[146] The slave ship was, after all, a floating factory, or warehouse, that was transformed into a prison for enslaved people as land came into view.[147]

The sight of a European ship or Arab dhow signaled the possibility of trade at Madagascar. Jacob de Bucquoi, previously employed as a mapmaker and draughtsman for the VOC at the Cape, described the arrival of the pirate ship, the *Cassandra*, at Maningare (Massaly River), on 15 August 1722.[148] On

---

[141] See Robert Louis Stein, *The French Slave Trade in the Eighteenth Century: An Old Regime Business* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979) for the outfitting of private slave voyages.

[142] Shell, "Slave Mortality," 100.

[143] Ranjeva-Rabetafika, Baesjou and Everts, "Of Paper and Men," 49.

[144] The Political Council requested a "flute-ship" from the Amsterdam chamber for the Madagascar slave trade in 1753.

[145] Sleigh and Westra, *Meermin*, 117-18. Massavana's interrogation is the only known slave testimony from the Malagasy slave trade during the eighteenth century.

[146] C 18, 22 May 1686, 23-27. Andries de Man, who sat on the Political Council, was acting packhouse master during van Breugel's slave trading commission.

[147] See Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (London: John Murray, 2007).

[148] Jakob de Bucquoi, *Aanmerkelijke Ontmoetingen in de Zestien Jaarige Reize naar de Indiën* (Haarlem: J. Bosch, 1744), 34. Du Bucquoi was employed as a cartographer at the

seeing the pirates dropping anchor, fire a shot of cannon, and raise the black flag, the king's "coast guard" (*strantwagter*) "Lit a fire, which was followed by a second, then a third etc: the fires were followed deeper inland: thus giving the king knowledge in less than an hour that there was a ship on the Road [*sic*]."[149] James Barry encountered "a mightÿ great smoak [*sic*]" on the shore of a bay en route to Iongoeloe during the *Phillip's* slave voyage, on Wednesday 16 August 1682.[150] His party reached Iongoeloe a week later, with Barry reporting, as recorded by the VOC clerk, that, "wee saw this nÿght smoakay fÿre, bÿ the inhabitants" and smoke to the north, the next day.[151] Hendrik Frappé and Willem van der Lint heard from "Hollanders" from a VOC ship called the *Overwinnaar* that King Tokaf "had spent the whole night dancing and jumping at the sure news" of the *Leijdsman's* arrival at Maningare.[152] Otto Hemmy's party was greeted with smoke signals when the *Brak* arrived there in August 1741[153]; and the *Meermin's* officers tricked the slaves who had taken over their ship into thinking that they had been returned to Madagascar by alerting the landdrost of Stellenbosch and local militia at Soetendaal's Valley, near Cape Aghulas, to light bonfires on the beach via a message in a bottle.[154] The *Drie Heuvelen* was approached by the canoe of one of the king of Morondava's subjects, Captain Jan, when the ship arrived there in August 1753.[155] Captain Jan informed Dirk Westerhoff that the king had instructed him to board any ship or ships arriving at Morondava, and to ask them their business there. These meetings with Malagasy fishermen, villagers and royal subjects – like the "broker" (*makelaar*) Captain Jan – typify first encounters between Europeans and Malagasy in the shallows of the coastline of Madagascar. It is worth mentioning here that the same party purchased slaves a week later at sea from men on canoes from the nearby village of Anpandre.[156] European slave traders rewarded the services of lower-ranking traders or agents, like Jan, with gifts. The giving of gifts was an important means by which European slave traders advertised their wares on the island. Rafael Thiebaut has described the indispensable role of

---

Company's *comptoir* Fort Leidzhaamheit at Rio de la Goa from 1721 to 1722. He was abducted by the pirate Oliver Levasseur 'la Buse' ('the vulture') in 1722 and spent fourteen years on the *Cassandra.*

[149] Ibid.: "*Hier door zyn, zy by den Inlander verkent waar op terstand een Konins Strantwagter een fein doet van vuur, 't welk door een tweede, en derde enz: diper in 't land word nagedaan: dus heft de koning in min dan een uur kennisse dat 'er een shchip of de Reede is.*"

[150] HA 4018, *Phillip* (1682), Wednesday 16 October 1682, 187.

[151] Ibid., Wednesday 23 and Thursday 24 October 1682, 190.

[152] Armstrong and Westra, *Slave Trade*, 89-91: *Leijdsman's* trade journal, Thursday 12 September 1715.

[153] HA 4149, *Brak* (1741), 14 August 1741, 344.

[154] The crew tricked the slaves who had taken over the vessel into thinking they had returned to Madagascar, an idea which was enforced by the arrival at a river (Soetendaal's river) and the lighting of three fires on the beach.

[155] HA 4193, *Drie Heuvelen* (1753), Friday 3 August 1753, 3133.

[156] Ibid., Saturday 11 August, 3144.

intermediaries in the dealings between VOC slave-commissioners and Sakalava kings in his recent research on the Malagasy slave trade.[157]

Jane Hooper has highlighted the importance of 'welcoming ceremonies,' ritual banquets and the sharing of gifts in the fostering of commercial relationships at Madagascar which, she argues, were intimately tied to the provisioning trade.[158] Trade commenced after formal introductions and the sharing of gifts: food and bullocks from Malagasy kings and princes; and arak,[159] guns, gunpowder, flints, knives, cloth, beads, musical-boxes and mirrors from European slave-commissioners and supercargoes. Malagasy kings also offered their daughters and subordinate queens in ceremonial marriages to European slave traders as a gesture of goodwill during negotiations. The king of Iongoeloe, for example, 'married' his daughter to the slave trader Charles Barrington in 1738. King Ramanrasse warmly greeted the *Brak's* party at Toliara in 1741 with handshakes, in the presence of "hundreds of blacks with guns," while asking commissioner Otto Hemmy what his "message" ("*bootschap*") was. When the king's translator, Captain James, informed Hemmy that the king could understand English, Hemmy promptly read him the contents of his 'letters of credential' (*credentiale brieven* or "*geloofsbrief*"). The letters of credential explained that the Heren XVII wanted to re-establish the "old friendship" ("*oudes vriendschap*") they had maintained with his predecessors and to purchase slaves from him on a yearly basis.[160] Kings and commissioners usually made mutual declarations of friendship and assurances of trade before inspecting their respective merchandise or negotiating the prices of slaves and provisions.

The ship's crew repaired their longboats and pinnaces, finished building the slaves' lodgings in the hold, and brought water and wood on board, while slave-commissioners and their assistants conducted negotiations on shore. De Bucquoi's party sent a delegation to purchase victuals from the king while some of the crew careened and caulked their upturned ship. The king met the captain and crew three days later with an army of 2,000 armed soldiers. He gave the men a bullock, and drank so much brandy that he appeared "like a drunk man in a comedy."[161] Otto Hemmy's trade journal recounts that the Arabs he had met on the northwestern coast of Madagascar had recommended the dispensation of arak as the "principle" means of negotiation during the slave trade.[162] Hemmy plied King Ramanrasse with so much arak over a three

---

[157] Thiebaut, "The Role of "Brokers," 62; and "Traite des esclaves," 393-99.

[158] Hooper, *Feeding Globalization*, 2.

[159] C 110, Tuesday 25 April 1741, 69-107. The *resolutiën* explain how the strong alcoholic beverage arak – brewed from distilled red rice, sugar and coconut juice – was imported from Batavia to the Cape by the VOC for use in the slave trade.

[160] HA 4149, *Brak* (1741), 5 July 1741, 269: "*Hiet mij als doen vragen wat myne bootschap was daarop ek den Credentiaalen brief aan hem vertoonde*" ("He asked me what my message was, thereon I showed me the Credential-letter").

[161] De Bucquoi, *Aanmerkelijke Ontmoetingen*, 34.

[162] HA 4149, *Brak* (1741), 8 November 1741, Hemmy's summary of the slave trade (on leaving Toliara for the Cape), Friday 8 November 1741, 437.

day period in Toliara, in July 1741, that the king was ill for three days. The king's drunkenness made Hemmy's negotiations very difficult ("*lang werk*"), though he eventually granted the merchant an audience, all the while sipping arak.[163] At midday on July 25 "the king came with a frightening physiognomy," and, stamping his feet in a fit of drunken rage, fired a shot into the sand. The *commies* describes Ramanrasse with a glass of alcohol in one hand and three pipes of tobacco in the other, gifts from the Dutch, which he lit in succession as each expired. The Dutch gave away 234 flagons (out of a store of 1,224 "cans") of arak at Toliara; and plied King Maheyningerivo with arak at his palace in Maravoay some weeks later.[164] The party continued to make gifts of arak while purchasing captives from the king and his men. Hemmy's party also gave arak to the "natives" (*inlanders*) who supplied them with food, water and wood at their camp on the beach. Captain Bagwell was cautioned by the Directors of the EIC to be careful of being stalled on the coast of Madagascar by the local kings, who liked brandy, but were not always forthcoming with slaves.[165] The last instruction the captain of the *Brak* received was to maintain "Christian discipline"[166] during the voyage, which not only meant holding religious observances on Sundays, but to refrain from drinking the arak that was reserved for the trade. A little brandy or red wine, however, was rationed to slaves and crew to maintain immunity and morale on the return passage to Table Bay.

Once the slave ship dropped anchor at a bay or river mouth – like St. Augustin's, Toliara or Bombetoka Bay – the ship's officers and merchants erected barracoons and a 'factory' near the shore from bamboo, scrub and wood and planks from the hold. Sometimes slave traders paid Malagasy interpreters or local inhabitants to build their factories for them. The *Brak's* party built a temporary trading post with a kitchen, infirmary and storehouse – surrounded by a palisade – at Bombetoka Bay in 1742.[167] The factory was usually guarded by a rotational watch under the captain, merchant, surgeon and other senior officers. While the *Edgebaston* was anchored at Fort Dauphin, the officers were requested to, "Send ashore six swivel Gunns with their proper Necessarys for the security of our Factory against one of the kings called Dean Pomet, who has lately been very troublesome to our Captain!"[168] The captain, however, "brought the Queen of King Dean Manjeva with

---

[163] Ibid., 438. Hemmy described how King Ramanrasse "would not leave his [calabash of *arak*] while there was a drop there" ("*zÿ zullen deselve niet verlaten soo long daar een drop mis*").
[164] Ibid., 29 July 1741, 337. See also HA 4193, *Drie Heuvelen* (1753), 3122-176. Dirk Westerhof, who refused to trade barrels of arak for two slaves at Morondava River, distributed at least 671 cans of arak as gifts at Toliara, Morondava and Anpandre between Thursday 8 June and Friday 9 November 1753.
[165] *Hertford*, Instructions (1730), 21.
[166] "*Christelijke discipline*."
[167] Ellis, "Sovereigns," 54.
[168] *Edgebaston* 1 (1740), Friday 7 November 1740, 86.

several princes & princesses to Dinner" that evening.[169] European slave traders often showed their trading goods, or declared what goods they had on presentation of their *credentiale brieven*, to Malagasy kings; and Malagasy kings, in turn, showed their treasuries, armouries and slaves to their visitors. Newly arrived slaves were inspected by the ship's surgeon and slave-commissioner and held in barracoons or in the ship's hold, while the sale of slaves took place on the shore, or on ships and dhows, river mouths or the inland residences or encampments of kings. Otto Hemmy was taken nearly twenty kilometres to the town of Maravoay to meet King Maheyningerivo, in 1741. Slaves were transported to the slave ship once they had been purchased by the locals' canoes or the Company's longboats or pinnaces. Ironically, the slaves who overpowered the VOC's *Meermin* in 1766, tried to row to freedom in the ship's longboat at Soetendaal's Valley: one of the instruments of their enslavement. The EIC Directors instructed Captain George Bagwell of the *Hertford*, in 1730, not to stay too long in one place, because his party would be vulnerable to the predations of "European pirates" and "treacherous natives" who might force them to engage in trade.[170] The threat of revolt or escape was greater near the coast, which is why the *Brak's* instructions ordered, in October 1740, that slaves be released from their shackles and manacles once land was out of sight.[171] The officers of the *Meermin* paid dearly for not following this protocol in February 1766.

Negotiations begin

Negotiation for the sale of slaves began when 'welcoming ceremonies' and rituals ended. The VOC *commies* Hendrik Frappé and his assistant Willem van der Lint initiated negotiations in Madagascar during the *Leijdsman's* slave trade in 1715.[172] They first encountered delegates of King Demonaij of Toliara on 27 July 1715. Their hosts led them, after perfunctory formalities, to a large tree about a mile and a half inland where "his black majesty" ("*sijn swarte majestijt*") sat with his retinue of four to five hundred men, women and children.[173] The king's men were armed, and Frappé was warned by a Dutch castaway to be careful because the king had killed a Dutchman some years ago in a fit of anger.[174] Frappé introduced himself, and reminded the king of his good relationship with the Company:

---

[169] Ibid.

[170] *Hertford*, Instructions (1730), 22.

[171] See Eric Robert Taylor, *If We Must Die: Shipboard Insurrections in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2006). Taylor makes extensive use of ships' journals in his monograph.

[172] Armstrong and Westra, *Slave Trade*, 23.

[173] Ibid., Hendrik Frappé [with additions by Willem van der Lint], "Journal of the main and most import events that occurred on the voyage from the Cape of Good Hope to the islands of Madagascar, Anjouan or elsewhere, as well as a description of the geography, people, livestock, fruits, crops, their decorations, customs regarding religion, etc.," Monday 29 July 1715, 67.

[174] Ibid., Saturday 27 July 1715, 59. Demonaij killed one of the *Schoonhouwen's* sailors c.1711.

> Then we also told him how pleased our Lord Directors were with the good
> reception our ships had enjoyed in previous years and that they had decided on a
> new mission to maintain the mutual understanding.[175]

King Demonaij recalled his father's good relationship with the Company and
announced that he would supply the Dutch with slaves. He told the traders,
who were now surrounded by 800 armed men, that he had sold slaves to the
English, French and Portuguese in exchange for muskets, gunpowder, flints
and lead. Demonaij settled on a final, lower price during the following day's
negotiations, saying: "If you do not want to give this much I will keep my
slaves and await the English, who will give me more."[176] The Dutch
purchased slaves from the king on Monday July 29, once they had settled on
prices in a written contract with him. King Maheyningerivo of Boeny, who
was no older than thirty-six years old (Otto Hemmy was thirty-one), made
similar assurances to the German slave-commissioner in Maravoay, in 1741.
The king offered elaborate homage to the insignia of four generations of his
ancestors – King Tokaf, Tsimenata, Lahifotsy and "Meffere" – while hosting
the Dutch trading-party at his palace.[177] He consecrated the signing of his
contract with the Dutch during an elaborate religious ceremony before the
same images of his ancestors, even though he was a muslim, a week later.
Hendrik Frappé described how Maheyningerivo's father, Tokaf, had been
"honoured and feared like a god" during the *Leijdsman's* voyage[178] – an
observation that was corroborated by Hemmy twenty-six years later. Stephen
Ellis has explained that the bond between the Sakalava dynastic kings and
their kinsmen awarded them a 'spiritual' status that often justified their
enslavement of neighbouring peoples.[179] Hemmy reported that the French and
English considered the king to be a rogue ("*schelm*") because he professed to
be the friend and "father" of these nations, but was not often forthcoming in
business.[180]

The *Leijdsman* reached Maningare on Wednesday 11 October 1715 and
proceeded to Bombetoka River, where the slave-commissioners met King
Tokaf.[181] Tokaf was delighted with the *Leijdsman's* party, who had decorated
their ship with flags and ribbons, fired a cannon salute, shot muskets in the air
and arrived on the shore with a musical procession of drums, flutes and
violins.[182] Like Frappé, the English sailor Robert Drury, who was stranded on
the island in the first decades of the eighteenth century, spoke highly of Tokaf.

[175] Ibid., 61.
[176] Ibid., Sunday 28 July 1715, 65.
[177] HA 4149 *Brak* (1741), Wednesday 23 August 1741, 358.
[178] Armstrong and Westra, *Slave Trade*: Hendrik Frappé, "Short description of the west-
side of Madagascar or St. Laurens Island" ("*Kort beschrijving van 't eijland Madagascar of
S. Laurens aan de westsijde*"), 129.
[179] Ellis, "Sovereigns," 421.
[180] HA 4149, *Brak* (1741), 8 November 1741, 438-39.
[181] Armstrong and Westra, *Slave Trade*, 89-107.
[182] Ibid., 25.

The Dutch negotiated with the king through his prime minister or "second voice" (*"tweede stem"*), Andian Simonalij, at the king's camp, which was half an hour from their factory by foot. The king and his wives were invited on board, where they dined and drank wine with the captain and slave-commissioners on Tuesday October 24. Simonalij told the slave-commissioners that the king's men had complained that their muskets were defective. Frappé and van der Lint, therefore, paid for the sale of 41 slaves with Spanish pieces of eight and gunpowder. Tokaf showed the merchants his armoury, and asked them to bring lighter guns with longer barrels next time. The Sakalava kings captured many Hova from the highland region of Amboalambo with guns supplied to them by the Europeans.[183] The slave trade at Madagascar was, as we have seen, predicated on guns, warfare and kidnapping.

The arrival of European slave traders on the Malagasy coastline was communicated inland by fires, coast guards, brokers and messengers. VOC slave traders frequently made contact with fishermen and petty officials of Malagasy kings, as well as European and Arab slave traders, before sending their officers to shore. First contacts with Malagasy kings were usually made on shore or aboard the Company's ships. Introductory encounters included salutes and greetings, the presentation of letters of endorsement and ceremonious welcoming rituals (the sharing of gifts, food and alcohol). These encounters included the mutual inspection of trade goods and slaves, as well as assurances of trade. Negotiations over the number and prices of slaves ensued, which culminated in written contracts or verbal agreements between parties. VOC personnel worked within the limits of their instructions and their letters of credential or introduction legitimised them as *bona fide* representatives of the Directors of the Company in the eyes of Malagasy kings.

Conclusion

The VOC's slave voyages in the South-West Indian Ocean from 1663 to 1781 began with a refreshment stop at Mauritius (until 1715), the purchase of slaves on the west coast of Madagascar, provisioning stops at Anjouan, and a last attempt, on the return voyage, to buy slaves at Rio de la Goa. Simon van der Stel and his personnel developed the slave trade from the Cape of Good Hope to Madagascar with the help of English trade journals, maps and counsel from 1679 to 1698. The Company further developed its slave trade by consulting records of its own voyages after 1700. The VOC was influenced by English slave traders until the mid-1720s and utilised English maps on their voyages until the 1780s. The Company had forty years of slave trading experience on the northwestern coast of Madagascar to draw on by the time of the

---

[183] Ellis, "Sovereigns," 414; HA 4149 *Brak* (1741), Sunday 27 August 1741, 367. Ellis recounts that King Maheyningerivo had told Hemmy he had sent his "people" to Amboalambo ("*d'Ambolúmmers*").

Leijdsman's voyage in 1715. Captain Jacobus van der Spil and slave-commissioner Otto Hemmy successfully revived the *Leijdsman's* trade relations with the kings of Toliara and Maravoay during the *Brak's* first expedition in 1741. This article charts the development of the VOC slave trade from the Cape of Good Hope to Madagascar during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through navigation, inquiry, diplomacy and trade. It argues that the two landmark voyages of the *Leijdsman* and *Brak* were crucial in the establishment of VOC slave trading policy on the island of Madagascar from 1741 to 1781. This article further describes typical first contacts between VOC slave traders and Malagasy kings and their representatives on the coastline of Madagascar during the eighteenth century.

Appendix: VOC instructions (*instructiën* or *instructies* (Afrikaans)) and ships' journals (*skeepsjoernale* or *joernale*) for the Company's slave voyages from the Cape to Madagascar, 1658-1786

Instructions (*instructiën*):

"Instructions" ("*Instructies*"), "Register of Papers" ("*Register van papieren*") and crew lists for the majority of the VOC's slave voyages to Madagascar (and the east coast of Africa) are housed in the National Archives of South Africa in Cape Town (CA) Political Council (*Politieke Raad*) (C) Series, CA C 2333, *Maria* (1661); CA C 2339, *Westerwijk* and *Jambij*; CA C 2340, *Jambij* (1686) and *Baren* and *Jambij* (1687), *Tamboer* (1694), *Noordgouw* (1701, 1702 and 1703) and *Ter Aa* (1705, 1706 and 1707); CA C 2341, *Leijdsman* (1715); CA C 2344, *Drie Heuvelen* (1753), *Schuylenburg* (1755) and *Hector* (1756); CA C 2345, *Hector* (1758 and 1759), *Neptunus* (1760 and 1762) and *Meermin* (1762 and 1763); *Voorhout* (1767); CA C 2346, *Zon* (1775 and 1776) and *Jachtrust* (1777); CA C 2347, *Jachtrust* (1779, 1780 and 1781) (mentions François Renier Duminy's voyage to Ceylon); and, CA C 2348, *Meermin* (1780, 1784 and 1785). CA C 2350-53 contain "memorials and instructions" relevant to Duminy, but not his slave trading activities. Rafael Thiebaut made CA C 2361 available to me, which contains a comprehensive list of instructions and logbooks for the VOC era – "Register of Instructions ("*Register op Instructies*"), 1657-1784": 1-139; "Inventory of Day Registers or Journals of sea voyages and land journeys made, also reports of wrecked vessels and other matters describing lands and coasts, 1655-1770"; and CA C 2243 contains a list of VOC slave voyages which was compiled on the order of the first British governor of the Cape Earl George Macartney in 1798.

Ships' journals or day registers, *dagregisters* or *skeepsjoernale*:

Nationaal Archief of the Netherlands in Den Haag (HA) VOC Series, Access Number 1.04.02, *Overgekomen brieven en papieren van de Kaap de Goede Hoop aan de Heeren XVII en de kamer Amsterdam* ("Letters and papers despatched from the Cape of Good Hope to the Seventeen Lords and the Amsterdam chamber" (1651-1792)). The HA 1.04.02 *Overgekomen brieven*, which includes ships' journals and instructions, is available online at https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02. Here is a list of ship's journals at Den Haag, the Cape and the National Library of South Africa (Cape Town): *'t Waterhoen* I (1663) HA 3998 (with *instructie*); *'t Waterhoen* II (1664-65) CA C 2243; *Pijl & Boog* (1672) HA 4008 (with *instructie*); *Voorhout* I (1676) HA 4012 (with *instructie* for *Voorhout* and *Tulp* CA C2338); *Voorhout* II (1677) HA 4013; *Jambij* (1686) HA 4023; *Tamboer* (1694) HA 1544; *Soldaat* (1696) HA 5072 (with *instructie*); *Peter & Paul* (1699) HA 4043; *Noordgouw* I (1701) HA 4047; *Noordgouw* II HA 4047; *Ter Aa* (1706) HA 4057; *Leijdsman* (1715) HA 4074 and HA 4052 and National Library of South Africa (NLSA) MSD 3 and 10 (with *instructiën*); *Snuffelaar & Zeepost* (1732) HA 4118; *Brak* I (1741) HA 4149 (*Brak instructie* (1740) HA 4144); *Brak* II (1742) HA 4157; *Brak* III (1743); *Schuylenburg* (1752-53) HA 4187; *Drie Heuvelen* (May to December 1753) HA 4188; *Neptunus* (1760) CA C 2250-2251; *Meermin* (1763) HA 4229; *Meermin* (1765-66) HA 4245; *Meermin* (1766) HA 4241; *Zon* I (1770) HA 4257 and CA C 2251; *Snelheid* (1771) HA 4261 and CA C 2252; *Snelheid* (1773-74) HA 4273 and CA C 2253; *Zon* II (1774-75) HA 4261 and CA C 2254; *Zon* III (1775-76) HA 4281 and CA C 2254 and CA C 2256; *Zon* IV (Jan 1777) HA 4283 and CA C 2256; *Jachtrust* I (Apr 1777) HA 4283; *Jachtrust* II (1777-78) CA C 2257; *Jachtrust* III (1781) HA 4249 and CA C 2280; *Meermin* I (July 1784 to January 1785) HA 4289; and, *Meermin & Meeuwtjie* II (June 1785 to February 1786) CA C 2066 and National Library of South Africa (NLSA), Cape Town, Nöthling Collection MSB 361.

Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES

CAPE ARCHIVES DEPOT, CAPE TOWN (CA)

A Accessions

A 455 BP 12 (0)   W.S. van Ryneveldt, "Replies to the Questions on the Importation etc. of Slaves into the Colony; Proposed by His Excellency the Earl of Macartney etc., etc., dated 29 November 1797 (preserved to the Cape Archives by G.W.A. Mears, "the original mss. destroyed by fire")."

A 455, Dundas-Melville Papers, "Macartney's Description of the Cape Colony."

C Council of Policy

C 325   Untitled. Extracts from Letters from Simon van der Stel and the Political Council to the VOC Directors in Amsterdam, dated 1682: 44-81; and VOC Directors (Amsterdam chamber) to Simon van der Stel and the Political Council (Cape of Good Hope), 1 January 1682: 7-8.

C 2243   "Journals kept on board the different ships on their several voyages & expeditions since the year 1615 till 1793" [English copy of C2244].

C 2244   "Register op instructies, 1657-1784" ["Register of instructions, 1657-1784"]: 1-139.

C 2344   *Drie Heuvelen* (1753) *Instructie.*

C 2361   "Skeeps-en ander joernale": 69-87.

C 2251   *Neptunus* (1760) "Skeeps- en ander joernale. Dagregister gehou aan boord de   Neptunus, 1760 Nov 24 – 1761 Feb 14." (Johan Godfried Krause).

CJ *Council of Justice*

CJ 693   Criminiele Proces-Stuken, 1766: 174-203.

BRITISH LIBRARY, LONDON (BL)

India Office Records (IOR) Maritime (MAR) Series:

IOR/MAR/B/106   "Orders and Instructions Given by the Court of Directors of the United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies to Captain George Bagwell, Mr Richard Taylor and Mr William Oaker" (26 October 1730): 17-23.

IOR B 154 f.22, "Sloane Collection no. 4044," Woodes Rogers to Sir Hans Sloane, 7 May 1716.

IOR/L/MAR/B/622A   *Edgebaston* "Commander's Journal" (Stephen Cobham) (20 December 1739 – 7 August 1742): 1-131 [double-sided pages].

IOR/L/MAR/B/622B   *Edgebaston* Rob Veitch and Will Parks's "Deck log" (1740-41): 80-102.

IOR/L/MAR/B/164C   *Onslow* (Captain Balchen) (1740-41).

IOR/L/MAR/B616A   *Swift* logbook (1741-42).

IOR   India Office EIC Court Director's Minutes (D) and (E) Series

IOR/D/93 f.511   Minutes of the EIC Directors.

IOR/E/I/17/ff.164-65v   15 March 1726 South Sea Company (hereafter SSC) application for licenses from the EIC Directors.

IOR/E/I/17 ff.205v   SSC application for a license from the EIC Directors.

IOR/E/I/6 ff.275   28 December 1715, William Heysham application for a license from the EIC Directors.

DANISH NATIONAL ARCHIVE (RIGSARKIVET), COPENHAGEN

446   "Het Vestindisk-Guineisk kompagni, Charles Barrington," 218 1737-1742 and "Charles Barrington's trade journals, charter party, ship logbooks and trade journals," 220, no. 2 1737-1738 (mainly unpaginated loose papers and Charles Barrington "Logbook 1": 1-90 [single pages]) and 221, no. 3 (c.1725-38) (loose papers).

ARCHIVE DEN HAAG (HA)

VOC Series, Access Number 1.04.02 "Inventaris van het archief van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC)," 1602-1795, Deel I/E.5.b: *Overgekomen brieven en papieren uit Kaap de Goede Hoop aan de Heeren XVII en de kamer Amsterdam* (https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02.).

HA 1639 "Cabo de Goede Hoop a° 1700," Letter from Willem Adriaan van der Stel (Governor of the Cape) and Willem van Outhoorn (Governor-General of Batavia) [concerning the English slaver the *Harwich*], 22 March 1700: 37-38.

HA 4018 The *Phillip* (1682) (James Barry), "Extract úÿt seeker Engelse dagregister gehoúden bÿ James Barree supercargo: op 't Engelse schip de fillip [2 April 1682] naar 't Eÿlandt Madagascar Streeks": 174-95 [double-sided pages].

HA 4144 *Brak* (1740) *Instructie*: 128-41.

HA 4149 *Brak* (1740) *Skeepsjoernaal* (Otto Hemmy) (4 May to 25 December 1741): 241-458 [double-sided pages].

HA 4193 *Drie Heuvelen* (1753) *Skeepsjoernaal* (Dirk Westerhoff) (26 May to 17 December 1753): 3116-176 [double-sided pages].

ROYAL MUSEUMS GREENWICH, CAIRD LIBRARY, LONDON

LUB/39/28   Lubbock, Basil, "List of English East India Company Ships."

BRENTHURST LIBRARY, OPPENHEIMER COLLECTION, JOHANNESBURG

MS 61/3 Barrow, Sir John, *Sketches of the Political and Commercial History of the Cape of Good Hope* (1 December 1796).

PUBLISHED PRIMARY SOURCES

TANAP *Resolusies* of the Council of Policy http://databases.tanap.net/resolusies/ (C) (Retrieved 1 October 2020)

C 16   Minutes 13 December 1682: 42-44.

C 18   Minutes 22 May 1686: 23-27.

C 18   Minutes 10 February 1687: 112-15.

C 33   Minutes 21 May 1715: 68-78.

C 89   Minutes 25 March 1732: 72-90.

C 110   Minutes 25 April 1741: 69-70.

C 115   Minutes 27 December 1740: 129-37.

C 155   Minutes 6 May 1777: 214-34.

PRINTED CONTEMPORARY WRITINGS

De Bucquoi, Jakob, *Aanmerkelijke Ontmoetingen in de Zestien Jaarige Reize naar de Indiën* [*Remarkable Encounters in the Sixteen Year Journey to the Indies*] (Haarlem: J.Bosch, 1744).

Drury, Robert, *Madagascar; or Robert Drury's journal, during fifteen year's captivity on that island* (London, 1729).

Van Dam, Pieter, *Beschryvinge van de Oostindische Compagnie*, XLVII, "orders van de XVII voor den slavenhandel," Bijlage 2 (Amsterdam, 1701): 668-670.

Ovington, John, *A Voyage to Suratt in the Year 1689* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1696).

SECONDARY SOURCES

BOOKS

Allen, Richard B., *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean, 1500-1850* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015).

Alpers, Edward A., *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1979).

Armstrong, James and Westra, Piet, *Slave Trade with Madagascar: The journals of the Cape slaver* Leijdsman*, 1715* (Cape Town: Africana Press, 2006).

Barendse, R.J., *Arabian Seas 1700-1763*, vol.3, "Men and Merchandise" (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

Bōeseken, Anna, *Slaves and free blacks at the Cape, 1658-1700* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1977).

Boucher, Maurice, *The Cape of Good Hope and Foreign Contacts 1735-1750* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1985).

Capela, José, *O Tráfico de Escravos nos Portos de Moçambique, 1733-1904* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2002).

Cordingly, David, *Spanish Gold: Captain Woodes Rogers and the Pirates of the Caribbean* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011).

Duminy, Andrew, *François Renier Duminy (1747-1811): French Mariner and South African Pioneer* (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2005).

Elphick, R. and Giliomee, H., eds., *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840*, 2nd ed. (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1989)

Ferguson, Niall, *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World* (London: Penguin Books, 2009).

Filliot, Jean-Marie, *Les Traite des Esclaves vers les Mascareignes au XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris: ORSTOM, 1973).

Florentino, Manolo, *Em Costas Negras: Uma história do tráfico de escravos entra a África e o Rio de Janeiro (séculos XVIIIe XIX)*(Companhia Das Letras: São Paulo, 1997).

Grandidier, Alfred and Guillaume, *Collections des ouvrages anciens concernant Madagascar*, 9 vols. (Paris: Comité de Madagascar, 1903-1920).

Haalmeijer, Hans, *Pinassen, Fluiten en Galjassen: Zeilschepen van de Lage Landen – Kustvaart en Grote Vaart* (Alkmaar, Holland: De Alk bv., 2009).

Hooper, Jane, *Feeding Globalization: Madagascar and the Provisioning Trade, 1600-1800* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2017).

Klein, Herbert S., *The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978).

Krüger, D.W. and Beyers, C.J., eds., *Dictionary of South African Biography*, vol. 3 (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1977).

Lenta, Margaret and Le Cordeur, Basil, eds., *The Cape Diaries of Lady Anne Barnard, 1799-1800* 2, Van Riebeeck Society Second Series no. 30 (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1999).

Machado, Pedro, *Ocean of Trade: South Asian Merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean, c.1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

O'Malley, Gregory E., *Final Passages: The Intercolonial Slave Trade of British America, 1619-1807* (Williamsburg, Virginia: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

Pettigrew, William A., *Freedom's Debt: The Royal African Company and the Pollitics of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1672-1752* (Williamsburg, Virginia: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

Rediker, Marcus, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (London: John Murray, 2007).

Rogoziński, Jan, *Honor Among Thieves: Captain Kidd, Henry Every, and the Pirate Democracy in the Indian Ocean* (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 2000).

Schoeman, Karel, *Early Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1717* (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2007).

_____. *Portrait of a Slave Society: The Cape of Good Hope, 1717-1793* (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2012).

Shell, Robert Carl-Heinz, *Children of Bondage: A Social History of the Slave Society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994).

Sleigh, Dan, *Die buiteposte: VOC-buiteposte onder die Kaapse bestuur 1652-1795* (Pretoria, HAUM 2004).

Sleigh, Dan and Westra, Piet, *The Taking of the Slaver Meermin 1766* (Cape Town: Africana Publishing, 2013).

Stein, Robert Louis, *The French Slave Trade in the Eighteenth Century: An Old Regime Business* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979).

Taylor, Eric Robert, *If We Must Die: Shipboard Insurrections in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006).

Van Bart, Marthinus, *Kaap Van Slawe: Die Britse slawebedryf van 1562 tot 1910: Met spesiale verwysing na die Kaap die Goeie Hoop vanaf 1680* (Cape Town: Historical Media, 2012).

Worden, Nigel, *Slavery in Dutch South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

ARTICLES AND CHAPTERS IN BOOKS

Alexander, Andrew, "Shipboard Slave Uprisings on the Malagasy Coast. The "Meermin" (1766) and "De Zon" (1775)," *Kronos: Journal of Cape History* [Cape Town] 33 (November 2007): 84-111.

_____. "Negotiation, trade and the rituals of encounter: an examination of the slave trading voyage of De *Zon*, 1775-1776," *Itinerario* 31, no. 3: 39-58.

Allen, Richard B., "A traffic of several nations: the Mauritian slave trade, 1721-1835," in V. Teelock and E.A. Alpers, eds., *History, Memory and Identity* (Mauritius: University of Mauritius Press, 2001), 157-77.

_____. "The Mascarene Slave-Trade and Labour Migration in the Indian Ocean during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in Gwyn Campbell, ed., *The Structure of Slavery in the Indian Ocean, Africa and Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 33-50.

_____. "The constant demand of the French: The Mascarene Slave Trade and the World of the Indian Ocean and Atlantic during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of African History* 49, no. 1 (2008): 43-73.

Alpers, Edward A., "The French Slave Trade in East Africa (1721-1810)," *Cahiers d'etudes africaines* 10, no. 37 (1970): 80-120.

Armstrong, James, "Madagascar and the Slave Trade in the Seventeenth Century," *Omaly Sy Anio (Hier et aujour d'hui)* [Madagascar] nos. 17-20 (1983-84): 211-32.

Armstrong and Worden, "The Slaves, 1652-1795," in Elphick, R and Giliomee, H, eds., *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1820*, 2nd ed. (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1989), 109-68.

Bialuschewski, Arne, "Pirates, Slavers and the Indigenous Population in Madagascar, c.1690-1715," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 38, no. 3 (Boston University African Studies Centre, 2005): 401-25.

Boucher, Maurice, "The Cape and foreign shipping, 1714-23" *South African Historical Journal* 6, no. 1 (November 1974): 3-29.

_____. "The Voyage of a Cape Slaver in 1742," *Historia* [Pretoria] 24, no. 1 (1979): 50-58.

_____. "An Unexpected Caller: Charles Barrington at the Cape in 1737," *South African Historical Journal* 13 (1981): 20-35.

Boyer-Rossol, Klara, "Makua Life Histories: Testimonies on Slavery and the Slave Trade in 19th Century Madagascar," in Bellagamba, A., Greene S.E. and Klein, M.A., eds., *African Voices on Slavery and the Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 466-80.

Debien, G., "Le Journal de traite de la *Licorne* au Mozambique, 1787-1788," in Estival, R. and Braudel, F., eds., *Etudes africaines offertes à Henri Brunschwig* (Paris: EHESS, 1982) 91-116.

Ellis, Stephen and Randrianja, S., "Les archives de Compagnie néerlandaise des Indes orientales et l'histoire de Madagascar. L'expedition du navire de la Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (V.O.C.) Le *Schuylenburg – Septembre* 1752," in I. Rakoto, ed., *La route des esclaves* (Paris: Harmattan, 2000), 47-73.

Ellis, Stephen, "The history of sovereigns in Madagascar: new light from old sources," in Nativel, Didier and Rajaonah V., Faranirina, eds., *Madagascar revisitée: en voyages avec Françoise Raison-Jourde* (Karthala: Paris, 2009), 405-31.

Eltis, David and Hooper, Jane L., "The Indian Ocean in Transatlantic Slavery," *Slavery and Abolition* 34, no. 3 (2013): 353-75.

Hardyman, J.T., "The Madagascar slave trade to the Americas (1632-1830)," *Studia Revista Semestria* 11 (January 1963): 501-21.

Harries, Patrick, "'The Hobgoblins of the Middle Passage': the Cape of Good Hope and the Transatlantic Slave Trade," in Schmieder, Ulrike, Fülberg-Stoberg, Katja, Zeuskem, Michael, eds., *The End of Slavery in Africa and the Americas: a comparative approach* (Munster: LIT Verlag, 2011), 27-50.

_____. "Middle Passages of the Southwest Indian Ocean: A Century of Forced Immigration from Africa to the Cape of Good Hope," *The Journal of African History* 5, no. 2 (July 2014): 173-90.

_____. "Mozambique Island, Cape Town and the Organisation of the Slave Trade in the South-West Indian Ocean, c.1797-1807," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 42, no. 3 (2016): 409-27.

Klein, Herbert S., "The Trade in African slaves to Rio de Janeiro, 1795-1811: Estimates of mortality and patterns of voyages," *Journal of African History* 10, no. 4, 533-49.

Larson, Pier M., "Enslaved Malagasy and 'Le Travail de la Parole' in the Pre-Revolutionary Mascarenes," *Journal of African History* 48, no. 3 (2007): 457-479.

Machado, Pedro, "A Forgotten Corner of the Indian Ocean: Gujarati Merchants, Portuguese India and the Mozambique Slave-Trade, c.1730-1830," in *Slavery & Abolition* 24, no. 2 (2003): 17-32.

Platt, Virginia Bever, "The English East India Company and the Madagascar Slave Trade," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (October 1969): 548-77.

Ranjeva-Rabetafika, Baesjou, René and Everts, Natalie, "Of Paper and Men: a note on the Archives of the VOC as a source for the history of Madagascar," *Itinerario* 24, no. 1 (2000): 45-67.

Reidy, Michael Charles, "Book review of Dan Sleigh and Piet Westra's, *The Taking of the Slaver Meermin, 1766*," *Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa* 68, no. 1 (2014): 119-22.

Ross, Robert, "The Dutch on the Swahili Coast, 1776-1778: Two Slaving Journals, Part 1," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 19, no. 2 (Boston University African Studies Centre, 1986): 305-60.

_____. "The Dutch on the Swahili Coast, 1776-1778: Two Slaving Journals, Part 2," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 9, no. 3 (1986): 479-506.

_____. "The Last Years of the Slave Trade to the Cape Colony," in Clarence-Smith, W.G., ed., *The Economics of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (London: F. Cass, 1989), 209-20.

Shell, Robert Carl-Heinz, "The Twinning of Maputo and Cape Town: The Early Mozambican Slave Trade to the Slave Lodge: 1677-1731," *Quarterly Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa* [Cape Town] 55, no. 3 (2001): 114-20.

_____. "Slave Mortality on the Middle Passage to the Cape, 1688-1808," *Quarterly Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa* [Cape Town] 59, no. 3 (2005): 113-26.

Van Rensburg, Andre Martinus, "The secret modus operandi used to obtain slaves from Guinea for the Cape: the ship *Hasselt*, 1658," *Familia* 38, no. 2 (2001): 78-92.

Vernet, Thomas, "Slave trade and slavery on the Swahili coast (1500-1750)," in Mirzai B.A., Montana I.M. and Lovejoy, P., eds., *Slavery, Islam and Diaspora*, (African World Press, 2009), 37-76.

Vink, Markus, "'The World's Oldest Trade.' Dutch Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean in the Seventeenth Century,' *Journal of World History* 14, no. 7 (June 2003): 131-77.

Worden, Nigel Anthony, "Slavery and amnesia: towards a recovery of Malagasy heritage in representations of Cape slavery," in Ignace Rakoto, ed., *L'esclavage à Madagascar: Aspects Historiques et Résurgences Contemporaires* (Antananarivo: Institut de Civilisations – Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie, 1997): 51-63.

_____. "Indian Ocean Slavery and its demise in the Cape Colony," in Campbell, Gwyn, ed., *Abolition and its Aftermath in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 29-49.

_____. "Indian Ocean Slaves in Cape Town, 1695-1807," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 42, no. 3 (2016): 389-408.

THESES AND UNPUBLISHED PAPERS

Hägerdal, Hans, "Slaves and slave trade in the Timor area: Between indigenous structures and external impact," (unpublished paper, "Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean and Indonesian Archipelago Worlds," presented at the International Institute of Social History (IISH), Amsterdam, 10-11 November 2016) (convenors, Dr Matthias van Rossum and Dr Titas Chakraborty).

Maritz, Loraine, "Die lewe en werk van François Renier Duminy, 1781-1811," (unpublished MA thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1994).

Ravell, James J., "The VOC Slave Trade Between Cape Town and Madagascar" (Leiden, 1978).

Reidy, Michael Charles, "Captive experience aboard VOC slave ships during the Indian Ocean Middle Passage in the 18th century," (unpublished paper, "The Southwest Indian Ocean – and the slave trade," History Department, University of Basel, Switzerland, 5 December 2014 (convenor, Dr Patrick Harries)).

Thiebaut, Rafael, "Traites des esclaves et commerce néerlandais et français á Madagascar (XVIIe-XVIIIe siécles)," (unpublished PhD. Thesis, Sorbonne University Paris and Free University Amsterdam, 2017).

DIGITAL SECONDARY SOURCES

Shell, Robert C.-H., ed., *From Diaspora to Diorama: A Guide to the Old Slave Lodge* (Cape Town: Nagpro, 2013).

Thiebaut, Rafael, "De Madagascar à Sumatra: une route négrière peu commune. Le voyage du navire *Binnenwijzend* de la VOC en 1732," *Afriques* [En ligne], uploaded on 21 December 2015, consulted 16 March 2021. URL: http://journals.openedition.org/afriques/1805; DOI: https://doi.org/2010.20204000/afriques.1805

_____. "The Role of "Brokers" in the Dutch Slave Trade in Madagascar in the Eighteenth Century," in Preben Kaarsholm, Manoel João Ramos and Iain Walker, eds., *Fluid Networks and Hegemonic Powers in the West Indian Ocean* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Internacios do Instituto de Lisboa, 2017): 37-64. E-book.

"Bred up under Our Roofs": Domestic Slavery in Ceylon, 1760-1834[1]

Lodewijk Wagenaar

Introduction: a manumission agenda from 1816.

Early in August 1834, Sir Alexander Johnston, the former Chief Justice of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), tried to interest the British government in helping to erect a monument in Colombo to commemorate "certain numerous slave proprietors" who had agreed in July 1816 to declare all children born to their slaves after August 12th that year as free.[2] In his reply to Sir Alexander, Thomas Spring Rice, the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, observed that while "it would be impossible either to forget such an act of benevolence, or to undervalue it as a measure of mercy by which an end was put to the existence of slavery in Ceylon," the passage of time had rendered the erection of such a monument as unnecessary and inexpedient.[3] Had it been constructed, this monument possibly would have recorded the names of the 763 individuals who signed an address to the prince regent, the future George IV, announcing their decision to emancipate all children born to their domestic slaves after the prince regent's birthday on August 12th, 1816.[4]

Table A: List of [Ceylonese] Subscribers to the Address to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent for Emancipating Children born of Slaves after the 12th of August 1816.

COLOMBO:			JA-ELA:		
Dutch Inhabitants and Burghers	110		Jayelle Cingalese	73	
Vellales	38				
Fisher Caste	17		CHILAW:		
Washer Caste	24		Malabars	3	

---

[2] "Copy of a letter from Sir Alexander Johnston to Mr. Secretary Spring Rice, 7 August 1834," in *Return to an address of the Honourable The House of Commons dated 1 March 1838; for copies and abstracts of all communications relating to the subject of slavery in the Island of Ceylon, and to the measures there taken for its abolition* (hereafter *Return*), (London: The House of Commons, 1838), 613-614.
[3] "Copy of a letter from Mr. Secretary Spring Rice to Sir Alexander Johnston, 16 September 1834," *Return*, 615.
[4] "List of subscribers to the Address to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent for emancipating Children born of Slaves after the 12th of August 1816, *c*. 31 July 1816," *Return*, 575-78.

Mahabadde	20		Moors	2	
Malabars	30		total Chilaw		5
Moors	32				
total Colombo		*271*	**MANNAR:**		
			Dutch Inhabitants and Burghers	11	
NEGOMBO:			Chitteis	17	
Dutch Inhabitants and Burghers	17		Moorman	1	
Cingalese	74		Total Mannar		29
Negombo Cingalese	57				
Malabars	9		**JAFFNA:**		
Moors	4		Dutch Inhabitants and Burghers	19	
total Negombo		*161*	Moors	2	
			total Jaffna		*21*
KALUTARA:					
Dutch Inhabitants and Burghers	3	*3*	**TRINCOMALEE:**		
			Dutch Inhabitants and Burghers	14	
GALLE:			Malabars	102	
Dutch Inhabitants and Burghers	26		**Trincomalee Moors**	7	
Galle Cingalese	5		**Total Trincomalee**		*123*
total Galle		*31*			
			BATTICALOA:		
MATARA:			Malabars	19	
Dutch Inhabitants and Burghers	4		Moors	10	
Vellales	6		Total Batticaloa		*29*
Matura Vellales	2				
Moors	1				
total Matara		*13*			
subtotal row 1		*479*			
subtotal row 2		*280*			
GRAND TOTAL		759			

Source: Return, 575-578.

The names of social groups and of places as given in the source 'Returns' have been kept in the table above. Some of them need clarification. All signatories belonged to the elite of their respective social groups. That was also the case of the group of "Dutch Inhabitants/Burghers," even though that group did not have a structured social leadership comparable to the other groups. Within the group of these "Dutch" signatories one phenomenon is striking: apparently widows had sufficient social status to also subscribe–seen their family history these women were clearly recognizable as being of Dutch descent, and therefore belonged to the elite of that group. That being said, the second striking feature is the ethnic diversity reflected in the list of signatories. Understandably, in Colombo we come across most different groups, headed by the 110 signatories representing the "Dutch Inhabitants and Burghers" of Colombo–they were the first to be involved by Sir Alexander Johnston (1775-1849) in the development of his initiative. In the capital, or actually greater Colombo, we find "Vellales" or members of the Sinhalese Goyigama caste (38), signatories from the "Washer" or Rada caste (24), representatives from the "Fisher" or Karava caste (17), "subscribers" from the "Mahabadde" or cinnamon peeling caste (20),[5] 30 "Malabars" (30),[6] and "Moors" (31).[7] A striking feature about this address is what it reveals about the geographical distribution of those who signed it. Its "Dutch" subscribers resided not only in Colombo, but also in other urban centers and districts including Kalutara, Galle, Matara (all three places south of Colombo), Negombo (north of Colombo), Mannar and Jaffna in the north, and Trincomalee in the northeast of the island. In addition to Colombo, its Sinhalese signers lived in Matara, Galle, Ja-Ela and Negombo, while those described as Malabars and Moors resided in Chilaw, Mannar, Jaffna, Trincomalee and Batticaloa.

It would go too far to discuss here the developments in the United Kingdom (hereinafter usually referred to as England) that led first to the abolition of the slave trade and then to the abolition of slavery itself. Suffice it to say that the colonial government in Ceylon, as Sri Lanka was called until 1972, tried in vain first to limit the slavery of Covias, Nalluas and Pallas in northern Ceylon. To make any start in this, a system of registration of field and personal slaves was devised, but the regulation of August 14, 1806 was massively sabotaged, and a second regulation of May 27, 1808 met the same fate.

Alexander Johnston, from 1807-1811 Puisne (Junior) Justice of the Supreme Court of Ceylon, was driven by his liberal and humane views towards the Ceylonese people. He tried to do his own to get his liberal ideas

---

[5] Also known as Salagama or Chalias.
[6] Tamils–not referiing to the so-called Indian Tamils, who laboured in the nineteenth century in the new tea plantations.
[7] Then a generic term used to refer to Muslims.

realized. This is how the genius plan arose to start abolition from the bottom up, by taking a soft first step that would not hurt too much the owners of domestic slaves. He seduced them, so to speak, to make a charitable gesture and join the plan as designed by the African Institution in London, to declare free children of domestic slaves born on or after the birthday of the Prince Regent on August 12, 1816, writing:[8]

> Many of you are aware of the measure I proposed in 1806 to the principal proprietors of slaves on this island, and of the reason for which its adoption was at that time postponed. Allow me to avail myself of the present opportunity to suggest to you, that should those proprietors, in consequence of the change which has since taken place in the circumstances of this island, now think such a measure advisable, they will, by carrying it into effect, set a bright example to their countrymen, and show themselves worthy of being ranked amongst the benefactors of the human race.
>
> I have, &c.
> (signed) *Alexander Johnston.*

Few in the Netherlands at the end of the eighteenth century were aware of the efforts of the Abolutionists. The ex-soldier in Dutch service, John Gabriel Stedman, was perhaps an exception. Nowhere in Dutch VOC documents have I been able to find anything that refers to the political developments in England. Those discussions did not exist in the Netherlands, or hardly so, because a platform like a parliament did not exist there. European VOC personnel, and the Burghers around them, would certainly have been shocked to have heard of the discussion.

It is almost astonishing that the "Dutch Inhabitants and Burgers" agreed so readily to Johnston's proposal. Stood they really behind it? Was it a way to maintain as much of the system as possible by making a gesture that would only have long-term consequences? Governor Robert Brownrigg (1758-1833), then only three years in office, was aware of the limited impact in the short term. Thus he wrote:

> "The immediate sacrifice appears trifling on the part of the proprietors; but the result of the measure, if it can be made general, will eventually be the positive abolition of slavery in the island".[9] Acceptance of the 1816 proposal was not limited to the group of "Dutch Inhabitants and Burghers". Leaders of other groups have followed suit. Therefore we can now look back on an important first step in the Abolition process.

---

[8] *Return*, Enclosure 1 in Extract of a despatch from Lieutenant-general Sir R. Brownrigg [Governor of Ceylon] to Earl Bathurst [Secretary of War and Colonies], Colombo, 16 September 1816, in: *Return*, 562.
[9] "Extract of a despatch from Lieutenant-general Sir R. Brownrigg to Earl Bathurst, 16 September 1816, *Return*, 561-562.

Map 1. South India and Ceylon (Armand Haye, 2020)

Aims of this study

The case above is illustrative of the process where enslaved labor was wound down in Ceylon, and which will be scrutinized in this chapter. It asks how social changes and shifts in domestic slavery can be traced through a new reading of the sources during a time when a hybrid colonial contact zone was slowly and hesitantly changed with the transition to a liberal colonial governance – in other words, as two rather different colonialisms met in an Indian Ocean context. This transitory process is especially interesting since slavery and abolition in Ceylon remain relatively unstudied.[10] As Richard Allen has noted, the history of abolitionism in the early nineteenth-century Indian Ocean world cannot be written without taking developments in Ceylon, such as the 1816 address to the prince regent, into consideration.[11] The address's importance transcends, however, its place in the history of British abolitionism in the Indian Ocean. More specifically, this address and the documentation that surrounds it provides us with a unique opportunity to examine domestic slavery in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Ceylon and, by implication, elsewhere in colonial South Asia. While historians have explored aspects of domestic slavery in Dutch Southeast Asia,[12] they have largely ignored the European involvement with domestic slavery elsewhere in the Indian Ocean world, especially in South Asia.[13]

As a matter of fact, that involvement should be seen and understood in a wider perspective, by encapsulating it in the greater whole of the European impact on the respective colonized societies. In that respect it is relevant to refer to the research project of Leiden University and the Radbout University Nijmegen, "Colonialism Inside Out: Everyday Experience and Plural Practice in Dutch Institutions in Sri Lanka (c. 1700-1800)", developed and coordinated by Alicia Schrikker (Leiden). Schrikker has mapped out a few interesting

---

[10] Exceptions include: Chandima S.M. Wickramasinghe, "Coloured Slavery in Ceylon (Sri Lanka)," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka*, n.s., 54 (2008): 159-78; Chandima S.M. Wickramasinghe, "The Abolition of Colonial and Pre-colonial 'Slavery' from Ceylon (Sri Lanka)," *Cultural and Social History* 7, no. 3 (2010): 315-35. The publication of Nira Wickramsinghe's *Slave in a Palanquin: Colonial Servitude and Resistance in Sri Lanka* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020) will undoubtedly help to redress this historiographical deficiency.

[11] Richard B. Allen, *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014), 190-93.

[12] E.g., Barbara Watson Andaya, "From Temporary Wife to Prostitute: Sexuality and Economic Change in Early Modern Southeast Asia," *Journal of Women's History* 9, no. 4 (1998): 11-34; Eric Jones, *Wives, Slaves, and Concubines: A History of the Female Underclass in Dutch Asia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010).

[13] Notable exceptions include: Margot Finn, "Slaves out of Context: Domestic Slavery and the Anglo-Indian Family, *c.* 1780-1830," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 19 (2009): 181-203; Jorge Simón Izquierdo Díaz, "The Trade in Domestic Servants (Morianer) from Tranquebar for Upper Class Danish Homes in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century," *Itinerario* 43, no. 2 (2019): 194-217; Linda Mbeki and Matthias van Rossum (2016): "Private slave trade in the Dutch Indian Ocean world: a study into the networks and backgrounds of the slavers and the enslaved in South Asia and South Africa," *Slavery & Abolition* (2016).

research paths that, studied between 2017 and 2022, will bring us to a greater understanding of the impact on daily life in the territories of Sri Lanka occupied by the Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or VOC). The results cannot be anticipated here, however, this article also deals with the colonial impact visible in a very specific area, namely slavery, and in particular the phenomenon of enslaved household workers, hereinafter referred to simply as domestics.

Much of the daily life of these forced workers eludes us, for so-called *egodocuments* are extremely rare.[14] Although we know from administrative and judicial sources how generally this category of personnel was looked at and appreciated, this does not alter the fact that the sources from the period of the occupation of Sri Lanka by the VOC and of the transition period of British administration are mainly quantitative of character. That makes it difficult to look at the particular situation of enslaved domestics with an empathetic view–that we have to accept. Nevertheless the existing documents do help us to observe social changes and to see how minor kinds of shifts in the system of domestic slavery occurred over time. Therefore, let us first look at some data retrieved from the Slave Registers of Galle and Jaffna, which, like the registers of Colombo and those of a few other places, can be regarded as a direct result of Sir Alexander Johnston's efforts.

TABLE B: Slave Owners and their domestics registered in Galle and Jaffna, 1818.

	Male Owner	Female Owner	Domestics Registered in 1818	Male	Average Age	Female	Average Age	Children of Slaves at Registration	Children born after 1818
GALLE									
Burghers/ Europeans	4	3	12	3	35.8	9	46.9	9	-
Sinhalese	2	-	5	1	31	4	43.4	13	2
Muslims	14	-	20	9	35.2	11	35.7	26	-
totals			37					47	
JAFFNA									
Burghers/ Europeans	21	7	64	23	30.8	41	36.5	67	1

Source: *Data retrieved from the "Alphabetical register of domestic slaves in and for the province or district of Galle [Ceylon] under the 9th regulation of 1818", National Archives, Kew, England, inv.nr. T-71-663 [Registers of the Office for the Registry of Colonial Slaves, 1813 to 1834, Ceylon: T-71-663].*

---

[14] For the discussion on the regrettable lack of egodocuments of enslaved persans, see Alicia Schrikker and Nira Wickramasinghe, *Being a Slave. Histories and legacies of European Slavery in the Indian Ocean*. (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2020), and my contribution therein, "Boenga van Johor: 'My forced journey from Batavia to the Cape of Good Hope'": 123-146.

Owners of domestic slaves in Galle, 1818

No census data exist for this period, therefore the "Dutch" owners mentioned in the Slave Registers not necessarily represent all "Dutch" inhabitants of Galle. We know however that before that time many had moved to Colombo, or in 1807/08 were evacuated to Batavia (Jakarta). From Appendix 1 one learns that the domestics sometimes had typical slave names, in addition to the more common names that were in vogue among VOC employees. Renaming enslaved people fulfilled a need to give the domestics a more familiar character. Thus we come across the name October, a classic example of naming after months. In the row *Names of children* we meet "Keetje" (Kate), a typical Dutch name, which may not have been given anymore later in the nineteenth century. An example of a fantasy name is "Harlekyn". Most other names are fairly common, only "Malatie" is exceptional. The Malay name *Melatie* is a girl's name meaning "jasmine flower". Here we may presume that the owner knew the enslaved girl came from the Indonesian Archipelago or from the region of Malacca. For Malatie it must have been comforting that the last thing she owned, her original name, had not been taken away from her. Other domestics however, were stripped from their names, and that act does confirm the phenomenon that Orlando Patterson has labeled "Social Death": The enslaved was cut off from the cultural past and made completely dependent on her or his owner's will.[15] Most slave names in the Slave Registers do not differ from those names traditionally given to domestics. That we learn from the baptismal registers of the Reformed Church in Galle that show names taken from classical antiquity, such as Alexander, Cleopatra, Diana, Helena, Mercury, Victoria, etc; biblical names like Benjamin, David, Rachel and Sarah were quite common too, as also were names of days and months names, such as Friday, etc.[16]

We know the age of the registered slaves, but unfortunately this is not the case with their children. Documents from the previous period tell also little about this, but there are exceptions. For example, the heirs of Steven Baade, Master of the Equipment in Galle, reported fifteen slave children between the ages of 2 ½ months to 8 years in the estate of the deceased. They had eight different mothers–nothing is known about the fathers, for Baade had a dozen "slaven jongens" (male slaves).[17]

One of the owners, Mrs. Degen, had registered three domestics with six children, altogether eight enslaved domestics in the household, a number that was certainly not exceptional for wealthy residents of Galle in the time of the VOC. The numbers of domestics owned by VOC personnel will be explained in more detail below in the treatment of the northern place Jaffna.

---

[15] Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death. Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*. [With a new   preface]. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2018): 54-58.
[16] Dutch Reformed Church Archives, Christian Reformed Church of Lanka, General Consistory Office, Wellawatta (Colombo 6): Baptism Registers 1677-1807.
[17] Sri Lanka National Archives, Colombo (SLNA), 1/5674, Secretariat Protocol, 26 March 1761.

Interesting in Galle is Don Bastian Jayatilleke, the Atapattu Mudaliyar, in charge of the jurisdiction of the Galle District, and highest Sinhalese *headman* (chieftain). His five enslaved domestics had altogether thirteen children of whom two were freed at the time of registration. Later on, under the new regulation, two grandchildren of his domestic Dingey were born free, the one in 1820, the other in 1823.

The question here is: how common was the system of domestic slavery among the Sinhalese elite? The Sinhalese rural population was ruled by their own chiefs or *headmen*, who all lived outside the urbanized VOC centers. In return for their services they had traditionally received lands, the mightiest of them sometimes got entire villages as lifelong loan. Therefore cash money was not given to them by the Company–that is why they do not appear in the Company books, hence little is known about their households. They certainly had a large clientele consisting of persons born from lower castes, or from impoverished caste equals, who provided services in and around the home. I am not aware of any official VOC list ("rolle") in which domestic slaves are listed, however, from scattered sources we do know that Sinhalese living in the Dutch territory also owned domestics. That is shown in a secretariat protocol of February 1760, wherein two Sinhalese persons declared that the female domestic Sabina, also called Acka Ammad (Akka meaning "older sister" in Tamil) "had given birth to four children, two boys and two girls, who were named as Gabriel, Pedroe, Citto and Grama".[18] There was no doubt about the status of Sabina, because from a "transport" protocol, dated November 12, 1737, it could be seen that she was legally sold in the Dutch VOC settlement of Nagapattinam–so she probably was originating from the Coromandel or "Textile" Coast in South India. Other examples have been mentioned by Kate Ekama in her study of slavery in Colombo.[19] It can be assumed that more information can be obtained from VOC sources, for the moment however, the Slave Registers are a unique source.

It is unfortunate that I am not able to look extensively at the Slave Registers of Colombo, but a first look showed me that a lot of Sinhalese registered domestics there. Examples are Paulus Perera, who registered "Ayappa" (a male domestic of 40 years), Don Richard de Silva Mohandiram ("Agusto", 40 years old) and Matthus Hendrik de Silva ("Adonies", 35 years old)–these names I chose to refer to the names of subscribers mentioned above, and to the suffix Mohandiram, showing that "Don" Richard de Silva formed part of the elite in the District of Colombo.[20]

---

[18] SLNA 1/1/6400, Civil Protocol, dated 13 February 176, quotation retrieved from Wagenaar, Galle, 56.

[19] Kate Ekama, *Slavery in Dutch Colombo: A social history* (Master Thesis Leiden University, 2012), 20.

[20] Data retrieved from the "Alphabetical register of domestic slaves in and for the province or district of Colombo [Ceylon] under the 9th regulation of 1818", National Archives, Kew, England, inv.nr. T-75 [Registers of the Office for the Registry of Colonial Slaves, 1813 to 1834, Ceylon: T-75].

However, it is not entirely clear whether the large-scale possession of domestics under the Sinhalese elite only started after the arrival of the English. The previously mentioned 'Return' shows that at various places in the coastal area Sinhalese had come forward to support the petition as subscriber. We are most likely looking at something very differencing from slavery in the Kandyan provinces, as mentioned in the Census of 1837. There a total of 687 males and 694 females was given, but those were not really functioning as domestics, but were especially used during burial ceremonies.[21] The slavery we come across in the 'Return' and in the Slave Registers has most likely been a phenomenon that only existed for a short time, possibly only from the departure of the Dutch in 1796 to the abolition of slavery in 1843. But again, this is difficult to prove.

Anyway, the names of the two Sinhalese who registered in 1818 show that these Sinhalese officials lived in two worlds. The group to which they belonged had been used to this for quite a long time, for in the period of colonial administration that was the way to have their social positions maintained. Therefore, adaptation and collaboration was the outcome of the colonial *impact* on Sri Lankan society.

Slavery in the Muslim communities of Sri Lanka has clearly left its marks in the sources. Here again data from the 1760s help us to understand how domestic slavery in the several groups in Galle and the Galle district looked like. To start with Galle proper, the fortified city itself had in 1760 a population of 1841 inhabitants "so of the feminine as the masculine sex, old and young, free and slaves".[22] Among them we count 518 Company servants (in majority consisting of military men), 66 Burghers, 96 Company slaves or *lijfeijgenen*, 40 prisoners condemned to do forced labor, and 112 local servants. On this list about a thousand inhabitants are not specified, but the not described persons will have consisted of the families–housewives and children–of the higher and middle echelons, such as administrators, accountants, clerks, artisans, officers and non commissioned officers, and of course a great number of private slaves, their domestics, on average about 4.5 persons per household.

Outside Galle Fort lived the families of the Muslim community, most of whom were engaged in retail trade. Their registered total was 478, of whom 22 men did not have to perform *Ulyam* service (which was a kind of substitute corvée for Muslims and Chetties, who were officially regarded as foreigners by the VOC). Most owners of the 52 registered domestics will have belonged

---

[21] [Anonymous,] *Slavery and the Slave Trade in British India; with Notices of the Existence of these Evils in the Islands of Ceylon, Malacca, and Penang.* London: Thomas Ward and Co., 1841, 60. The author however doubts whether these numbers are correct, since the Census of 1829 and 1824 gave much higher numbers, namely more than double that amount.

[22] SLNA, 1/2740, Day register of the inspection tour by the Dutch Governor Jan Schreuder, 23-24.

to this group.[23] The Muslims of the Galle District were well connected with family and colleagues in South India, so it was not difficult for them to obtain slaves. Matthias van Rossum and his group of researchers in the International Institute for Social History (IISH), Amsterdam, recently has published interesting information on the slave trade from South India).[24] One may assume that little will have changed after the British takeover, therefore it seems that the data from the Slave Registers of 1818 correspond quite well with the situation that existed at the time of the VOC.

J.W. Heydt, Ein Prospect des Castells Jaffnapatnam, wie sich dasselbe von innen praesentiret, c. 1735-1744. Plate LXXXVI in: J.W. Heydt, Geographisch- und topographischer Schau-Platz von Africa und Ost-Indien… Wilhermsdorf: J.C. Tetscher, 1744, p. 256. Amsterdam Museum, inv.nr. LA 1905.

---

[23] SLNA, 1/2766: Galle Compendium 1758/1759, attachment No 27, Moorse Tombo ("List of Muslims"). Attachment No 28, List of Chetties, sums up 123 persons, among whom 13 men were free of Ulyam Service–most of the 26 slaves will have been owned by the latter.
[24] Alexander Geelen, Bram van den Hout, Merve Tosun and Matthias van Rossum, "Between Markets and Chains: An Exploration of the Experiences, Mobility and Control of Enslaved Persons in the Eighteenth-Century South-West India," in Alicia Schrikker and Nira Wickramasinghe, *Being a Slave, Histories and Legacies of European Slavery in the Indian Ocean.*(Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2020): 75-97. See also note 43.

No sketches by Heydt have survived, so we do not know to what extent he 'upholstered' his drawings afterwards. He must have done so realistically, for VOC officials, and more generally Europeans and Eurasians, were accompanied by slaves carrying umbrellas to keep their masters out of the hot sunshine. Bottom right one sees two ladies sitting in a palanquin. They are protected against the hot sun by a slave wearing a talipat leaf. The slaves in this (and other prints by Heydt) can be read as giving expression to status of the white VOC men – all of whom would have felt a sense of absolute superiority over these enslaved servants. However, their relative positions were so taken for granted that we should not assume that Heydt added in these servants in order to express his superiority. It was simply the everyday reality that could be seen everywhere and at all times.

The young servant behind the Company officer at the right is holding a fold-up talipat leaf, when opened used as traditional protection against the hot sun. The slave in this watercolour can be read as giving expression to status of the white VIC men – all of whom would have felt a sense of absolute superiority over this servant. However, their relative positions were so taken for granted that we should not assume that Steiger added in the young boy in order to express this superiority. It was simply the everyday reality that could be seen everywhere and at all times. Therefore, in this kind of images we always see servants wear a sun-shade to protect their master.

Owners of domestic slaves in Jaffna, 1818

To start with: the several Jaffna Slave Registers of 1818 consist of two separate units. One concerns the registration of slave casts that only existed in the northern province, formerly the VOC Commandment of Jaffna, namely the registers of the *Covia*, *Nallua* and *Palla*. The situation of the members of these groups was complex, but, to keep it short here, one can say that there was a mixture of serfdom and slavery. We will come back to that later, now we will only delve into the other register, namely that of domestics in the households registered by the "Dutch Inhabitants and Burghers", residing in Jaffna proper–the so-called *Castle* of Jaffnapatnam–and the adjoining modest urban area. There the situation differed from other places: No members of other social groups (such as Muslims, Chetties or Sinhalese) had registered domestics–the Tamils or *Malabars*, as said above, had their own system of slavery.

In Jaffna, 28 "Dutch" owners registered their domestics and respective children: 41 female slaves, 23 male slaves and 67 children–of these 61 were not free at the time of registration, 6 children had been freed. Only one child was born free after the new ordinance. The enslaved domestics and their non-free children counted together 125, therefore the average of enslaved persons in the households was 4.5 slaves. The number of persons in the Jaffna register is such that not all details can be shown in a table. All data however is contained in Appendix 1.

The names given by the owners are not much different from what we have seen in Galle. We come across names like May and November, Abraham,

Jacob, Joseph and Benjamin, Alexander, Minerva and Pandora, etc, and further the usual names in Western style. In Jaffna too a fantasy name was given, not very respectful, namely Onverwagt ('Unexpected').[25] A few non-Western names are striking. We find Soentien and Sontee, Nagy Natjie and her child Deogoe ('Deogu').[26] One given name is quite mysterious, namely Vanderkruys, a son of Lena, a domestic owned by John Stutzer. The website with names of eighteenth-century crew members and other personnel on board VOC ships, maintained by the National Archives in The Hague,[27] lists a number of persons with the name Van der Kruijs, but a descendant of one of them in Jaffna is not easily traceable. It may be someone who had fathered Lena with her fourth child.

As is also the case with the Slave register of Galle, column 8 indicates whether the children of registered domestics are free or not (Non Free / Free). That is the case with six of these children, all of the female sex. After sixteen children we read in column 12 ("Additional Remarks") the addition "Emancipated ," four registered domestics got the same remark.

"Emancipated" did not mean that the persons concerned were actually freed. Members of the group "Dutch Inhabitants and Burghers", namely those who sat on the Special Jury of the province of Colombo, wrote to Sir Alexander Johnston on July 14, 1816 that they wholeheartedly supported his proposal, saying it was their "earnest desire, if possible, to disencumber ourselves of that unnatural character of being proprietors of human beings," but they also wrote that they could not agree with "a sudden and total abolition of slavery," that would not only harm the owners but also the slaves themselves. Even more, they argue, "[T]he slaves of the Dutch inhabitants are generally emancipated at their [owners] death, and therefore we are confident that those who are still in a state of slavery have likewise the same chance of obtaining their freedom".[28] That comment was unrealistic, because emancipation was usually linked to certain conditions, such as, indeed, serving the owner till her/his death, but often there was an additional condition, namely the serving of a particular daughter or son for as long as they lived, or until a certain point in time. Kate Ekama has brought such to our attention in her excellent study on slavery in Colombo in the eighteenth century. She writes extensively about conditional emancipation and her conclusion is clear: "In Colombo, it is more likely that slaves who were freed under conditions of service exchanged one form of bondage for another and experienced little change in their circumstances".[29] That some actually did receive their emancipation deeds and were freed, we also learn from the Slave Register of Jaffna. That was the case with thirty of the domestics registered

[25] Such fantasy names were also given to foundlings in the Netherlands.
[26] In Jaffna is a Deogu Lane.
[27] Website *VOC Opvarenden*:
(https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/index/nt00444?searchTerm=).
[28] *Return*, 562.
[29] Kate Ekama, Slavery in Dutch Colombo, 29.

in 1818. In addition, in five cases we read "Mother and Child Free" or "Mother and Children Free." In one case we read "Mother and Child not free"–the background to this is not yet clear. However, as said above, absolute manumission often did not occur when the proprietor or her/his heirs believed that the emancipated slave had violated the conditions–then the emancipation could be reversed in court.

One remark in column 12 still requires attention, that is the remark "died" or "dead". We read this in eleven cases with registered domestics, sometimes with the addition "Mother died". It is striking that one case concerns the death of the male slave Achalus who, together with four other slaves in 1818 was registered by Anna Henrietta Vanderspar. In column 7 ("Names of Children of Female Slaves") the name Benjamin is listed after his name in column 3 ("names of slaves"), but it is not clear from this source whether his mother had died earlier. Neither we learn about the age of Benjamin. In case he would still had been a young child, there were three female domestics in the household, and also a male one, to care for him.

The literature gives an interesting reference to the origin of a few domestic slaves, namely in a late eighteenth-century document wherein also the name of Thomas Nagel (1740-1823) was mentioned, the one we meet thirty years later as owner who registrated in Jaffna in 1818 two domestics, Thesdorus and Sontee, and with the daughter of the latter, Alexes. (see Appendix 2). Nagel was the former Land Regent of the Wanni, and he had envisioned a great future for this area to the government in Colombo.[30] He was a great connoisseur of the northern provinces. He had started his career with the VOC as *vuurwerker*, a function just below that of lieutenant.

About some of his slaves we have interesting data from the Secretariat of Jaffna, namely a deposition in support of the lawful property in a slave, dated 27th march 1782.[31] Two witnesses, both from the Nallua caste declared that they could confirm that two slave children, one Eliza and Frans, had as mother the domestic Regina, and another child, Joseph, Ragel, as mother. They could bear witness to this, "because they had consistently frequented" the houses of the Artillery Officer Thomas Nagel and of the Artillery Cadet Gerrit Engelbert Vos. The aforementioned slave children in the house of the two VOC soldiers will therefore almost certainly have belonged to the caste of the Nalluas. This is one of the rare evidence that VOC staff in Jaffna had domestic slaves who had not been brought in from South India, but came from the province of Jaffna itself.

The above-commented data from the Slave Records from 1818 cannot lead to meaningful discussions without a firm comparison with the situation

---

[30] See about Thomas Nagel and the Wanni: Alicia Schrikker, *Dutch and British colonial intervention in Sri Lanka, 1780-1815: Expansion and Reform*. (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007), 86-89, 103-107.
[31] R.G. Anthonisz, *Report on the Dutch Archives at Colombo* (Colombo: H.C. Cottle, Government Printer, 1907), 67-68.

at the time of the occupation of the coastal area by the VOC, a starting around 1640 and running to 1796 when the British took over. Such a comparison should certainly not be limited to quantitative aspects, but should also address questions about the treatment and appreciation of the domestic slaves. In addition, the current discourses about slavery and the slave trade, the share of Europeans in this, and in particular the role of the Dutch East India Company in this should also be addressed. Therefore, first some information will be presented on the use of slaves by the Company itself and by its European and Eurasian personnel, and by Eurasians not engaged by the Company, but who lived in a close relationship with the VOC, and were even highly dependent on it.

Domestic Slavery in Dutch Colonial Ceylon

The VOC was not just a trading company, it was an institution facilitated by the Dutch state, aiming at a maximum economic exploitation of the coastal area against minimal costs. To this end, it was essential that all existing social and economic structures were used and developed to achieve that goal. This meant that statute labour in the occupied territories of Sri Lanka, the so-called *rayakariya*, and other forms of forced labor, continued to exist and, if possible, were adapted to the needs of the VOC. Slavery, here mainly explored in the field of domestic slavery, was essential for the Company because, by keeping and expanding that system, its personnel, Europeans and Eurasians, were greatly facilitated to perform their duties optimally.

The economic exploitation was accompanied by the development and strengthening of close relations with the upper classes of the several social groups, such as the Sinhalese (who formed the majority in the southwestern part of the island), the Tamils (making up the majority in the northern province and in the coastal belt of the northeast), and of Muslims and Chetties–above it has already been stated that these two groups got a special treatment by the VOC, because they were considered as foreigners who were guests in Ceylon.

The close relations with the respective elites was not only in the interest of the Company, for the various elites in turn also benefited from this collaboration: It enabled them to maintain and even strengthen their position amidst their respective social groups. This is evident from the fact that they used and copied instruments of colonial society. The figures from early nineteenth-century sources show that the upper layer of the social groups mentioned above, had followed the Dutch colonial legal system in the use of domestic slaves–as a matter of fact, they had no other legal options open (and again, in the northern provinces of Sri Lanka the situation was different). Although sometimes under protest, they followed suit when the colonial rulers were taking the first steps of abolishing the system. The data retrieved from VOC records and from the Slave Registers discussed above, show sufficiently how parallel in this respect the interests of the various local elites

in the colonial structure were. Therefore, research on domestic slavery should not be limited to Europeans' share of slavery in their own social and economic environment, but must also be turned to the impact of colonial rule on the different communities–bearing in mind the persistent existence of unequal relationships among the communities.

Slave ownership was quite common during the one and a half century that the Dutch East India Company controlled parts of coastal Ceylon. The Company's Dutch personnel, those who the British would subsequently describe as "Dutch Inhabitants and Burghers" (the latter being persons of mixed European and Asian origin), and other of the island's inhabitants including Chetties, Moors, and Sinhalese and Tamil *mudaliyars*[32] and lower chiefs owned slaves.[33] The 1816 address reflects both the ethnic diversity and the elite status of its signatories. Twenty-three signers in Ja-Ela, for example, had the honorific title "Don" which dated from the period of Portuguese rule in the coastal area, starting around 1550 (depending of the place) and ending in 1658 with the loss of the northen province. Many of these persons shared the same last name (Perera) which likewise attests to their descent from families who had maintained close ties with the Portuguese. The same holds true in Colombo and Negombo where signatories from the Vellale, Fisher, and Washer communities included numerous individuals with Portuguese surnames such as Perera, Fernando, and (de) Silva. This elitist character also applies to the signatories of the group "Mahabadde". To give a clue, four owners of those represented as subscribers in the section of Mahabadde bore the surname "Rajepakse", a family which produced many chiefs who collaborated with the VOC.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to exactly determine the extent of domestic slavery in colonial Ceylon. The information at our disposal suggests that Dutch governors and other top officials owned fifteen and often more such slaves, while other senior staff with the rank of merchant, also serving on the councils in places such as Colombo, Galle and Jaffna each owned at least five to ten domestic slaves. Such a number was also kept in the household of the pastors of the Reformed Church, a figure substantiated by the fact that Abraham Anthony Engelbrecht, who served as minister to the Company's employees in Galle, had to leave five of his seven slaves behind when he left Ceylon in 1807.[34] Slaves accounted for 159 (27 percent) of the 581 persons who embarked on two of the four ships which carried Dutch personnel from

---

[32] Also spelled *mudaliar, muthaliar, mudali, muthali, or moodley*. A Tamil title indicating a person of the first rank. The Portuguese created the position to serve as a link between colonial authorities and the local population. *Mudaliyars* were paid in the form of land grants and the right to service from local communities.

[33] Alicia Schrikker and Kate J. Ekama, "Through the Lens of Slavery: Dutch Sri Lanka in the Eighteenth Century," Zoltán Biedermann and Alan Strathern, eds, *Sri Lanka at the Crossroads of History* (London: UCL Press, 2017), 188.

[34] Alicia Schrikker, "Caught Between Empires," 134. Engelbregt died in Batavia, 23 September 1808.

Ceylon to Batavia that year. Overall, there is reason to believe that one-third of the approximately 1,000 passengers on these four vessels were enslaved domestics.[35]

Back to Jaffna

The first question to answer is how common the use of enslaved domestics actually was. The literature on the phenomenon of slavery during the VOC era in Sri Lanka is confined in amount and not all periods and locations are covered. The studies by Remco Raben and Kate Ekama should certainly be mentioned here, although both works are limited to the capital Colombo.[36] The situation in other urbanized places however, though most of them were quite small, was not essentially differencing from that in Colombo. It is no surprise that most European and Eurasian servants of the Company could dispose of domestics, the European common soldiers stationed in their baracks being the great exception. We know however, that many a soldier stayed behind in the East Indies and settled after fulfillment of the usual contract period of five years. The VOC records contain a lot of requests by such soldiers asking permission to marry a local housewife. From the records one learns that many of them had started a family, and even more, the documents show that even such modest employees could afford to have domestics in their dwellings. In Jaffna (and likewise in Mannar) so-called *Tupasses*, mostly descendants of Eurasians who had served the Portuguese, served as soldier, and they also were allowed to marry, and had domestics in their modest homes, called in Dutch a *kamer* or *woning* ('room' or 'house'), That we learn from data compiled in 1690, showing the situation of all Company servants, from top to bottom. The survey 'List of all families, their children and slaves, males and females, residing in the Kingdom of Jaffanapatnam with indication of the status of all children's mothers' sums up all members of the 126 households of the Company servants: 92 men, 118 women, 115 sons, 113 daughters, 284 male slaves and 284 female slaves, alltogether 1,006 persons.[37] So on average there were 4,5 domestics per household, but if the extremes are not taken into account, it can be said that many families had much more domestics at their disposal. That can clearly be seen from Table C.

---

[35] Ibid, 140.

[36] Kate Ekama, *Slavery in Dutch Colombo*; Remco Raben, *Batavia and Colombo. The Ethnic and Spatial Order of Two Colonial Cities 1600*-1800 (PhD thesis Leiden University, 1996).

[37] National Archives, The Hague, VOC 1469, Brieven en Papieren overgekomen van Ceylon in 1691, 557r-559r: Rolle der familien, derselver kinderen, slaven en slavinnen, remoreerende [verblijvende] in't koninckrijck Jaffanapatnam met aenwijsinge uijt wat moeders de kinderen sijn geteelt, Jaffna, 7 november 1690.

TABLE C: Jaffna Company Slave Owners and their domestics registered in 1690.

	Origin of Wife	Children	Male	Female	Slaves	Male	Female
Commander	Hollantse	3	2	1	33	25	8
Dessave	Hollantse	1	-	1	21	13	8
Minister	Hollantse	8	4	4	22	10	12
Minister	Hollantse	3	2	1	10	5	5
Administrator	Hollantse	-	-	-	18	10	8
Fiscal	Hollantse	2	1	1	10	5	5
Cashier	Hollantse	2	1	1	14	7	5
Captain	Hollantse	2	1	1	10	6	4
Surgeon	Hollantse	6	4	2	11	5	6
Ass. Surgeon	Misties	1	-	1	4	2	2
Ass. Surgeon	Misties	-	-	-	3	2	1
Ass. Surgeon	Misties	-	-	-	1	-	1
Usher	Misties	1	-	1	2	1	1
Assistent	Mixties	2	2	-	5	2	3
Ensign	Casties	3	2	1	10	5	5
Ensign	Misties	4	1	3	6	3	3
Ensign	Misties	2	1	1	7	2	5
Sergeant	Misties	7	6	1	1	1	-
Sergeant	Misties	2	1	1	9	4	5
Sergeant	Toepasie	2	2	-	1	-	1
Soldier	Toepasie	-	-	-	1	-	1
Soldier	Misties	1	1	-	2	-	2
Carpenter	Misties	6	3	3	4	1	3
Carpenter	Misties	1	-	1	1	1	-
Carpenter	Misties	1	-	1	1	1	-
Schoolmaster	Toepasie	4	2	2	3	1	2
Cooper	Misties	-	-	-	1	1	-

Source: National Archives, The Hague, VOC 1469, Brieven en Papieren overgekomen van Ceylon in 1691, 557r-559r: Rolle der familien, derselver kinderen, slaven en slavinnen, remoreerende [verblijvende] in't koninckrijck Jaffanapatnam met aenwijsinge uijt wat moeders de kinderen sijn geteelt, Jaffna, 7 november 1690

The table with 25 of the 126 families of VOC staff in Jaffna (including the single-person households) shows the major differences between the Europeans and those of Eurasian origin. As mentioned earlier, the senior members or *gequalificeerden* (qualified officers) had fifteen, twenty or more domestics at their disposal. This was already known about various senoir officers and from different periods, but it is special to see these amount brought together in one source. From this we learn that almost 65 percent of the VOC servants were involved in the system of slavery at home. One third

(44 households) had no domestics at all, while twelve households had only one slave.

The number of Eurasians in the secretaries and other departments holding simple jobs, below the rank of accountant, in Jaffna is comparable to what I had found in previous research on Galle for the year 1760, about sixty percent. This fact is important, because it is precisely members of this group who stayed behind after the change of power in 1796: they had become Sri Lankan through the VOC.

The number of Eurasians occupying the modest jobs in the secretaries and other departments of Jaffna, below the rank of bookkeeper, was comparable to what I had found in previous research on Galle for the year 1760: About sixty percent. This fact is relevant, because members of this group had remained after the change of power in 1796. Not all members of this group will have been able to maintain their economic and social position, others however will have been able to keep their status over the years, and those are the ones we meet in the list of subscribers in 1816.

After the date of the composition of the report of 1690 nothing had changed with regard to slavery, therefore the number of domestics in the last years of the VOC administration must have been comparable to that of a century before.

In 1796 the international situation had completely changed, the British had taken over, and the contacts with the Netherlands had been broken due to the Napoleonic Wars. VOC personnel that had remained behind had no longer a grip on the slave trade with South India. Before 1796 inhabitants of Galle could easily acquire new domestics at the auctions held after arrival of East Indiamen from South India. VOC documents kept in Colombo inform us in detail about the existence of a private slave trade involving skippers and officers of such VOC ships, but that supply line had ceased to exist.[38] Then in 1807/08 the last part of VOC personnel had left, leaving behind mostly individuals and families with an Eurasian background who were not eligible for transfer to Batavia or who wanted to stay and try the new masters. There are no suitable sources to inform us who had domestics around 1796, and how many.

The extent of domestic slavery following the imposition of British rule in 1800 is equally difficult to determine. There is good reason to believe, however, that the number of domestic slaves declined for reasons other than just the Dutch evacuation of the island. In 1800, the British administration issued a proclamation regulating domestic slavery and banning slave imports and exports, while the 1820s witnessed additional abolitionist measures

---

[38] SLNA 1/5775, Ordinary Secreatariat Protocols 1 January 1760-28 January 1761. See for more about private (domestic) and Company slaves in Galle: Lodewijk Wagenaar, Galle. VOC-vestiging in Ceylon. Beschrijving van een koloniale samenleving aan de vooravond van de Singalese opstand tegen het Nederlandse gezag, 1760. Amsterdam: De Bataafse Leeuw, 1994, 51-59.

including the passage in 1821 of an ordinance freeing all female slave children of Covia, Nallua, and Palla caste status born on or after 24 April 1821 and governmental allocation in 1822 and 1824 of the monies needed to purchase the freedom of 900 Nallua and Palla slaves and their families.[39] The 1824 census recorded the presence of 221 "descendants of slaves," 1,115 freed slaves, and 17,538 slaves in the colony, including 18 described as "slaves of the Burghers" and 78 as "formerly slaves of the Dutch Government," but failed to distinguish domestic or urban slaves from those who lived elsewhere.[40] According to a report submitted to a commission of inquiry in 1831, the number of domestic slaves in the colony's maritime provinces did not exceed 1,000, most of whom were the property of the Dutch inhabitants who had signed the 1816 address or their descendants. The same report reveals that only 96 children (50 boys, 46 girls) had been born to slave mothers and freed since then.[41] The number of domestic slaves continued to decline with the passage of time, and had become no more than a marginal group by the time slavery was formally abolished in Ceylon in 1843.

Domestic Slave Ownership

In 1818, the colonial administration ordered the establishment of a slavery registry to ensure that the slave owners who had vowed in 1816 to free the children born of their female slaves had kept their promise to do so. The register of domestic slaves in Colombo, Galle, Matara, Jaffna and Mannar, which continued to be maintained until 1832, in connection with the compensation schemes to be implemented, provides an unique opportunity to view this otherwise obscure slave population.[42] The registers recorded domestic slaves' names alphabetically in each town or district and were intended to record kinds of information about individual slaves including their number within each alphabetical list; the date of their registration; their name, sex, and age; the name of their owner; the names of children born to female slaves; whether these children were free or not; the name and sex of slave children born after the first registry and number and letter under which they were registered as slaves; the number and letter under which a slave was registered on a change of property; and, lastly, any additional remarks. It should be noted that registers usually recorded information for only the first eight of these categories.

---

[39] Allen, *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014), 190-91, 193.

[40] Reported in E.B. Denham (ed.), *Census Report. Ceylon at the Census of 1911, Being the Review of the Results of the Census of 1911* (Colombo: H.C. Cottle, Government Printer, 1912), 11.

[41] "Extract from a report of Lieutenant-colonel Colebrooke, one of his Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry, upon the administration of the Government of Ceylon, dated 24 December 1831," *Return*, 597-98.

[42] National Archives of the United Kingdom (hereafter NAUK), Kew: T 71/663, Ceylon: Domestic slaves [registered in] Colombo, Galle, Matura, Jaffna and Manar, 1818-1832.

The information in these registers provides us with an opportunity to see if there had been any shifts in the system of domestic slavery after the ending of the VOC regime, or to the extent to which it was applied.

Domestic Slaves and Their Masters

The relationships between domestic slaves and their masters in colonial Ceylon often remain hidden from our view. Unlike other European colonies in the Indian Ocean world such as Mauritius and South Africa where slaves' voices can sometimes be heard, albeit perhaps only indirectly,[43] such voices are largely absent from the Ceylonese archival record. Last wills and testaments provide some insight into the relationships between domestic slaves and their owners. The will of Steven Baade, for example, confirm that some owners had special, if not affectionate, relationships with their enslaved domestics. More specifically, the will reveals that Baade, the Company's Master of Equipment in Galle, had adopted Johannes Baade, the child he had undoubtedly fathered with his manumitted enslaved domestic Regina.[44] Such relationships are certainly more common, but they are not easily traceable in the sources. Sometimes, as discussed above with the slave name Vanderkruys, one can have suspicions about fatherhood. And what about "Mr. Johannes Anthonisz" from Galle (see Appendix 1)? His domestic Selphia, aged 45 in 1818, had a daughter Johana ('Joan'), a name that does not appear in the various lists of slaves–but of course, one has to be careful with such speculations.

If the relationships that domestic slaves had with their masters often remains hidden, it is clear that for many Europeans, domestic slaves were crucial components of their lives. While the signatories to the 1816 address to the prince regent expressed their sympathy with the sentiments that had moved Parliament to look favorably upon "that unfortunate class of beings

---

[43] See, for example, the complaints that Mauritian slaves filed with the colony's Protector of Slaves during the late 1820s and early 1830s, some of which printed in the British Parliament Sessional Papers. Surviving correspondence has also made it possible to reconstruct at least some aspects of the lives of Southeast Asian slaves who reached the Cape Colony. See Gerald Groenewald, "Panaij van Boegies: Slave–*Bandiet–Caffer*," *Quarterly Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa* 59, no. 2 (2005): 50-62; Sirtjo Koolhof and Robert Ross, "Upas, September and the Bugis at the Cape of Good Hope: The Context of a Slave's Letter," *Archipel* 70 (2005): 281-308. Recent publications shed additional light on the lives of European-owned slaves in the Indian Ocean world. See Alicia Schrikker and Nira Wickramasinghe, eds., *Being a Slave. Histories and Legacies of European Slavery in the Indian Ocean* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2020); Matthias van Rossum, Alexander Geelen, Bram van der Hout, and Merve Tosun, *Testimonies of Enslavement: Sources on Slavery from the Indian Ocean World* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020).

[44] Lodewijk Wagenaar, "The Cultural Dimension of the Dutch East India Company Settlements in Dutch-Period Ceylon, 1700-1800," in Thomas Da Costa Kauffmann and Michael North, eds., *Mediating Netherlandish Art and Material Culture in Asia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014), 141-176, esp. 152-54. The case is based on the last will of Steven Baade of February 1760, Sri Lanka National Archives (SLNA), 1/5731.

placed in the degraded condition of slavery," they urged the gradual abolition in the colony on the grounds that,

> In families long settled in this island, of whatever class, the Household establishment is usually so much dependent on the service of slaves, that a general discharge of those persons would subject the inhabitants to privations, losses and expense, such as ordinary prudence forbids us to encounter; at the same time we have reason to know, that to great numbers of persons now in our houses in the character of slaves, bred up under our roofs, many of them far advanced in life, the greater part established in habits and attachment, a general emancipation would withdraw the source of their support without advancing their happiness or improving their condition.[45]

The signatories claim that they had supported their household slaves "for a course of years with kind and considerate treatment and comfortable subsistence" is of particular interest because it invariably raises the question of whether domestic slavery in colonial Ceylon was really as mild as these memorialists claimed. Evidence from elsewhere in the Indian Ocean world suggests there is good reason to believe otherwise. Robert Ross, for example, notes that while slave owners in Cape Town may, at times, have considered their domestic slaves "to be part of the family," it is unlikely that many or, indeed, any household slaves thought of themselves as such. Ross demonstrates, moreover, that Cape Town's emancipated domestics did not hesitate to leave the houses of their former masters to find their own accommodations, even when these dwellings were modest and far away.[46] Evidence from Mauritius likewise indicates that some 9,000 slaves purchased their freedom following the abolition of slavery in the colony on 1 February 1835, and that a great majority of the colony's new freedmen abandoned their masters when the post-emancipation apprenticeship system came to an end in 1838.[47]

The sentiments expressed in the 1816 must accordingly be viewed in the context of the day and age in which they were articulated, a period which witnessed the winds of abolitionism blowing with increasing intensity in the British Indian Ocean world. Ceylon did not remain untouched by these winds which made themselves felt for the first time in the second half of the 1780s when British East India Company officials sought not only to abolish slave trading to and from India, but even the institution of slavery itself.[48] These developments invariably raise the question of what were the realities of the

---

[45] Enclosure 11 in Extract of a Despatch from Lieutenant-general Sir R. Brownrigg to Earl Bathurst, Colombo, 16 September 1816, in: *Return*, 567.

[46] Robert Ross, "Accommodation and the Ironies of Resistance: The Housing of Cape Town's Enslaved and Freed Population Before and After Emancipation," paper presented at the Workshop on "Being a Slave," Leiden University, 29-30 May 2017.

[47] Richard B. Allen, *Slaves, Freedmen, and Indentured Laborers in Colonial Mauritius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 105-35.

[48] See Allen, *European Slave Trading*, 179-220.

slave experience in Dutch Ceylon, realities that were invariably shaped in part by the legal framework within which slavery in VOC possessions in general and slavery in Ceylon in particular. In his *History of Java*, Stamford Raffles observed that,

> … although they [the Dutch] adopted principles that admitted of the most cruel and wanton treatment of slaves, I would not be understood to say, that they carried these principles into common practice. The contrary was almost universally the case, and the condition of slaves on Java, where they were employed principally in domestic offices, formed a complete contrast to the state of those employed in the West-India plantations.[49]

It is possible that Raffles witnessed conditions in Ceylon similar to these he observed during his tour of duty in Batavia (1811-16).

The treatment of slaves in VOC possessions was governed by two sets of laws, the Statutes of Batavia (1642) and the New Statutes of Batavia (1766). Article 11 of the section of the 1642 Statutes that dealt with slaves and freed persons (*Lijf-eigenen en vrij gemaakten*) stipulated that slave owners were not permitted to chain, torture, or maltreat their slaves; they were, however, allowed to chastise them "domestically after merit" when they misbehaved.[50] Cases from Batavia and other VOC settlements attest that slaves were often subject to various forms of corporal "correction." In 1713, for example, a slave girl named Martha ran away from her owner, Jacob Keijl, the blacksmith's boss of Galle. Several testimonies of the incident and what happened afterwards have been passed down. For example, we read the statement of two surgeons who had diagnosed that Martha had serious ulcers

---

[49] Thomas Stamford Raffles, *The History of Java*, 2 vols. (London: Black, Purbury and Allen, and John Murray, 1817), vol. 1, 76. Raffles continued: "The grounds on which the Dutch justified the practice of making slaves, was not that they could not command the services of the natives with a sway sufficiently absolute, and that they were compelled to seek, beyond the limits of the island, for unfortunate agents to perform what the natives shewed a reluctance to undertake, but that they found the class of foreigners more adroit and docile than the Javans in the conduct of household affairs, and that having reduced them to the state of property, they remained in the family for life, and saved the trouble of a new training."

[50] J.A. van der Chijs, ed., *Nederlands-Indisch Plakaatboek, 1602-1811. Uitgegeven door het Bataviaansch genootschap van kunsten en wetenschappen met medewerking van de Nederlandsch-Indische regering*. Negende deel: Nieuwe Statuten van Batavia [1766]. Batavia: Landsdrukkerij/ 's Gravenhage: M. Nijhoff, 1891, 575. The Dutch text is as follows: "En, schoon 't den lyfheeren toegelaten is, wanneer hunne slaven eenige fauten komen te begaan, deselve huysselijk, naar verdienste te castyden, zoo zullen zy deselve egter niet vermogen in de ysers ofte boeyen te slaan, ten zy met kennisse en consent van den regter of den officier van justitie, onder wier jurisdictie zy sorteeren, veel min deselve te tortureeren of andersints grofelyk te mishandelen (...)." This article was taken over literally from the 'Old Statutes', the so-called *Statuten van Batavia* (1642). We know that this ordinance was also law in Dutch Ceylon for in 1659 that particular article was copied from the Batavian Statute Book and issued separately in Colombo (see Ordinance No. 49 in the edition of all Dutch Ceylonese ordinances in: L. Hovy, *Ceylonees Plakkaatboek. Plakkaten en andere wetten uitgevaardigd door het Nederlands bestuur op Ceylon, 1638-1796*. 2 Vols. (Hilversum: Verloren, 1991), I, 47.

on her body that needed acute care. We read Martha's own statement, translated by the interpreter of the Council of Justice in Galle, Joan Alvis. In 1711, we read, Martha had been bought with a couple of other slaves by the skipper of the yacht *Wateringen*, Jacob de Jong, and taken from Bengal to Ceylon. On the way the skipper died, and his belongings were auctioned upon arrival in Galle in May 1712. This is how Martha came to work in the house of Jacob Keijl, where she performed household tasks such as sewing shirts, she said. However, Keijl's housewife was never satisfied with her job, so she was regularly beaten by her, "and having been burned with firewood in various places on her body."[51] One day in March 1713, she couldn't stand it anymore and ran out of the house in a panic. On the street she met the Fiscal, Jacobus van Oudshoorn van Sonneveld, and begged to be allowed to be sold in order to be released from further chastisement. After medical examination, Martha was placed with the Master-of-Arms to recover in peace. She stated that she was not tied there, but that she had been allowed to roam frankly and freely in the prison house.

From another document we know that Jacob Keijl turned to the governor to get his "slave maid" Martha back. How that ended is not known to me. More important here is the fact that enslaved persons were normally heard and given testimony. Certainly, we do not know exactly how the deposition came about, Martha may have been helped here and there to refresh her memory, for example in the case of the name of the yacht, *Wateringen*. It is also not known whether she actually remembered the name of the skipper, or whether this was known on the secretary from other documents–because everything related to an auction was carefully recorded, including checks on whether someone indeed had the legal status of a slave. Be that as it may, it is remarkable that we hear from such a judicial document the voice of a slave.

There are virtually no documented stories showing extremely bad treatment of domestics in Ceylon. One case, however, has gained notoriety because it is mentioned by François Valentijn in connection with the death of Ceylon's Governor Isaak Augustin Rumph on June 11, 1723. He is said to have had a heart attack when he learned that the fiscal of Colombo, Barent van der Swaan, and his wife had been murdered by their slaves–he was literally shocked to death. It is assumed that the murder was a result of ill-treatment, but details are not known from written documents.[52]

---

[51] NA, VOC 9787, Missives and Papers (Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren [OBP] from Ceylon, received in 1715, part II, Attachments, p. 163-166 (the pagination was recently added in pencil by an employee of the archive). From the Dutch text it is clear that the housewife herself executed the 'corporal correction': "(..) dat zij attestant door de huijsvrouw van voorsz. baas ["by the housewife of the said boss", mine underlining, LW] verscheijde male zeer strengelijk geslagen en hier en daar op 't lichaam met brandhoud is gebrand geworden, ter zaake de attestant dagelijx niet genoeg na de zin van haar juffrouw aff deed".

[52] Reference to the story from François Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën* [the description of the VOC and its history in Asia], Volume 5A [1726], 359, retrieved from Wagenaar, *Galle*, 59.

Local ordinances provide additional insight into the ways in which slaves were treated. A *plakkaat* (placard) of 16 November 1759 intended to prevent begging by impoverished manumitted slaves was deemed necessary because of "the inhumane and unmerciful behaviour of Christians as well as Muslims and Heathens who turn out [of] their houses and abandon not only free persons whom they had quasi adopted or otherwise had taken in their houses [as domestics] only for maintenance, but also after many years of service their enslaved domestics when they happened to be contaminated, ill, diseased, infirm or old aged."[53] This was not the first such ordinance; in 1711, a similar ordinance had also forbid masters from getting rid of their slaves and other domestic servants because of illness or other infirmities.[54]

Such acts by slave owners reflected the widespread belief that slaves engaged willingly in acts, such as theft, intended to harm on their masters. A 1786 ordinance attests to the seriousness with which authorities viewed such activity; the ordinance forbid people from buying a wide range of items from slaves including jewels, items made of gold, silver or copper, household furnishings, instruments, cloth, clothing, wine, beer and other alcoholic drinks, "or other items of whatever nature it might be, even not clothes or personnel ornaments of the slaves themselves, since a slave cannot possess anything as private property."[55] Such ordinances rarely had the desired effect. Three years later, in 1789, another ordinance forbid people to purchase or take as security from "ordinary natives, *let alone from slaves* [emphasis added] any valuable items, such as clothing, cloth, items made from gold and silver, jewellery, etc., without the foreknowledge and permission of the relevant authorities."[56]

Conclusion

Policy development and implementation in Sri Lanka by the VOC and the English government in the period 1780-1815 has been discussed extensively by Alicia Schrikker in her book on "Dutch and British colonial intervention". Action, intervention, planning, even dreaming by administrators and staff.

---

[53] L. Hovy, *Ceylonees Plakkaatboek*, II, 649-651 (Ordinance No. 444). The original text reads: "(..) ontwaard is de waare oorzaak daarvan te zijn dat veele ingeseetenen – zowel christenen als Moren en heydenen – zo onmedogend, ja gantsch onmenschelijk zijn om niet alleen vrije menschen die zij quasi geaddopteerd of andersins alleen voor onderhoud in hunnen dienst op- en aangenomen hebben, maar ook haare lijfeigenen na langjaarig genot van diensten, wanneer besmet, ziek, zugtig, gebrekkig of oud werden, te verstooten en aan haar eyge voorsorge over te laten."
[54] Hovy, *Ceylonees Plakkaatboek*, I, 351-352 (Ordinance No. 228).
[55] Hovy, *Ceylonees Plakkaatboek*, II, 869 (Ordinance No. 631, Art. 10). The Dutch text reads: "Niemand zal van slaaven iets moogen koopen of in pand neemen, inzonderheid geene klijnodiën, goud-, zilver-, koperwerk, huysraad, gereedschap, lijnwaat, kleedjes of gemaakte kleederen, alsmeede geen wijn, bier of andere dranken of iets anders van wat natuur 't ook moge zijn, al waar't ook kleedingstukken of lijfciraadjes van de slaven zelven, alzoo een slaaf niets eygens kan bezitten".
[56] Hovy, *Ceylonees Plakkaatboek*, II, 925-26 (Ordinance No. 631).

Today, there is a new interest in the *impact* of colonial administration and policy on local societies. Not only by a policy of administrative *action*, but also of tacit or not tacit *toleration*, in different degrees: from consciously accepting to letting go. The Company itself had an interest in using slaves to realize work in the form of forced labor in its various departments (yards, warehouses, fortress building, etc.). The VOC also had an interest in maintaining a system of domestic labor, or even expanding it in size, because that's what her personnel needed. Its facilitating activities played a major role in this, in fact, the positive action in the field of slavery by the Company can be seen as decisive for the maintenance of the system.

The Company was able to give a clear outline of the system of slavery with legal tools borrowed from Roman law. Thus the system was rigged with a variety of regulations, including those that must limit the slave owners in their unbridled freedom to punish their enslaved domestics. Other ordinances must prevent emancipated slaves from being thrown out without giving them sufficient means of subsistence. In addition, the Company also guarded the interests of its personnel by, among other things, the provision that Europeans / Christians were not allowed to sell slaves to Muslims. It could be said without hesitation that the administration and the judiciary (at that time not yet separate units) provided the tools for maintaining the system: clerks have drawn up many thousands of documents dealing with (domestic) slavery, sales deeds, proofs, etc. etc, and yes, also acts of emancipation.

British colonial administrators had not arrived in 1796 on the island with a clean slate on the subject of slave trade and slavery in 1796. They were aware of the developments in the UK that had led to the fight against the slave trade, and they had also extensively experienced the various forms of slavery in India–inclusive its many abuses. Intervention in India proved to be extremely difficult, but the first attempts to tackle slavery in Sri Lanka also failed. The "evils" were too deeply rooted.[57]

This article focuses on a first, albeit very hesitant, push towards the abolition of domestic slavery. "1816" was really something new, despite its limitations. Children born free were required to remain in the home of the former owners until the age of twelve (girls) or fourteen (boys). That meant showing themselves as "benefactors of the human race" did not hurt, for the consequences of that "charitable" proposal were pushed far ahead–that delay approached the generic abolition of slavery, in 1832, although the final abolition in Sri Lanka was not implemented until 1843. The other groups spoke in the same terms, such as the Muslims: "We, (..) the Mahomedans (..) being likewise proprietors of slaves, and desirous of extending our voluntary

---

[57] See the anonymous pamphlet *Slavery and the Slave Trade in British India; with Notices of the Existence of these Evils in the Islands of Ceylon, Malacca, and Penang* (London: Thomas Ward and Co., 1841).

aid towards the eventual extinction of slavery on this island...”[58]. And the Sinhalese: “[W]e, being desirous to grant our aid for the eventual extinction of slavery, most willingly coincide in that benevolent and humane act of declaring all children born (..) free...”[59] “We the undersigned Chitties”, etc, etc. The implementation of Johnston's proposal was laid down by the representatives of the Dutch Inhabitants and Burghers in eleven articles: Article 4 concerned the continued service at home of the boys and girls in question, who would subsequently receive their letter of manumission when they reached the age of 14 and 12 respectively (art. 5). At the end of that resolution an additional article was proposed, though not consented to unanimously, with the provision however that it would be inserted at the end of the foregoing resolutions, namely: “That the freeborn children shall, as a token of their freedom, be brought up in the habit of their native ancestors, and not wear any European dress (my underlining, LW), and be further taught, by such as may be capable of affording it, to read and write some native language”.[60]

That would take a while, and by then, in the majority of cases, domestic slavery in the country had already ended naturally, due to lack of supply, and due to old age and death. That actually proved not to be problematic, for the society could provide many other opportunities to recruit domestic service personnel. That development, and the treatment of those domestics is beyond the scope of this article, but is relevant enough to study–inside and outside Sri Lanka.

Appendix 1: List of owners of three social groups [Dutch Inhabitant/Burghers, Sinhalese and Muslims] who in 1818 registered their domestic slaves in Galle.

The order of names in the Slave Registers of Galle is based upon the names of their domestics, who are registered in alphabetical order after their (given) names. Hence the order of their owners in the registers is arbitrary, and, in case they owned more slaves, they are mentioned several times. In this appendix, the owners are listed only once, with their domestics placed in alphabetical order after their owners' names.For practical reasons in this appendix the names of the owners are listed per social group: Dutch Inhabitants / Burghers, Sinhalese, and Muslims.

---

[58] Enclosure 2 in Extract of a despatch from Lieutenant-general Sir R. Brownrigg to Earl Bathurst, Colombo, 16 September 1816: meeting of 20 July 1816, *Return* 563..
[59] Enclosure 3 in Extract of a despatch from Lieutenant-general Sir R. Brownrigg to Earl Bathurst, Colombo, 16 September 1816: meeting of 22 July 1816, *Return*, 563-564.
[60] Enclosure 7 in Extract of a despatch from Lieutenant-general Sir R. Brownrigg to Earl Bathurst, Colombo, 16 September 1816: meeting of 15 July 1816, *Return*, 565-566.

Name of owner	Social group	Name of slave	Date of registr.	Age	Sex	Names of children	Free / Non Free	Children born after first registry, with sex and date of birth
Mrs Degen	DI/B	Jasmina	27/10	40	F	Adrina Jacoba Keetje Sofia	NF NF NF F	
		Sophia	17/10	68	F	Rosina	NF	
		October	17/10	40	M			
Mr Digen	DI/B	Malatie	17/10	36	F	Helena Catharina	NF NF	
Mrs J.J. Engelbregt [subscriber]	DI/B	Cannega	26/10	35	F			
Mr Van Hek	DI/B	Marques	28/10	40	M			
Mrs Ludevice	DI/B	Falentina July	22/12 22/12	35 47	F M	Harlekyn	NF	
Mr De Vos	DI/B	Rosina Selvia Philida	17/10 27/10 27/10	83 58 22	F F F			
Mr Johannes Anthonisz	DI/B	Selphia	09/09	45	F	Johana	NF	
Registered by 7 owners: 9 female slaves, 3 male slaves, 9 children of these, of whom one free at the time of registration.								
Don Abraham Dias *Guard Modliar* [subscriber]	S	Anthony Libina	14/12 14/12	35 60	M F			
Don Bastian Jayetilleke *Attepatte Modliar*	S	Casandra	14/12	45	F	Pinrehyi Abeya Inwema	NF NF NF	
		Dingey	14/12	28	F	Watowey Nonetey Rosina	NF NF F	Juan M – b. 8/7/1820 Cullo Appo M 29/9/1823
		Loesa Samelie	14/12 14/12	27 44	M F	Maleya Juanie Jubeya Justina Christina	NF NF NF NF NF	

Owner		Slave name	Date	Age	Sex	Children	Status	
						Dona	F	
		Sinne	14/12	40	F	Cornelis	NF	
Registered by 2 owners: 5 female slaves, 2 male slaves, 13 children of these, of whom two free at the time of registration and two born free after the regulation.								
Ahamadoe Lebbe Andoe Lebbe Markan	M	Alalie Miran Pakirel Sinnewel	06/11 06/11 06/11 06/11	39 42 35 37	M M F F	Mira Baney MademBandoo Amadiem Pakier Bando	NF NF NF NF	
Ander Lebbe Sinne Lebbe Markair	M	Bibie Mathem Bandoe Sinnewal Salem	30/10 30/10 30/10 30/10	48 56 45 44	F M F M	Mira Bandoe Pakier Ismael Aussin	NF NF NF NF	
Secadi Marcair Seddie Lebbe Markan	M	Castorie	06/11	35	F			
Alfred Rocoeh Cader Saiboe	M	Chimney Maddey	29/12	26	F	Ausin Bandoe	NF	
Mira Nayna Markan Nooema Lebbe Markan	M	Imnabaro mmoer	27/12	30	M			
Ahamadoe Natchia	M	Karittoo	24/11	35	F	Madun Bandoe	NF NF	
Alema Natcha	M	Mambey	24/10	40	F	Pakiral Kaysa Ausunuma	NF NF NF	
Mianayna Markan Udoema Lebbe Markan	M	Miran Bandoe Pakier Pakirel	07/12 07/12 07/12	12 30 14	M M F			
Ahamadoe Mapulley Ismael Lebbe Markan	M	Miran Pakiral	03/12 28/12	34 35	M F			

Miran Pirkuan	M	Ossenna	28/12	30	M			
Samsie Lebbe Slena Lebbe	M	[no name]		-	-	Palleaden Hadjie Ismael Rannewen	NF NF NF NF	
Ismael Lebbe Markan Sultan Sayboe	M	[no name]	29/12	-	-	Palleaden	NF	
Lemtenando Lindo Mihidin Banden	M?	Slematie	02/11	43	F	Pakiral Palley Kaymal Pakier Omoeran	NF NF NF NF NF	
Assen Nayna Camacapoelley Basin Balopla Rajab	M?	[no name]	04/11	-	-	Sinna Aman Paketteo	NF NF	
Registered by 14 owners: 25 female slaves, 9 male slaves, three boxes without mention of name and sex, 26 children of these, of whom two free at the time of registration and two born free under the new ordinance.								

Source: Data retrieved from the "Alphabetical register of domestic slaves in and for the province or district of Galle [Ceylon] under the 9th regulation of 1818", National Archives, Kew, England, inv.nr. T-71-663 [Registers of the Office for the Registry of Colonial Slaves, 1813 to 1834, Ceylon: T-71-663]. NB: not all names were legible.

Appendix 2: List of owners of "Dutch Inhabitant and Burghers" who in 1818 registered their domestic slaves in Jaffna.

The order of names in the Slave Registers of Jaffna is based upon the names of their domestics, who are registered in alphabetical order after their (given) names. Hence the order of their owners in the registers is arbitrary, and, in case they owned more slaves, they are mentioned several times. In this appendix, the owners are listed only once, with their domestics placed in alphabetical order after their owners' names.In the Slave Register of Jaffna only one group is represented, comprising mostly names of members of the group "Dutch Inhabitants and Burghers", plus a few English names.

Name of owner	Name of slave	Date of registr.	Age	Sex	Names of children of female slave	NF/F	Additional remarks
John A. Martensz [subscriber]	Andries	25/12	18	M	No name	NF	"Free"
Anna Henriettta Vanderspar	Achalus	31/10	18	M	Benjamin *m.*	NF	"Achalus died'
	Engeltina	31/10	21	F	Agate *f.*	F	
	Jesmena	31/10	38	F	Hausa *f.*	NF	Daughter of Hausa, Anjalina *f.*: *born after registration*
	Nasson	31/10	19	M	Luwese *f.*	F	
	Soentien	31/10	36	F	Benjamin *m.*	NF	"Free"
					Andries *m.*	NF	
					David *m.*	NF	
					Ambron *m.*	NF	
Salfelt	Albertina	02/11	20	F	No name	NF	
	Cryton	03/11	40	M			"Free"
	Castorie	03/10	50	F	Salmaran *m.*	NF	"Salmaran emancipated"
	Doretea	03/11	50	F	Castor *m.*	NF	
					Phegelant *m.*	NF	"Phegelant emancipated"
					Polcartus *m.*	NF	
					Rovette *f.*	NF	
					Castory *f.*	NF	
					Ormina *f.*	NF	"Ormina emancipated"
					Orphus *m.*	NF	"Orphus emancipated"
					Minerva *f.*	NF	"Minerva emancipated"
	November	03/11	55	M			
	Regena	03/11	58	F	Noresa *f.*	F	"Mother died"
	Statira	03/11	60	F	Clermont *m.*	NF	"The Mother and Clermont
					Stephanis *m.*	NF	and Stephanis free"
					Jesmie *f.*	NF	"Jesmie emancipated"
					Amelie *f.*	NF	"Amelie emancipated"
					Marselena *f.*	NF	"Marselena emancipated"
Juliana Verwyk, widow of Isaac Van Hek [subscriber]	Abraham	03/11	26	M	Joseph *m.*	NF	"Joseph emancipated"
	Jacob	03/11	23	M			"Free"
	Maria	03/11	29	F	Jacob *m.*	NF	"Free"
					Joseph *m.*	NF	
	Orphius	03/11	21	M			"Free"
C.D. Craft	Alexander	04/11	50	M			"Dead"
E.R. Nagel	Benjamin	03/11	20	M			"Emancipated"
	Joseph	03/11	22	M			"Emancipated"
	Maria	03/11	50	F	Frans *m.*	NF	"Emancipated"
					Ezau *m.*	NF	
					Anthonia *f.*	NF	
					David *m.*	NF	
	Pamela	03/11	16	F			
John Verwijk [subscriber]	Bastiaan	02/11	45	M			"Died"

Gerrit Frankena [subscriber]	Cezar	02/11	49	M				"Free"
John A. Stutzer [subscriber]	Clementina	31/10	23	F				
	Janiera	31/10	40	F	Pandora *f.* Lastoor *m.* Doengo *m.* Dylla *m.* Jumat *m.*	F NF NF NF NF		"Mother and Children free"
	Lena	31/10	26	F	Lucie *f.* Daphena *f.* Benjamin *m.* Vanderkuys *m* .	NF NF NF NF		"Mother, Children free"
	Pequet	31/10	30	M				"Free"
	Salman	31/10	30	M				
John Vandergeucht	Christina	04/11	40	F				"Dead"
	Clemina	04/11	20	F				"Dead"
	Christoffel	04/11	27	M				"Dead"
	Nagie	04/11	54	F				
J. G. Kock	Cartolina	28/10	25	F				"Dead"
	Dalida	02/10	30	F				"Free"
	Urbanis	28/10	35	M				"Free"
William de Rooy [subscriber]	Danial	24/10	16	M				"Free"
	Silvea	24/10	15	F				"Free"
Rodrigo Frederick	Filida	31/10	40	F				
Levenardus Kroon	Hagar	30/10	60	F	Leontina *f.*	NF		"Levantina emancipated"
	Minerva	30/10	32	F	Nepholis *m.* Phielies *m.*	NF NF		"Mother and Children free"
	Olimpia	30/10	25	F	Lentiles *m.* David *m.* Jelenes *m.*	NF NF NF		
John Matthysz [subscriber]	Jasmie	28/10	36	F	Sefasina *f.*	F		"Sefasina emancipated"
Johana Vanderwerf, widow of Kegel	Joan	31/10	40	M				"Free"
	Maria	31/10	35	F	Joseph *m.*	NF		"Mother and Child not free"
	Ormine	31/10	19	F				"Emancipated"
Isª Fredericksz	Livina	02/11	60	F				"Dead"
Gerardina Giffening,widow of Toussaint [subscriber]	May	28/10	25	M				"Free"
	Onverwagt	28/10	23	M				"Died"
Ibrahim Anthonisz	Marial Sandy	02/11	68	F	Sawerie *m.*	NF		"Mother died"
John Boiteling	Maarte	02/11	31	F	Elisa *f.* Markes *m.* Neltjie *f.*	NF NF NF		"Free"
Debora Honsz	Elvira	02/11	38	F	Alexander *m.*	NF		"Mother and Child free"
	Maria	02/11	16	F				"Free"
Vandersprenkel	Maria	02/11	30	F				"Free"

John Barendsz	Madelend	03/11	17	F	Amelie *f.*	F	"Amelie emancipated"
	Nagy Natjie	03/11	62	F	Deogoe *m.*	NF	"Deogo[e] emancipated"
Johanna Dormieux	Philupus	02/10	26	M			"Free"
David Boot	Ramy	29/10	25	F	Panda *f.*	NF	
					Amar *m.*	NF	
					Albena *f.*	NF	
					Melenda *f.*	NF	
					Eprasena *f.*	NF	
John Kock	Silvea	28/10	62	F	Urbanus *m.*	NF	"Silvea free"
					Delida *f.*	NF	
					Castelina *f.*	NF	
					Fransaeva *m.*	NF	
	Selafina	25/10	32	F			"Dead"
Thomas Nagel	Sontee	02/11	55	F	Alexes *f.*	NF	"Free""
	Thesdorus	02/11	50	M			"Free"
Caterina Jobsford	Statira	02/11	28	F			"Free"
Maria Stol	Thesresia	24/11	25	F	Albertus *m.*	NF	
Registered by 28 owners 41 female slaves, 23 male slaves, 67 children, of whom 61 were not free at the time of registration, 6 children were freed. One child was born free after the new regulation. Non free domestics and their non free children together 125 enslaved persons > average of 4.5 slaves per household.							

Source: Data retrieved from the "Alphabetical register of domestic slaves in and for the province or district of Jaffnapatam [Ceylon] under the 9th regulation of 1818", National Archives, Kew, England, inv.nr. T-71-663 [Registers of the Office for the Registry of Colonial Slaves, 1813 to 1834, Ceylon: T-71-663].

Bibliography

Allen, Richard B., *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014).

Allen, Richard B., *Slaves, Freedmen, and Indentured Laborers in Colonial Mauritius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Andaya, Barbara Watson, "From Temporary Wife to Prostitute: Sexuality and Economic Change in Early Modern Southeast Asia". *Journal of Women's History* 9, no. 4 (1998): 11-34.

Anthonisz, R.G., *Report on the Dutch Archives at Colombo* (Colombo: H.C. Cottle, Government Printer, 1907).

Denham, E.B. (ed.), *Census Report. Ceylon at the Census of 1911, Being the Review of the Results of the Census of 1911* (Colombo: H.C. Cottle, Government Printer, 1912).

Chijs, J.A. van der, (ed.), *Nederlands-Indisch Plakaatboek, 1602-1811. Uitgegeven door het Bataviaansch genootschap van kunsten en wetenschappen met medewerking van de Nederlandsch-Indische regering.* Negende deel: Nieuwe Statuten van Batavia [1766]. (Batavia: Lands-/drukkerij/ 's Gravenhage: M. Nijhoff, 1891).

Díaz, Jorge Simón Izquierdo, "The Trade in Domestic Servants (Morianer) from Tranquebar for Upper Class Danish Homes in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century," *Itinerario* 43, no. 2 (2019): 194-217.

Ekama, Kate, *Slavery in Dutch Colombo: A social history* (Master thesis Leiden University, 2012).

Finn, Margot, "Slaves out of Context: Domestic Slavery and the Anglo-Indian Family, *c.* 1780-1830," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 19 (2009): 181-203.

Geelen, Alexander, Bram van den Hout, Merve Tosun and Matthias van Rossum, "Between Markets and Chains: An Exploration of the Experiences, Mobility and Control of Enslaved Persons in the Eighteenth-Century South-West India," in Alicia Schrikker and Nira Wickramasinghe (eds.), *Being a Slave, Histories and Legacies of European Slavery in the Indian Ocean* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2020): 75-97.

Groenewald, Gerald, "Panaij van Boegies: Slave–Bandiet–Caffer," *Quarterly Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa* 59, no. 2 (2005): 50-62.

Hovy, L., *Ceylonees Plakkaatboek. Plakkaten en andere wetten uitgevaardigd door het Nederlands bestuur op Ceylon, 1638-1796.* 2 Vols. (Hilversum: Verloren, 1991).

Jones, Eric, *Wives, Slaves, and Concubines: A History of the Female Underclass in Dutch Asia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010).

Koolhof, Sirtjo, and Robert Ross, "Upas, September and the Bugis at the Cape of Good Hope: The Context of a Slave's Letter," *Archipel* 70 (2005), 281-308.

Mbeki, Linda, and Matthias van Rossum (2016): "Private Slave Trade in the Dutch Indian Ocean World: A Study into the Networks and Backgrounds of the Slavers and the Enslaved in South Asia and South Africa," *Slavery & Abolition*, (2016). doi:10.1080/0144039X.2016.1159004.

Patterson, Orlando, *Slavery and Social Death*: *A Comparative Study.* [With a new preface] (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).

Raben, Remco, *Batavia and Colombo. The Ethnic and Spatial Order of Two Colonial Cities 1600-1800.* (PhD thesis Leiden University*,* 1996).

Raffles, Thomas Stamford, *The History of Java*, 2 vols. (London: Black, Purbury and Allen, and John Murray, 1817).

Ross, Robert, "Accommodation and the Ironies of Resistance: The Housing of Cape Town's Enslaved and Freed Population Before and After Emancipation," (paper presented at the Workshop on "Being a Slave," Leiden University, 29-30 May 2017).

Rossum, Matthias van, Alexander Geelen, Bram van der Hout, and Merve Tosun, *Testimonies of Enslavement: Sources on Slavery from the Indian Ocean World* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020).

Schrikker, Alicia, *Dutch and British colonial intervention in Sri Lanka, 1780-1815: Expansion and Reform* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007).

Schrikker, Alicia, and Kate J. Ekama, "Through the Lens of Slavery: Dutch Sri Lanka in the Eighteenth Century," in Zoltán Biedermann and Alan Strathern (eds.), *Sri Lanka at the Crossroads of History* (London: UCL Press, 2017).

Schrikker, Alicia, and Nira Wickramasinghe (eds.), *Being a Slave. Histories and Legacies of European Slavery in the Indian Ocean* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2020).

Valentijn, François, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën…* 5 parts in 7 volumes. (Dordrecht/Amsterdam: Joannes van Braam/ Gerard onder de Linden, 1724-1726).

Wagenaar, Lodewijk, Galle. *VOC-vestiging in Ceylon. Beschrijving van een koloniale samenleving aan de vooravond van de Singalese opstand tegen het Nederlandse gezag, 1760*. (Amsterdam: De Bataafse Leeuw, 1994).

Wagenaar, Lodewijk, "The Cultural Dimension of the Dutch East India Company Settlements in Dutch-Period Ceylon, 1700-1800," Thomas Da Costa Kauffmann and Michael North (eds.), *Mediating Netherlandish Art and Material Culture in Asia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014): 141-176.

Wagenaar, Lodewijk, "Boenga van Johor: 'My forced journey from Batavia to the Cape of Good Hope,'"Alicia Schrikker and Nira Wickramasinghe (eds.), *Being a Slave. Histories and legacies of European Slavery in the Indian Ocean* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2020): 123-146.

Wickramasinghe, Chandima S.M., "The Abolition of Colonial and Pre-colonial 'Slavery' from Ceylon (Sri Lanka)," *Cultural and Social History* 7, no. 3 (2010): 315-35.

Wickramasinghe, Chandima S.M., "Coloured Slavery in Ceylon (Sri Lanka)," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka*, n.s., 54 (2008): 159-78.

Wickramsinghe, Nira, *Slave in a Palanquin: Colonial Servitude and Resistance in Sri Lanka* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020).

Return to an address of the Honourable The House of Commons dated 1 March 1838; for copies and abstracts of all communications relating to the subject of slavery in the Island of Ceylon, and to the measures there taken for its abolition (London: The House of Commons, 1838).

Forms of Slavery and Patterns of Slave Holding in Urban Mozambique in the 1820s

Filipa Ribeiro da Silva

Introduction[1]

Over the last forty years, the topics of slavery and slave trade in the Indian Ocean World (IOW) have received a greater deal of attention from scholars specialized on the various regions touched by this vast water mass, East Africa and Mozambique being no exceptions.[2] This interest led to the production of an extensive body of literature and a lively debate mainly dominated by four questions: i) what were the meanings of 'slave' and 'slavery' in the IOW? ii) what were the multiple forms of slave labor in the IOW and how did they compare? iii) How did slave labor co-exist with other forms of coerced labor? And iv) how did the slave trade and slavery in the IOW compare with the same phenomena in the Atlantic World?[3]

Although, as Gwyn Campbell stated earlier "there is [still] no consensus as to the meaning of slavery in the IOW"[4], it is now commonly accepted that this vast area of the globe was home to different groups of servile workers,

---

[2] See among others: Pedro Machado, "A Forgotten Corner of the Indian Ocean: Gujarati Merchants, Portuguese Indian and the Mozambique Slav-Trade, c. 1730-1830," *Slavery & Abolition*, 24:2 (2003):17-32; and Allen F. Isaacman and Barbara S. Isaacman, *Slavery and Beyond: The Making of Men and Chikunda Ethnic Identities in the Unstable World of South-Central Africa, 1750–1920* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2004).

[3] For an overview of this scholarly production and its main debates, see: Gwyn Campbell, "The Question of Slavery in Indian Ocean World History" in Abdul Sheriff and Engseng Ho, eds., *The Indian Ocean: Ocean Connections and the Creation of New Societies* (London: Hurst & Company, 2014), 123-150.

[4] Gwyn Campbell, "Servitude and the changing face of demand for labor in the Indian Ocean world, c. 1800-1900" in Robert W. Harms, Bernard K. Freamon, David W. Blight, eds., *Indian Ocean Slavery in the Age of Abolition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 12.

including not only enslaved people, but also other servile laborers such as corvée- and debt-bonded workers, among others. It is also widely acknowledged that slavery took different shapes determined not only by the lack of freedom of a person, but also by his or her function, as well as by the context in which a slave lived and worked, such as the distinction between rural and urban spaces or between domestic service and plantation work. The ties slaves maintained with their masters, as well as with the people found in other forms of dependency appeared to have also been paramount in defining their social and economic status, making clear the distinctions between chattel-slavery, client slavery, pawnship, etc. East Africa and more specifically Mozambique are cases in point, as slavery took multiple forms here, and slaves coexisted side-by-side with other dependent workers.

In nineteenth-century Mozambique, this coexistence becomes rather evident through the analysis of a small collection of individual household and estate surveys (as way of example see Illustration 1), and a set of nominal population counts (as way of example see Illustration 2), carried out by officials of Portuguese Crown in the Mozambican territory under their control, including both rural and urban settings.[5] On 25 May 1820, for example, Francisco João da Costa Xavier, a lieutenant of the militia in the town of Tete (Mozambique) and resident there, sent his attorney José Ferreira Rodrigues to attend the local representative of the Portuguese Crown. The purpose was to provide information about his household, estate and assets and Rodrigues declared that lieutenant Xavier owned 220 slaves, 120 of whom lived on his estate and 100 of whom were absent. Equal numbers of men and women were listed. Xavier's estate, named *Terra Jnadoa* and held in tenancy from the Portuguese Crown, had come to him on his marriage to Madame Paula Gertrudes de Aragão, and was home also to five or six villages of non-enslaved African dependents (named *colonos* as well as *colonos forros* in the Portuguese sources). The *colonos forros* produced maize, for which the tenants received 10 *alqueires*[6] from each *colono* and six cotton cloths (*machilas de gondo*) in return for their use of the oven located on the same estate and for protection.[7] Like lieutenant Xavier, many other descendants of Portuguese inhabitants provided similar particulars to the officials of the Portuguese Crown in the territory, as did Banyan merchants of Indian origin and Swahili residents. Xavier lived in Tete, but the same pattern was repeated by many other individuals in other Mozambican towns under Portuguese

---

[5] These materials are currently deposited in the collections of the Portuguese Overseas Historical Archive (hereafter AHU – Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino) and the Portuguese National Archive/Torre do Tombo (hereafter AN/TT).

[6] Measure of capacity used for grains. 1 *alqueire* = circa 13 kilograms.

[7] Portuguese Overseas Historical Archive (hereafter AHU)*, Mozambique*, cx. 174, doc. 68: "Mapa Circunstanciado da Casa de Francisco João da Costa Xavier como se vê da maneira seguinte" (see Illustration 1). Machila was a commonly used means of transport for Europeans and wealthy people all over the Portuguese Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including in Angola and Mozambique.

control. The information was used to produce a series of household and estate surveys as well as population counts for the Portuguese as part of a major initiative by the Portuguese Crown in the 1770s to register all subjects of the Empire with the aim of expanding royal power and extracting wealth and labor.[8] The population tables produced then contain names of household members, marital status, age and place of birth, relationship of each household member to the head of the household, and the profession of the head of the household. Details of the amount of property held by each household, including slaves living in the urban centers or as dependents of the urban residents, as well as dwellings, fields and livestock are included too. The total number of adult male and females and child slaves was given for each household, although no names, ages, marital status, family ties nor trades were recorded.

Despite being known for more than fifty years to scholars interested in the history of Mozambique and the surrounding region, and despite the richness of the information available in these source materials on slavery and other forms of dependency, none of it has yet been used to study the slave population of urban Mozambique, the forms of enslavement in the main towns and their outskirts, slavery's coexistence with other forms of dependency, nor to trace the profile of the masters of these slaves and their patterns of slave ownership, as well as their role as patrons or superiors of other dependent workers. [9] These will be the main goals of this study and its contribution to the broader debate on slavery in the IOW.

---

[8] These source materials were recently located, transcribed, and made available online by the Research Project: *Counting Colonial Populations: Demography and the use of Statistics in the Portuguese Empire, 1776-1875*. This initiative was sponsored by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology and coordinated by Paulo Teodoro de Matos (NOVA University of Lisbon, Portugal). This project aimed to identify and analyze the dominant demographic patterns in the Portuguese empire between 1776 and 1875, and to explain how population statistics became instrumental in the consolidation of Portuguese colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. The project's main goals were: i) to identify and reconstruct the main demographic indicators of colonial populations; ii) to distinguish and explain the existing demographic regimes; iii) to reconstruct the bureaucratic network used in the production and collection of statistical information and to identify the evolution of population categories; and iv) to assess how the statistics responded to the needs of the colonial administration at military and fiscal level, and in terms of territorial occupation. Further information on datasets, and outputs may be found on: http://colonialpopulations.fcsh.unl.pt/mainEnglish.html

[9] These demographic sources have been used mainly to provide a portrait of the territory's population, and to study topics such as the formation of the *Prazo System*, labor recruitment, migration patterns, and household structures during the precolonial period. Additionally, they have been examined as an object of study *per se*, with scholars paying special attention to the source production process, and the problems of reliability posed by these materials to researchers. Among the scholars who have worked with some of these materials are Malyn Newitt, Allen Isaacman, Eugénia Rodrigues, and Rudy Bauss, Ana Paula Wagner, to mention just a few. Allen Isaacman, *Mozambique: The Africanication of a European Institution: The Zambezi Prazos, 1750-1902* (Madison, Wisc.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1972); Rudy Bauss, "A Demographic Study of Portuguese India and Macau as well as comments on Mozambique and Timor, 1750-1850," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 34.2 (1997); Eugénia Rodrigues, *Portugueses e Africanos nos*

Illustration 1: Household Bulletin with information on family and propriety, including enslaved Africans

Sources: AHU, Moçambique, cx. 174, doc. 68

To date, the scholarship on Mozambique's economic and social history, and particularly on slavery and the slave trade, has to a great extent been divided into two main streams. On the one hand, there is a body of literature focused on so-called 'traditional' forms of slavery and other forms of dependence, while on the other hand there are studies devoted mainly to the trade in slaves. The literature on slavery itself has focused mainly on the study of African systems of slavery and other forms of dependency of free people within the framework of African chieftaincies, as well as in the context of Portuguese settlement on the Mozambican coast and the formation of the so-called *Prazo*

Rios de Sena: Os Prazos da Coroa em Moçambique nos Séculos XVII e XVIII (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 2013); Ana Paula Wagner, *População no Império Português: Recenseamentos na África Oriental Portuguesa na segunda metade do século XVIII* (Ph.D. diss., Universidade Federal do Paraná, Curitiba, 2009). Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, "From Church records to royal population charts: The birth of "modern demographic statistics" in Mozambique, 1720s-1820s,"*Anais de História de Além-Mar* 16 (2015): 17-50.

system[10] in the Zambezi Valley.[11] These studies have made clear the existence of client-slavery and a "open slavery system" in the region, as well as the client-patron relationships between local elites and non-enslaved dependent workers.[12] The literature on slave trading, on the other hand, has been centered on the trade between Mozambique and the Indian sub-continent in particular Goa, as well as on the trade between Mozambique and the greater Indian Ocean and between Mozambique and the Atlantic. There has been close focus also on Mozambique's role as an indirect supplier of slaves to the Portuguese Indiamen (the *Carreira da Índia*) that sailed on an annual basis between Goa and Lisbon, and sometimes calling at Mozambique and Brazil.[13]

The literature on slaves has focused mainly on those living inland in their own villages under local chiefs or authorities, whether of African, Portuguese or some other descent, while writing on slave trading has been devoted essentially to the sale of slaves to the international markets of the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans. In most cases slaves living under the rule of the urban

---

[10] The *Prazos da Coroa Prazos* were farms similar to medieval manors in how they were run and in the types of relationships established between landowners and peasants. As Malyn Newitt explains, "It is not easy to say in simple terms exactly what a *prazo* was (…). To the Portuguese [authorities] they were land grants held under Roman Law contracts of emphyteusis, but from the African point of view they were essentially chieftaincies and as such part of a complex system of social and economic relations bounding together all the people in the region." Malyn Newitt, *A history of Mozambique* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 217. *Prazos* varied in size, and geographically they were concentrated along the Zambesi river and its tributaries. Usually, the *Prazo* included an area under the direct administration of the landlord and several attached villages of free and enslaved African populations. Further information on the *Prazo system* and the prazo-tenants can be found in: Isaacman, *Mozambique: The Africanication of a European Institution*; Malyn Newitt, *Portuguese settlement on the Zambesi: exploration, land tenure and colonial rule in East Africa* (London: Longman, 1973); Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, "The prazeiros as transfrontiersmen: a study in social and cultural change," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 8.1 (1975), 1-39; and Rodrigues, *Portugueses e Africanos nos Rios de Sena*.

[11] On the different categories of slaves and their roles, see among other studies, Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, "Slavery and social stratification among the Sena of Mozambique: a study of the kaporo system," in S. Miers and I. Kopytoff, eds., *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison, Wisc.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 105-120. Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, *Slavery and beyond: the making of men and Chikunda ethnic identities in the unstable world of south-central Africa, 1750-1920* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004).

[12] On the distinction between "open" and "closed" slavery systems in the IOW, Asia and Africa, see: James L. Watson, *Asian and African Systems of Slavery* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), and also the discussion of the literature in the Introduction to this volume.

[13] José Capela, *O tráfico de escravos nos portos de Moçambique, 1733-1904* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2002); José Capela, "Slave Trade Networks in Eighteenth-Century Mozambique" in David Richardson and Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, eds., *Networks and Trans-Cultural Exchange: Slave Trading in the South Atlantic, 1590-1867* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), 165-194; Pedro Machado, "A Forgotten Corner of the Indian Ocean: Gujarati Merchants, Portuguese India and the Mozambique Slave-Trade, *c*.1730–1830," *Slavery & Abolition* 24.2 (2003), 17-32. Pedro Machado, *Ocean Trade: South Asian merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean, c. 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2014).

colonial elites of nineteenth-century Mozambique are too little studied. As a consequence, and unlike for other regions of both East and West Africa such as Mauritius or Ghana, for example, much less is known about the slave population who lived and worked in some of the main urban centers of Mozambique and their surroundings. We therefore know relatively little about how the forms of slavery there differed – if they did – from the forms of slavery brought about by the emergence of the trans-Atlantic, Indian Ocean and Indian-Atlantic slave trades.[14] Also, little is known about how the multiple forms of slavery in these spaces coexisted, nor about how urban slavery and other forms of dependency coexisted. In short therefore, no comprehensive study has been done of the enslaved population, the dependent populations, and their masters and patrons living in main urban spaces in the region around Mozambique, nor of patterns of slave-ownership among urban elites in the region.

---

[14] Richard Allen, *Slaves, Freedmen and Indentured Labourers in Colonial Mauritius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) provides details on the composition of households, including professions, assets, and slave-ownership, in Port Louis, Mauritius, 90-92, 94-96, 98. Sandra E. Greene, *Slave owners of West Africa: decision making in the Age of Abolition (Ghana, 19th century)* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2017).

Illustration 2: First known population count for the Island of Mozambique, 1820 (first page as way of example)

Source: Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (hereafter ANTT), Ministério do Reino. Partial copies of this document are in the collection of Conselho Ultramarino – Mozambique in the Portuguese Overseas Archives (Arquivo Histório Ultramarino, hereafter AHU), located in Lisbon.

However, reference to the type of household surveys cited earlier in this study in combination with the nominal population counts produced by representatives of the Portuguese Crown in early nineteenth century

Mozambique will allow us to study the slave population that was dependent of urban colonial elites. We shall be able to broaden our understanding both of differences and similarities between local forms of slavery and dependence, and how they might have been connected to the global forms of slavery that were directly linked to the Indian Ocean and the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and to the slave trade that connected those two Oceans. Simultaneously, it will also allow us to look into the profile of the slave masters living in the urban spaces as well as their patron ties to other dependent workers.

For this specific study I have analyzed the enslaved and dependent population who lived in three of the main towns of nineteenth-century Mozambique. Those towns are Tete, Inhambane and Mozambique Island[15] and their respective outskirts.[16] To this purpose, I used the population counts and related household surveys produced by clergymen, the civil and military administrators at the request of the Portuguese Crown in 1820 and 1822 for the Island of Mozambique, Inhambane, and Tete (see Illustrations 1 and 2).[17] The main goals of this study are, therefore, to trace the profile of those slave populations, identify their origins, where they lived and what they did; and explain how they came to be dependent on the colonial urban elites in

---

[15] During the same period, Quelimane and Sena were also important urban centers that contained populations larger than Inhambane. However, despite all research efforts, I have not yet discovered population counts for them that are comparable to those for the island of Mozambique, Tete and Inhambane under examination here. For that reason I have decided not to include either of them in this study.

[16] The population counts under analysis in this study include not only people living in the urban centers, but also in the surrounding areas, where the main land and labor holders kept their properties (often *prazos* of the Portuguese Crown) and their slaves. In the case of the island of Mozambique, the surrounding areas very likely included Mossuril and Cabeceiras, and in Tete the *prazos* outside the town.

[17] The first population counts with nominal data at household level were produced in the early 1800s, but only two have survived, one for Tete and the other for Inhambane. So far, no population count has been found for the island of Mozambique, the biggest town under Portuguese control at the time. In light of that and also of the quality of the data in the two aforementioned tables, the PI of the *Counting Colonial Population* Project, Paulo Teodoro de Matos, and I agreed that the set of maps produced in the 1820s was more suitable for comparative purposes given their wider geographical and population coverage and the higher quality of their data. The following are the source materials used in this study: Tete (1822): Mappa da População da Villa de Tete e seu Termo, como nelle se declara, 1 March 1822. AHU, *Moçambique*: cx. 183, doc. 89; Mozambique Island (1820): Mappa Geral da População que eziste nesta Cidade e seu Continente tirado por Ordem do Ilustríssimo Excelentíssimo Senhor Governador e Capito Geral desta Capitania de Mossambique, 5 December 1820, Portuguese National Archive/Torre do Tombo (hereafter AN/TT): *Ministério do Reino*; Mappa Geral dos Banianes que existem nesta Cidade tirado por ordem do Illustrissimo e Excelentissimo Senhor Governador e Capitão General desta Capitania de Mossambique, 5 December 1820, AN/TT: *Ministério do Reino*; Mappa Geral dos Mouros que existem nesta Cidade tirado por ordem do Illustrissimo e Excelentissmo Senhor Governador e Capitão General desta Capitania de Mossambique, 5 December 1820, AN/TT: *Ministério do Reino*; Inhambane (1820): Mappa Georgraffico, Arthmetittico e pullitico da Cappitania de Inhambane, que da o Governador Izidro Manoel de Carrazedo, ao Illmo. E Exmo. Senhor Governador e Capitão General deste Estado, 1 July 1820, AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 170, doc. 2.

Mozambique. For their part, those elites were variously Portuguese, Banyan/Indian or Swahili, the Swahili being Muslims which often led the Portuguese to refer to them as *Mouros,* i.e. "Moors". It should therefore be possible to determine the dominant patterns of slave-ownership among those three main population groups, and to discuss how different those forms of slavery were from the ones found in other locations around the Indian Ocean or in the Americas –or indeed similar to them. It should indeed be obvious if the circumstances of what we might think of as "local" slavery around Mozambique differed from those of the sort of slavery which emerged with the rise of the plantation system and the consequent development of the early modern trans-Atlantic and Indian Ocean slave trade.

Early nineteenth-century Mozambique: Portuguese rule, economy and local forms of dependence and slavery

By the early 1800s Mozambique Island, Inhambane and Tete were three of the main urban centers in the territory that had fallen under the influence of the Portuguese Crown and its subjects. In fact, for most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Portuguese presence in the region, whether officials of the Portuguese Crown and the Catholic Church or private individuals was mainly limited to various coastal trading posts and a few settlements in the Zambezi Valley region. They began on the coast between Sofala and Quelimane and stretched into the heartlands, reaching as far as Sena, Tete and Zumbo. During the course of the century Portugal also came to control a number of coastal areas, including the Quirimbas Islands, Ibo, Angoche, Inhambane and present-day Maputo, which before independence was known as Lourenço Marques. During that period, Portuguese influence therefore extended as far as the present-day borders with Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe (see Map 1). However, the remaining territory of Mozambique remained under the control of the local African authorities and consequently stayed out of the reach of the representatives either of the Portuguese Crown or the Catholic Church.

Map 1: Mozambican territory controlled by the Portuguese, 17th-19th centuries
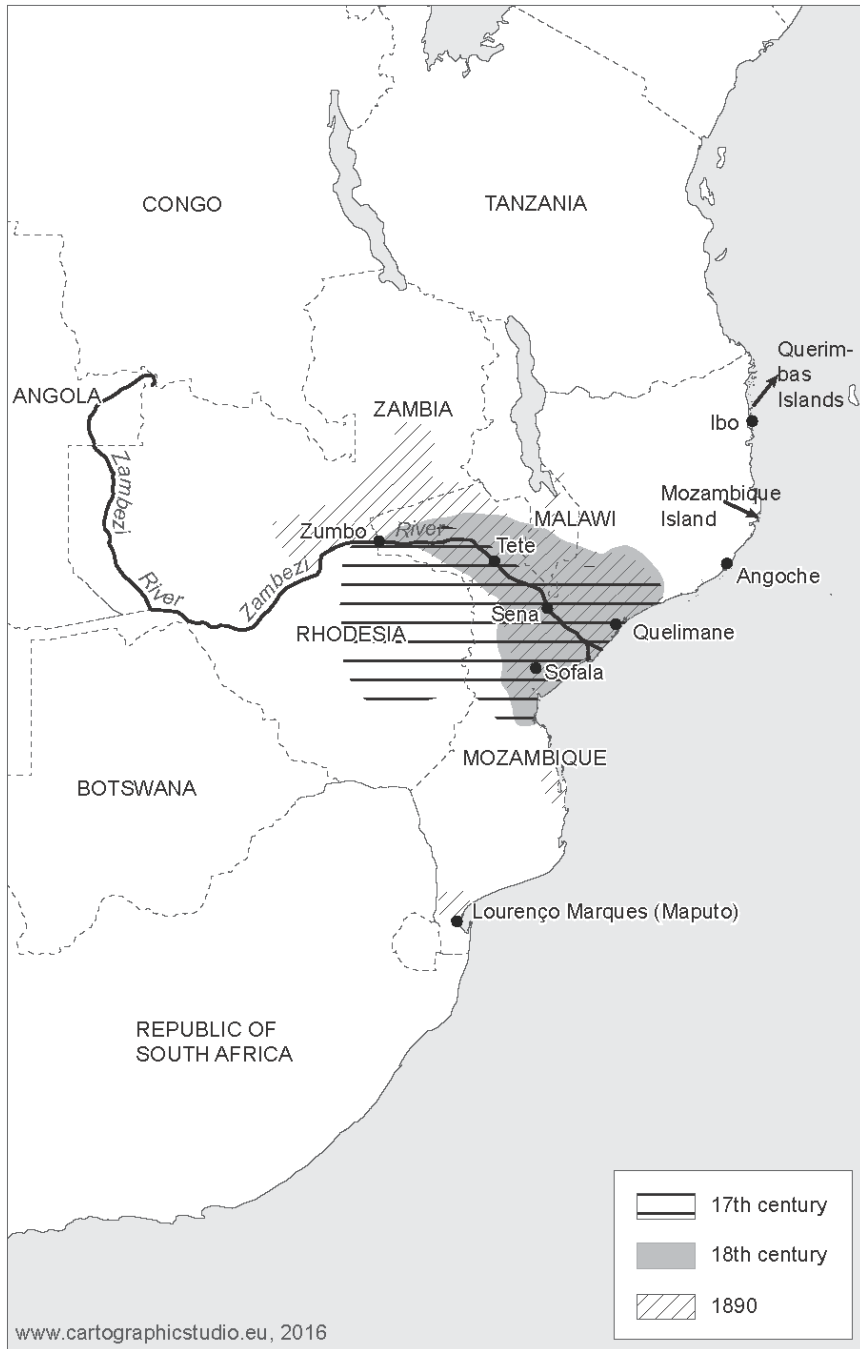
Within the territory controlled by Portugal the free populations of Portuguese, Indian and Swahili origin represented a small fraction of the inhabitants. Many individuals combined different activities which might include the tenancy and management of *Prazos* in the Zambezi Valley. The *Prazos da Coroa* was a system of land tenure regulated on the same principles as the Roman legal contract called *emphyteusis* and was put in place by the Portuguese Crown from the seventeenth century onwards with the idea of attracting settlers to the Zambezi Valley.[18] From an economic point of view the *prazos* were similar to medieval manors both in how they were run and in the types of relationship established between tenants and dependent peasants. That in turn implies that *Prazo* tenants acted as landlords and those who lived within their areas of influence were their dependents, regardless of whether they were enslaved or not. In that way *Prazo* tenants might be the employers of enslaved or of non-enslaved African dependent workers (*colonos* or *colonos forros* as mentioned earlier), establishing with enslaved and non-enslaved workers a relationship closer to client-patron than to slave-master as more commonly found in the Americas. These type of clientele and patronage relationships resemble others found in other regions of the IOW as earlier studies have illustrated and several contributions in this volume also do.

The free population of Portuguese, Indian and Swahili origin combined military and/or administrative service to the Portuguese Crown with trade in various products or commodities and enslaved Africans. Many of the free residents of nineteenth century Mozambican towns were engaged in the coastal trade that connected the island of Mozambique with the ports of Quelimane, Sofala, Inhambane, Cape Delgado and the Cape of Correntes and the Quirimbas Islands, as well as the trade routes that connected the Mozambican coast to the Indian sub-continent and other ports in the Greater Indian Ocean.

The Mozambican coastal trade circuits brought many slaves to the island of Mozambique, the vast majority of whom would be sold onto the international slave markets of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans –so-called 'slaves for sale or export'. However, a limited number were acquired by the colonial elites who lived in the main towns of Mozambique. Those slaves were destined for two main purposes: domestic service and the so-called "slaves for hire".[19] Alongside these two types of slaves, Crown's slaves were

---

[18] Under Roman Law, *emphyteusis* was a contract under which a landed estate was leased to a tenant, either in perpetuity or for many years, upon payment of an annual rent or canon, and on condition that the lessee should improve the property, by building, cultivation or otherwise, with the lessee having the right to alienate the estate at his pleasure or pass it to his heirs by descent, and with the property being free from any right of revocation, re-entry, or claim of forfeiture on the part of the grantor, except for non-payment of the rent. The right granted by such a contract was designated *jus emphytcuticum*, or *emphytcuticarium*.

[19] Capela, "Slave Trade Networks in Eighteenth-century Mozambique," 186-ss

also commonly found in the main towns where royal officials and royal administrative and military institutions were present.

In principle, "slaves for sale" were acquired in the interior by the Makua people who controlled the trade in the regions that fell outside the jurisdiction of local African chiefs and *Prazo* tenants. Slaves were brought to the coastal towns from the interior in caravans, along with commodities like elephant tusks, gold, and other trade items.[20] "Slaves for sale" and "slaves for hire" were therefore a constant presence in the Portuguese cities and fortresses along the coast, as well as in vessels of the Portuguese fleets sailing the Indian Ocean – the *Carreira da Índia* or, "Portuguese Indiamen". The slaves were in transit either as "slaves for sale" or often as workers – "slaves for hire". The "slaves for hire" performed a variety of tasks associated with local daily life, including domestic service, street selling, and craftwork. Together they were part of the early modern forms of slavery that emerged with the rise of the global slave trade circuits that connected the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans. They formed a group quite distinct from the slaves who lived and worked in villages near towns and as dependents of the Portuguese-descended *Prazos'* tenants or the local African chieftains and whose enslaved condition was directly linked to local forms of slavery and dependence.

The largest group of slaves in the region were the locally enslaved Africans. Many of them had been attached to plots of land and their tenants through a "system of reciprocal obligations" so that the relationship between master and slave approached more closely that of feudal patronage and dependence than the forms of slavery that emerged in the Americas and in other locations around the Indian Ocean. In most cases, slaves had families and lived in their own villages which fell under the jurisdiction of the Portuguese *Prazos* or, in territories outside the Portuguese sphere of influence, and under the rule of the local chiefs and authorities. Slaves often performed a number of different tasks for *Prazo* tenants and local chiefs, alongside activities like hunting, fishing, and foraging for their own subsistence. As time went on slaves of that type became known as *Chicunda* and were employed by their masters to collect taxes from non-enslaved African dependents – the so-called *colonos* or *colonos forros* as mentioned earlier. The *colonos* too lived and worked in independent villages but in the spheres of influence of *prazo* tenants or African chiefs. The *Chicunda* were even employed on diplomatic missions on behalf of *Prazo* tenants and local African chiefs, as well as in the defense of the *Prazos* and chieftaincies and dependent areas, and also in trade. In fact the *Chicunda*, or *Achicunda*, comprised most of the slaves at that time. This situation illustrates well not only the coexistence of enslaved people and other dependents. Additionally, this reality makes clear the role played by function and context in determining slave social and economic status, and it also shows the type of ties that linked them and their masters as well as dependents and their patrons.

---

[20] Overtime this situation would change due to the growing demand for slaves.

The remaining slaves lived as dependents of the *Prazos* and some of them lived actually in them. They had a wide variety of roles. In the first half o the eighteenth century, for example, the "Jesuit *prazos* employed cooks, bakers, barbers, tailors, washerwomen, masons, fishermen, seamstresses, carpenters, tillers, ironsmiths, boat-builders and gold miners as well as household and garden slaves".[21] A significant proportion of the activities developed by slaves in rural areas was directed towards the production of foodstuffs for local consumption and goods for the market economy, with any revenues accruing going to the slaves' owners and masters. There were, however, certain distinctions in the types of work done by male and female slaves, with most female slaves occupied in agriculture and mining. In the aforementioned Jesuit *Prazos*, for example, these two activities occupied more than 85 % of the female slave workforce. [22]

The non-enslaved African dependents – *colonos forros* – constituted the majority of the population both in and outside the areas controlled by or under the influence of the Portuguese Crown and the *Prazos da Coroa* which were located along the Zambezi Valley and held by families of Portuguese descent. As Allen Isaacman and Malyn Newitt explained, they were "essentially chieftaincies and as such part of a complex system of social and economic relations bounding together all the people in the region." [23] That implies that even though the *colonos* were not formally enslaved they lived and worked as dependents of the tenants of the *Prazos'* as well as of the local chiefs and their living and working conditions did not differ much from slaves. This evidence makes clear that freedom was not a key element to tell apart enslaved and non-enslaved dependents in this region, with function and context playing a crucial role in determining their status as the debate on slavery in the IOW has been demonstrating for other regions.[24]

Alongside their work in the *Prazos* the *colonos* were engaged in five main activities. Those were gold extraction in surface-mine workings in the Central African heartlands; hunting of elephants for both their meat and ivory; foraging for honey, wax, and wood; as well as the transport of agricultural surplus, ivory, gold, foraged goods, and enslaved Africans to important inland[25] and coastal trading centers, such as Tete, the Island of Mozambique,

---

[21] Newitt, *A history of Mozambique*, 241.

[22] Newitt, *A history of Mozambique*, 241.

[23] Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, 217. Each *Prazo* varied in size, but usually included an area under the direct administration of the land tenant and attached villages of free and enslaved Africans. Isaacman, *Mozambique: The Africanization of a European Institution*. Newitt, *Portuguese Settlement on the Zambesi*. Isaacman and Isaacman, "The Prazeros as Transfrontiersmen."

[24] See among many others, for example, Anthony Reid, *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland, 1983). Martin A. Klein, ed., Breaking the Chains. Slavery, bondage and Emancipation in Modern Africa and Asia (Madison: Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

[25] Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, 194.

Inhambane, and Quelimane.[26] Alongside those activities the *colonos* engaged in subsistence agriculture including the production of maize, millet, wheat, sugar, tobacco, and groundnuts and groundnut oil. As already mentioned, the inland slave trade was controlled mainly by the Makua people whereas elephant hunting was dominated by the Maravi, the Lunda, and the Bisa. Meanwhile the caravan trade between the interior and the coast was led by the Yao people.[27] In all communities agriculture was mainly women's work, with male seasonal participation only to help clear the fields and during harvesting.[28]

Part of the gold, ivory, honey, wax, and agricultural production ended up in the hands of the local authorities, either African or Portuguese, in the form of tribute, as the anecdote in the introduction of this study clearly illustrates.[29] Tribute labor was often also demanded by African village and community chiefs as well as by *Prazo* tenants of Portuguese descent, in exchange for protection.

The work and products paid as tribute to *Prazo* tenants and African chiefs were not only for domestic consumption, but also to supply small urban centers, to provision ships, and for export through the coastal ports. The products obtained through farming, hunting, fishing, and foraging also fed villages and non-enslaved Africans and their families. The *colonos* therefore had a twofold relationship of dependence to the *Prazo* tenants, in that they were obliged to work the land for the *Prazo* tenant, and were required to pay a tribute in kind which was mainly directed to supply the market economy. It is likely that identical relations existed between non-enslaved African dependents and local African chiefs, as the seminal works by Newitt and Isaacman on the *Prazo system* have suggested.

Thus, in the early nineteenth-century Mozambican territory controlled by the Portuguese, and probably also in the areas under the rule of local African chieftaincies, different forms of slavery and dependency seem to have coexisted in both rural and urban areas, and the relationship between enslaved and non-enslaved with the most powerful land-tenants dominated by clientele and patronage, through which protection is paid in kind and work, allowing local elites to control labor and production.

---

[26] Inland trading centres were called *feiras* in Portuguese sources.
[27] Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, 183. On the Mozambican slave trade and its inland and overseas dimensions, see, among others, Edward A. Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves: Changing Patterns of International Trade in East Central Africa to the Later Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, 1975), Pedro Machado, "A Forgotten Corner of the Indian Ocean: Gujarati Merchants, Portuguese India and the Mozambique Slave-Trade, c.1730-1830", *Slavery & Abolition*, 24:2 (2003), 17-32; Capela, "Slave Trade Networks in Eighteenth-Century Mozambique", 165-194.
[28] Kathleen E. Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain: A History of Women, Work, and Politics in Mozambique* (Portsmouth, NH, 2002), ch. 1.
[29] Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, 237-242.

Forms of Slavery and patterns of slave ownership in main Mozambican urban centers and their outskirts, c. 1800[30]

Who then were the slaves whom we find in the demographic sources of the early nineteenth century Mozambique as the registered property of the urban colonial elites? How many of them were there? How many of them were men and how many women? Where did they come from? How did they come to be dependent on the urban elites to the extent that they were owned by them? Where did they live? What did they do? Who were their masters? Were there different preferences in terms acquisition and ownership of slaves among masters from the different urban elite groups? And if so, why?

To answer those questions I analyzed 398 households selected from Mozambique Island (289), Inhambane (66) and Tete (43).[31] According to the available population counts, those three towns were home to 10,203 individuals, with the island of Mozambique being the biggest urban center in the territory, with a total of 4,671 residents. Then came Tete with 4,577 inhabitants and Inhambane with 955. In each of the three towns the majority of the individuals registered were slaves, with 4,423 in Tete, 4,149 in the island of Mozambique and 765 in Inhambane. The free population accounted for just a small fraction of the total population, at 20% in Inhambane; approximately 12% in the island of Mozambique and fewer than 5% in Tete (see Graph 1). Those results show us three urban centers with economies which appear to have relied heavily on slave labor. Non-enslaved African dependents, in contrast, were mainly absent in these counts. Only in the town of Tete they appeared registered, but in a small number accounting for less than 10% of the town's population. This evidence suggests that free dependent African workers were more present in the non-urban spaces. This is confirmed by the information about their villages in the real estate surveys and household bulletins carried out in the outskirts of towns and other areas further inland, in particular, along the Zambezi Valley.

---

[30] Part of the data presented and discussed in this section of the study was used to study the population structures and household composition in the 1820s of the three Mozambican towns referred to in the analysis. The results of that research were published in the following article: Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, "Counting People and Homes in Urban Mozambique in the 1820s: Population Structures and Household Size and Composition," *African Economic History* 45:1 (2017): 46-76.

[31] Although small and with low population densities, these towns were the main urban centers of the territory controlled by the Portuguese in the 1750s-1800s.

Graph 1

Sex Distribution
Free *versus* Slave Population Groups
Mozambique Main Urban Centres, 1819, 1820, 1822
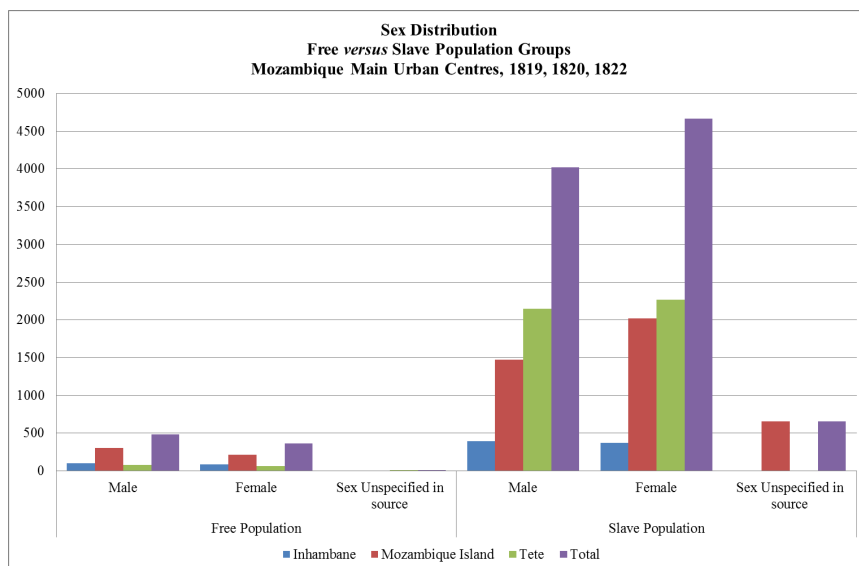
Sources:

Tete (1822): Mappa da População da Villa de Tete e seu Termo, como nelle se declara, 1 March 1822. Portuguese Overseas Historical Archive (hereafter AHU): Moçambique: cx. 183, doc. 89;

Mozambique Island (1820): Mappa Geral da População que eziste nesta Cidade e seu Continente tirado por Ordem do Ilustríssimo Excelentíssimo Senhor Governador e Capito Geral desta Capitania de Mossambique, 5 December 1820, Portuguese National Archive/Torre do Tombo (hereafter AN/TT): Ministério do Reino; Mappa Geral dos Banianes que existem nesta Cidade tirado por ordem do Illustrissimo e Excelentissimo Senhor Governador e Capitão General desta Capitania de Mossambique, 5 December 1820, AN/TT: Ministério do Reino; Mappa Geral dos Mouros que existem nesta Cidade tirado por ordem do Illustrissimo e Excelentissmo Senhor Governador e Capitão General desta Capitania de Mossambique, 5 December 1820, AN/TT: Ministério do Reino;

Inhambane (1820): Mappa Georgraffico, Arthmetittico e pullitico da Cappitania de Inhambane, que da o Governador Izidro Manoel de Carrazedo, ao Illmo. E Exmo. Senhor Governador e Capitão General deste Estado, 1 July 1820, AHU, Moçambique, cx. 170, doc. 2.

Notes:

* Includes population of Portuguese descent and the so-called "Mouros" (Moors);

 # Includes population of Portuguese descent, the Banyan Population and the so-called "Mouros" (Moors);

** Includes population of Portuguese descent. No information concerning other population groups.

In the towns, most of the slaves were adult women (see Graphs 1 and 2). They accounted for the majority of the slave population registered in Mozambique

Island and Tete. Only in Inhambane were there more adult male slaves (see Graph 1). The pattern was similar in other port-towns in Atlantic Africa, such as for example of nineteenth-century Benguela (Angola), as well as in other regions of the IOW.[32] By contrast, young or child slaves rarely appear in the registers, and that is largely because the purpose of the registration of the slave population was to account for property and its value. Adult slaves were of greater economic value than child or even simply young slaves. Moreover adults, and in particular men, could be used for military purposes, which might be why more adult men were registered in certain towns.

Graph 2

Approximate Age Groups per Sex
Slave Population
Mozambique Main Urban Centres, 1820, 1822
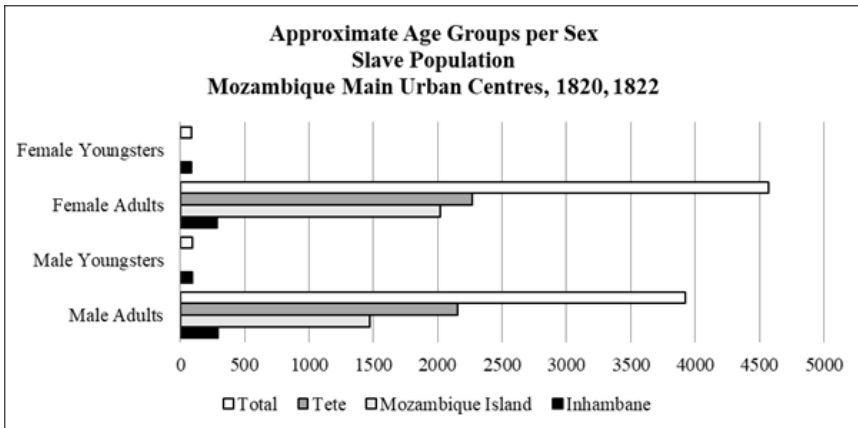
Sources: see legend to Graph 1.

As for the geographic origins of the registered slave population, the demographic sources under scrutiny here tell us little. However, it is probable that they were from the territory of Mozambique or its neighboring areas, as they are referred to as *Negros, negras, Muleques and Negrinhas* which implies they were of dark complexion and so likely of African origin. Of interest is that two different types of slaves were registered in the sources under analysis. There were "urban slaves" who lived inside the towns, many of them actually in the households of their masters. These urban slaves were employed as domestic workers and as slaves for hire. The other category of slaves were those who lived in the surrounding areas of the towns, on the estates belonging to the free urban residents.

---

[32] Mariana P. Candido, *Fronteras de Esclavization: Esclavitud, Comercio e Identidad en Benguela, 1780-1850* (Mexico City: El Colégio de México, Centro de Estudios de Asia y Africa, 2011), 90-92. Indrani Chatterjee and Richard M. Eaton, eds., *Slavery and South Asian History 1526-1707* (Dehli, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Gwyn Campbell, ed., *The Structure of Slavery in the Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (London: Frank Cass, 2004).

The majority of the households examined owned fewer than 5 slaves. That was the dominant pattern in Mozambique Island and quite common in Inhambane also (see Graph 3). Ownership of such small numbers of slaves suggests that their masters would either keep them within the household to perform domestic chores or would hold them as slaves for hire, offering their services and skills to prospective customers in exchange for payment. In doing that the owners therefore transformed the slave into a source of income. A similar practice was common in Lisbon also, as it was in other colonial cities throughout the Portuguese Empire – and in cities in other European-held colonies, for that matter.[33]

This evidence suggests that many of the slaves in question were acquired in the towns' slave markets, where slaves arrived either via the inland or along the Mozambican coast. I would therefore argue that the majority of the households examined in the Mozambican towns likely acquired their domestic service and slaves for hire through the same channels as those that catered to the international slave markets of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. Consequently, the slaves acquired by and living in local households were in many ways just as much part of the global slave trade circuit and represented a more modern form of slavery that emerged with the rise of the international slave trade. They were comparable to slaves acquired in, living in and working in other port-cities within the Indian and Atlantic Ocean areas. This situation contrasted with the households owing tens and hundreds of enslaved people and having multiple non-enslaved dependents, as I will explain next.

Unfortunately, the demographic sources under scrutiny here are silent about the types of activity performed by the slaves in Mozambican towns. However, given that those towns played important roles as ports, whether as sea-ports in the cases of Inhambane or the island of Mozambique, or as river-ports like Tete, slaves were likely to have done harbor-related work such as ship repairs, as well as working as street vendors, washer men and -women, and so on, just as they did in other port-cities of the former Portuguese empire, like Bahia. There, activities done by slaves at about the same time have been depicted in drawings and paintings by artists of the time, such as Rugendas and Debret. Slaves were also an important source of labor for the Portuguese Crown and her representatives and institutions in these towns.

---

[33] As way of example, see the following studies: Jorge da Fonseca, *Escravos e Senhores na Lisboa Quinhentista* (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2010). A.J.M. Barros, "O Porto e o Trato de Escravos no século XVI," *Africana Studia* 7 (2004): 31-51. D. Lahon, "O escravo africano na vida económica e social portuguesa do Antigo Regime," *Africana Studia* 7 (2004): 73-100. F. Araújo and, S. Alves, "A comunidade escrava de Leça da Palmeira seiscentista, *Revista da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto – História*", 3rd series, 5 (2004): 193-210. M.H.M. Mesquita, "Escravos em Angra no século XVII: uma abordagem a partir dos registos paroquiais, Arquipélago – História, 2nd series, 9 (2005): 209-230. M. DO R. Pimentel, *Viagem ao fundo das Consciencias. A escravatura na época Moderna* (Lisboa: Bertrand, 1995). A. C. DE C. M. Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves and Freedmen in Portugal, 1441-1555* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

Graph 3

No. of slaves per household
Main Mozambican urban centres, 1820, 1822

■ 100 or more slaves ⊠ 50-99 slaves ▨ 30-49 slaves ⊡ 10-29 slaves
▫ 5-9 slaves □ 1-4 slaves ⊠ 0 Slaves

Sources: see legend to Graph 1.

In the three Mozambican urban centers under analysis here there were also a considerable number of households that owned between 10 and 29 slaves or even more. Owning higher numbers of slaves, especially more than 30, appears to have been more common in Tete than in any of the other towns, where it was found that most households owned 100 slaves or more, or at any rate more than 30 (see Graph 3). Such households acquired their larger numbers of slaves in a rather different way than applied to the domestic slaves and slaves for hire just mentioned. The larger groups of slaves were almost always acquired together with property and tenancy rights over land – so-called *Butaca* – granted by the Portuguese Crown, through the *Prazos* system. *Butaca* encompassed the transfer and appropriation both of assets and people attached to the land and the right of the tenant to exercise power over the them.[34] *Butaca* was usually granted together with an *emphyteusis* contract that regulated the *Prazo* tenancy of Crown land. Many such slaves had been attached to the land and its tenant through the "system of reciprocal obligations" already mentioned. In this sense, the relationship between master and slave approached more feudal patronage and dependence than the forms of slavery that emerged in the Americas. These relationships and ties of rights

---

[34] Capela, O Tráfico de Escravos nos Portos de Moçambique, 21.

and obligations are somewhat identical to those found in other parts of the IOW.[35]

In the households containing a higher number of slaves in Tete therefore, as in those on the island of Mozambique and in Inhambane, the relationship between masters and slaves must have been different from those between domestic slaves and slaves for hire and their masters. Most probably, the more slaves owned the more distant the relationships with masters would have been as a result of naturally more limited personal contact. Different also were the types of activities performed by slaves in households with more slaves. A small number of those slaves worked at domestic tasks within the household but the majority lived outside it on the land they worked for their masters or digging for gold in the surface mining works that still existed, called "bars". That was especially true in the area of Tete, which was close to the mining areas. It is also probable that most slaves based near Tete lived in dedicated villages under the protection of the tenants of the *Prazos da Coroa*.

Similar patterns of slave holding were observed in households regardless of whether they were headed by men or women. As for all households, 30% of female-led households owned fewer than 5 slaves, or between 10 and 29 slaves. It must be noted, however, that more than 10% of female-headed households owned 50-99 slaves, more than 5% owned 30-49 slaves, and more than 5% owned more than 100 slaves (see Graph 4).

For all households, higher numbers of slaves were owned by women in Tete, while in Mozambique Island and in Inhambane, most of the households headed by women owned fewer than 5 slaves or between 10 and 29 slaves. The activities performed by slaves owned by households headed by women might have been the same as those described above, although it must be mentioned here that owning slaves for hire was a very common practice among single women and widows for whom it was regarded as a respectable way to obtain income without having to work outside the household, and without doing manual labor, both of which activities many considered unsuitable for decent women.

---

[35] Campbell, "Servitude and the changing face of demand for labor," 25.

Graph 4
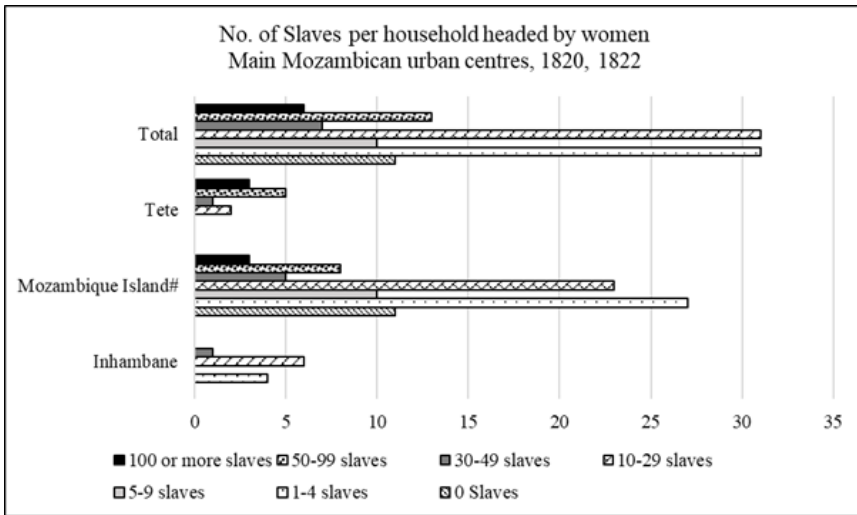
Sources: see legend to Graph 1.

Differences in slave ownership were evident not only in the households in each of the three urban centers under scrutiny here, but among different population groups living in them. That is notably true for Mozambique Island and Inhambane, where Swahili Muslim and Banyan communities lived side-by-side with people of Portuguese descent.[36] The majority of the free population living in the three urban centers were regarded as being of Portuguese descent (regardless of where they actually originated and most probably regardless too of their skin color) (see Graph 5). The Swahili Muslims were present only in Inhambane and Mozambique Island, accounting for 20% and 12% of the free population, respectively (see Graph 5). The Banyan merchants from Diu were registered only in Mozambique Island and represented more than 10% of the free population (see Graph 5).[37]

---

[36] This comparison cannot be made for Tete, as the population tables available for this town registered only inhabitants of Portuguese descent.

[37] For further information on household size and composition in these three urban centres of early nineteenth-century Mozambique, see: Ribeiro da Silva, "Counting People and Homes."

Graph 5

"Ethnic Groups"
Total Free Population
Mozambique Main Urban Centres, 1820, 1822
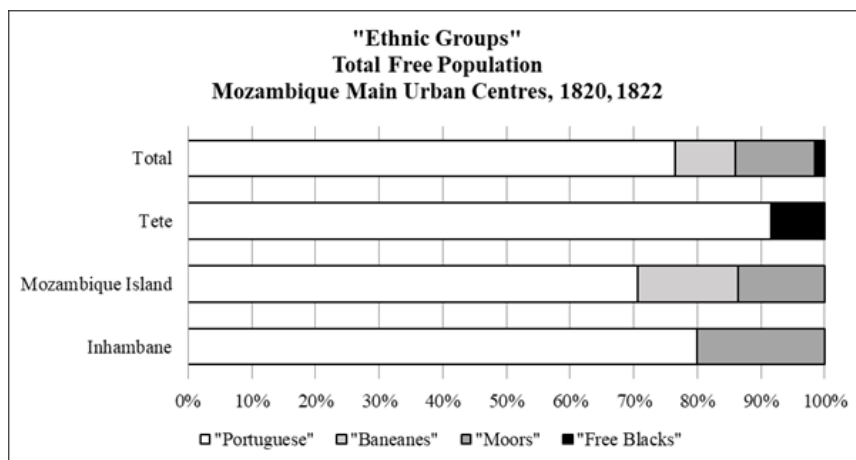
Sources: see legend to Graph 1.

Note: Free Blacks, i.e. Negros Livres as mentioned in the Portuguese sources were non-enslaved Africans. They rarely appear in the population counts under analysis here. This information is available only for Tete, and the number of non-enslaved Africans registered was very low (see Graph 5). Non-enslaved Africans registered in the population counts were likewise accounted as property. In other words, they were regarded as household assets as were slaves.

A detailed analysis of slave holding patterns per household among the three main population groups resident in Mozambique Island shows that approximately 40 % of households headed by people of Portuguese descent owned no slaves. Among the Banyans however, approximately 30 % of households had no slaves, while fewer than 10% of Muslim households held no slaves (see Graph 6). However, in both Mozambique Island and Inhambane the population of Portuguese descent owned a higher number of slaves than the Muslim population, with 683 as against only 82 (see Graph 7).[38]

There were differences also in gender preferences for slave ownership among the three main groups of slave masters. In Mozambique Island female slaves predominated in Portuguese and Muslim households, while male slaves were more common in Banyan households (see Graph 8). This high number of males might have been related to the commercial and shipping activities developed by the Banyan group, which required strong labor force for heavy duty work, including loading and unloading, and suitable to travel overseas on board their vessels. In the coastal port-town of Inhambane, households of Portuguese descent and of Muslim background alike also

---

[38] AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 170, doc. 2: 1820-07-01: "Mappa Georgraffico, Arthmetittico e pullitico da Cappitania de Inhmmambane, que dá o Governador Izidro Manoel de Carrazedo, ao Illmo. E Exmo. Senhor Governador e Captião General deste Estado."

showed a slight preference for male slaves (see Graph 9) although the difference in actual numbers was small.

Graph 6

Slave Ownership per Household
among different "Ethnic" and "Religious" Groups
Captaincy of the Island of Mozambique (including mainland), 1820

Graph 7

No. of slaves per household of different Masters' "Ethnic" group
Inhambane, 1820

Graph 8

Slave gender preferences per Masters' "Ethnic" Group
Mozambique Island, 1820
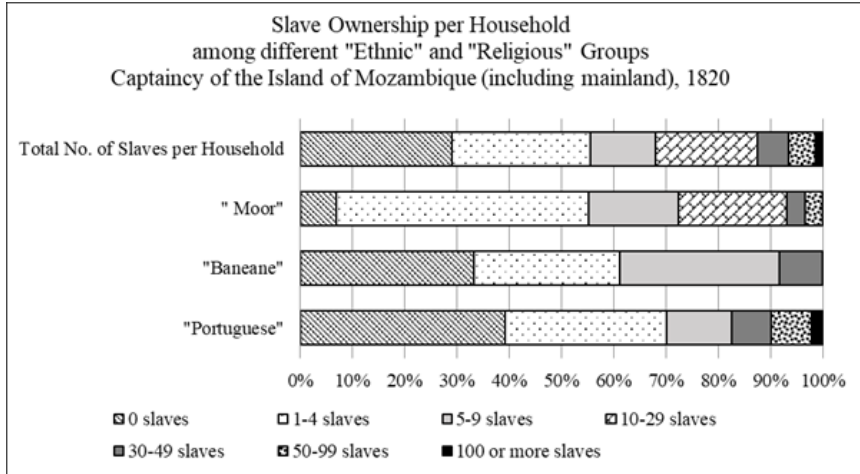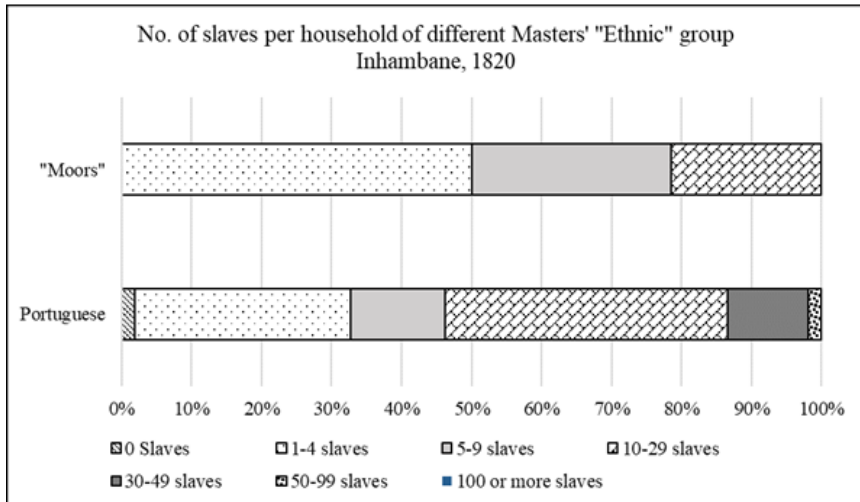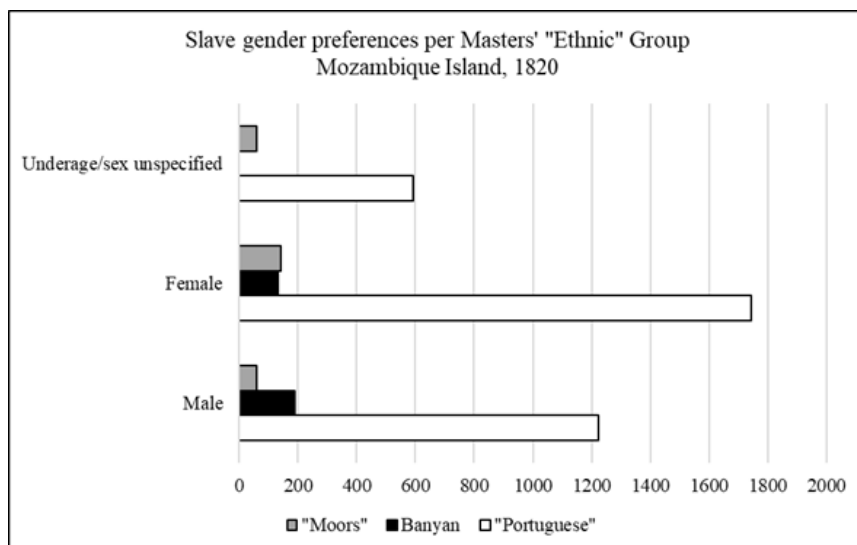
Sources: see legend to Graph 1.

Graph 9

Slave gender preferences per Masters' "Ethnic" Group
Inhambane, 1820
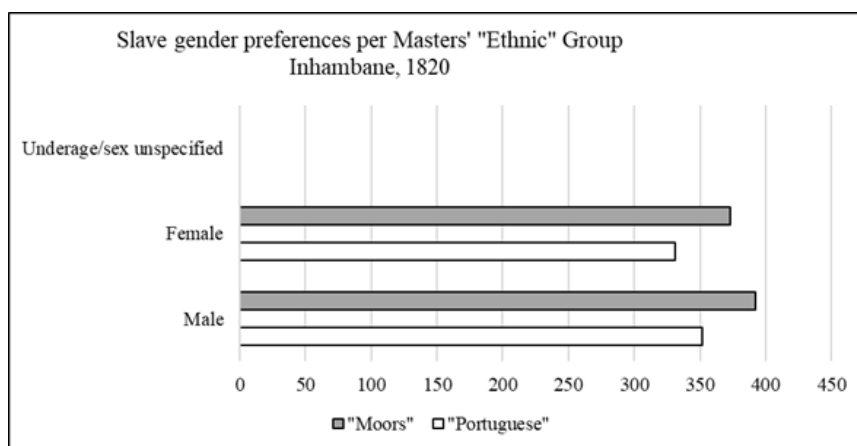
Sources: see legend to Graph 1.

What factors can explain the differences in slave ownership in the different cities and between the different communities there, the Portuguese, the Muslim, and the Banyans?

In our view there are five main factors and they are:

1. the activities developed by those groups for which slave labor was required;

2.   the possibilities of gaining access to land and the clienteles of dependents attached to those territories;

3.   the level of wealth of the households of the three groups which would allow the heads of households to invest more or less money in slaves, or in the provision of services that would lead enslaved and non-enslaved Africans to live under their dependence and protection;

4.   the value attributed to slave ownership. While in some cases slave holding would be regarded mainly as a status symbol suggesting power and prestige, in others it would be simply means to have available the labor needed for certain tasks; and

5.   the value attributed to male and female slave labor by the slave-masters of the three different urban centers under analysis here. The different estimations of value and the ways male and female labor was perceived were directly linked to the dominant family systems in the regions under scrutiny and the positions and power of men and women in them, as well as in the home societies of the three groups.

Each of these factors deserves individual detailed analysis in future research on forms of slavery and slave ownership in Mozambique.

Conclusion

To summarize, the evidence presented and discussed here suggests that in early nineteenth-century Mozambique the three main urban centers had approximately 10,000 inhabitants, the majority of whom were adult slave women. The free population was smaller and comprised a majority of people considered to be "Portuguese" either because of their Portuguese ancestry, their Catholic religion or their command of the Portuguese language. The Portuguese lived alongside communities of Muslims of Swahili origin and Banyan Hindu merchants in the port-towns of Inhambane and on Mozambique Island.

The three main groups formed the so-called free population and were the main slave owners in the urban spaces of nineteenth-century Mozambique, with the Portuguese inhabitants apparently being the main slave holders overall. Slave holding was especially high in Tete and Mozambique Island. The Banyan merchants based in Mozambique Island appear to have been the second largest group of slave holders while the Muslims seem to have owned a much more modest number of slaves.

Additionally, the population counts and household and estate surveys here under analysis suggest that the urban elites of Mozambique acquired their slaves in two distinct ways, either by purchase at slave markets or after taking leases on land which included dependent populations on it. Those dependents included not only enslaved but also non-enslaved African dependents.

The three groups of slave-masters showed different patterns of slave holding in terms of gender preferences. While Portuguese and Muslim slave-masters seem to have preferred adult women as slaves, the Banyan merchants

had a clear preference for males. Among the households of Portuguese slave-masters regional differences can be discerned in gender preferences. While in Tete and Mozambique Island there were larger numbers of female slaves, in Inhambane that situation was reversed. A number of factors might have influenced the different patterns of slave holding found in nineteenth-century urban Mozambique. Those factors included levels of wealth, differences in economic activity and in the value attributed to slave ownership, as well as attitudes to male and female slave labor and male and female roles in the society and economy. However, further research is needed to shed more light on the topic.

The data discussed here also make clear that in early nineteenth century Mozambican towns and their outskirts local forms of slavery and other forms of dependence coexisted with the sort of modern and more global forms of slavery that emerged with the rise of the international slave markets of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

More importantly, the information analyzed and discussed here shows that in nineteenth-century Mozambique, like in other regions of the IOW:

- various forms of slavery coexisted, including client-slavery and chattel slavery, the latter mainly found in urban centers and the former in the agricultural outskirts of towns and rural areas;
- various forms of dependency existed side-by-side with slavery in all its forms, namely the patron-client relationship between powerful land-tenants and lords and non-enslaved African dependents, living and working in their own villages, but under the protection of those landlords, in exchange for tribute in labor and kind;
- and various forms slavery and dependency coexisted with the status of enslaved and non-enslaved being defined not so much by his/her access to freedom, but rather by the function he/she performed, and by the context in which he/she lived and worked.

This study brings to the fore therefore multiple similarities between Mozambique and other regions of the IOW and opens possibilities for further comparative research.

Bibliography

Allen, Richard, *Slaves, Freedmen and Indentured Labourers in Colonial Mauritius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Alpers, Edward A., *Ivory and Slaves: Changing Patterns of International Trade in East Central Africa to the Later Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

Araújo, F., and, S. Alves, "A comunidade escrava de Leça da Palmeira seiscentista, *Revista da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto – História*", 3rd series, 5 (2004): 193-210.

Barros, A.J.M., "O Porto e o Trato de Escravos no século XVI," *Africana Studia* 7 (2004): 31-51.

Bauss, Rudy, "A Demographic Study of Portuguese India and Macau as well as comments on Mozambique and Timor, 1750-1850," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 34.2 (1997).

Candido, Mariana P., *Fronteras de Esclavization: Esclavitud, Comercio e Identidad en Benguela, 1780-1850* (Mexico City: El Colégio de México, Centro de Estudios de Asia y Africa, 2011).

Capela, José, *O tráfico de escravos nos portos de Moçambique, 1733-1904* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2002).

Capela, José, "Slave Trade Networks in Eighteenth-Century Mozambique" in David Richardson and Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, eds., *Networks and Trans-Cultural Exchange: Slave Trading in the South Atlantic, 1590-1867* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), 165-194.

Fonseca, Jorge da, *Escravos e Senhores na Lisboa Quinhentista* (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2010).

Greene, Sandra E., *Slave owners of West Africa: decision making in the Age of Abolition (Ghana, 19th century)* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2017).

Isaacman, Allen, *Mozambique: The Africanication of a European Institution: The Zambezi Prazos, 1750-1902* (Madison, Wisc.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1972).

Isaacman Allen, and Barbara Isaacman, "The prazeiros as transfrontiersmen: a study in social and cultural change," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 8.1 (1975), 1-39.

Isaacman Allen, and Barbara Isaacman, "Slavery and social stratification among the Sena of Mozambique: a study of the kaporo system," in S. Miers and I. Kopytoff, eds., *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison, Wisc.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 105-120.

Isaacman Allen, and Barbara Isaacman, *Slavery and beyond: the making of men and Chikunda ethnic identities in the unstable world of south-central Africa, 1750-1920* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004).

Lahon, D., "O escravo africano na vida económica e social portuguesa do Antigo Regime," *Africana Studia* 7 (2004): 73-100.

Machado, Pedro, "A Forgotten Corner of the Indian Ocean: Gujarati Merchants, Portuguese India and the Mozambique Slave-Trade, *c.*1730–1830," *Slavery & Abolition* 24.2 (2003), 17-32.

Machado, Pedro, *Ocean Trade: South Asian merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean, c. 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Mesquita, M.H.M. "Escravos em Angra no século XVII: uma abordagem a partir dos registos paroquiais," *Arquipélago – História*, 2nd series, 9 (2005): 209-230.

Newitt, Malyn, *A history of Mozambique* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995).

Newitt, Malyn, *Portuguese settlement on the Zambesi: exploration, land tenure and colonial rule in East Africa* (London: Longman, 1973).

Pimentel, M. DO R., *Viagem ao fundo das Consciencias. A escravatura na época Moderna* (Lisboa: Bertrand, 1995).

Ribeiro da Silva, Filipa, "Counting People and Homes in Urban Mozambique in the 1820s: Population Structures and Household Size and Composition," *African Economic History* 45:1 (2017): 46-76.

Ribeiro da Silva, Filipa, "From Church records to royal population charts: The birth of "modern demographic statistics" in Mozambique, 1720s-1820s,"*Anais de História de Além-Mar* 16 (2015): 17-50.

Rodrigues, Eugénia, *Portugueses e Africanos nos Rios de Sena: Os Prazos da Coroa em Moçambique nos Séculos XVII e XVIII* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 2013).

Saunders, A. C. DE C. M., *A Social History of Black Slaves and Freedmen in Portugal, 1441-1555* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

Sheldon, Kathleen E., *Pounders of Grain: A History of Women, Work, and Politics in Mozambique* (Portsmouth, NH, 2002).

Wagner, Ana Paula, *População no Império Português: Recenseamentos na África Oriental Portuguesa na segunda metade do século XVIII* (Ph.D. diss., Universidade Federal do Paraná, Curitiba, 2009).

"Enslaved for Life": Construing Slavery in Nineteenth Century India

Akanksha Narayan Singh

Introduction

The history of slavery in India has been the central theme of many researches. These studies however suffer primarily at two levels. Firstly, they have largely focused on Southern India where the slaves constituted the bulk of agrarian labour and were closely affiliated to the caste system.[1] This approach has led to negation of slavery studies in Northern India where the slaves were employed largely in the households as domestic servants. Secondly, an integral element of studies on Indian slavery has been the elements of similarity and dissimilarity vis-a-vis the Atlantic form of slavery. Although this comparative approach is useful in many respects, this is also marred by many flaws. The immense importance given to Caribbean variant of slavery in the New World primarily because of the role it paid in the Atlantic economy tends to ignore and undermine the significance of slavery in the socio-economic milieu of the Indian Ocean and the surrounding lands. Many slave systems have been castaway under the baggage of the monolithic concept of Anglo-American slavery. It has not only led scholars to disregard the active agency of the slaves in the Indian subcontinent but have also resulted in locating Indian slavery in a continuum between bondage and freedom, without really taking into account the contexts and conjunctures that produce specificities. The tendency has been to cast Indian slavery in mild and paternalistic terms so as to bring out its domesticated nature compared to severely exploitative chattel slavery prevalent in the west. Any such classification and generalization is inherently problematic as it views servitude only through the lens of western orientated understanding of economy, underpinned by its commercial lucrativeness. This perspective perhaps emerged in response to extensive debates and discussions during the colonial period on the nature of Indian slavery, wherein most debates converged on how Indian slavery was different from Atlantic slavery. Nevertheless, later studies such as that of Indrani Chatterjee and Richard M. Eaton nudged scholars to rethink slavery in world history. Through the study of several variants of slavery in India from ancient to colonial times, they were able to reposition Indian slavery in global setting. Taking cue from there, this article intends to bring about the transmutation of Indian slavery into dependent servanthood through legal alchemy during the nineteenth century

---

[1] See Tanika Sarkar, "Bondage in the Colonial Context", in M. Dingwaney, and U. Patnaik (eds.), *Chains of Servitude* (1985); Gyan Prakash, *Bonded Histories: Genealogies of Labor Servitude in Colonial India* (1990); Dharma Kumar, *Land and Caste in South India* (1965).

in Northern India. It also probes the colonial concerns that paved the way for domesticating the institution of slavery through law and other normative discourses. It delves into the transformation of slavery into different forms through legal procedures and their approbation by the colonial state as well as the natives[2], especially after the Abolition of Slavery Act of 1843. An analysis of this transformation is significant to understand the pedigree of labour bondage in South Asia, without which the study of history of enslavement in the India Ocean world would remain incomplete.

Colonial responses to slavery

The manner in which the East India Company officials responded to slavery in India was set against a bunch of assumptions encompassing the Indian identity, family, and gender relations.[3] The nature of the legislation itself reflected ambivalence on the part of the colonial state to completely do away with the system of slavery in India. The ideological backdrop proved to be a crucial factor determining the extent of legal intervention in the native society. In the mid nineteenth century, 'liberty' had become the core guiding philosophy of the English polity. Derived from the mother country, similar philosophy was adopted by British East India Company (henceforth EIC) officials in India too, although in a more subtle and muted manner. It did not allow the colonial state to proactively engage with any aspect of the Indian society that seemed to be an integral part of the domestic life. There was a clear distinction that was maintained between the domestic and the political realm of the State vis-a-vis the people. Colonial state's interference in the lives of the people was considered to be an expression of its meddling with the native lives and customs which was unacceptable to the indigenous population as well as to the English public back home who hailed the ideals of liberty. Moreover, it was economically not viable for the government to completely abolish slavery, as that would have lead to heavy economic burden on the exchequer to pay as compensation to the masters for the release of their slaves. There was also real fear of a backlash and reaction from the elite strata of the society that constituted the bulk of the master class. It was this class of landlords, aristocrats and higher bureaucrats which employed maximum number of slaves that also buttressed the colonial rule in India and acted as a bulwark against any mass protest. The imperial policy making hence revealed the conflict between ideological, moral, political and pragmatic imperatives. Andrea Major has suggested that the "British debates about slave trading in the princely states saw the juxtaposition of anti-slavery sentiment and concerns with the stability and integrity of their borders with a political

---

[2] Throughout the article, the word 'natives' has been used to refer to the Indians in the British Presidencies and local population of the Princely States.
[3] Andrea Major, "Enslaving Spaces: Domestic Slavery and the spatial, ideological and practical limits of Colonial control in the nineteenth century Rajput and Maratha States", *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. 46, No. 3, (2009), 316.

discourse about the limits of acceptable British intervention in semi-independent states."[4]

This brings us to a very pertinent question of why did the colonial state take up the cause of delegalizing slavery in the first place when it was economically burdensome, socially unacceptable to the most influential classes of the society and politically unviable? The answer lies in the larger socio-political context that initiated the abolitionist drive across the globe. While on one hand there were genuine humanitarian concerns with the persistence of slavery in the modern world, there were also specific socio-economic reasons for gradually waning off slavery in the Indian sub-continent. The abolitionist leaders vehemently debated the dilemma of coexistence of an ancient exploitative system in a very modern capitalist production system like that of a plantation. It was not only ideologically contradictory that slavery permeated all aspects of production in the Atlantic but also politically against the moral obligations of the modern state that relied heavily upon the ideas of liberty, equality and democracy. Thereupon, EIC's encounter with the slave trading and the institution itself became a point of negotiation between the immediate political demands and the moral authority of the state seeking legitimacy. The half-hearted attempts at ending slavery in India were a result of an ensuing intermingling of economic imperatives, social ideals and humanitarian goals. The apprehensiveness of the colonial state was also clearly reflected in its ambivalence to implement the regulations promulgated in the first half of the nineteenth century. Apart from exposing the political expediency of the colonial rule, it echoed the need to maintain political stability and also reduce expenditure by ruling through indigenous structures.[5]

Howard Temperley too suggested that the surplus landless labour in India provided an altogether different dimension and context to slavery than what existed in the New World where slavery was premised upon critical shortage of free labour to work on the lands.[6] Moreover, slavery was considered to be mutually beneficial for both, the master and the servant. Famous English orientalist and the founder of the Royal Asiatic Society, H.T. Colebrooke noted, "Indeed, throughout India, the relation of master and slave appears to impose the duty of protection and cherishment on the master as much as that of fidelity and obedience on the slave, and their mutual conduct is consistent with the sense of such an obligation; since it is marked with gentleness and indulgence on the one side, and with zeal and loyalty on the other."[7] Thus the Government wanted to impose abolition through indirect means without upsetting the social or economic status quo. The primary preoccupation of the

---

[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid, p. 318.
[6] Howard Temperley, "The Delegalisation of Slavery in British India" in Temperlay, ed. *After Slavery: Emancipation and its Discontents* (2000), 173.
[7] William Adam, *Law and Custom of Slavery in British India* (1840), 244.

EIC in the context of slavery was not the holding of slaves per se but the immoral and illegitimate acquiring of slaves through kidnapping, murdering of parents etc. Andrea Major asserts that 'humanitarian rejections of the 'moral' legitimacy of such routes into slavery were often secondary to pragmatic considerations about the impact of the trade on social and economic stability of the regions affected and the implementation of law and order in British India.'[8] The 'frontier' states such as Delhi, Agra, Dacca and Nepal received significant attention in debates on slave trade in the official circles. This suggested 'a concern with settling and pacifying turbulent areas and asserting state authority over its subjects and borders, rather than slavery as a static institution.'[9]

Despite the British Government having passed orders to eradicate the open sale and purchase of slaves in the British territory, it was unable to check its secret filtration because of the customs in neighbouring districts.[10] The slave trade, whether overt or clandestine, especially the overseas trade remained very lucrative throughout the nineteenth century. A letter addressed to the Agent to the Governor General, in Ajmer in 1832, paints a vivid picture of slave trading in Rajputana carried out nefariously by the *Burda furosh* (slave-dealers) under the due protection of the Chiefs. The constant demand to furnish slaves for the *Zenana* (secluded inner chambers of the house meant exclusively for women) of the Chiefs' households was met by importing slaves from different ports of India, which was "an avowed and considerable source of revenue."[11] The regular demand for domestic slaves in the Hindu and Muslim households was also fuelled and swelled by the demand from European households.[12] The British, the Portuguese and the Dutch settlers in India trying to imitate the lifestyles of India's elite and wealthy, frequently demanded a retinue of servants at their disposal who were employed as cook, butler, maid, household servant, *Punkah* (a large cloth fan suspended on a frame) puller, coolie etc. They believed that by mirroring the lifestyle of the Indian elites, they would be able to endorse their status in Indian society and also legitimize their domination over the subject population.

Early attempts at abolition

Despite the fact that persistence of slavery served many purposes for the colonial state, it did carry out a protracted programme to abolish slavery in India throughout the nineteenth century. In 1811, an Anti-Slavery statute (Felony Act of 1811 or 51 Geo. III, C. 23) was enacted by the British Parliament, which was applicable to all British Dominions. It intended to

---

[8] Andrea Major, *Slavery, Abolitionism and Empire in India 1772-1843* (2012), 164.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Cons. 25th January, 1831, no. 65, Foreign (Political) Department, National Archives of India (Henceforth NAI).
[11] Cons 13th August, 1832, no. 25-26, Foreign (Political) Department, (NAI).
[12] Bengal Political Consultations, 30th May, 1808, West Bengal State Archives (Henceforth WBSA).

repress the sale of human beings. This was adapted by the British Indian Government as Bengal Regulation X of 1811. It declared the importation of slaves, by land or sea, to be strictly prohibited. It also affixed a penalty of six months imprisonment and a fine not exceeding Rupees 200 to the offence, in default of which liability to be imprisoned for another six months was further added. It was also extended to the removal of female children in order to bring them up as *nautch* (dancing) girls.[13] However, this Regulation remained a dead letter in the context of India due to several reasons. Firstly, there was great divergence of opinion amongst the Supreme Government, the Governments of Bombay and the Madras Presidency regarding its applicability and implementation. Secondly, it had no affect on the cases of slaves being brought by their owners from foreign lands, if they were not meant for sale. This was a cause of much concern as many slave dealers in the British territories devised means to transfer slaves into areas under Government jurisdiction by restoring to a simple expedient of first landing the slaves in a neighbouring state and then transporting them to British territories.[14] Thirdly, it also did not have any provisions for the slaves held legally and transported within the British provinces as this would have made great majority of Indian inhabitants liable to punishment under this Regulation.

During the two decades between 1811 to 1833, the Governments of Bengal, Bombay and Madras enacted several local Acts in order to abolish slavery, but without much success. On a larger scale, legislative measure was taken up with the Charter Bill of 1833. It contained a provision for the abolition of slavery in India on or before 12th April, 1837. However, the reply of Court of Directors to the official communication by Charles Grant cautioned that "any plan which may be calculated to improve the condition of the natives, by abolishing slavery, without doing violence to the feelings of caste, or the rights of property, cannot fail to meet with the court's cordial approbation."[15] This wary hostility became more apparent in the meeting of Court of Directors on the 5th of July, 1833, when Henry St. George Tucker (English financier, who later became the Chairman of the EIC) and Richard Jenkins, (Director of the EIC) vehemently opposed it. As a result the clause was modified during the second reading of the bill, and it was stated as "And whereas it is expedient that slavery should cease throughout the said territories. Be it enacted, that the said governor general in council shall, and he is hereby required to frame laws and regulations for the extinction of slavery, having due regard to the laws of marriage and the rights and authorities of fathers and heads of families..."[16] Even after the Bill was cleared

---

[13] D.R. Banaji, *Slavery in British India* (1933). p. 297.
[14] Bengal Judicial Consultations, 19th December, 1812, (WBSA).
[15] *Slavery and Slave Trade in British India* (by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society) (1841), 47.
[16] Ibid.

in the House of Commons, it was forced to undergo further modifications in the House of Lords. It encountered severe resistance from the Duke of Wellington, Lord Ellenborough, the Earl of Harrowby, and the Marquis of Salisbury. Lord Ellenborough pronounced the clause as "useless and unnecessary", adding further that if it passed, "it would not only ignite the indignation of the landed proprietors, but it would, at the same time, shake the confidence and the allegiance of the native officers." The Marquis of Salisbury considered slavery to be "nothing more than an affair of caste."[17] This kind of reductionism of slavery in India to a system entwined with caste and equating slave labour with servitude emanating out of obligatory and customary relationship between the persons of high and low caste, was widely prevalent in the English officialdom.

Finally this Bill was amended on a motion by Lord Lansdowne, which called for "leaving the question to be settled in India."[18] Section 88 of the Charter Act of 1833 directed the Government of India to take into immediate consideration "the means of mitigating the state of slavery, and of ameliorating the condition of slaves, and of extinguishing slavery throughout the said territories, so soon as such extinction shall be practicable and safe."[19] The government was further required to submit annual reports before the Parliament regarding the implementation of the above directive.

Sixteen months after India Bill had become law, the Court of Directors transmitted their instructions respecting slavery to the Governor General. They argued that certain kinds of restraints are required and stated that "in legislating therefore on slavery, it may not be easy to define the term precisely, it is necessary that the state to which your measures are meant to apply should be described with due care"; they also thought that remedial measures should generally begin with the cases of the greatest hardship.[20] Domestic slavery was assumed to be mild with its origin resting in the seasons of scarcity and was hence seen as a measure of social service and humanity. The British officials argued that to dissolve such a connection by forcible measures would mean inflicting injury upon emancipated individual. They also suggested that the slaves should "perhaps be set at liberty by degrees" as their immediate and unqualified enfranchisement was not warranted by "the degree of civilization which the society had attained".[21] Skepticism around abolition was most explicit in carefully worded statement of D.M. Smith who wrote- "to themselves it might be a questionable benefit, while such a measure would undoubtedly affect, in a very serious manner, the interests of a large

---

[17] Ibid, 49.
[18] R.K. Tiwari, *Human Rights and Law-Bonded Labour in India* (2011), 19.
[19] Ibid.
[20] *Slavery and Slave Trade in British India* (by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society) (1841), p. 53
[21] Ibid.

class of the landholders of this province."[22] It was finally laid out that for the emancipation of any slave, legally or illegally held in bondage, three things were required. First, "the desire for it on the part of the slave should always be previously ascertained." Second, "every case for emancipation should be a judicial proceeding, investigated and decided the judge." Third, "compensation should be given to the owner."[23] Eventually, the Parliamentary session of 1840 carried the law of 1833 into effect.

C.H Cameron, a British Jurist and a prominent member of the Law Commission in India in 1830s and 40s, deliberating on the origin of slaves wrote that "slaves could originate in two ways – Firstly, in a contract by which a free man sells himself and his posterity or sells his child (or other relatives) and his posterity; and secondly, by a birth of a child which has been begotten by a man of a superior caste upon a woman of inferior caste. Such child is a slave and may become of course the stock of a race of slaves." He further observed that except in cases of abuse, the continuance was in great measure voluntary. In case of disobedience or fault committed by the slave, the master had power to beat his slave with a thin stick or to bind him with a rope and if the slave was considered to deserve more severe punishment, the master may pull his hair, or expose him upon an ass. Cameron compared a usage of a stick by the master upon his slave to the right of Englishman to correct his wife with a similar instrument.[24]

In the draft Penal Code published in 1837, in the Chapter on Kidnapping, except in Clause 357, there is no reference to slavery. However, on the basis of the information collected from every part of India, the report of the Commissioners recognized slavery as existing and that there was no law whatever defining the extent of the power of a master over his slaves and that everything depended on the disposition of the particular functionary who happened to be in charge of the district. The Minutes by the Governor General (27th May, 1839), noted that the law regarding powers of a master over his slave "partly depends upon the opinion of those by whom it is administered, and is liable of some degree to fluctuate with a change of functionaries".[25] Because of marked inconsistency amongst them, the Law Commissioners recommended to the Governor General in Council that no act falling under the definition of an offence should be exempted from punishment because it was committed by a master against a slave.[26] It was thought that by framing the law in this manner they were in fact virtually abolishing slavery in British

---

[22] Kumaun Division Judicial Letters Issued, Vol. 30 (1834-38), Letter from D.M. Smith to Govt. of Agra, Uttar Pradesh State Archives (Henceforth UPSA).

[23] *Slavery and Slave Trade in British India* (by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society) (1841), 54.

[24] Parliamentary Papers (PP), *Special Reports of the Indian Law Commissioners*, 1842. p. 222.

[25] Ibid, p. 245.

[26] Minutes by Justice Spankie in Empress of India v Ram Kuar on 8 March, 1880. Citation: (1880) ILR 2 All 723

India. In reality their prime objective was to deprive slavery of those evils that were its essence. According to the Commissioners, the circumstance that made slavery the worst of all social evils was not that the master had a legal right to certain services from the slave but that the master had a legal right to enforce the performance of those services without having recourse to the tribunals.

Despite the distinction between moderate and immoderate correction of the slave by the master, the boundary between the two remained blurred. Thus the effect of the proposed law was to abolish the right of corrective moderating of slave. Many servants were under the contract, the performance of which was compelled by severe punishment under several Regulations (especially the Bye–Laws of Calcutta). The officials viewed the proposed Act as leaving the master of the slave without means, either by his own personal correction or through the intervention of a magistrate, of compelling the service of his slave.

Regarding the legal effect of the Act, the Law Commissioners opined that it would have no significance in ameliorating the condition of slavery. They firmly believed that the magistrates and the courts would invariably decide doubtful cases in favour of the slave.[27] The Law Commissioners were also apprehensive regarding the knowledge of the investigators on the subject of slavery and were as much wary of the abuse of law by the slaves.[28]

Governor General, Lord Auckland noted in his minutes of 6th May, 1839 that the abuse of violent punishment was nowhere legal and that the Government has taken an authoritative stand over other issues which had become synonymous with the practice of slavery such as child stealing and capture of children after their parents have been murdered.[29] In spite of all the efforts, it could not do much to prevent the sale of children by their own parents especially during famines. The Government celebrated the fact that 'most of the slaves in Hindustan have all lost their freedom by the act of their parents'[30] as an expedient measure in times of dearth. The apologetics of slavery argued that this was the only way by which thousands of children could be saved from starving to death. C. H. Cameron commenting on Hindu Slavery, stated, "Our researches into the subject of Indian slavery have led me to believe that it operates in a great degree in mitigation of the evils which are incident to the state of society prevailing in a greater part of this country. I believe that it mitigates the evils of poverty, at all times pressing heavily upon the lower orders: in times of dearth and famine, pressing with intolerable severity. Slavery may be regarded as the Indian Poor law and prevention of

---

[27] Parliamentary Papers, Special Reports of the Indian Law Commissioners, 1842. p. 241.
[28] Ibid. p. 243.
[29] Consultations- 21st Jan, No.65, 1831; 13th Sept, No.82-83, 1834; 23rd Oct No.33, 1834. Foreign Department, Political Branch, NAI.
[30] House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, Ireland University Press, 1831-32, Vol. 5. Appendix. p. 23.

infanticide…"[31] Furthermore, passing of children into slavery in order to redeem their parents from debt or to repay the loans that their parents had accrued over the years was not unusual. The government also could not do much in this regard as transfer of the burden of debt in this form was a norm of the society, legitimized by years of tradition and customary law. In fact the relationship between dependent servants and masters, earlier construed as a matter of rights and duties, was transformed into a tie betwixt debtor and creditor. This change was brought about by the juridical process that turned bonded labourers into persons with suspended rights.[32] Lalla Ram Chaman Lal, Agent to the Maharajah of Ramghur, testified before the Law Commissioners that *Kamias* were absolute slaves until the repayment of loan and were called *Sounkia*. He further added that there was no such thing as the sale of a man for life without his offspring.[33] The origin of slavery of *Kamia* and many of his likes was self-sale, and sale by the father or other who exercised parental authority.[34]

The sale and purchase of child slaves remained a very contentious issue in the debates that preceded the passing of Act V of 1843. It became even more serious and critical as the connection between debt bondage and slave trade was brought to light. It was clearly acknowledged that "all the peculiar hardship and the cruelty of the slave trade was perpetuated by sanctioning the free introduction of slave debtors".[35] Hamilton citing an example from Gorakhpur wrote, "a native, for a loan of fifty one rupees, at twelve percent interest, comes under an obligation to give his own labour and that of his family to the lender at all times and in all forms, for an indefinite period, until the amount of the loan shall be repaid, principal and interest, in full."[36] Therefore the effect of such arrangement was that on the death of the father, his wife and children were left in bondage. Such bond service often practically transformed into perpetual slavery by the inability of the bond-servant to discharge the pecuniary obligations which had been incurred. To end this it was suggested that after the 1st of July, 1836, no contract for

---

[31] *Special Reports of the Indian Law Commissioners,* House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1842(585), p. 221.

[32] See Gyan Prakash's *Bonded Histories: Genealogies of Labor Servitude in Colonial India,*(1990). The book explores the relationship between the *Kamia* (Dependent labourer) and the *Malik* (Patriarchal master) and within it the power of money to bind people. In an attempt to trace the history and roots of bonded labour in Southern Bihar, it also shows how the reciprocal power and dependence between the labourers and their lords got transformed into a monetary relation based on *kamiauti* (advances/ loans) reflecting the changes in the political economy.

[33] *Reports of the Indian Law Commissioners,* House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1841(262), p. 257.

[34] Ibid. Also see the testimony of Sarvanand Rai, Zamindar (Landlord) in Mymensingh district in *Reports of the Indian Law Commissioners,* House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1841(262), p. 246.

[35] PP 1841, p. 241.

[36] Ibid.

debtor's slavery under any shape, should be deemed valid in the courts. There was strong opposition in Governor General's Council to the banning of the sale of children into slavery. The suggestion for a system of apprenticeship with due registration of such sales before a Magistrate was refuted citing administrative unfeasibility.[37]

The Act of 1843 and its aftermath

At last, the Act V of 1843 carried out the original recommendations of the Law Commissioners, which is considered a landmark in the legislative history of British India. It did nothing to prevent possession of child slaves or traffic in them and the issue was only addressed by the Penal Code of 1860. However, it did lay down certain procedures delegalizing slavery in British India.[38] The Act did not declare possession of slaves to be a penal offence and therefore was only an enabling Act. Dharma Kumar rightly argued that "essentially the government solved the problem of slavery by ignoring it, the courts would not recognize the master's rights. The Indian institutions were too deeply rooted for a more direct attack."[39] Therefore, in practical terms, the Act only abolished the legal state of slavery, which meant that any claim to the labour or services of a slave could no longer be recognized or upheld by any Court of Law. Moreover, the transmission of knowledge to the slaves never happened. As a matter of fact, the Indian officials who were vested with the responsibility of implementing this Act, were themselves slave owners.

Later in 1846, the Indian Law Commissioners again submitted a report on the Indian Penal Code (IPC). In Clauses 426 to 438 of their report, the Commissioners referred to kidnapping and sale of children. In Clause 435 they referred to Act V of 1843, and observed that the private sale of a free person for the purpose of being dealt with as a slave is not prohibited by this law. But as, under Section 4 of it, no person so sold could be dealt with as a slave against his will, which amounted to a virtual prohibition and which was

---

[37] S.V. Desika Char, *Centralised Legislation-A History of the Legislative System of British India,* (1965), 193.

[38] First, "it is hereby enacted and declared that no public officer shall in execution of any decree or order of Court or for the enforcement of any demand of rent or revenue, sell or cause to be sold any person on the ground that such person is in a state of slavery";

Second, "and it is herby declared enacted that no rights arising out of an alleged property in the person and services of another as a slave shall be enforced by any Civil or Criminal court or Magistrate within the territories of east India company";

Third, "and it is herby declared enacted that any person, who may have acquired property by his own industry, or by the exercise of any art, calling or profession or by inheritance, assignment, gift or request shall not be dispossessed of such property or prevented from taking possession thereof on the ground that such person or that the person from whom the property may have been derived was a slave";

Fourth, "and it is herby enacted that any act, which would be penal offences if done to a free man, shall be equally an offence if done to any free person on the pretext of his being in a condition of slavery." George S. Fagan, *The Unrepealed and Unexpired Acts of the Legislative Council of India* (1862*)*, 383-4.

[39] Dharma Kumar, *Land and Caste in South India*, 74.

regarded as effectual in regard to adults who could avail themselves of the law.[40] But with respect to children, it was suggested that it should be made penal to sell or purchase a child under any circumstance. As a result of this recommendation in the report of 1846, the Sections 370 and 371 of IPC were prepared. However, Section 370 provided for specific offences only which included (i) the importation and exportation of a person as a slave; (ii) the disposal of a person as a slave (and here the presumption is that the act is against the will of the person); (iii) the acceptation, reception or detention of any person against his will as a slave, that is, it must be shown that the act was done against the will of the person, who cannot be accepted, received or detained as a slave. In majority of cases these conditions were not fulfilled and therefore Section 370 was mostly not applied. In the case of Empress of India v Ram Kuar, 1880 Justice Oldfield noted, "To bring the act of the accused in the case before us within the meaning of Section 370, there must be a selling or disposal, of a girl as a slave, that is, a selling or disposal whereby one who claims to have a property in the person as a slave transfers that property to another...The girl appears to have come under the protection of accused when in a state of destitution, and she was given over to Udai Ram in order that she might become his brother's wife, the accused receiving a gratification for her trouble. The facts do not, therefore, appear to me to constitute an offence under Section 370."[41] This opinion was seconded by Justice Straight who also stated, "there is no sufficient evidence that the girl Deoki was 'sold or disposed of' to the brother of Udai Ram for the purpose of her being dealt with as a slave."[42]

There was a lot of debate around Section 370 of the IPC and the four sections under the Act V of 1843 in the 1880s. In the light of the Act of 1843, the intention behind Section 370 of IPC was not clear to many judges and law commissioners. Section 370 provides that "whoever imports, exports, removes, buys, sells, or disposes of, any person as a slave, or accepts, receives, or detains against his will any person as a slave, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine." In the case mentioned above, of Empress of India v Ram Kuar, 1880, Chief Justice Robert Stuart commented that Section 370 seems to assume the condition of slavery as a possible fact within the cognizance of the law but such a situation was as much ignored by the law of India as it was by the law of England.[43] According to him, 'the slave was a creature without any rights or status whatsoever, who was or may become property of another as a mere chattel, the owner having absolute

---

[40] Minutes by Justice Spankie in Empress of India v Ram Kuar on 8 March, 1880. Citation: (1880) Indian Law Reports (ILR) 2 All 723
[41] Minutes by Justice Oldfield in Empress of India v Ram Kuar on 8 March, 1880. Citation: (1880) ILR 2 All 723
[42] Minutes by Justice Straight in Empress of India v Ram Kuar on 8 March, 1880. Citation: (1880) ILR 2 All 723
[43] Ibid.

power of disposal by sale, gift, or otherwise, and even of life or death, over the slave, without being responsible to any legal authority.' This was such a determinate and fixed condition of the slave in the eyes of the law and therefore not a condition capable of degrees. But at the same time such a position of any human being under the Government of India was thoroughly repudiated by the Act of 1843 which denied by law not only of the condition of slavery as a possible state of things, but of any rights or interests or estate which could be asserted in respect of it.

Justice Spankie citing the precedents of the Court elaborated that 'a person is treated as a slave if another asserts an absolute right to restrain his personal liberty, and to dispose of his labour against his will, unless that right is conferred by law, as in the case of a parent, or guardian, or jailor.'[44] At the same time it was also widely acknowledged that children were purchased from their parents or strangers, and were brought up as domestic servants, having little or no personal liberty conceded to them. These children were practically slaves and the persons who detained them in their houses were liable to punishment under the Penal Code.

This confusion regarding the interpretation of Act V of 1843 and Section 370 of IPC continued well into the twentieth century. In the case of Koroth Mammad v Unknown, 1917, the judgment by Justice Ayling clearly deliberated upon the lack of any proper definition of the term 'slave'.[45] It also referred to other cases which included a definition very short of slavery in its most extreme forms wherein the master had absolute and unlimited power over the life, fortune and liberty of the slave.[46]

Persistence of bonded labor relations

The above description regarding the persistence of slavery into the twentieth century has a thematic dimension as well. As has been argued before, the relations between the masters and servants were defined by customs and traditions, in which caste played a very crucial role in determining the hierarchy of relationships. The lender-debtor aspect of the relationship was only one of the many aspects that connected the servant to the master. In post 1843 period, how the credit relationship became the 'only' connection that bound the two is a point of enquiry. Loan or advance became the fundamental basis on which the attachment of labour to his employer rested. Legitimacy that was earlier granted to such relations of supremacy and subordination by defining them in terms of caste, religion and custom, were set aside as the

---

[44] Minutes by Justice Spankie in Empress of India v Ram Kuar on 8 March, 1880. Citation: (1880) ILR 2 All 723

[45] Minutes by Justice Ayling in Koroth Mammad v. Unknown on 27 August, 1917. Citation: 42 Indian Cases 977, (1917) 33 *Madras Law Journal* 430.

[46] Ibid.

same relations came to be remoulded as contractual credit relationships.[47] Slaves no longer belonged to some specific castes of lower order as persons from all castes from Brahmin to Shudras could be enslaved.[48] More so, it also ceased to be a system limited to a particular religion as both Hindu and Muslim laws sanctioned it.[49] It also permeated all sections of society. As the system came to be disassociated with caste or religion, it was natural that its basis had to be located somewhere else. Thus, it was the gradual monetization of the relations of servitude that took place and this process became even more intensified with the legal abolition of slavery. Jacques Pouchepadass notes, "the same dependents continued to work under the same masters, and their conditions of existence, work and remuneration remained identical...in a sense, the colonial situation not only perpetuated the existence of personal servitude under a new garb, but it gave it the inflexible rigidity of the modern law and a new kind of legitimacy, independent from the personal relation of reciprocal exchange which bound master and dependent within the caste system."[50]

Abolition created the much-hyped difference between a chattel slave (considered to be unjust) and an ameliorated slave[51] (considered to be morally legitimate). The fact that one could buy and sell a man's work without appropriating the body, gave way to morally justifiable and acceptable versions of slavery cast in debt based forms of servitude. In the debates that preceded abolition, slavery was a labour system but soon after abolition, it became 'the other of an unrealised and general condition called Freedom'.[52] With this shift in the understanding of the concept of slavery itself, from a socio-economic condition to a conceptual one, was underlined by the shifts in the law and the legal apparatus that enforced these laws. When persons ceased to be the property of their owners, there were other means and regulatory frameworks devised to restrict the mobility of labour. The nodal point of power shifted from the master of the slave to the State and its instruments of control. For example, Ravi Ahuja's work on Madras presidency has shown how police regulations disciplined and controlled labour at the turn of century. Similarly, another major instrument available with the State i.e. 'law' was resorted to for appropriating and retaining workers. Legal mechanisms as well as extra-economic means were employed to enforce contracts, restrict mobility, fix working hours, and even apprehend runaway workers.

---

[47] See the testimony of Parsinath Doobe, Mooktear (An executive and legal head) to the Maharja of Kurruckpore in *Reports of the Indian Law Commissioners,* House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1841(262), p. 247.

[48] Ibid, 246.

[49] PP, 1841, p. iv.

[50] Jacques Pouchepadass, 'After Slavery: Unfree Rural Labour in Post-1843 Eastern India', in Jan Breman, Isabelle Guerin, Aseem Prakash (eds), *India's Unfree Workforce: Of Bondage Old and New,* (2009), 30.

[51] Term borrowed from Roger Sawyer in *Slavery in the Twentieth Century* (1986).

[52] Harold D. Woodman, "Sequel to Slavery: The New History Views the Postbellum South", *The Journal of Southern History,* Vol. 43, No. 4, (1977): 523-24.

The most visible transformation was in the countryside. The class of agricultural slaves was attached to their masters through varied linkages. In majority of cases these relationships resembled that of 'patron and client'. The ideology of caste was central to the formulation of these relationships.[53] The lower caste labourers were found to be in dependent relationships with their landlords and the patronage of the master was expressed through the maintenance of his servants through life and death. In the return for the favours, the servants were obliged to render certain services, made sacrosanct by the local customs and traditions. With the gradual penetration of nascent capitalism in the rural countryside, these traditional forms of relationships were recast as debt bondage. Many servile relationships existed by the virtue of being so from time immemorial. For example, the subjection of the low caste *Chamars* (low caste labourers) at the hand of upper castes especially the *Thakurs* (high caste landlords) had continued unabated in the medieval period.[54] Similarly, the relationship between the *Kamia* and his *Malik* also derived from age-old tradition, customs and culture of mutual obligations.[55] During and after the abolition of slavery, many existing master-slave relationships were carried out on a sly and were gradually converted into legal forms such as debt bondage.[56] It was only after the abolition of slavery that customary relationships of mutuality were recast as relationships based on the objective power of money. The reformulation of such labour relations as debt bondage was crucial and pertinent for the colonial state to present a picture of 'free' society, where there were no ties binding people either to land or to persons except that of money. "Legal emancipation notwithstanding" wrote Baak, 'relations between ex-slaves and ex-owners often did not change. Agricultural labourers usually remained attached to a particular plot of land and its owner, particularly as a result of indebtedness.'[57] Thus, a contract based on credit became the sole device through which people could become bonded. In this context, the earlier ties that bound people like caste, custom, or even mutuality became redundant.

These contracts based on debt made way for other types of contracts too. Although the basis of contract remained the same i.e. money; the nature of credit underwent a change. Instead of 'loans' which bound agricultural labourers to their masters or the landlords or even to the moneylender, it was the perennial 'advance' that underpinned the contracts between the employers and the labourers. So while 'slavery' existed due to social sanctioning of

[53] See Dharma Kumar's *Land and Caste in South India*, Tanika Sarkar's "Bondage in the Colonial Context", Gyan Prakash's *Bonded Histories*.

[54] Irfan Habib, Presidential Address at Indian History Congress, Kurekshetra, 1982.

[55] See Gyan Prakash, *Bonded Histories*.

[56] Wendy K. Olsen, "Marxist and Neo-Classical approaches to Unfree Labour in India", in Tom Brass and Marcel van der Linden (eds.) *Free and Unfree Labour, The Debate Continues* (1997), 380.

[57] Paul E. Baak,' Enslaved Ex-Slaves', in in Tom Brass and Marcel van der Linden (eds.) *Free and Unfree Labour, The Debate Continues* (1997), 436.

involuntary servitude, 'contract' was the legally sanctioned means of controlling and retaining labour. Manjari Dingwaney writes, "the prohibition of slavery was often accompanied by an increasing resort to practices and institutions that attempted to circumvent that prohibition. Hence, substitutes like indentured or contract labour emerged (where there is no ownership of persons, but the rights to ownership of labour under exploitative conditions exists.)"[58] Extra-economic coercive measures in both the cases derived their sanction from the power of debt, either in the form of loan or advance. So while, the colonial state to its own advantage portrayed advances as a means to come out of bondage, in reality they implicated an entry into a new one. Jan Breman was right in stating it was 'nothing other than a colonial fantasy to maintain that a contract was entered into voluntarily."[59]

Contracts, debts and bondedness

The common understanding is that the contract is an outcome of two willing parties to enter into it while agreeing to the terms and conditions therein. However, it problematically and significantly pre-supposes freedom which in reality is nothing more than 'choicelessness'. In theory, the prodigious contract hails the freedom of worker or the freed slave to enter into the contract as an indication of his free will to give his labour power. But since the worker himself always embodies labour power, what is contracted is not only the intangible labour power but the bodied labourer himself. Furthermore, the so-called freedom is not ever independent or free from choicelessness arising out the absence of any alternative in which the labourers may offer his services. As a consequence while buying labour power, employees buy a command over the use of workers' bodies and their persons also. Jairus Banaji reaffirmed that "voluntary role of labour power was not the anti-thesis of servitude but its precondition".[60] In other words disembodied labour power was only to create an illusion wherein the workers themselves were not commodities but entities exercising their free will to sell their labour power. Banaji further wrote, "the will theory of contract was a construct of the legal formation of the 19th century and was accepted for precisely what it was."[61] In context of India especially, the right to control labour power was sold in exchange for the necessary means of subsistence, which in practice was actually control over labourers themselves. Therefore,

---

[58] Manjari Dingwaney, "Unredeemed Promises: The Law and Servitude", in Utsa Patnaik and Manjari Dingwaney (eds.), *Chains of Servitude, bondage and slavery in India* (1985), 314.
[59] Quoted in Paul E. Baak, "Enslaved Ex-slaves, Uncaptured Contract Coolies and Unfree Freedom: "Free" and "Unfree" Labour in the Context of Plantation Development in Southwest India", in Brass, Tom and Marcel van der Linden (eds.), *Free and Unfree Labour, The Debate Continues* (1997), 428.
[60] Jairus Banaji, "The Fictions of Free Labour: Contract, Coercion and so called Unfree Labour", *Historical Materialism*, Vol.11, No.3 (2003): 70.
[61] Ibid, p.71.

the concept of free labour post abolition remained an incoherent concept which nevertheless helped to accommodate newly emerging forms of labour; labourers bound by debt and power of money being the most prominent category. Debt, incurred either through a loan or an advance, was an attempt by the landowners to hold the labourers tied to their field at a time when large numbers of landless workers were migrating to towns, plantations and newly emerging industrial sectors and factories. It was indeed ironic that the vocabulary of implied freedom was used to bind people in servitude. Nevertheless, it was intelligible for the colonial Government as it helped them to comprehend and have different slave like forms of labour within the rubric of legislation and regulation by asserting that bondage in India was derived from indebtedness to their masters, of otherwise free labourers. The usual way in which a man sold himself earlier was through a sale-deed ('*Kharidagi-pottah', 'param bhatarak'*), but later it was done by affirming to lease or mortgaging his services for a very long period ranging from sixty to hundred years, which was 'understood to include children born after the lease.'[62] It was the most common way by which the law containing commerce in slaves was circumvented.[63] Hence the dichotomy arising from subsumption of unfreedom within the category of so-called free workers was resolved by creating a category of debt-bondage. Theoretically it was possible to come out of bondage if the bonded labourer repaid the loan he had taken. However, it was only virtually possible and loans were usually requited in the form of labour service. The transaction from slavery to debt bondage to contract was not simply a shift from unfreedom to freedom but a change in the taxonomy of existing power relations between the dominant and the subordinated; sustained by legal formalism which distinctively legitimated and regulated labour in different periods.

Advances played a significant role in appropriating labour and were the key element in retaining and mobilizing labour. For labourers who had no rights in land and lived hand to mouth, advances were crucial for survival. The most definitive examples of the relations formulated on the basis of advances were the one constituted between the *Thakurs* and *Chamars* in UP, and between *Maliks* and *Kamias* in Bihar. The give and take of advances was the event for the masters to reassert their domination but also it was an occasion for construction of bondage. Instead of resurrecting the dependent ties, it was an economic bond founded on things. The juridical notion of debt-bondage allowed the labourers to be bound to their masters for life as the repayment of loans was permanently deferred.[64] Advances were also the

---

[62] Testimony of Dhurb Singh Das, in Sudder Dewanny Adawlut (Civil Court) of Calcutta; Appendix 1 to *Reports of the Indian Law Commissioners*, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1841(262), p. 230.

[63] See Testimonies of Vaydia Nath Missar and R.H.Mytton in Appendix 1 to Reports of the Indian Law Commissioners, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1841(262), p. 225 - 228.

[64] Gyan Prakash, *Bonded Histories*, p.180.

means by which the labourers manipulated the labour market especially where long distance migration was involved. Michael Anderson noted that creditors exchanged small advances for large quantities of work, while workers shied away from low-waged employment without a nominal sum in advance.[65] The advances given by the jobbers were often used immediately by the workers. Advances enabled the workers to pay off their debt to the landlord to whom they were bound. Whatever remained was exhausted during the course of the journey to pay for food etc. Consequently, the workers were already indebted to the jobbers, even before they had reached the site of work.[66] This system of advances under the penal contract brought the employer-employee relationship very close to perpetual servitude.[67] In reality these arrangements amounted to being identified as forced labour but these were also the most convenient and popular mechanism with the industrial entrepreneurs for assembling their work forces.[68] These advances were manipulated to take form of loans and thus was established an inextricable and institutionalized link between credit and labour. For landless labourers living barely at subsistence level in dire need of money for life cycle rituals, these advances were great temptation.

The system of advances as an attempt to lure, control and discipline the labour, has been brilliantly depicted by Ian J. Kerr in his study of Railway construction in the nineteenth century. He argues that advances 'subordinated the worker to the *muccadum* (jobber) and, in the complex hierarchy of supervision and direction that characterized Indian railway construction, subordinated *muccadam* to sub-contractor, sub-contractor to the contractor (or to the engineer) and the whole hierarchy to the railway company or to the Government that provided the capital'.[69] This implied that the advances helped to mobilize labour and also tied labour to the capital. Also through the advances, the employer gained considerable control over the worker's labour power, which consequently meant the loss of worker's control over his own labour power. These advances were also instruments by which labour was retained and brought within the purview of law. For example, in Queen Empress v. Indrajit, a three Rupee advance was given to secure a three-year contract.[70] Similarly, in Tangi Joghi v. Hall, both- two and four years contracts were secured with one Rupee advance.[71] It was remarked in Emperor v. Namdev Sakharam that the consideration in such contracts was

[65] Michael Anderson, 'India 1858-1930: The Illusion of Free Labor', in Douglas Hay and Paul Craven (eds.), *Masters, Servants, and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562-1955* (2004), 426.
[66] Paul E. Baak, 'Enslaved Ex-Slaves', 440.
[67] Michael Anderson, 'India 1858-1930', 436.
[68] Ibid, 426.
[69] Ian J. Kerr, "Free or Unfree", in Tom Brass and Marcel van der Linden (eds.) *Free and Unfree Labour, The Debate Continues* (1997), 418.
[70] Michael Anderson, "India 1858-1930", 433.
[71] Ibid.

"often so grossly inadequate as to suggest that the so-called advance was merely a device for bringing the contract within the Act".[72]

It is also important to mention that it was not only private individuals who used advances to bind labourers but also the colonial State. Through various mechanisms such as the Statutory Labour Act, the Compulsory Labour Act (1856) etc., the government too procured labour for various public works. The system of *Begar* i.e. Unpaid Forced Labour was no doubt, inextricably woven into the ruler's rights and privileges; and when the British Government took over the governance and administration in India, it appropriated all such rights and privileges which had hitherto been enjoyed by the native *rajahs* (rulers). Regarding the institution of *Begar* in the Hill states of Northern India, (where it was most extensively employed in contrast to other parts of the country), V.Verma notes that while re-instating the ancient chiefs, the Company Government bound each one to furnish a fixed quota of *Begaris* and in event of failure to do so, they were penalized by the imposition of adequate fines.[73]

Within Northern India, State appropriated forced labour or *Begar* was most widely prevalent in the Kumaon and Garhwal region. These hilly regions had become quite popular amongst the British officialdom as area of retreat during oppressive summers. There were an increasing number of complaints made by the *Zamindars* (Landlords) against the evil of *Begar* system. The Public Servants, both Civil and Military who travelled through the interior parts of these areas seized the coolies by means of extortion of rations and made them carry their baggage. It then became pertinent to prohibit any such arrangements regarding the supply and provisions of carriage.[74] The system had become entrenched and very abusive is established by the fact that several villages in the district had become deserted as the compulsory system of acquiring the services of *Khusseeas* (Hill Porters) had caused villagers to migrate to Dotee solely to escape the Coolie System.[75] The Tehsildars of Halee Kumaon region were frequently directed by the Commanding Officer to furnish *Khusseeas* for private works at cantonment, for parties of sepoys going on command and for transport of public stores or private baggage of Officers especially between Lohooghat and Petoragurh.[76]

On 29th January, 1858 the Governor General informed the Legislative Council that he has given assent to the Bill entitled "a Bill to authorize the impressment of artisans and labourers for the erection of Buildings for the European Troops in India, and for works urgently required for Military purposes", turning it into an Act.[77] The Act created hue and cry amongst the villages surrounding Military cantonments. The contractors who had taken up

---

[72] Ibid.
[73] V. Verma, *Shimla Hill States in 19th Century*, (2008), 231.
[74] Letter from G.W. Traill to Lt. Col. Alldin, Kumaun Division, Judicial Letters Issued, Vol. 26, 1822-25, UPSA.
[75] Letter from G.W. Traill to Captain Speck in ibid.
[76] Letter from G.W. Traill to Military Auditor General in ibid.
[77] Cons. 29th January, 1858, Home Department, NAI.

Public or Military works suddenly came under duress. For example, in Allahabad, the construction work for the doors of the barracks was going on smoothly till the passing of the above Act. The declaration of Act created so much panic among the native work force that they did not even leave their houses and the work in general almost stopped. The contractors of Messrs.' Burn and Co., Architects and Builders, complained of not being able to procure workers and demanded that some provision be devised to protect the people employed in Government contracts or otherwise it would be very difficult to carry on and fulfill the engagements, which would further prevent the contractors from taking up any more work.[78]

A variant of forced labour employed by the officials belonging to military and State came to fore in the mid-nineteenth century, when the exodus to hill stations became voguish amongst the British officials especially with the construction of Dak-Bunglows and PWD rest houses. These travels required large number of labourers for porterage of establishment of camp. In 1827, the Governor General, Lord Amherst visited Shimla and for carrying the baggage of his entourage from Kalka; 1700 coolies were found just not enough.[79] About a century later, on 31st January, 1928, The Indian National Herald reported the barbarity of the system of *Begar*. The correspondent stated that the Viceregal advent was attended with the separation of the cruelest phase of this system.[80] Wherever the viceroy visited or passed through Indian state territory, a large member of people (women not excluded), chiefly from the villages were caught hold of at the suspect and made to stand, each by a telegraph post all along the railway line, with burning torches in hand. As these trips were usually carried out in winters, the ill-fed and ill-clad villagers were forced to remain outdoors on the coldest of nights. To top it all, the privations of these people always remained unrequited. The newspaper also reported that when the viceroy was travelling from Jodhpur to Udaipur on the 25th Jan 1928, hundreds of villagers were driven by the police and subjected to keep the nocturnal watch for no return. Examples such as these coupled with many petitions and complaints that reached the government regularly demanding the abolition of the iniquitous system of *begar*, further flagged by several reports that appeared in the nineteenth century in the hill states (In Bushahe (1858), in Jubbal (1864), in Kuthar (1895), in Keonthal (1900), in Theog (1920)) compelled the government to reconsider its stand on the issue of *begar*. It also realized that for several valid reasons, the Chiefs could not be expected to supply the required number of *begaris* at all times. Here it was initially decided that the British officials would pay for the services that they availed. The coolies who carried loads of troops were paid four pice per man per march. In 1832, the wages of the

---

[78] Cons. 5th March, 1858, No. 43, Hme Department, NAI.
[79] V. Verma, Shimla Hill States in 19th Century, 234.
[80] The Indian National Herald, 31st January, 1928.

porters were increased to two annas a day.[81] Gradually, all *begaris* requisitioned by the British officials and military were commuted into service by cash payment. At many other places, the system of *begar* was unilaterally abolished and compensated by the State. For example, in the Jullender Division in 1917, after the abolition of *begar*, the *begar* services to the ladies of *haremsarai* were replaced by the services of regular employees paid by the State. Also, instead of employing *begaris* to procure wood and charcoal, the ladies started receiving wood and charcoal from the state. The compensation for *begari* was paid at the rate of Five Rupees per month per *begari*.[82]

Another milestone in the history of Master and Servant laws in India was the Act XIII of 1859 (Workmen's Breach of Contract Act), which applied to artificers, workmen, or labourers at the presidency, who had received money in advance for the performance of any work. The magistrate could compel refund of money or performance of the work or imprisonment for a term of three months. It primarily aimed at arming employers to control 'artificers, workmen and labourers.' While the initial enactment covered only the three Presidency towns of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, by 1865 it was extended to cover almost all British territories by different versions of Criminal Breach of Contract Act. As the reading of the sections under the law would suggest, it was (very ironically to its title) biased in favour of the master vis-à-vis the servants. It was rather next to impossible for the servants or workers, mostly illiterate and poor, to file a civil suit against the misdoings of the master, in contrast to the relative ease of the master to submit a complaint to the magistrate and seek police assistance in apprehending a runaway servant. Anderson has argued that this Act also provided the master with a unique legal instrument, otherwise not available to them under the common law which exempted specific performances from applying to contracts of employment 'on the grounds that forcing a person to work against his or her consent was tantamount to forced labour.'[83] Nonetheless, as the terms of the Act suggest, it could be invoked only where money had been advanced for the services offered by the worker. Though apparently it seemed to constrict its scope, in reality it could be applied to all bonded servants and wage labourers. The need for credit initiated a cycle of advances in which the money earned by the worker was always less than the money lent to him by the employer and thus the worker forever remained in debt.

Another Act of the same genre was the Employers and Workmen (Disputes) Act (X) of 1860. This also provided for criminal punishment of breach of contract by giving in magistrates summary powers to settle wage disputes. This act was a result of an uprising amongst railway workers in Bombay in 1859. Ian J. Kerr in his work has stated that this Act was a result of maltreatment meted out to the workers, which paradoxically in the course

---

[81] Ibid.
[82] Cons. No. G 34-18, 1917, Home Department (Public), NAI.
[83] M. Anderson, "India 1858-1930", 431.

of its formulation came to include provisions for fining and imprisoning workers who, having admitted to work for a particular period or to carry out a specific work, failed to fulfill their commitment. Moreover, there was no provision by which an appeal could be made against the decision passed under this Act.[84] Both the Acts, Workmen's Breach of Contract Act and Employers and Workmen (Disputes) Act, were modeled on English statutory law. In nineteenth century England, these laws were used to mobilize labour for small-scale enterprises. However, they were considerably modified to suit the requirements of a colonized society. The Indian version of the Acts put in place the criminal provisions but at the same time omitted the integral part of the English law i.e. legal protection of workers. In England, ill-treatment, cruelty or refusal to provide basic necessities of life on the part of the employers could become the basis for servant's discharge from services by the orders of the Magistrate, whereas in India neither legislation nor judicial doctrine provided any relief or protection against wrongdoings of the employer.[85]

Conclusion

The above article has outlined the metamorphosis of slavery in North India in a century that was marked by many legislative outpourings. Contrary to the popular belief, these legal interventions did not create a smooth, unidirectional passage from slavery to freedom. In fact it created contrivances through which slavery in India could continue for a very long time donning different garbs. It wouldn't be wrong to argue that in essence there was not much difference between slavery and its variants. An analysis of these suggests that in most cases they were interchangeable and overlapped. After slavery was delegalised in British dominions, the usual master-slave relationship became obfuscated and covert. Post 1843, the slave trading became surreptitious and the extant master-slave relationships were remoulded into other legally sanctioned forms such as Debt-bondage, Forced Labour (*Begar*), Statutory or Compulsory Labour and Contract Labour. The boundaries amongst them remained fluid and permeable and only in 1920s did any real change occur when penal sanctions and exactions were completely removed from the domain of labour employment. Although, many angles and connections remain yet to be explored in order to provide a vivid and articulate picture of enslavement in the Indian sub-continent but the above article presents interesting insights into the system of slavery which deftly functioned and sustained itself through an intricate web of laws, customs and normative discourses of the colonial state.

---

[84] Ian J. Kerr, "Free or Unfree", 424.
[85] M. Anderson, "India 1858-1930", 432.

Bibliography

Adam, William, *The Law and Practice of Slavery in British India*, in a series of Letters to Thomas Fowell Buxton (London: Weeks, Jordan, 1841).

Ahuja, Ravi, "Labour Relations in an Early Colonial Context: Madras 1750–1800", Paper for Conference on Indian Labour History, Delhi (1998).

Anderson, Michael, "India, 1858-1930: The Illusion of Free Labor", in Douglas Hay and Paul Craven (eds.), *Masters, Servants, and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562-1955* (Chapel Hill and London, University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

Banaji, D.R., *Slavery in British India* (Bombay: Taraporevala Sons & Company, 1933).

Banaji, Jairus, "The Fictions of Free Labour: Contract, Coercion and so called Unfree Labour", *Historical Materialism*, Vol.11, No.3 (2003): 69-95.

Bose, Sugata, "The Peasantry in Debt: The Working and Rupture of Systems of Rural Credit Relations" in Sugata Bose (ed.), *Credit, Markets And The Agrarian Economy Of Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Brass, Tom and Marcel van der Linden (eds.), *Free and Unfree Labour, The Debate Continues* (Berne: Peter Lang, 1997).

Breman, Jan, *Patronage and Exploitation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

Breman Jan; Guerin, Isabelle; and Prakash, Aseem (eds.), *India's Unfree Workforce: Of Bondage Old and New* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Cassels, Nancy Gardner "Social Legislation under the Company Raj: the Abolition of Slavery Act V 1843", *South Asia Research*, 11-1 (1988): 59-88.

Char, S.V Desika, *Centralised Legislation – A History of the Legislative system of British India from 1834 -1861* (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1963).

Chatterjee, Indrani, *Gender, Slavery and Law in Colonial India,* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Chatterjee, Indrani, Richard M.Eaton (eds.), *Slavery and South Asian History* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006).

Dingwaney, M. and U. Patnaik (eds.), *Chains of Servitude* (Madras: Sangam Books, 1985).

Dingwaney, Manjari, "Unredeemed Promises: The Law and Servitude", in Dingwaney, M. and U. Patnaik (eds.), *Chains of Servitude* (Madras: Sangam Books, 1985).

Ganguli, Dwarkanath, *Slavery in British Dominion* (Calcutta: Jijnasa, 1972).

Hay, Douglas and Craven, Paul (eds.), *Masters, Servants, and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562-1955* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

Hjejle, Benedicte, "Slavery and Agricultural Bondage in South India in the 19th Century", *The Scandinavian Economic History Review,* Vol.XI, Nos.1 and 2 (1967), 71-126.

Kerr, Ian J., "'Free or Unfree?', Railway Construction Labour in Nineteenth-Century India", in Brass, Tom and Marcel van der Linden (eds.), *Free and Unfree Labour, The Debate Continues* (Berne: Peter Lang, 1997).

Kumar, Dharma, *Land and Caste in South India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965).

Kumar, Dharma, "Caste and Landlessness in South India", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (1962): 337-363.

Linden, Marcel van der, Prabhu P. Mohapatra (eds.), *Labour Matters, Towards Global Histories* (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2009).

Major, Andrea, *Slavery, Abolitionism and Empire in India 1772-1843* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012).

Major, Andrea, "Enslaving Spaces: Domestic Slavery and the Spatial, Ideological and Practical Limits of Colonial Control in the Nineteenth–century Rajput and Maratha States", *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 46, 3 (2009): 315-342.

Olsen, Wendy K., "Marxist and Neo-Classical Approaches to Unfree Labour in India", in Brass, Tom and Linden, Marcel van der (eds.), *Free and Unfree Labour, The Debate Continues* (Berne: Peter Lang, 1997).

Pouchepadass, Jacques, "After Slavery: Unfree Rural Labour in Post-1843 Eastern India" in Jan Breman, Isabelle Guerin, Aseem Prakash (eds.), *India's Unfree Workforce: Of Bondage Old and New* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Prakash, Gyan, *Bonded Histories: Genealogies of Labour Servitude in Colonial India,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Prakash, Gyan, "Terms of servitude: The Colonial Discourse on Slavery and Bondage in India" in Martin A. Klein (ed.) *Breaking the Chains: Slavery, Bondage, and Emancipation in Modern Africa and Asia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 131-49.

Sarkar, Tanika, "Bondage in the Colonial Context", in Dingwaney, M. and U. Patnaik (eds), *Chains of Servitude,* (Madras: Sangam Books, 1985).

Sawyer, Roger, *Slavery in the Twentieth Century*, (Michigan: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986).

Temperley, H, *After Slavery: Emancipation and its Discontents,* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

Tesstart, Allian, "The Extent and Significance Of Debt Slavery", *Revue franciase de sociologie*, Vol.43, Supplement: An Annual English Selection (2002): 173-204.

Tiwari, R.K., *Human Rights and Law: Bonded Labour in India,* (CUP India: Foundation Books, 2011).

Verma, V, *Shimla Hill States in the 19th Century,* (New Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation, 2008).

Official Reports

Parliamentary Papers (House of Commons) 1828 (125) Slavery in India.
    House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, Ireland University Press, 1831-32, Vol. 5.

Parliamentary Papers (House of Commons) 1841 Session I (262) *Report of the Indian Law Commissioners on Slavery in East Indies* (January 1841).

Parliamentary Papers (House of Commons) 1842 (585) *Special Reports of Indian Law Commissioners.*

Report on Forced Labour (Statement regarding the various kinds of forced or compulsory labour in Indian States), 1930.

Slavery and Slave Trade in British India (by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society) (1841).

Atkinson, Edwin T, (ed.) *Statistical Descriptive and Historical Account of the NW Provinces of India*, Allahabad (1874).

Fagan, George S., *The Unrepealed and Unexpired Acts of the Legislative Council of India,* Volume 1 (Calcutta, 1862).

"Handikapptoaletten hade de som förråd" – Att utmana funktionsnormativitet med humor

Hanna Söderlund, Josefine Wälivaara och Karin Ljuslinder

Introduktion

Humor kan fungera som ett verktyg för att upprätthålla förtryckande strukturer och etablerade maktordningar, exempelvis genom att humorn görs på bekostnad av marginaliserade grupper. Den typen av humor är något som personer som har funktionsnedsättningar återkommande har varit föremål för. Historiskt har kroppslig och mental olikhet varit en källa till förlöjligande humor vilket bidragit till begränsande och stereotypa föreställningar om personer med funktionsnedsättningar (Haller och Ralph 2003, Ljuslinder 2014, Shakespeare 1999, Bingham och Green 2016). Dessa reproduceras inte minst i kulturella representationer, berättelser och medier där livet med en funktionsnedsättning ofta framställs som tragiskt, begränsande och onormalt i relation till ett liv med en normativ kropp och ett normativt sinne (se bl.a. Norden 1994, Ljuslinder 2002, Barnes 1992, Pointon 1997, Longmore 2003). Men humor har också potential att synliggöra och utmana normer, maktordningar och förgivettagna föreställningar i samhället (Strain et al. 2016, Wilde 2018, Bingham och Green 2016, Lockyer 2015). Genom att utmana normativa föreställningar kan de få nya eller andra betydelser som är mer nyanserade, mångfacetterade och förhoppningsvis mindre negativt laddade. Utmanandet kan även synliggöra normativa föreställningar som kulturellt, socialt och historiskt konstruerade diskurser. Artikelns syfte är att undersöka humorns potential att synliggöra och utmana förgivettagna föreställningar och normer, det vi kallar funktionsnormativitet, genom att analysera humoranvändning i poddsamtal mellan personer som har egna erfarenheter av funktionsnedsättningar. Funktionsnormativitet (ableism) är en maktordning som premierar funktionsfullkomlighet framför funktions-nedsättning och som positionerar personer med funktionsnedsättningar som mindre värda än personer utan funktionsnedsättningar (Campbell 2009).

Humor och funktionalitet

Tidigare forskning om funktionalitet och humor har i första hand fokuserat på filmkomedier och ståuppkomik, men inte på humor i vardagligare mening, i samtal eller intervjusituationer (Wilde 2018, Bingham och Green 2016, Ljuslinder 2014). Ett undantag är en studie där Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt och Buchholtz (2018) undersöker hur den kanadensiska humorpodden Sickboy kan bidra till kulturella förändringar i fråga om att bryta stigman om sjukdom.

Forskare har tidigare pekat på hur dominerande diskurser om funktionsnedsättning som tragiskt livsöde bidragit till att humor tillsammans med funktionsnedsättning har framstått som oförenligt (Haller 2003, Wilde 2018: 36). Exempelvis framhåller Bingham och Green (2016) att normativa föreställningar om funktionsnedsättning som personlig tragedi bidragit till den stora mängden forskning som främst visar hur humor används som känslomässigt hanterande av funktionsnedsättning, så kallad *coping*. Att studera humor och funktionalitet kräver en medvetenhet om den representationshistoria inom västerländsk kultur där kroppslig och mental olikhet ständigt har förknippats med tragiska narrativ.

Till skillnad från den typ av nedsättande humor som karakteriserat representationer av normbrytande funktionalitet genom historien, så kallad *disabling humor*, beskriver forskare en annan typ av humor som benämns *disability humor* (Bingham och Green 2016: 4).[1] Denna typ av humor kan utmana stereotyper och synen på funktionsnedsättning som enbart en tragedi genom att vända upp och ner på, ironisera över eller på annat sätt skämta om de nedsättande stereotyperna så att de framstår som absurda, överdrivna eller helt enkelt felaktiga. Skiftet i fokus innebär att komiker inte skämtar om personer med normbrytande funktionalitet utan istället om omständigheter som skapar funktionshinder (Shakespeare 1999: 52). Lockyer (2015: 1405) kallar det för "reversed disability discourse", alltså humor som riktar sin komiska blick mot sociala normer om funktionalitet. Wilde (2018: 29) menar att humor har potential att ifrågasätta föreställningar om bland annat normalitet och att humor därmed spelar en viktig roll i att dekonstruera funktionsnormativitet. *Disability humor* kan också användas av personer när de berättar om sina erfarenheter av att leva med en normbrytande funktionalitet vilket bidrar till att framställa dem som först och främst människor (Bingham och Green 2016: 4).

Representationer av normbrytande funktionalitet och humor i Sverige har tidigare undersökts av Karin Ljuslinder (2007), som i sin studie av SVT:s tv-serie CP-magasinet undersökte om programformatet tillät andra representationer än de vanligast förekommande i tv. Ljuslinder konstaterar att föreställningar om personer med normbrytande funktionalitet utmanades genom användningen av humor i programmet.

Material och urval

Materialet till den här undersökningen utgörs av avsnitt från en svensk podcast, inspelad under 2010-talet. Anledningen att vi valt just en podd är att vi vill komma åt samtal på svenska som finns offentligt tillgängliga, som handlar om vardagliga saker och sker mellan personer med normbrytande funktionalitet. Offentliga samtal har möjlighet att nå en större målgrupp än

---

[1] I artikeln används begreppet normbrytande funktionalitet synonymt med funktionsnedsättning.

privata samtal och kan därför reproducera såväl nya som gamla förståelser av olika föreställningar. Vi hade kunnat välja andra typer av medierade intervjusamtal, men valde en podd också för att poddmakarna inte är styrda av sändningsregler och liknande på det sätt som traditionell tv och radio är, utan är mer fria att leverera oberoende innehåll direkt till sina lyssnare (Llinares et al. 2018: 5). I en podd har vem som helst möjlighet att göra sin röst hörd, i likhet med hur det är i andra sociala medier. Poddmakare kan genomföra samtal på det sätt de själva vill och lyfta fram ämnen och perspektiv som är intressanta kanske bara för en smal mottagargrupp. Formen är därför potentiellt fri. Den som lyssnar på en podd har också möjlighet att ta del av ett samtal som kan uppfattas som personligt mellan människor, ett slags tjuvlyssnande av ett samtal.

Podden har valts ut utifrån fyra kriterier: 1) den är svensk, 2) den drivs och gästas av människor som själva lever med normbrytande funktionalitet (poddmakarna presenterar sig själva som rullstolsburna), 3) samtalen är interpersonella med utgångspunkt i den personliga berättelsen och 4) poddmakarna representerar inte någon intresseorganisation. Poddmakarna bidrar i den här podden med sina egna livserfarenheter, vilket innebär att de i stor utsträckning medverkar till samkonstruktionen av olika förställningar som förhandlas fram. Eftersom personer med normbrytande funktionalitet ofta är marginaliserade i medierepresentationer (se bl.a. Ljuslinder 2002, Ghersetti 2007), är en viktig aspekt av den här studien att det är personer med normbrytande funktionalitet som både leder och gästar podden.

Podden har inget uttalat syfte att vara humoristisk eller på ett aktivt sätt utmana funktionsnormativa föreställningar. Den humor som uppstår används delvis som ett socialt smörjmedel, det vill säga för att lätta upp stämningen, sondera terrängen, känna in varandra eller hantera mindre motsättningar som uppstår. Gästerna benämns av poddmakarna som *inspirerande förebilder*. Huvudfokus i podden ligger således på livsberättelser från personer som har erfarenheter av funktionsnedsättningar. Syftet med podden enligt podd-makarna själva är att öka kunskapen om och förståelsen för hur det är att leva med normbrytande funktionalitet.

Det vanligaste upplägget i poddavsnitten är att de två som driver podden är ankare i samtalet, varav en i huvudsak leder samtalet med en inbjuden gäst. Dramaturgin ser liknande ut i de flesta samtalen. Det börjar med frågor om gästens barndom och personens normbrytande funktionalitet. Ett antal frågor kretsar också kring gästens drömmar och syn på lycka och frihet. Samtliga poddavsnitt ramas in av inledande och avslutande samtal mellan podd-makarna. Samtalen kan delvis ses som institutionella eftersom de bygger på någon som intervjuar och andra som besvarar intervjufrågorna (Norrby 2014: 37). Frågorna följer oftast ett givet upplägg och den som ställer frågorna är den som i stor utsträckning också driver samtalet framåt. Men eftersom frågorna ofta är öppna finns utrymme för resonerande svar, vilket följs av

fördjupande följdfrågor. Samtalen har i stor utsträckning en vänskaplig snarare än en kritiskt utforskande ton.

Hela poddserien utgörs av 50 avsnitt. Av dessa har vi inom varje tiotal avsnitt slumpmässigt valt ut två avsnitt, samt det sista femtionde. Det totala urvalet utgörs därmed av elva avsnitt. De utvalda avsnitten har lyssnats igenom av samtliga tre författare och transkriberats utifrån en skrift-språksnorm. Detaljer som pauser och samtidigt tal har inte markerats eftersom analysen främst är innehållslig. Däremot anges inom dubbelparentes saker som skratt och röstintonation (se transkriptionsnyckel i slutet av artikeln.) Vi har gemensamt lyft fram exempel ur materialet där vi funnit att humor används. Sedan har vi valt ut de sekvenser där funktionsnormativa föreställningar synliggörs eller utmanas. För den slutgiltiga analysen har vi valt att fokusera på tre funktionsnormativa föreställningar som vi återkommande fann i humorsekvenserna: (1) Föreställningar om vilka subjektspositioner som ses som (o)möjliga, (2) föreställningar om att ett liv med normbrytande funktionalitet är ett tragiskt liv och (3) föreställningar om att det är bättre att vara funktionsfullkomlig än att ha en funktionsnedsättning.

Definitionen av humor som vi använder utgår från skrattet, det vill säga att någon eller några i samtalet skrattar. Även om anledningen till att människor skrattar inte behöver vara att något är humoristiskt, menar vi att det skapar en inramning av komik eller en möjlighet att tolka det sagda som komiskt eller på ett icke-bokstavligt sätt. Exemplen som analyseras ska inte ses som representativa för hur samtalen och skämtandet i podden ser ut överlag. Istället är avsikten att de exempel som lyfts fram belyser hur humor kan användas som verktyg för att synliggöra och utmana olika funktionsnormativa föreställningar. Det finns också annat skämtande i podden som inte har den funktionen. Här har vi dock valt att visa på humorns möjligheter, och hur den kan användas som verktyg i olika typer av samtal för att undvika marginalisering eller stereotypisering.

Teoretiskt ramverk

Som en övergripande teoretisk utgångspunkt i studien används begreppet *diskurs*. Diskurs är ett långt ifrån entydigt begrepp, men bygger på att språkliga begrepp och formuleringar har väsentlig betydelse för hur mottagarna uppfattar och förstår händelser och skeenden. I den här studien innebär diskurs att olika föreställningar och kunskaper struktureras så att de bildar en helhet som gör att vi förstår saker på ett visst sätt. Olika föreställningar som finns om världen, uttryckt i praktiker och materialitet, formas således i diskurser (Foucault 1993). En del av dessa föreställningar och förståelser blir så vedertagna att de uppfattas som självklara. Föreställningarna kan dock utmanas vilket innebär att de förändras. Handlingar och språk kan bidra till att både befästa och utmana föreställningar diskursivt. Att föreställningar utmanas innebär att de öppnas upp och att andra betydelser blir möjliga.

Vi tar i den här artikeln vår utgångpunkt i att olika kulturella föreställningar och diskurser är påverkade av de representationer vi är exponerade för. Det är ett, sedan länge, väletablerat antagande att traditionella och sociala medierepresentationer är centrala för hur vi människor förstår och får kunskap om omvärlden i allmänhet (McQuail 2005). Särskilt när det rör sig om företeelser som vi inte kan få egna direkta farenheter av, är det medier som är vår huvudsakliga källa till kunskap. Vi är således ofta hänvisade till den bild som medierna ger av omvärlden för att bilda oss föreställningar om samhälle och kultur (McLuhan 2001, Fiske och Jenkins 2011, Hall 1997, Ljuslinder 2002). Farnall och Smith (1999) och Kenix (2011) bland andra, visar i sina studier att medieporträtt av personer med normbrytande funktionalitet har inflytande på hur funktionsnedsättning uppfattas och förstås.

Perspektiv på funktionalitet

Den alltjämt dominerande förklaringsmodellen till funktionsnedsättning är den biomedicinska, där den kroppsliga eller kognitiva funktionaliteten betraktas som avvikande från någon sorts normalfunktionalitet. Diagnoser, mediciner, behandlingar och operationer betraktas vara nödvändiga såväl som önskvärda och eftersträvansvärda för att personen ska kunna få, eller återfå, full funktionalitet. Funktionsnedsättningen ses, enligt den här förklarings-modellen, som ett ovedersägligt faktum och enbart som en individuell kroppslig eller mental åkomma. Det är individen som ska anpassas till normaltillståndet och inte samhället som ska anpassas efter människor med olika funktionalitet (jfr. Oliver 2013). Den här dominerande förklarings-modellen, eller diskursen, gör att funktionsnedsättning- och funktions-hinderbegreppen aldrig kan bli politiska positioner där sociokulturella processer skulle kunna ifrågasättas som hindrade i personernas liv. Istället blir den normavvikande funktionaliteten ett självklart individuellt sakförhållande (jfr. Linton 1998).

Den medicinska förklaringsmodellen har dock utmanats av den sociala förklaringsmodellen, från början framför allt av forskare i England (se bl.a. Oliver 2013). Enligt den sociala förklaringsmodellen framhåller forskare att det är samhället och hur samhället är uppbyggt som skapar funktionshinder. Inom den sociala modellen förnekades för den skull inte den kroppsliga eller kognitiva icke-fullkomliga kroppen eller intellektet och därför skapades benämningen funktionsnedsättning (*impairment*) för att särskilja det från funktionshinder (*disability*). Man menade att människors olika funktions-nedsättningar inte skulle behöva vara hindrande för delaktighet på lika villkor i samhällslivet. Om inte samhället är konstruerat så att det utgör hinder och barriärer för vissa kroppar och intellekt behöver människor med dessa kroppar och intellekt inte förstås som funktionshindrade. Det är istället samhället som skapar funktionshinder.

I likhet med den utveckling som skett inom andra forskningsfält, som gay and lesbian studies utveckling mot queerteori, har forskning om funktionalitet också kommit att handla om att inte bara undersöka funktionsnedsättning utan även fokusera på de praktiker och föreställningar som upprätthåller funktionsfullkomlighet som norm. Föreliggande studie tar sin teoretiska utgångspunkt i vad som kallas för *studies in ableism*, vilket vi valt att kalla funktionsnormativitet på svenska (jfr. Bahner 2016: 13). Forskningsfältet fokuserar på frågor rörande hur funktionsnormativitet fungerar, skapas och upprätthålls genom att studera det som framstår som normalt och eftersträvansvärt (Campbell 2012: 215).

Funktionsnormativitet är en diskriminerande maktordning som gör att funktionsfullkomlighet värderas högre och ses som mer eftersträvansvärt än det som benämns funktionsnedsättning. Funktionsnormativitet innebär enligt Fiona Kumari Campbell

> a network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical and therefore essential and fully human. Disability then is cast as a diminished state of being human. (Campbell 2012: 213)

Detta nätverk av föreställningar, övertygelser, processer och praktiker bidrar till att framställa funktionsnedsättningar som något i grunden negativt i relation till ett funktionsfullkomligt ideal. Funktionsnormativitet upprätthålls av två centrala beståndsdelar: föreställningen om det normala samt upprätthållandet av en konstituerande uppdelning eller isärhållning mellan det normala (hur människor förväntas vara) och det avvikande (Campbell 2012: 215). Normen framstår genom att exempelvis vissa kroppar eller funktioner pekas ut som avvikande, sjuka eller till och med icke-mänskliga. Begreppen norm, normal och normativ är kulturellt konstruerade och började användas i och med industrialiseringen då vetenskapen, med dess statistik och medeltal blev vanliga. *Normal* kom också att få genomslag på fenomen som ideal moral samt kroppsliga och intellektuella funktioner (Davies 1997: 3). Normen skapas genom att peka ut det som inte ses som normalt. Inom en funktionsnormativ logik positioneras alltså personer med funktions-nedsättningar inte bara som mindre värda utan också som mindre mänskliga i relation till det funktionsfullkomliga idealet. Resultatet blir, utöver diskri-minerande praktiker, en dominerande och normerande föreställning om att vissa människors kroppar och sinnen är i behov av att botas och förbättras (Campbell 2012).

I linje med förändringar i diskurser om normbrytande funktionalitet har också vokabulären förändrats från den medikaliserade beteckningen handi-kappad till funktionshindrad, funktionsnedsättning och funktionsvariation bland annat. I denna artikel använder vi oss av begreppet normbrytande funktionalitet för att signalera att det är i brottet mot den funktionsfullkomliga normen som funktionsnedsättningar uppstår (Bylund 2016). Vi använder

också begreppet funktionsnedsättning synonymt med normbrytande funktionalitet, ibland för att anpassa oss till ordval i utsagor, ibland för att variera texten. I utsagorna aktualiseras också andra ord för funktionsnedsättning, exempelvis handikapp eller invalid, som i många fall kan anses förlegade.

Humor, skratt och deras funktioner

Det finns många olika definitioner av humor. Palmer (1994:3) definierar humor som "… everything that is actually or potentially funny and the processes by which this funniness' occur." Attardo (1994: 6) menar att "Humor is whatever a social group defines as such" och implicerar därmed att den sociohistoriska kontext som vi befinner oss i bestämmer om vi ska uppfatta en utsaga som humor eller inte. Det är nästan omöjligt att entydigt definiera humor som vetenskapligt begrepp, kanske framför allt på grund av att humorforskning genomförs inom ett stort antal discipliner med olika teoretiska utgångspunkter och empiriska synsätt (Berglund och Ljuslinder 1999). Det finns heller inte någon samstämmighet när det gäller humorns funktion eller någon definition som tar upp alla humorns funktioner. Berger (1996:1) menar till exempel att den viktigaste funktionen hos humor är skrattet. Raskin (1985:24) är en av dem som anser att det mest karakteristiska med humor är de olika textteknikerna, det vill säga de olika humorteknikerna. Knuutila (1996:39) menar att humoruttrycket, texten, är det som avses med humor. I den här artikeln har vi valt att kalla både humortexter, i det här fallet skämtandet i samtalen, och mottagarnas reaktioner för humor.

Teorier om humor delas vanligen in i teoretiska förhållningssätt om oförenlighet, överlägsenhet eller befrielse (Berger 1996, Raskin 1985, Palmer 1994). Teoretiska perspektiv om oförenlighet är vanligast i litteraturen och behandlar främst vad det är i texter som framkallar humor. I teorier om oförenlighet läggs fokus på att det är textuttrycket som skapar humor, närmare bestämt den diskrepans som sker när mottagarna leds i en viss tolkningsriktning av en text och där texten sedan gör en helomvändning och kontexten blir en helt annan (Berger 1996:1). De två andra teoretiska perspektiven, överlägsenhet och befrielse handlar om vilka effekter humor skapar hos mottagarna (Berger 1996). I den här artikeln har vi, först och främst, använt det teoretiska perspektivet *oförenlighet* för att synliggöra humor och dess potential.

För att oförenligheten i humor ska uppkomma används diverse humortekniker. Feinberg (1969:85ff) gör en indelning av humortekniker som vi utgår från i den här artikeln. Han talar om oförenlighetskriterier, överraskningstekniker, tekniker som skapar falskt sken och tekniker som förmedlar en känsla hos mottagaren om att hen befinner sig i överläge. Alla dessa humortekniker kommer till uttryck i materialet till den här studien. Till oförenlighetsteknikerna brukar räknas överdrifter, underdrifter, karikatyrer och kontraster. Ett exempel på kontraster kan vara att använda sig av ett

begrepp ifrån ett paradigm och överföra det till ett annat paradigm. På så sätt överförs betydelsen från det första paradigmet till det andra, som till exempel när begreppet *rörelsehindrad* från en funktionshindervokabulär används om kronprinsessan Victoria. Överraskningsteknikerna kännetecknas av att något oväntat dyker upp som gör att utsagan framstår som absurd. I materialet till den här artikeln uppstår det absurda framför allt när kulturella förgivettagna föreställningar visar sig vara felaktiga. Ett exempel är att en blind person sällan lagar mat, men inte på grund av sin blindhet utan på grund av att hen tycker det är tråkigt att laga mat. Bland humorteknikerna som kallas falskt sken kan framför allt ironi nämnas, vilket helt enkelt innebär att säga en sak men mena en annan. Slutligen som exempel på humortekniker som kallas överlägsenhet kan nämnas när mottagaren framstår som smartare än den som humorutsagan avser, till exempel när en rullstolsburen kvinna hos mödravården påpekar att handikapptoaletten används som förråd.

När mottagarna möter de här humorteknikerna kan det innebära att nya betydelser uppstår för dem. På detta sätt kan den sociala konstruktionen av ett förgivettaget samband göras synligt, och den dominerande betydelsen av utsagan utmanas. Det är dock viktigt att påminna sig om att humoruttryck i många situationer bidrar till att bekräfta dominerande betydelser, snarare än att utmana dem.

Humoruttryck kan även generera nya tankebanor. Det finns teoretiska perspektiv som talar om att när något i en text, eller en praktik, plötsligt uppfattas som oväntat så reagerar vi som mottagare med att våra sinnen skärps. Vi blir medvetna om hur vi själva tänker. Våra skärpta sinnen hamnar därmed i beredskap för att tänka nya, inte tidigare tänkta tankar (se bl. a. McGhee 1983).

Skratt utgör en viktig avslutning som respons på humor och skämtande (Sacks 1974: 347–348). Men i samtal kan skratt också användas på andra sätt. Skrattet kan exempelvis användas för att göra en besvärlig social situation mindre obekväm (Adelswärd 1989: 129). Om personer i ett samtal har olika åsikter i ett ämne kan situationen eller uttalandet riskera att bli ansiktshotande, det vill säga hotande för ens egen eller andras självbild. Skratt kan då användas för att dämpa ansiktshotet (Norrby 2014: 215). När man inte håller med någon eller när man säger något som kan uppfattas som ogynnsamt för andra kan det därför uppstå överslätande skratt i samtalen. Även om skratten i dessa fall inte nödvändigtvis ses som skapade av humor, kan de ändå sägas rama in något som humoristiskt. I samtal med ett specifikt syfte, som exempelvis arbetsmöten, kan humor och skratt också användas både för att skapa solidaritet och för att framföra kritik på ett sätt som inte blir ansiktshotande (Holmes 2000: 179, Holmes och Marra 2002: 83). Skratt är det sätt vi har använt för att identifiera humor i vårt material.

Analys

Nedan analyseras humorns potential att synliggöra och utmana tre funktionsnormativa föreställningar. De tre föreställningarna har induktivt valts ut för att de återkommande aktualiserats i poddsamtalen: (1) Föreställningar om vilka subjektspositioner som ses som (o)möjliga, (2) föreställningar om att ett liv med normbrytande funktionalitet är ett tragiskt liv och (3) föreställningar om att det är bättre att vara funktionsfullkomlig än att ha en funktionsnedsättning.

Genom det teoretiska ramverket som presenterats, analyserar vi humor-sekvenser i podden. Inför varje analysavsnitt introduceras de föreställningar som övergripande är aktuella för analysen. För vart och ett av samtals-sekvenserna analyseras sedan hur humor används.

I exemplen har vi bytt ut namnen på deltagarna eftersom individerna inte är relevanta rent analytiskt. Istället är det de föreställningar som kommer fram i samtalen som är centrala för undersökningen. Vi har därför också valt att inte namnge podden. De som leder podcasten i samtliga avsnitt benämns som Jennifer och Ivan.

Föreställningen om (o)möjliga subjektspositioner

Funktionsnormativitet fungerar ofta reducerande på så sätt att förutfattade meningar och normativa föreställningar gör det svårt eller omöjligt för personer med normbrytande funktionalitet att inta någon annan subjektsposition än den som person med funktionsnedsättning. Subjekts-positioner skapas diskursivt i interaktion (Laclau och Mouffe 2001: 115), exempelvis genom att en person tilltalas eller omtalas på ett visst sätt. I olika diskurser blir olika subjektspositioner möjliga och andra inte. Positioner är alltid knutna till förväntningar och maktrelationer. När podd-deltagarna använder humor synliggörs att vissa subjektspositioner har varit svåra att inta eller behålla på grund av förutfattade meningar om deras normbrytande funktionalitet. Normativa föreställningar indikeras som bakomliggande orsaker till olika bemötanden. Genom humorn kan föreställningar om vilka subjektspositioner som är (o)möjliga för vissa typer av kroppar bli utmanade.

En föreställning som synliggörs är att ett funktionsnormativt samhälle inte alltid förmår se personer med normbrytande funktionalitet som potentiella kärlekspartners eller som personer som förväntas skaffa familj och barn (Wälivaara och Ljuslinder 2020, McRuer och Mollow 2012). Gästen Marianne beskriver att handikapptoaletten på mödravården som hon besökte som gravid användes som förråd när hon kom dit i rullstol.

> Marianne: […] Så jag kom ju till mödravården där, och de är ju jättegulliga och allting och sådär. Men de hade ju inga svar att ge. De var jättesnälla på alla sätt och vis, och handikapptoaletten hade de som förråd ((skratt)), den hade de aldrig behövt använda. Och så. (Avsnitt 2, 00:28:46)

I uttalandet om att handikapptoaletten används som förråd skapas en överraskande effekt, vilket utlöser skratt som en markering för det absurda i situationen. Här synliggör Marianne inte bara den praktiska bristen på tillgängliga toaletter på mödravårdscentralen, hon sätter även fingret på det faktum att personalen kanske inte förväntade sig att en person i rullstol skulle bli gravid och besöka mödravården. Personalen hade inte heller tillräcklig kunskap för att besvara frågor hon kunde tänkas ha: *de hade ju inga svar att ge*. Genom att skämta om att handikapptoaletten användes som förråd synliggörs att personalen var oförberedda på att möta en blivande mamma i rullstol. Genom humorn synliggörs dessutom hur positionen som gravid eller mamma inte framstår som tillgänglig för Marianne med anledning av hennes funktionsnedsättning.

En annan typ av subjektsposition som problematiseras genom humor är bråkstaken. Gästen Mats beskriver skämtsamt att han sällan hade problem i skolan så länge han intog den förväntade rollen som passiv och inte stod ut i mängden.

> Mats: Allting fungerande väldigt bra så länge jag va den tysta, snälla, gulliga invaliden kan man väl säga ((skrattar)). Men när jag började tröttna på den rollen för jag kände att det inte var jag utan började ta plats och höras mycket, jag engagerade mig i elevrådet och så, då blev det en förändring i förhållande till hur mina kamrater såg på mig och en stor irritation på något sätt över att jag inte visste min plats och så där. (Avsnitt 23, 00.13.38)

Mats berättar att han fick det svårare när han började ta plats och stå upp för sina rättigheter: *Allting fungerande väldigt bra så länge jag va den tysta snälla, gulliga, invaliden kan man väl säga.* I utsagan görs kopplingen att positionen som aktiv och engagerad blir problematisk utifrån att han har en normbrytande funktionalitet och förväntades inta en passiv och medgörlig position. Hans skratt kan utlösas av den kontrast som uppstår mellan att förväntas vara passiv och hans egen förmåga att ta plats. Det framstår som kulturellt oförenligt att en person som har en funktionsnedsättning också kan vara aktiv och engagerad. Möjligen utlöses skrattet också som ett försök till att dämpa det ansiktshotande i och med att han ger sig själv det nedsättande och lite förlegade epitetet *invalid*, som kanske var något han drogs med under den här tiden.

I en annan utsaga beskriver gästen Kristian hur han bryter mot lagen genom att kasta ut ett glas genom ett bilfönster under en utekväll. Polisen har svårt att hantera situationen när det visar sig att Kristian inte kan stiga ur bilen utan sin rullstol.

> Kristian: Ja, det var lite klantigt av mig, jag satt, vi skulle, vi hade, på något sätt fått tag på en limousine som vi åkte i efter att vi hade varit ute. Och så skulle vi åka till ett annat ställe. Så jag satt där bak liksom, jag, min flickvän. Och sedan så drack vi upp champagnen ur glaset ((skrattar)), och sedan så tog jag bara och slängde ut det ur rutan du vet, precis innan vi skulle ut, så den krossades. Och då

> var det en civilpolis som bara, där jag släppte glaset, där står han liksom.
> Jennifer: Var det på Stureplan eller?
> Kristian: Ja precis. Och sedan så öppnade, så han sliter bara upp dörren och bara
> "ut ur bilen!" Jag bara "ta det lugnt, jag kan inte gå ut, liksom". Han bara "ut ur
> bilen nu" ((tillgjord röst))! Och sedan så liksom, "jag kan inte jag sitter i rullstol".
> Så han bara, "du går ut ur bilen!" Han trodde jag ljög liksom. Så han fick typ slita
> i mig. Så jag bara, "nej jag kan inte gå, ta det lugnt. Min rullstol kommer nu." Så
> att min tjej hon tog ut rullstolen och höll på att sätta ihop den så jag skulle kunna
> hoppa ut snabbt liksom ((Jennifer skrattar)) för den här snubben. Så när han såg
> det, så står han och bara, "ja, ja okej," ((tillgjort skärrad röst)) så här, "du gör inte
> om det där va, det får du inte göra"! För han var ju nära att nita mig först liksom.
> Kristian: Så där la man fram rullstolskortet då, och kom undan liksom. (Avsnitt
> 18, 00:43:01)

Humorn skapas i den kontrast som uppstår i polisens helomvändning från aggressiv till försonlig när Kristian förklarar att han inte kan stiga ur bilen utan sin rullstol. I utsagan synliggörs det oväntade i att den person som slänger ut glaset genom bilrutan är rullstolsburen. Den överraskande helomvändningen i polisernas beteende leder till gemensamt skratt av podd-deltagarna. Möjligen uppstår överraskningsmomentet både i den svårighet som polisen verkar uppleva när han ska hantera att Kristian inte fysiskt kan stiga ur bilen och det faktum att bråkstaken är en person som har en normbrytande funktionalitet. Kristians kommentar *Så där la man fram rullstolskortet då, och kom undan liksom* visar att han tolkar in att den normbrytande funktionaliteten blir en form av frikort.

En annan föreställning som synliggörs i poddmaterialet är att personer i rullstol inte skulle leva "vanliga liv". Marianne som själv sitter i rullstol och som ofta möter nyskadade i sitt arbete beskriver att människor ibland blir förvånade över att det går att leva ett "vanligt liv" när man sitter i rullstol.

> Marianne: […] Om man är nyskadad och det kommer in en doktor i vit rock och
> säger att "det kommer gå så bra, och du kommer kunna jobba och ha familj" så
> kanske man inte tar till sig det på samma sätt som när någon av oss kommer
> inrullandes och, jaa. Det blir mer påtagligt. Vi har kommit dit i egen bil, och vi,
> jaa, har vanliga kläder på oss ((leende röst)). Det var någon som trodde en gång
> att vi inte skulle ha. ((Jennifer och Marianne skrattar)) (Avsnitt 2, 00.37.19)

Humorn uppkommer, och ett gemensamt skratt uppstår, i det absurda uttalandet att en rullstolsburen person inte förväntas ha vanliga kläder på sig: *vi jaa, har vanliga kläder på oss. Det var någon som trodde en gång att vi inte skulle ha*. Skrattet som uppstår skulle kunna vara ett gemensamt och samförstående skratt, samtidigt som föreställningen om att de inte skulle ha vanliga kläder framstår som absurd och därmed oväntad.

Även i samtalen podd-deltagarna emellan finns exempel på när det tas förgivet att det är den normbrytande funktionaliteten som begränsar en persons möjligheter. Den blinda gästen Eva får frågan om hon lagar mat, varpå hon svarar att hon inte gör det så ofta.

Ivan: Lagar du mat själv?
Eva: Min sambo lagar mest mat, men det är för att jag tycker att det är tråkigt. ((skrattar)) Ja, mm.
Ivan: Steker du på en köttbit ibland?
Eva: Eeeeh, jao, ja, de är, det är ärligt mer han som gör det. Om jag ska vara ärlig.
Jennifer: Rent praktiskt, är det svårt liksom, att få till det?
Eva: Aa, fast jag vet jättemånga synskadade som är superduktiga på att laga mat.
Jennifer: Mm
Eva: ((skrattar)) (Avsnitt 12, 00:56:44)

Efter Ivans initiala fråga och Evas svar att det mest är sambon som lagar mat, frågar Ivan igen: *steker du på en köttbit ibland?* Evas svar drar ut lite på tiden. Hon uttrycker tvekan innan hon åter svarar att det mest är sambon som lagar mat. Hennes tveksamhet kan indikera att hon ska ge ett svar som inte är det önskvärda, vilket leder till att samtalet får en komplicerad struktur (Norrby 2014: 223). Eva har just besvarat samma fråga och måste igen svara att hon inte lagar mat, lite inlindat. Jennifer tycks då dra slutsatsen att det har att göra med att Eva är blind, trots att Eva hävdat att hon tycker det är tråkigt att laga mat. Eva påpekar då: *fast jag vet jättemånga synskadade som är superduktiga på att laga mat*. Därefter skrattar hon. Det absurda, och komiska, uppstår i diskrepansen mellan den normativa kulturella föreställningen att blinda inte skulle kunna klara av vissa saker så som att laga mat och den egentliga orsaken till att hon inte lagar mat, nämligen att hon tycker att det är tråkigt. Evas skratt kan vara ett sätt att motsätta sig den position som hon håller på att hamna i. Skratten kan då användas för att rama in uttalandet som humoristiskt för att hennes motstånd inte ska upplevas som ansiktshotande. Eva får gång på gång påpeka att hon är ointresserad av matlagning och att det inte har att göra med hennes normbrytande funktionalitet. Att hon får samma fråga flera gånger kan indikera att de som frågar inte riktigt är tillfredsställda med det svar hon ger. Tidigare i samtalet har Eva sagt: *Jag vill inte bli behandlad på något annorlunda sätt, så. Och det är ju fortfarande, tyvärr mycket så att folk tror att man inte kan göra saker och ting, och det fungerar inte när man inte ser* (Avsnitt 12, 00:55:41). Trots det uttalandet är det precis en sådan situation som uppstår i samtalet om matlagningen, att hennes förmågor tolkas utifrån att hon är blind.

Gästernas användning av humor synliggör det absurda i olika bemötanden de fått som har baserats på funktionsnormativa föreställningar. De har antingen reducerats till sin funktionalitet, eller också har funktions-nedsättningen utgjort en begränsande omständighet i bemötandet. I utsagorna synliggörs att blivande mödrar förväntas vara funktionsfullkomliga. Något annat som framkommer i analysen är att en bråkstake inte förväntas sitta i rullstol. En person med en funktionsnedsättning förväntas helt enkelt inte leva ett "vanligt liv". I exemplen synliggörs att deltagarna har en samsyn runt olika erfarenheter, vilket bidrar till gemensamma skratt om det absurda. Men ibland

används humordiskursen också för att motsätta sig andras erfarenheter eller synsätt. Skrattet kan då användas som ett sätt att omförhandla situationen och göra den mindre ansiktshotande. Humorn kan därför sägas användas subversivt, eftersom man omförhandlar föreställningar om vilka subjekts-positioner som är möjliga och inte.

Narrativet om det tragiska livsödet

Funktionsnormativitet har sin utgångspunkt i att normbrytande funktionalitet nedvärderas i relation till funktionsfullkomlighet. Utifrån det perspektivet tolkas alltid livet med funktionsnedsättning som något negativt. De livsöden som förknippas med en sådan position ses som tragiska, eftersom personerna uppfattas ha en brist eller en avsaknad av något, exempelvis en kroppsdel eller en kognitiv förmåga. Därmed uppstår uppfattningen att personerna inte kan leva ett fullgott liv. Nära förknippad med den föreställningen finns en *välgörenhetsmodell* som format synen på personer med funktions-nedsättningar (Retief och Letšosa 2018: 6). Utgångspunkten i modellen är att det är synd om personer som lever med funktionsnedsättningar. De betraktas i första hand som offer i behov av hjälp och välgörenhet, vilket medför att personerna ses som hjälplösa och passiva (Retief och Letšosa 2018: 6) och inte minst som tragiska offer. Nedsättande förlöjliganden av personers normbrytande funktionalitet finns dokumenterade ända tillbaka till medel-tiden (Shakespeare 1999, Korhonen 2014). Olika medierepresentationer har bidragit till att (re)producera denna föreställning. Stereotypen om att personer med funktionsnedsättningar är tragiska offer har till exempel existerat under så gott som hela filmens historia. I dessa filmer är det tydligt att det är individen som måste förändras eller förbättras snarare än samhället. En logisk upplösning av narrativet är att karaktären dör, vilket framställs som en barmhärtig handling (Norden 1994: 28). I poddsamtalen synliggörs och utmanas narrativet om det tragiska livsödet.

Gästen Mats berättar om sin reaktion på den bild av normbrytande funktionalitet som gestaltas i marknadsföringen av Kronprinsessan Victorias fond, vilken har som mål att ge barn med funktionsnedsättningar en aktiv fritid. Mats känner inte igen den bild som målas upp av dessa barn, och underförstått sig själv, som att det skulle vara synd om dem. Därför beskriver han hur han tillsammans med sina kompisar gjorde en motaktion där de under namnet "Stackars Victoria" samlade in pengar till kronprinsessans fritid.

> Mats: […] Så då tänkte vi så här: "Ja men kronprinsessan Victoria hon är ju faktiskt också rörelsehindrad, hon kan inte heller röra sig fritt i samhället, hon har också en massa saker som hon hela tiden måste tänka på, vad hon kan göra eller inte göra, hon måste kanske också ha det svårt att få en välfungerande fritid som alla andra." Så då började vi samla in pengar till hennes fritid i en fond som vi kallade för "Stackars Victoria" och det blev ((Jennifer skrattar till)) en ganska stor snurr kring det där, vi var med i tidningar och i radio, tv och vi lyckades

> faktiskt samla in över 10 000 kr till kronprinsessan Victoria […] (Avsnitt 23, 00.38.06)

Mats utsaga och valet av namnet på fonden, *stackars* Victoria, synliggör den kulturella föreställningen att det skulle vara synd om personer med funktionsnedsättningar. Epitetet *stackars* används här humoristiskt om kronprinsessan, efter att Mats ofrivilligt anser sig ha blivit etiketterad på samma sätt på grund av sin normbrytande funktionalitet. När etiketten istället humoristiskt hamnar på Victoria synliggörs den, samtidigt som dess mening omförhandlas. Humorn uppstår genom det oförenliga i att också kalla kronprinsessan Victoria rörelsehindrad: *"Ja men kronprinsessan Victoria hon är ju faktiskt också rörelsehindrad, hon kan inte heller röra sig fritt i samhället"*. Att synliggöra två olika betydelser av begreppet rörelsehindrad skapar ett överraskningsmoment, vilket gör att humor uppstår. Genom humorn kan den absurda föreställningen om att funktionsnedsättning per automatik kopplas samman med en tragisk, passiv offerroll lyftas fram. Det oväntade skapar här en möjlighet för mottagaren att faktiskt reflektera över att det kanske inte är mer tragiskt att leva med en normbrytande funktionalitet än att ha en titel som ofrivilligt begränsar ens rörelsefrihet. Berättelsens humoristiska framställning synliggör de problem som finns med att ständigt förknippa normbrytande funktionalitet med det tragiska, samtidigt som föreställningen om vem som egentligen är rörelsehindrad problematiseras. Utsagan synliggör också var ett funktionshinder egentligen uppstår – inte i enskilda individers kroppar, utan i samhällets brister och normativa föreställningar.

En annan gäst, Kristian, berättar att när han skadade sig tyckte han att det var kul att få börja köra rullstol. I poddavsnittet ger poddmakarna uttryck för förvåning över detta till synes oväntade uttalande, genom att de skrattar.

> Kristian: Och jag tänkte så här, jag hade ju kört rullstol lite innan också.
> Jennifer: Jaha? I samband med vadå?
> Kristian: Nej, bara för att jag testa på något sjukhus eller flygplats eller någonting.
> Jennifer: Okej.
> Kristian: Och det var rätt kul tänkte jag.
> ((Jennifer och Kristian skrattar))
> Jennifer: Den reaktionen har jag aldrig hört förut faktiskt, det var nytt!
> Kristian: Nej, det var rätt, jag kom ihåg att jag tänkte på det.
> Ivan: Du äntligen, tänkte du!
> Kristian: Ja, eller hur.
> Jennifer: Nu behöver jag inte gå längre! ((leende röst))
> Kristian: Nej exakt. Men jag tycker fortfarande att det är kul att köra rullstol. Så det är ju positivt.
> Ivan: Där är vi olika kan jag säga.
> Kristian: Ja ((skrattar)) (Avsnitt 18, 00.13.44)

Att köra rullstol kan vara roligt hävdar Kristian: *det var rätt kul tänkte jag.* Uttalandet kan i förlängningen tolkas som en oväntad kommentar på hur det är att få en förvärvad funktionsnedsättning, hamna i rullstol och inte längre kunna gå. Därmed skapas ett överraskningsmoment som framkallar skratt. Ivan fortsätter genom att göra en överraskande skämtsam överdrift: *äntligen tänkte du.* Jennifer fyller på: *Nu behöver jag inte gå längre!* Humorn uppstår här genom att det positiva med att sitta i rullstol och i förlängningen leva med en funktionsnedsättning överdrivs. Humorn skapar en kontrast till den normativa föreställningen om att det är negativt. I samtalet vänds på den funktionsnormativa värderingen att funktionsfullkomlighet är bättre än normbrytande funktionalitet. Kristian uttrycker att han fortfarande är positivt inställd: *Men jag tycker fortfarande att det är kul att köra rullstol.* Då uttrycker Ivan sin egen motsatta åsikt i klartext: *där är vi olika kan jag säga.* Det tydliga överraskande avbrottet från den positiva utsagan blir humoristisk i sammanhanget. I utsagorna finns en underliggande kulturell föreställning om att det främst är negativt att bli rullstolsburen. Genom humorn synliggörs den funktionsnormativa föreställningen om att livet med en funktions-nedsättning i grund och botten bör förstås som ett tragiskt öde. Kristians utsaga kan också sägas utmana den föreställningen.

I ett samtal om kärlekslivet visar gästen Petter att också han är positivt inställd till rullstolen, och menar att den till och med kan utgöra en fördel när man ska närma sig tjejer.

> Petter: Nej, jag har väl snarare sett den som en fördel på krogen och sånt, det är jättebra ((skrattar till)) med rullstol då, man sticker ju ut i mängden liksom, man blir inte som alla andra och det är så här, dansa med rullstol och sånt det är fantastiskt och man kan sätta tjejer i knät och det finns jättemycket fördelar ((skrattar)).
> Ivan: Alltså dansa med rullstol, fy fan.
> Jennifer: ((skrattar))
> Petter: Ja det ser ju förfärligt ut.
> Jennifer: Är du inte bra på det Ivan?
> Ivan: Nej det är det värsta jag vet.
> Petter: Alltså jag håller med, det ser förfärligt ut, men andra tycker att det är lite coolt så där och sen sätter man tjejen i knät och så råkar man rulla in i ett mörkt hörn och så bara "ojdå sitter vi här och hånglar, det var ju trevligt" sådär tänker jag. ((skrattar)) (Avsnitt 31, 00:19:36)

Petter uttrycker vad som kan uppfattas som oväntat och överraskande, nämligen att rullstolen är en fördel när man vill ragga tjejer: *sen sätter man tjejen i knät och så råkar man rulla in i ett mörkt hörn och så bara "ojdå sitter vi här och hånglar, det var ju trevligt".* Uttalandet blir dessutom oväntat eftersom det går emot den normativa uppfattningen att personer med funktionsnedsättning är a-sexuella (McRuer och Mollow 2012, Schalk 2016, Longmore 2003). Humor uppstår när det oväntade och överraskande uttrycks explicit, vilket även ramas in av att Petter själv skrattar. Genom att använda

humor utmanas den normativa bilden av det tragiska livsödet. Ivan uttrycker istället en negativ inställning till rullstol: *alltså dansa med rullstol, fy fan* och *det är det värsta jag vet.* Ivans utsaga är kraftfullt uttryckt och kontrasten till den positiva utsagan kan uppfattas som humoristisk, vilket också indikeras av att den bemöts med skratt. Utsagan representerar den mer normativa synen på rullstolen som ett problem, i det här fallet rent estetiskt.

När intervjun med Petter fortskrider konstaterar han att han är tacksam för den fysiska funktion han fortfarande har. Han berättar också om olika äventyr han har gjort, äventyr som kan vara svåra att genomföra oavsett vilket funktionalitet man har. Efter att ha benämnt sig själv som *lyxhandikappad* kommenterar han poddmakarnas funktionaliteter.

> Petter: Ja men fan ni är ju handikappade på riktigt liksom.
> Ivan: Tack.
> ((skratt, eventuellt från Petter och Jennifer))
> Jennifer: Tack för komplimangen liksom.
> Petter: ((skrattar)) Ja ni är på riktigt, jag är bara fejk.
> Ivan: Har man händerna så brukar det vara ganska lugnt tycker jag, då verkar det inte vara så jobbigt.
> Jennifer: Nä precis. ((skrattar))
> Petter: ((skrattar)). Nej.
> Jennifer: Ja men man får lite perspektiv, det finns de som har det värre än oss också.
> Petter: Ja och det ger perspektiv liksom.
> Jennifer: Ivan är tveksam. ((skrattar))
> Ivan: Ja men det finns de.
> Petter: Det finns ingen som har det värre. ((skratt i rösten))
> Ivan: Jag har det allra värst.
> Petter: Nä såhär handikappad, ful och fattig liksom. Oälskad ((ödesmättad röst)), då har man det jobbigt alltså. (Avsnitt 31, 00:54:08)

Petter säger skämtsamt till de andra: *fan ni är ju handikappade på riktigt.* När Ivan säger tack lite ironiskt uppstår skatt. Jennifer fortsätter genom att överdriva och säger*: Tack för komplimangen liksom* och skrattar. Att det skulle vara en komplimang att bli kallad för handikappad på riktigt framstår som absurt, vilket är det som gör att humor uppstår. Den normativa föreställningen att normbrytande funktionalitet enbart skulle vara något tragiskt och negativt blir synligt i sekvensen. Det är så förgivettaget att det skulle vara på det viset att det framstår som absurt att använda det som komplimang.

Sedan fortsätter samtalet att handla om att ha det värst, och podd-deltagarna utbyter en skämtsam ordväxling om vem som egentligen har det allra värst. Petter tar slutligen den humoristiska överdriften vidare genom att säga: *Nä såhär handikappad, ful och fattig liksom. Oälskad, då har man det jobbigt alltså.* I utsagan sätter Petter fingret på en funktionsnormativ bild av personer med normbrytande funktionalitet, om positionen *handikappad*

samtidigt innebär *ful, fattig och oälskad* blir den per automatik tragisk och oönskad. Genom att lyfta fram och skämta om dessa konnotationer synliggörs att de inte nödvändigtvis är naturgivna. Om kommentaren i sammanhanget tolkas som vänd mot Ivan kan den framstå som ansiktshotande i och med att Petter blandar in fler negativa konnotationer med att ha en normbrytande funktionalitet och applicerar samtliga på Ivan. Att det alls går att uttrycka sig socialt ansiktshotande tyder på att uttalandena sker i en humoristisk diskurs, men också att man kan skämta om dessa teman på det här sättet i just det här sammanhanget. En eventuell anledning till att det är möjligt är att alla tre sitter i rullstol och därför befinner sig i snarlik belägenhet.

Humor bidrar i de ovanstående exemplen till att vända på olika normativa förgivettaganden om livet med en funktionsnedsättning som tragiskt, som att rullstolen skulle vara en nackdel eller att det skulle vara synd om personer med en normbrytande funktionalitet. I utsagorna skapas nya betydelser för begrepp som *stackars* och *rörelsehindrad*. Genom att använda orden i nya sammanhang och med humor synliggörs och utmanas normativa föreställningar om vad de egentligen innebär och hur de ofta oproblematiskt appliceras på personer utan att det stämmer överens med deras egen identifikation. I samtalen uppstår humor också i och med att någon visar upp en positiv inställning till rullstolen, vilken uppfattas som oväntad. I det fallet synliggörs och utmanas föreställningen om att det per automatik skulle vara negativt att sitta i eller hamna i rullstol, vilket i förlängningen implicerar att det alltid skulle vara negativt att ha en funktionsnedsättning. De olika utsagorna synliggör föreställningar om att livet med normbrytande funktionalitet enbart skulle ses som tragiskt.

Funktionsfullkomlighet som ideal

Utifrån ett funktionsnormativt perspektiv betraktas och framställs alltid funktionsfullkomlighet som bättre än funktionsnedsättning och som den enda eftersträvansvärda positionen. De kroppar och sinnen som bedöms som icke-normativa bör därför botas eller förbättras med målet att normaliseras och bli funktionsfullkomliga. Campbell sammanfattar att "disability is both *provisional and tentative* – it is always subject to being erased if a solution comes along (cure, correction, elimination)" (Campbell 2012: 213). Funktionsnedsättningar ses därmed som oacceptabla och som något som ska botas. Olika berättelser om att bota personer med funktionsnedsättningar, exempelvis genom medicinska, teknologiska eller religiösa bot, är ett återkommande tema i berättelser och medierepresentationer (Allan 2013, Wälivaara 2018, Norden 1994). Botemedel är i sig inget negativt. Problemet med boteberättelserna är att de i hög grad ger en enbart medikaliserad bild av funktionsnedsättning och att den tas förgiven. Olika normativa utgångspunkter och fördomar skulle istället behöva ifrågasättas för att:

make room for people to acknowledge—even mourn—a change in form or function while also acknowledging that such changes cannot be understood apart from the context in which they occur. (Kafer 2013: 6).

Att boteberättelserna ofta tar sin utgångspunkt i en funktionsnormativ föreställning gör att funktionsnedsättning ensidigt ses som negativt och som något som måste elimineras. Berättelserna reproducerar ofta en bild av den hierarkiska relationen mellan ett funktionsfullkomligt ideal (som ses som perfekt och alltigenom mänskligt) och funktionsnedsättning (som ses som avvikande, negativ och inte helt mänsklig). Den normativa föreställningen att funktionsfullkomlighet är det ideala eller att icke-normativa kroppar och sinnen är i behov av att botas eller förbättras aktualiseras och utmanas på olika sätt i samtalen i podden.

I samtalet med gästen Petter återkommer de till rullstolen som hjälpmedel. Den här gången pratar de om att den är stigmatiserad, vilket Petter tycker är synd. Humoristiskt lyfter de fram hur det ses som inspirerande att personer i rullstol lär sig att gå fem meter. Samtalet är kopplat till en tidigare sekvens där Petter berättat om en rädsla han tidigare haft över att hamna i rullstol, eftersom man då uppfattades som handikappad på riktigt. Nu utmanar han den negativa föreställningen om rullstolen genom att lyfta fram den som ett bra hjälpmedel.

> Ivan: Nej, det är väl ingen som vill hamna i rullstol. ((skrattar))
> Petter: Nej, rullstol är ju så stigmatiserat.
> Ivan: Man vill ju undvika det så mycket det går såklart.
> Petter: Ja men verkligen, men just det där att man liksom till all förbanne ska försöka gå liksom även om man är jättedålig på det och skulle ha ett mycket bättre liv i rullstol, det är så märkligt inom sjukvården, jag hoppas att det hållet på att ändras.
> Jennifer: Det känns som en amerikansk syn också på något sätt, då är det ju också att man ska gå trots allt.
> Petter: Jaha, det är som ett sådant här inspirerande klipp på Youtube och sådant på folk som sitter i rullstol som har lärt sig att gå fem meter och bara "Ah it's a miracle!", man bara "ja, javisst det är väl jättebra men du kan inte använda det till något vettigt alls" ((skrattar)). (Avsnitt 31, 00:11:51)

Inledningsvis menar Ivan att: *det är väl ingen som vill hamna i rullstol* och skrattar. Skrattet kan indikera att han uttrycker en självklarhet. Petter kan sägas modifiera den föreställningen genom att omtala rullstolen som *stigmatiserad*, att människor undviker rullstolen på grund av stigma även om de skulle kunna ha ett bättre liv i den. Han når kulmen när han kommenterar någon som efter mycket möda lärt sig gå fem meter med: *javisst det är väl jättebra men du kan inte använda det till något vettigt alls*. Humor uppstår när den normativa föreställningen om att man ska "kunna gå till varje pris" oväntat vänds upp och ner genom uttalandet att en person faktiskt kan få bättre funktionalitet med hjälp av rullstolen. Genom användningen av

humor synliggörs en central funktionsnormativ retorisk norm som Cherney (2011) benämner som "body is able" (Rhetorical Norms of Ableist Culture, stycke 5). Han menar att en persons funktion och färdigheter normativt bara räknas om de kommer från den egna fysiska kroppen, snarare än från hjälpmedel, som i detta exempel, en rullstol. Genom att synliggöra den föreställningen med humor är det också möjligt att visa upp den som socialt konstruerad och därmed möjlig att omförhandla, snarare än att den skulle vara naturgiven.

Det Petter också gör genom sin utsaga är att lyfta fram en normativ representation om att största målet med tillvaron för personer med funktionsnedsättning skulle vara att kunna ställa sig upp från sin rullstol. Det är en mediebild som utgår från den medicinska modellen av funktions-nedsättning. Här framställs normen om att kunna gå till varje pris som absurd och i det absurda uppkommer humorn i sekvensen.

Gästen Kristian har som beskrivits tidigare visat sig positivt inställd till rullstolen, och i samtalet efter intervjun diskuterar Ivan och Jennifer att de kan känna avundsjuka på Kristian. Ivan menar att han blir avundsjuk på det faktum att Kristian hanterar att han är rullstolsburen med sådan lätthet att man inte ens tänker på att han sitter i en rullstol. Men sen ångrar Ivan sig.

> Jennifer: Krille är ju inte direkt någon som ser begränsningar överhuvudtaget.
> Ivan: Vi har ju, gör en serie om folk som lever med invaliditet, och han, verkar inte beröra honom överhuvudtaget.
> Jennifer: Det var ju lite roligt när han sa att han tyckte att det var kul att sitta i rullstol.
> Ivan: Ja, det är helt sanslöst.
> Jennifer: ((skratt)) För att han hade provat innan, och att det verkade ju bra.
> Ivan: Det är ju kul att någon tycker att det är kul.
> Jennifer: Men han har ju grymt bra koll alltså. Men det är som du säger, man tänker inte ens på att han sitter i rullstol, just för att han hanterar den som att det var luft. Han har det bra.
> Ivan: Man blir ju lite avundsjuk. Måste man ju säga.
> Jennifer: Aa.
> Ivan: Varför man nu ska vara avundsjuk på honom. Man kan lika gärna vara avundsjuk på någon som kan gå i så fall. Känns inte som så här, sitta och vara avundsjuk på någon som sitter i rullstol ((skrattar)).
> Jennifer: Nej precis ((leende röst)). (Avsnitt 18, 00.58.46)

De skämtar i samtalet om att det var: *lite roligt när han sa att han tyckte att det var kul att sitta i rullstol*. Ivan kommenterar det med att säga: *Ja, det är helt sanslöst*. Jennifer skrattar åt kommentaren. Humor i utsagan uppstår eftersom det är kulturellt oväntat och överraskande att livet i rullstol uttrycks som kul, vilket därmed framkallar skratt. Därefter menar Ivan att: *Man blir ju lite avundsjuk*. Den utsagan vänds dock på när Ivan själv sedan ifrågasätter varför man ska vara avundsjuk på en person som sitter i rullstol bara för att personen är bra på att hantera sin rullstol. Istället menar han att den förväntade

strävan och avundsjukan bör gå i riktning mot vad som enligt normativa föreställningar ses som ett eftersträvansvärt liv, det vill säga ett liv utan normbrytande funktionalitet. Humorn uppstår i det orimliga i att vara avundsjuk på någon som själv sitter i rullstol eftersom den normativa föreställningen är att det är funktionsfullkomlighet som är idealet. I utsagan befästs den föreställningen, samtidigt som normen synliggörs.

I exemplen synliggörs genom humor den funktionsnormativa föreställningen om att funktionsfullkomlighet alltid är det eftersträvansvärda. Strävan efter funktionsfullkomlighet symboliseras exempelvis av att ha målet att kunna gå några steg. Genom att framställa detta mål som absurt, utmanas föreställningen om funktionsfullkomlighet. Men idealet befästs också med humor, genom att indikera att det är absurt att vara avundsjuk på någon som sitter i rullstol. Humor drar då uppmärksamheten till hur stark funktionsnormativiteten är. Samhället är så genomsyrat av föreställningen om den funktionsfullkomliga kroppen som ideal, att det framstår som löjeväckande att någon skulle vara avundsjuk på en person som sitter i rullstol.

Sammanfattande diskussion

I den här artikeln har syftet varit att undersöka humorns potential att synliggöra och utmana funktionsnormativitet. I analysen har vi lyft fram ett antal humorsekvenser som synliggör och utmanar funktionsnormativitet i poddsamtal mellan personer som har egna erfarenheter av funktionsnedsättningar. I exemplen framträder en typ av *disability humor* där överraskningar, överdrifter och ironi används för att utmana normativa föreställningar, vilket innebär att nya kan framträda. Humorn bidrar till att synliggöra det absurda i den normativa föreställningen att personer med normbrytande funktionalitet inte skulle leva ett "vanligt liv", vara mödrar, stå upp för sina rättigheter eller göra ogenomtänkta saker under en utekväll. Idén om funktionsnedsättning som något i grunden begränsande och tragiskt utmanas också, inte minst genom att med humor ge nya betydelser till begrepp som *stackars* och *rörelsehindrad* samt synliggörandet av negativa konnotationer kopplade till personer med funktionsnedsättningar. Gästerna motsätter sig den normativa bilden om att livet med funktionsnedsättning är tragiskt och framhåller istället positiva aspekter med att ha en normbrytande funktionalitet, vilket leder till överraskande skratt och humoristiska överdrifter. Även föreställningen om funktionsfullkomlighet som ideal utmanas och synliggörs genom humor som framhåller det absurda i strävan efter en ideal funktionsfullkomlighet, som till exempel att det är kul att köra rullstol. Humorn drar också uppmärksamhet till hur starka funktionsnormativa föreställningar är.

En del av humorn möjliggörs av att alla i samtalen har en normbrytande funktionalitet. De delar erfarenheter som gör att de kan relatera till och lyfta fram det absurda i olika situationer. Normer kan utmanas genom att man gemensamt skrattar åt det absurda i en utsaga. Här riktar man den komiska

blicken mot normer om funktionalitet (jfr Lockyer 2015). I samtalen kan podd-deltagarna också skämta om sin egen funktionalitet och ibland varandras. Den typen av skämtande skulle kunna uppfattas som ansiktshotande om det kom från en person utan normbrytande funktionalitet, eftersom maktbalansen blir ojämn baserat på vem som har tolkningsföreträde i en given fråga. Det gäller särskilt skämtande om personer som tillhör marginaliserade grupper (jfr Billig 2009). Men ibland uppstår också humor som ett sätt att omförhandla motstridiga synsätt i själva samtalssituationen. Om en funktionsnormativ föreställning uppstår i samtalet och någon annan gör motstånd mot den, kan samtalet ramas in som humor genom skratt. När inte alla är överens om hur något ska uppfattas finns alltså en möjlighet att omförhandla komplexa och normativa föreställningar. Det illustrerar att människor som lever med en normbrytande funktionalitet inte alltid har samma erfarenheter, intressen, inställning eller möjligheter. Sam-identifikationen kan då sägas erbjuda en ingång till att lyfta fram olika synsätt och perspektiv, något som mångt och mycket saknats i medierepresentationer av personer med funktionsnedsättningar (Ljuslinder 2002). Motsättningarna visar att livet med en normbrytande funktionalitet kan vara som andras liv: mångfacetterat. Poddmakarna illustrerar själva tydligt, om än kanske inte medvetet, att livet med funktionsnedsättning kan innebära väldigt olika saker, när de i ett avsnitt ska introducera Eva som är blind.

> Jennifer: Både jag och Ivan har ryggmärgsskada sedan många år tillbaka. Och är rullstolsburna. Så förhoppningsvis så har vi lite insikt i-
> Ivan: Hur det är att vara blind tänkte du?
> ((skratt från båda))
> Jennifer: I hur det är att faktiskt leva med en funktionsnedsättning. (Avsnitt 12, 00:02:43)

Ivan problematiserar först inställningen att de som rullstolsburna skulle veta något om hur det är att vara blind genom en skämtsam fråga som fyller i den mening som Jennifer har påbörjat. De skrattar båda åt detta påstående som att det är absurt. Jennifer avslutar dock med att säga att de vet hur det är att leva med en funktionsnedsättning. Genom att använda humor sätter de alltså fingret på att de både *delar* och *inte delar* erfarenheter med andra som lever men en normbrytande funktionalitet.

Det finns vissa inbyggda svårigheter med att utmana funktions-normativitet, inte minst på grund av de förgivettagna positioner som är förknippade med den. Cherney (2011) menar att om man ska utmana funktionsnormativitet så måste man ta i beaktande den retoriska kraft den innehar. Att funktionsfullkomlighet värderas högre och ses som mer eftersträvansvärd än funktionsnedsättning är en föreställning som ligger till grund för att funktionsnormativtitet framstår som "sunt förnuft", och därmed som naturgiven. Föreställningen blir till en icke-fråga och därmed retoriskt svårhanterlig eftersom den inte behöver uttalas, rättfärdigas eller

argumenteras för. Om man ska kunna utmana något som framstår som en otvetydig sanning, måste detta något först benämnas, namnges och synliggöras. Humor, menar vi, kan fungera som ett effektivt redskap för att göra just detta.

Humor har potential att vara ett effektivt redskap för att utmana maktordningar och kulturella föreställningar genom att synliggöra det absurda i en situation och samtidigt visa hur det har normaliserats i samhället (Strain et al. 2016: 88). Humorns möjlighet att skapa nya tankebanor har empiriskt ännu inte kunnat bevisas. Det som har kunnat visas är att sinnena skärps av humoruttryck (se bl. a. McGhee 1983) men däremot inte om mottagarnas tankar eller attityder ändras. Det betyder inte att man ska ge upp empiriska studier av humorns förmåga att påverka utan tvärtom fortsätta att göra mottagarstudier av olika humoruttryck och praktiker.

Vår analys visar exempel på hur olika humortekniker kan bidra till att synliggöra och utmana funktionsnormativitet genom hur de används i samtalen. Olika situationer visas upp som absurda och därmed synliggörs normer som finns i samhället. Först när normernas existens och absurditet uppmärksammas och dras fram i ljuset går det att visa att de inte är naturgivna utan utgörs av sociala, kulturella och historiskt konstruerade föreställningar och diskurser. Med hjälp av ironi, överdrifter, kontraster, överraskningar och skratt kan man säga att samtalsdeltagarna i podden gör just det, utmanar föreställningar. Och genom att utmana normativa eller nedsättande, stereotypa föreställningar går det att öppna upp för nya betydelser som är mer nyanserade. Humor har möjlighet att göra det, beroende på hur den används, av vem och beroende på hur den mottas. Även om det är svårt att utmana föreställningar som har kommit att bli så normerade och invanda att de ses som allmängods, så bör man inte låta bli att försöka. Det är centralt, inte minst för att förändra den funktionsnormativa synen på människor där vissa värderas högre än andra.

Transkriptionsnyckel

jaa	förlängt ljud
inte så-	yttrande avbryts
((skrattar))	beskrivning av ljud som inte är ord i samtalen

Finansiering

Etiska överväganden

Den etiska bedömningen är gjord utifrån McKee och Porters (2009) modell för forskningsetik vid internetstudier. Modellen ger vägledning om i vilka fall informerat samtycke bör inhämtas vid studier av nätbaserat material och om informationen som samlas in kan betraktas som känslig eller inte. Personer som talar om sina erfarenheter i en offentlig podd, där erfarenheterna endast till viss del kan uppfattas som känsliga, anses inte behöva informerat samtycke. Vi har istället kontaktat poddmakarna för att informera om studien och att vi i studien har utelämnat poddnamnet och bytt ut deltagarnas namn.

Bibliografi

Adelswärd, Viveka (1989), "Laughter and dialogue: The social significance of laughter in institutional discourse", *Nordic journal of linguistics,* 12(2): 107-136.

Allan, Kathryn (2013), *Disability in science fiction: representations of technology as cure.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Attardo, Salvatore (1994), *Linguistic theories of humor.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Bahner, Julia (2016), *Så nära får ingen gå?: en studie om sexualitet, funktionshinder och personlig assistans.* Göteborg: Institutionen för socialt arbete, Göteborgs universitet.

Barnes, Colin (1992), *Disabling imagery and the media: an exploration of the principles for media representations of disabled people.* London: BCODP.

Berger, Arthur Asa (1996), *Narratives in popular culture, media, and everyday life.* Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

Berglund, Staffan & Ljuslinder, Karin (1999), *Humor som samhällsmoral: svenskar och invandrare på den svenska TV-humorns arena.* Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Billig, Michael (2009), "Violent Racist Jokes", i Lockyer, Sharon & Pickering, Michael (red), *Beyond a joke: the limits of humour.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, s. 27–46.

Bingham, Shawn Chandler & Green, Sara E. (2016), *Seriously funny: disability and the paradoxical power of humor.* Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.

Bylund, Christine (2016), *Kuvande rum: Materialitet och funktionsfullkomlighet i berättelser från kvinnor uppväxta på institutioner för barn med normbrytande funktionalitet under 1930 till 1970-talet.* Masteruppsats Stockholms universitet.

Campbell, Fiona Kumari (2009), *Contours of ableism: the production of disability and abledness.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Campbell, Fiona Kumari (2012), "Stalking ableism: Using disability to expose 'abled'narcissism", i Goodley, Dan, Hughes, Bill & Davis, Lennard J. (red), *Disability and social theory: new developments and directions.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, s. 212-230.

Cherney, James L. (2011), "The rhetoric of ableism", *Disability Studies Quarterly,* 31(3).

Davies, Lennard J. (1997), "Constructing normalcy: the bell curve, the novel and the invention of the disabled body in the nineteenth century. ", i Davies, Lennard J. (red), *The Disability Studies Reader.* London: Routledge, s. 3-16.

Farnall, Olan & Smith, Kim A (1999), "Reactions to people with disabilities: Personal contact versus viewing of specific media portrayals", *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly,* 76(4): 659-672.

Feinberg, Leonard (1969), *Introduction to satire.* Ames, Iowa: Iowa State U.P.

Fiske, John & Jenkins, Henry (2011), *Introduction to communication studies.* London: Routledge.

Foucault, Michel (1993), "Diskursens Ordning: Installationsföreläsning vid Collège de France den 2 December 1970 [The order of discourse: inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, 2 December 1970]", *Stockholm and Stehag: Brutus Östlings bokförlag Symposion.*

Ghersetti, Marina (2007), *Bilden av funktionshinder: en studie av nyheter i Sveriges Television.* Göteborg: Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation, Göteborgs universitet.

Hall, Stuart (1997), *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices.* London: Sage.

Haller, Beth (2003), "DSQ symposium, disability & humor", *Disability Studies Quarterly,*

Haller, Beth & Ralph, Sue (2003), "John Callahan's Pelswick Cartoon & a New Phase of Disability Humor", *Disability Studies Quarterly,* 23(3/4).

Holmes, Janet (2000), "Politeness, power and provocation: How humour functions in the workplace", *Discourse studies,* 2(2): 159-185.

Holmes, Janet & Marra, Meredith (2002), "Over the edge? Subversive humor between colleagues and friends", *Humor,* 15(1): 65-87.

Kafer, Alison (2013), *Feminist, queer, crip.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Kenix, Linda Jean (2011), *Alternative and mainstream media: The converging spectrum.* A&C Black.

Knuuttila, Seppo (1996), "Humorforskningens teori och praktik" i Palmenfelt, Ulf (red), Humor och kultur. Åbo: Nordic Institute of Folklore publications, s. 37-60.

Korhonen, Anu (2014), "Disability humour in English jestbooks of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries", *Cultural History,* 3(1): 27-53. 10.3366/cult.2014.0053

Laclau, Ernesto & Mouffe, Chantal (2001), *Hegemony and socialist strategy: towards a radical democratic politics.* London: Verso.

Linton, Simi (1998), *Claiming disability: knowledge and identity.* New York: New York University Press.

Ljuslinder, Karin (2002), *På nära håll är ingen normal: handikappdiskurser i Sveriges television 1956-2000.* Diss. Umeå: Umeå universitet.

Ljuslinder, Karin (2007), "Handikappdiskurser i Sveriges Television. Exemplet CP-magasinet.", i Rafael, Lindqvist. & Sauer, Lennart (red), *Funktionshinder, kultur och samhälle.* Lund: Studentlitteratur, s. 215-237.

Ljuslinder, Karin (2014), "Empowering images or preserved stereotypes: Representations of disability in contemporary film comedies", *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema,* 4(3): 267-279.

Llinares, Dario, Fox, Neil & Berry, Richard (2018), "Introduction: Podcasting and podcasts—Parameters of a new aural culture", *Podcasting.* Springer, s. 1-13.

Lockyer, Sharon (2015), "From comedy targets to comedy-makers: disability and comedy in live performance", *Disability & Society,* 30(9): 1397-1412.

Longmore, Paul K. (2003), "Screening Stereotypes: Images of Disabled People in Television and Motion Pictures", i Longmore, Paul K. (red), *Why I Burned My Book and Other Essays on Disability.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, s. 131-148.

McGhee, Paul E. (1983), *Handbook of humor research, vol. 1 basics.* New York: Springer.

McKee, Heidi A & Porter, James E (2009), *The ethics of internet research: A rhetorical, case-based process.* New York: Peter Lang Publications.

McLuhan, Marshall (2001), *Media.* Skarpnäck: Pocky/Tranan.

McQuail, Denis (2005), *McQuail's mass communication theory.* London: SAGE.

McRuer, Robert & Mollow, Anna (2012), *Sex and disability.* Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Norden, Martin F. (1994), *The cinema of isolation: a history of physical disability in the movies.* New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press.

Norrby, Catrin (2014), *Samtalsanalys: så gör vi när vi pratar med varandra.* Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Oliver, Mike (2013), "The social model of disability: Thirty years on", *Disability & society,* 28(7): 1024-1026.

Palmer, Jerry (1994), *Taking humour seriously.* London: Routledge.

Pointon, Ann (1997), "Disability and Documentary", i Pointon, Ann & Davies, Chris (red), *Framed: interrogating disability in the media.* London: British Film Institute, s. 84-93.

Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, Pille & Buchholtz, Johanna Willstedt (2018), "Using a Humour Podcast to Break Down Stigma Around Illness", i Fox, Neil, Berry, Richard & Llinares, Dario (red), *Podcasting: new aural cultures and digital media.* Cham: Palgrave Macmilllan, s. 251-271.

Raskin, Victor (1985), *Semantic mechanisms of humor.* Dordrecht: Reidel.

Retief, Marno & Letšosa, Rantoa (2018), "Models of disability: A brief overview", *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies,* 74(1): 1-8.

Sacks, Harvey (1974), "An analysis of the course of a joke's telling", i Bauman, Richard & Sherzer, Joel (red), *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking.* London: Cambridge University Press, s. 337–353.

Schalk, Sami (2016), "Happily ever after for whom? Blackness and disability in romance narratives", *The Journal of Popular Culture,* 49(6): 1241-1260.

Shakespeare, Tom (1999), "Joking a part", *Body & Society,* 5(4): 47-52.

Strain, Megan L, Martens, Amanda L & Saucier, Donald A (2016), ""Rape is the new black": Humor's potential for reinforcing and subverting rape culture", *Translational Issues in Psychological Science,* 2(1): 86-95.

Wilde, Alison (2018), *Film, comedy, and disability: understanding humour and genre in cinematic constructions of impairment and disability.* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group.

Wälivaara, Josefine (2018), "Marginalized Bodies of Imagined Futurescapes: Ableism and Heteronormativity in Science Fiction", *Culture Unbound. Journal of Current Cultural Research,* 10(2): 226-245.

Wälivaara, Josefine & Ljuslinder, Karin (2020), "(Im) Possible Lives and Love: Disability and Crip Temporality in Swedish Cinema", *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research,* 22(1): 80-87.

"Man förstår nästan allt!" Läsförståelsearbete med faktatexter i årskurs 4

Robert Walldén och Annika Langwagen

Under många år har ämnesdidaktisk forskning lyft fram vikten av att främja elevers läsning i olika ämnessammanhang (t.ex. Edling, 2006; Hallesson m.fl., 2018; Liberg, 1999). I språkligt heterogena klassrum blir frågor om stödjande textarbete särskilt centrala. Studier har varnat för att andraspråksinlärare riskerar att lämnas ensamma i läsningen av krävande ämnestexter (Olvegård, 2014) och möta textpraktiker som inte synliggör och tar tillvara tidigare kunskaper och erfarenheter (t.ex. Duek, 2017; Walldén, 2021). Ett explicit arbete med lässtrategier kan därför tillföra ett värdefullt stöd (Lindholm, 2019). Undervisning i lässtrategier är dessutom något som påbjuds av det centrala innehållet i grundskolans kursplaner för svenska och svenska som andraspråk (Skolverket, 2019). Lässtrategiundervisning är därmed en pedagogisk angelägenhet.

Det finns mycket forskning som har visat mätbara positiva effekter av tillämpning av lässtrategier i undervisning (se t.ex. Skolforskningsinstitutet, 2019). Som påpekas av Lindholm (2016) är dock inte mycket känt om den undervisning elever i språkligt heterogena klassrum möte när lässtrategier sätts i fokus. Studier som har belyst läsning i klassrum som en del av en social praktik, som *läspraktiker*, har dessutom haft ett större fokus på skönlitterära texter (t.ex. Bergöö, 2005; Skoog, 2012) än det faktabetonade läsande som är centralt för lärande och kunskapsutveckling i olika ämnen (Rose & Martin, 2013). Därför vill vi i denna artikel dela med oss av erfarenheter och preliminära resultat från en klassrumsstudie i årskurs 4 om ett ämnesintegrerat arbete med faktatexter och lässtrategier. Undervisningen byggde på ett samarbete mellan den förstelärare och den forskare som båda är författare till denna artikel. Inga anspråk görs på att visa vilken eventuell effekt undervisningen hade på elevernas läsförståelse. Däremot kommer vi med inspiration av Langers (2011, 2017) och Rosenblatts (1994) receptionsteorier belysa olika positioner läraren och eleverna intog till texter i den ämnesintegrerade undervisningen. I ett läge där elever behöver lära sig både om ett naturvetenskapligt ämnesinnehåll och ett mer medvetet sätt att förhålla sig till läromedelstexter och läsning blir läspraktiken komplex på ett sätt som förtjänar att belysas.

Den skola som studien ägde rum på ligger i ett socioekonomiskt utsatt område. Ungefär hälften av eleverna har migrationsbakgrund. På skolan finns en stor samsyn om att många elever, oavsett språkbakgrund, behöver pedagogisk stöttning i arbetet med olika typer av texter och ämnesinnehåll. Så var även fallet i den årskurs 4 där studien ägde rum. Läraren hade som en

del av sitt försteläraruppdrag identifierat läsning av faktatexter som ett utvecklingsområde i undervisning. Hon hade tidigare arbetat mycket med läsförståelse i samband med läsning av skönlitteratur, samtidigt som hon hade erfarenheter av att många av eleverna har mycket svårt att läsa lärobokstexter självständigt. I andra textrika ämnen, såsom NO och SO, hade läraren därför tidigare använt bildstöd och presentationer för att åskådliggöra det väsentliga innehållet. En sådan strategi kan dock bara fungera kortsiktigt, eftersom eleverna bara får stöd i att förstå den text som för tillfället ligger framför dem. Nu ville läraren i stället ge eleverna verktyg för att på längre sikt kunna läsa och förstå texterna själva genom att sätta fokus på strategier för faktabetonat läsande. Det såg läraren som viktigt även med tanke på att många av eleverna hade annat förstaspråk än svenska och annan kulturell bakgrund än den som ibland tas för given i läroböcker. Lärarens ambition var att stärka både elevernas lärande och motivation genom att utveckla deras strategier för läsande av faktatexter och läroböcker.

Samarbetet mellan läraren och forskaren, som utgjorde en del av lärarens försteläraruppdrag, var etablerat sedan tidigare utifrån ett gemensamt intresse för stödjande textpraktiker i ämnesundervisning. Forskaren hade följt lärarens undervisning under två tidigare terminer. Innan hade forskaren deltagit genom klassrumsobservationer och uppföljande samtal, ofta med fokus på egenskaper hos lärobokstexter. Nu fördjupades dock samarbetet genom att undervisningen till viss del planerades gemensamt samtidigt som vi hade regelbundna möten för att reflektera över undervisningen och blicka framåt.

Lässtrategier – Vad och vilka?

I ett inledningsskede var det nödvändigt för forskaren och läraren att skapa en gemensam förståelse för lässtrategiundervisning. En forskningsöversikt om lässtrategier (Skolforskningsinstitutet, 2019) och Anna Lindholms (2019) avhandling om läsförståelsearbete i flerspråkiga mellanstadieklassrum blev gemensamma utgångspunkter för samtal, liksom strategiprogrammet reciprocal teaching (RT, se Palincsar & Brown, 1986) som läraren var bekant med sedan innan. RT var en viktig inspiration för lärarens sätt att introducera och ordna klassrumssamtal för att träna strategierna.

Lässtrategier kan beskrivas och kategoriseras på många olika sätt. Som en referenspunkt för undervisningen tog forskaren och läraren fram en lista över möjliga strategier att fokusera på. Dessa innefattade några strategier med direkt koppling till RT – att summera, förutsäga och klargöra – samt flera andra: ordförståelsestrategier, att rikta uppmärksamheten mot olika text-element och att använda textkunskaper. Återkopplande och sammanlänkande strategier lades också till listan. Strategiarbetet blev dock mer tidskrävande än väntat. Därför var det tre strategier som hamnade i fokus under den tiden då forskaren observerade undervisning. De valdes ut av läraren men speglar samtidigt hur forskarens och lärarens perspektiv möttes.

Först fokuserade läraren på betydelsen av textkunskap för att förstå faktatexter. Textkunskaper, såsom kunskap om typisk struktur och uppbyggnad, var något forskaren hade förespråkat som en resurs för läsförståelse utifrån en tidigare klassrumsstudie (Walldén, 2019). Läromedelstexters uppbyggnad hade också varit ett vanligt ämne i pedagogiska samtal mellan forskaren och läraren i anslutning till tidigare undervisning, men då med ett fokus på SO. Utifrån positiva erfarenheter av att ha arbetat med Gears (2015) strategier för läsning av faktatexter önskade läraren därefter lyfta fram betydelsen av olika textelement såsom bilder och figurer, vad Gears i svensk översättning kallar särdrag. En sådan multimodal strategi, som lyfter blicken från verbaltexten till de olika element som bygger upp till exempel ett läroboksuppslag, kan vara särskilt viktig med tanke på att läroböcker har blivit mer visuellt organiserade (se t.ex. Bezemer & Kress, 2016). När bilder inte bara illustrerar vad som står i texten utan tillför en egen innebörd behöver eleverna särskilt stöd i tolkningen av dem (Nygård Larsson, 2011). Den tredje strategin som gavs utrymme inspirerades av Cummins *Literacy Engagement Framework* för undervisning av flerspråkiga elever. Modellen trycker på nödvändigheten att aktivera elevers befintliga kunskaper och erfarenheter för att bygga upp en motivation och främja deras språk- och kunskapsutveckling.[1] Vi diskuterade modellen utifrån Lindholms (2019) avhandling och enades om att det var en god utgångspunkt för att säkerställa att strategiundervisningen och läsandet av ämnestexter inte blir mekanisk utan gav utrymme för eleverna att bidra till klassrumssamtalen och relatera till texterna. För att göra det lättare för eleverna att komma ihåg och samtala om strategierna satte läraren upp illustrerande kort på tavlan (bild 1).

Bild 1: Illustrerande bilder på lässtrategier

Valet av dessa strategier ska inte ses som att övriga strategier uteslöts. Tvärtom kommer vi att visa att de utvalda strategierna skapade förutsättningar

---

[1] (Cummins, 2016)

för att till exempel summera och förutsäga väsentligt innehåll (jfr Palincsar & Brown, 1986).

Läraren såg på strategiundervisningen i ett långsiktigt perspektiv, med ambitionen att eleverna till slut behärskar flera strategier som de kan växla mellan och även kan reflektera över vilka som passar i ett givet sammanhang. Den undervisning som belyses i denna artikel speglar en inledande fas, där läraren hade ett större ansvar för att introducera strategierna och leda samtal där eleverna fick träna på att tillämpa dem.

Undersökningen

I den studerade undervisningen integrerades svenska/svenska som andraspråk med fysik och biologi. Det innebär att lässtrategier sattes i relation till kunskapsområden om vatten (fysik) respektive djurs utveckling och anpassning (biologi). Forskaren följde ca 40 lektioner under två månader varav hälften ägnades åt det ämnesintegrerade arbete med lässtrategier som belyses i denna artikel. Det rörde sig i första hand om samtal i helklass och smågrupper om lärobokstexter som relaterade till arbetsområdena i fysik och biologi.

För att fånga elevernas perspektiv på arbetet med lässtrategier genomfördes även två fokusgruppsintervjuer med tre respektive fyra del-tagande elever. Läraren valde ut eleverna utifrån riktmärket att grupperna skulle spegla heterogeniteten i klassrummet beträffande språkbakgrund och läsförmåga. Läraren och forskaren utformade intervjufrågor gemensamt som berörde både deras uppfattningar om att läsa faktatexter och deras tankar om lässtrategier. Det var sedan läraren som genomförde intervjuerna utifrån en önskan om att få insikt i hur undervisningen har landat. Denna pedagogiska (snarare än forskningsmässiga) avsikt gör att intervjuerna bäst kan ses som en förlängning av de samtal om läsning och texter som ägde rum under den pågående undervisningen.

Faktabetonat läsande – en efferent läspraktik?

När studien påbörjades hade läraren och eleverna hunnit en bit in i arbetsområdet om vatten, med fokus på dess olika former. Detta innebar att eleverna behövde se en vardaglig företeelse, förekomsten av vatten, i ett nytt och ämnesspecifikt ljus. När läraren introducerade den första lässtrategin aktualiserades ytterligare ett abstrakt och komplext ämnesområde: kunskap om text. Det finns mycket forskning om vad som kännetecknar texter i olika skolämnen (se t.ex. Martin & Rose, 2008). Genrepedagogiskt inriktade studier har visat hur detaljerad kunskap om texttyper, såsom beskrivningar, förklaringar och argumentationer, kan främja ett ämneslärande (t.ex. Bergh Nestlog, 2017; Sellgren, 2011) men också leda in undervisningen på språkpedagogiska sidospår genom att ämnesinnehållet sätts på undantag (Walldén, 2019). Läraren valde en annan väg genom att främst relatera arbetet med lärobokstexter till skönlitterära texter. Det innebar att två breda

kategorier ställdes mot varandra, samtidigt som lärarens och elevernas delade erfarenhet av att läsa och diskutera skönlitteratur aktiverades som en resurs.

När läraren i inledningen av detta arbete frågade eleverna om de kunde peka på något i en lärobokstext som inte hade förekommit i en skönlitterär motsvarighet lyfte en av eleverna fram följande formulering överst på lärobokssidan "I det här kapitlet får du lära dig". Det var vanligt att både läraren och eleverna uttryckte att faktatexter läses för att lära. Utifrån Rosenblatts väl använda receptionsteori vittnar detta om en *efferent* läsart, alltså läsning med fokus på vad man bär med sig från texten (i detta fall skolkunskaper). Detta upprepades till exempel när läraren frågade varför orden *fast form*, *flytande form* och *gas* stod i fet stil. Elever föreslog att "man ska komma ihåg dom" och att "det är det hela texten går ut på". En tredje elev relaterade till tidigare arbete med faktatexter genom att något frustrerat beskriva hur de arbetade *nonstop* med nyckelord i trean. Fetmarkerade ord lyftes därmed fram som ett kännetecken för faktatexter, och länkade även ihop själva strategin med det specifika naturvetenskapliga ämnesinnehåll som var i fokus. Senare framhöll läraren även fetmarkerade ord som ett särdrag, alltså som ett särskilt textelement att vara uppmärksam på (se nedan).

De strategier som beskrivs i programmet reciprocal teaching (RT) blev inte den uttryckliga utgångspunkten för strategiundervisningen. Samtalen om att lära sig från faktatexter, komma ihåg och greppa vad "hela texten går ut på" kan dock relateras till RT-strategin att *summera*. När läraren lyfte fram rubrikers tydliggörande funktion aktualiserades i stället RT-strategin att *förutsäga*. Läraren visade upp en skönlitterär bok som en elev hade på sin bänk och menade att det är "svårt att räkna ut" vad som ska hända utifrån en kapitelrubrik ("Utan bevis") jämfört en aktuell lärobokstext där det står "Var kommer vatten ifrån?".

Läraren poängterade för eleverna att hon genom samtal som dessa ville att de skulle fundera över hur faktatexter "är skrivna". Ett medvetet förhållningssätt till texter och läsning var ett viktigt pedagogiskt mål. Interaktionen främjade därmed vad Langer (2011, 2017) beskriver som att stiga ut ur texter och objektifiera dem (fas 4)[2]. Möjligheterna att lära från texten var i fokus för dessa samtal vilket återigen pekar mot en efferent läsart, att läsa för att få information. Liknande perspektiv framkom under intervjuerna, då flera av eleverna menade att läsning av faktatexter är roligt "för att man lär sig" medan skönlitteratur kan vara "lite mer spännande". Att läsa för den spännande upplevelsens skull kan kopplas till en estetisk läsart (Rosenblatt, 1994), och uttrycktes allra tydligast av läraren under ett klassrumssamtal där hon beskrev läsningen av en favoritbok som att "äta en

---

[2] Langers faser ("stances") består i korthet av: 1) träda in i texten/skapa sig en inledande bild av ämnesinnehållet, 2) röra sig igenom texten/fördjupa sin förståelse, 3) lära från texten, 4) titta mer distanserat och kritiskt på texten, 5) röra sig vidare från texten (Langer, 2011. 2017). Langer betonar att faserna inte är bundna till en viss sekvens samt att de kan inträffa samtidigt och samspela med varandra (se även Walldén, 2019b).

påse godis". En elev, som annars sade sig föredra att läsa faktatexter, formulerade det på följande sätt:

> Det bästa jag gillar med skönlitterär böckerna är att när jag typ när det börjar så förstår du ingenting först. I faktatexter så förstår du *direkt* när du läser rubriken.

Eleven knöt tydligt an till klassrumssamtalen om rubrikernas betydelse och gav uttryck för spänningen att läsa en skönlitterär text. Uppfattningarna fördelade sig ganska jämt rörande vilken typ av text eleverna föredrog. Det starkaste ställningstagandet uttrycks av en elev som underströk att han "gillar inte hittepå över huvud taget". Precis som i Catarina Schmidts (2013) etnografiska avhandlingsstudie framkom det att flera av eleverna gärna läser och lånar faktatexter på fritiden.

Att en efferent position till faktatexter är framträdande är inte oväntat i sig. Rosenblatts läsarter har främst utvecklats och använts i relation till skönlitteratur, och då ofta för att varna för en undervisning där fokuset hamnat på ett lärande som ska uppnås genom läsningen (diskuteras i t.ex. Martinsson, 2018; Walldén, 2020; Öhman, 2015). Efferent läsning framstår som mer givet i relation till faktatexter, inte minst sådana från läromedel. Vad som gör läsarten intressant i denna artikel är att den blir föremål för samtal under arbetet med lässtrategierna, som en del av att objektifiera upplevelsen av texterna (Langer, 2011, 2017). Eleverna och läraren diskuterade uttryckligen texternas funktion och möjliga sätt att använda textkunskap för att förutsäga och fånga det väsentliga innehållet. Detta medvetna förhållningssätt till läsning blev en del av läspraktiken i den ämnesintegrerade undervisningen.

"Särdrag" som tydliggör och engagerar

Nästa lässtrategi läraren introducerade relaterade starkt till den första: att titta närmare på olika textelement som bygger upp faktatexter. I stället för att direkt lyfta fram det som en strategi valde läraren i stället att låta eleverna skapa sig en egen uppfattning om vilken betydelse till exempel bilder och rubriker har för läsningen. Hon delade ut en version av en lärobokstext där allt verbaltext var skriven i ett enda stycke. Denna fick eleverna läsa och sedan jämföra med den ursprungliga lärobokstexten som läraren projicerade på skrivtavlan. Att frånvaron av textelement, eller sädrag, spelade en stor roll för förståelsen blev då påtagligt. Flera av eleverna kommenterade olikheter i texterna men bara en av eleverna påtalade att det var två versioner av samma text. En elev reflekterade över att texten "bara kröp ihop" under läsningen i versionen utan bilder och styckesindelningen. Under samma aktivitet fördes också ett värderande samtal om huruvida rubrikerna och bilderna i lärobokstexten passade ihop med de olika textavsnitten. Åsikterna gick isär bland eleverna om bilder på skridskoåkande respektive badande barn var ett passande sätt att illustrera *fast* och *flytande* form. En elev menade att "dom hjälper inte alls" medan en annan uttryckte att "man kommer ihåg mycket

bättre". Liksom tidigare var möjligheterna att lära från texten i fokus (Langers fas 3) samtidigt som ett samtal fördes om hur texten är framställd samt hur detta påverkade läsningen (fas 4).

Genom samtal som detta uppmärksammades eleverna även på relationen mellan olika textelement, till exempel hur bilder omformulerar eller tillför information till det som framgår i verbaltexten (Martin & Rose, 2008). Sådana diskussioner kan bidra till att *klargöra* innebörder i texten (Palincsar & Brown, 1986). I första hand presenterade läraren dock denna strategi som att sätt att skapa sig en inledande uppfattning om vad texten handlar om, vilket kan kopplas till RT-strategin att förutsäga. En av de elever som uttryckte mest entusiasm i intervjuerna för att använda lässtrategier menade att man "förstår nästan allt" om man tittar på rubriken.

Läraren introducerade sedan termen *särdrag* (Gear, 2015) som benämning på textelement som inte är löpande text. Att vara uppmärksam på till exempel bilder, bildtexter och rubriker inför läsningen av faktatexter blev då en tydlig del av läspraktiken. Denna blick på texterna ledde dock inte till en ensidigt efferent hållning till texten, med fokus på att förutsäga och lära det väsentligaste i texten. Vid flera tillfällen förde fokuset på särdragen samtalen i nya riktningar som vidgade perspektivet på ämnesinnehållet. På ett uppslag där bilder och bildtexter visar olika exempel på djurs utseende och anpassning till en viss miljö fastnade elevernas uppmärksamhet vid den färgstarka pilgiftsgrodan. Det framgick av bildtexten att en mycket liten del mängd gift räcker för att döda en människa. Men hur lång tid skulle det ta att dö, och hur överförs giftet till människokroppen? Detta var frågor eleverna som eleverna ställde och fick i uppgift att ta reda på till en kommande lektion.

Ett annat tillfälle då elevernas reaktioner på särdragen påverkade undervisningens innehåll på ett påtagligt sätt var vid en gemensam läsning av ett uppslag om djurens släktträd. Ett par elever fäste uppmärksamheten vid en särskild ruta med information om *Paraceratherium*, det största landlevande däggdjuret som funnits. Eleverna hade tillgång till datorplattor och använde en speglingsfunktion för att projicera bild på det utdöda djuret på klassrummets skrivtavla. Läraren kommenterade att "man ser inte hur stor den är här men den var gigantisk". Då bytte eleverna till en liknande bild där en visuell jämförelse mellan däggdjuret och en människa var inklippt. Eleven använde datorplattan för att rita en pil för att markera detta element på bilden: "Det går att visa. Titta hur liten människan är." På samma sätt visade andra elever bilder på sjöborrar. Sjöborrar nämns, tillsammans med sjöstjärnor, som exempel på tagghudingar i läroboken men det är bara en sjöstjärna som visas på bild. Läraren berömde eleverna för initiativet att ta reda på och visa hur sjöborrar ser ut. Några elever bidrog också med erfarenheter av att ha sett sjöborrar när de har badat. Under dessa samtal var eleverna tydligt engagerade, samtidigt som de utvidgade lärobokstextens innehåll när de sökte och visade ny information. Detta för tankarna till Langers fas 5 som handlar just om att gå bortom den aktuella texten.

Samtalen under läsningen var fortfarande inriktade mot att lära från text (fas 3). Taxonomisk kunskap om hur djur kan delas in i till exempel däggdjur och tagghudingar är central kunskap inom arbetsområdet. Den nya informationen som eleverna bidrog med om pilgiftsgrodor, väldiga däggdjur och sjöborrars utseende kan också ses som en del av en klargörande strategi. Elevernas sätt att låta intresset styra och bidra engagerat med innehåll för dock tankarna till en *estetisk* snarare än efferent läsning av lärobokstexten, något som fokuset på textens särdrag i detta fall tycktes främja. Sammantaget fanns en påfallande spännvidd i den ämnesintegrerade läspraktiken: särdragen användes både för diskussioner om hur rubriker och bilder kan vara ett stöd för att förutsäga och summera det väsentliga innehållet – en tydlig efferent hållning – och i engagerade diskussioner där eleverna bidrog till att utvidga och klargöra innehållet. De senare samtalen hade fortsatt stöd i Langers fas 4, genom att eleverna och läraren riktade blicken mot läroboksuppslag på ett visst sätt, men med större tyngdpunkt i att utforska och skapa en förståelse för ett ämnesinnehåll (fas 2).

Att relatera till tidigare kunskaper och erfarenheter

Den tredje lässtrategin läraren introducerade var att relatera till tidigare kunskaper och erfarenheter. Läraren presenterade den för eleverna som "Vad kan jag redan?" och betonade att det kunde röra sig om olika saker, som tidigare erfarenheter, andra texter om samma eller liknande ämnen samt att fundera över vilka ord som hör ihop med ämnen som eleverna redan kan på svenska eller andra språk. För att introducera strategin använde läraren två texter från ett läsförståelsematerial: en förklarande text om grodor och en beskrivande text om sniglar och snäckor. Läraren modellerade först hur strategin kunde användas genom att projicera texten om grodor och berätta om en erfarenhet vid en skogsdamm. Samtidigt pekade hon ut ord, såsom "grodyngel", som hon kände igen sedan tidigare. När eleverna tillämpade strategin under ett helklassamtal delgav de engagerat olika vardags-erfarenheter av grodor och sniglar, i Sverige och i andra länder. Några exempel var erfarenheter av mördarsniglar i farmors trädgård, småsyskon som gillar att trampa på skogssniglar, en mystiskt vit snäcka som påträffades i en skog samt en särskilt stor vinbergssnäcka som observerades under en resa i ett annat europeiskt land. I relation till texten om grodors utveckling gav en elev i stället en intertextuell referens, genom att skrattande återberätta ett filmklipp om hur karaktären Mr. Bean födde upp grodor i ett badkar som sedan attackerade honom. Läraren bekräftade då att eleven visste något om hur grodor utvecklas från grodyngel. Dessa samtal berörde sådant innehåll som är centralt i texterna ur ett naturvetenskapligt perspektiv: grodors utveckling och olika sorters sniglar och snäckor. Samtal av sådant slag kan fungera som ett sätt att med stöd i vardagserfarenheter stiga in i texter som belyser bekanta företeelser ur ett ämnesspecifikt perspektiv (Langers fas 1). Kopplingar till tidigare kunskaper som kan fördjupa ämnesförståelsen (fas 2)

gjordes företrädesvis av läraren, till exempel genom att hon fäste uppmärksamheten vid ordet "blötdjur" i snigeltexten och kopplade det till det tidigare arbeten med djurens släktträd, där blötdjur utgjorde en av grenarna.

Den återkopplande strategin användes sedan på en beskrivande text om Charles Darwin som kompletterade läroboken. Eleverna anknöt då direkt till en kort animerad film från Utbildningsradion som de hade sett om naturforskaren under en tidigare lektion. Bland annat relaterade en elev en satirisk bild i texten till vad som framkom i filmen om att Charles Darwin hånades för sin teori människors utveckling från aporna. Detta utgjorde ett exempel på samspel mellan de olika strategier som läraren lyfte fram, i detta fall mellan särdrag och att göra kopplingar till tidigare lästa texter. Vidare uppmärksammade läraren att texten, i strid mot vad som framgick i filmen, påstod att Charles Darwin aldrig gick någon universitetsutbildning. Detta hade kunnat tagits vidare till en källkritisk aktivitet som kunde ha lett till ett klargörande.[3]

Som framgår ovan innebär den återkopplande strategin även att fästa uppmärksamheten vid ämnesrelaterade ord som eleverna var bekanta med sedan innan. En av eleverna svarade snabbt "anpassa, evolution och, det, art" som dessutom var fetmarkerade i texten. Dessa ämnesrelaterade termer hade varit i fokus under många tidigare samtal och klassrumsaktiviteter under arbetsområdet om djurs anpassning och utveckling. De fungerade som en referenspunkt i den ämnesintegrerade undervisningen, både för strategi-undervisningen och för utforskandet av det centrala naturvetenskapliga ämnesinnehållet.

Diskussion

Undervisning i lässtrategier är omtvistad. Trots det vetenskapliga stöd som finns för att strategiundervisning kan främja elevers läsförståelse har forskare varnat för att det kan påverka undervisningens läspraktiker på oönskade sätt. Thavenius (2017) nämner strategiundervisning som en litteraturdidaktisk brännpunkt och menar att det kan leda till att texter i första hand används som pedagogiska exempel för att träna strategier. Walldén (2019a) har tidigare belyst hur arbetet med läsfixare från det RT-inspirerade projektet *En läsande klass* satte själva förståelsearbetet med texten på undantag, alltså det som borde ha varit centralt i läsförståelsefrämjande undervisning.

Även om det inte går att dra slutsatser om huruvida strategiarbetet påverkade elevernas förståelse av ämnestexterna tyder resultatet på en lovande potential i att skapa förutsättningar för en läspraktik som stärker elevernas medvetenhet både om texterna de möter och den egna läsningen. Medvetenheten kan innefatta att använda textkunskap och rikta uppmärksam-het mot olika textelement på ett sätt som gör det möjligt att förutsäga och

---

[3] Texten som användes byggde på en "enkel" version av artikeln om Charles Darwin som finns på NE.se. Felaktigheten i texten tycks bero på en feltolkning av den "långa" versionen.

summera väsentligt innehåll. Ett annat intressant resultat är att det skapades utrymme för något som liknar en estetisk läsart, som väckte elevernas engagemang, satte deras tankar i rörelse och stimulerade ett intresse för vidare fördjupning. Både läsning av faktatexter och lässtrategi-undervisning för annars tankarna till en efferent läsning med fokus på vad man kan bära med sig från texten, till exempel i form av förvärvade ämneskunskaper och förhöjd läsförståelse. Att efferent och estetisk läsning kan samspela är något Rosenblatt (1994) själv lyfter fram i relation till skönlitterära texter. Elevernas och lärarens uppmärksamhet vid särdrag som kanske hade förbisetts annars tycktes främja ett sådant samspel vid läsningen av läroboktexterna. Det finns paralleller till forskning inriktad mot ämnesskrivande, där forskare har satt fingret på att undervisning som inriktar sig strategiskt mot måluppfyllelse även kan ge utrymme åt öppna och gemensamt förståelseskapande samtal som leds av elevernas intresse (se t.ex. Lindh, 2019). Exemplet med en elev som relaterade en läsförståelsetext om grodor till ett komiskt videoklipp visar även att elevernas erfarenheter av populärkultur kan bidra till och utgöra en del av undervisningens läspraktiker, något som har efterlysts i tidigare studier (se t.ex. Fasth, 2007; Schmidt, 2013).

En möjlig didaktisk lärdom som kan dras är att inte underskatta elevernas intresse av att läsa fakta- och läroboktexter. Intresset kan användas för att göra kopplingar till vardagserfarenheter och, i linje med Langers fas 5, utvidga samtalen och undervisningsinnehållet på ett sätt som sträcker sig bortom den aktuella texten. Särskilt i språkligt heterogena elevgrupper bör aktivering av elevers motivation och förkunskaper ses en central komponent i litteracitetsutvecklingen (Cummins, 2016). Att få elever använde möjligheten att göra kopplingar till naturvetenskapliga ord och begrepp de lärt sig på andra språk kan ha flera möjliga förklaringar. Dels kan det vara så att många av eleverna har svenska som sitt starkaste skolspråk. Dels framstår det som rimligt att aktivering av kunskaper på andra språk är något som i sig behöver tränas vid upprepade tillfällen för att synlig- och medvetandegöras som en resurs. Det skulle, liksom mycket annat med läsförståelsearbetet, behövas ses som en långsiktig process.

Läsförståelsearbetet väcker även andra didaktiska reflektioner. Ur forskarens perspektiv dyker frågan upp om ett mer ingående perspektiv på typiska drag hos de naturvetenskapliga ämnestexterna kunde ha bidragit ytterligare till arbetet med läsförståelsestrategier (jfr Walldén, 2019). Kunde till exempel kunskap om beskrivande och förklarande genrestrukturer, och relaterade språkliga drag, ha använts för att klargöra, summera och ta ställning till det väsentligaste innehållet? Svaret framstår inte som givet. Sådana kunskaper hade kunnat appliceras på en del av de läsförståelsetexter som användes som exempel, men inte med självklarhet på läroboktexterna. På de olika uppslagen var den visuella formgivningen med olika textelement viktig, vilket gjorde lärarens fokus på olika särdrag till en fruktbar ingång. Såsom har

påpekats i tidigare forskning behöver elever stöd i att förstå den innebörd som bärs upp av visuella element (Nygård Larsson, 2011),

Ett viktigt mål med strategiarbetet var att eleverna fick möjlighet att se på sin egen läsning med distans och bli medvetna om verktyg som stärker deras motivation och förmåga att ta sig an faktatexter. I de fokusgruppsintervjuer läraren och forskaren genomförde när de två första strategierna hade introducerats var det påtagligt att strategiarbetet landade på olika sätt. Två ytterlighetspunkter kunde ses i en av intervjuerna. En elev berättade engagerat och utförligt om att han använder "de tjocka orden" i texten (ett exempel på särdrag) ger en bild av vad som är viktigast att komma ihåg i texten: "Det är det ni kommer att fråga om." Detta var samma elev som menade att han "förstod nästan allt" genom att fundera över rubriken. Eleven uttryckte en tydligt efferent och skolanpassad hållning till läsningen, men också en glädje över att kunna läsa och förstå lärobokstexter. En annan elev hade påtagligt svårt att säga något alls om att använda lässtrategier. När läraren frågade om hur man kunde avgöra vad som är viktigast i en text svarade eleven att det är "jättesvårt att förklara …nästan alla delar är viktigast … på nåt sätt". Det intressanta i sammanhanget var att läraren upplevde denne elev som en stark läsare. Den elev som talade sig varm om lässtrategier fick däremot kämpa mer med läsningen. Inget kan med säkerhet sägas eftersom elevernas läsförståelse inte testades, men de olika uppfattningarna om strategiarbetet som uttrycktes speglas möjligen vad som har visats i tidigare forskning om att det är lågpresterande läsare som gynnas mest av undervisning om lässtrategier och texters uppbyggnad (se t.ex. Olin-Scheller & Tengberg, 2015; Rose & Martin, 2013). Annorlunda uttryckt kan elever som inte förvärvar förmågan att omedvetet använda sig av lässtrategier på framgångsrika sätt gynnas av en undervisning som främjar ett mer metakognitivt och metaspråkligt perspektiv på läsprocessen. En relaterad slutsats är att elever sannolikt behöver utmanas i läsningen för att se värdet av att medvetet använda lässtrategier. Det gör textvalet i relation till elevernas läsförmåga till en central fråga.

Som tidigare har framgått hade läraren ett långsiktigt perspektiv på strategiundervisningen som involverade att introducera fler strategier och så småningom låta eleverna tillämpa dem mer självständigt och flexibelt. Den blick vi har gett på den ämnesintegrerade undervisningen speglar ett tidigt skede. Vi hoppas att med denna artikel kunna bidra till en del nya insikter om hur en läspraktik formas när en lärare söker stödja elevernas läsning i möte med ett naturvetenskapligt ämnesinnehåll, samt hur denna läspraktik både kan visa vägar till centralt ämnesinnehåll och ge utrymme för elevernas engagemang, intressen och perspektiv.

Bibliografi

Bergh Nestlog, Eva (2017), "De första naturvetenskapliga skoltexterna". *Educare* (1): 72-98.

Bergöö, Kerstin (2005), *Vilket svenskämne? Grundskolans svenskämnen i ett lärarutbildningsperspektiv*. Doktorsavhandling. Malmö: Malmö universitet.

Bezemer, Jeff & Kress, Gunther (2016), *Multimodality, learning and communication: a social semiotic frame*. London: Routledge.

Cummins, Jim. (2016), "Language differences that influence reading development". I Peter Afflerbach (red.), *Handbook of individual differences in reading. Reader, text, and context*. New York: Routledge, s. 223–244.

Duek, Susanne (2017), *Med andra ord: samspel och villkor för litteracitet bland nyanlända barn*. Doktorsavhandling. Karlstad: Karlstads universitet.

Edling, Agnes (2006), *Abstraction and authority in textbooks: the textual paths towards specialized language*. Doktorsavhandling. Uppsala: Uppsala universitet.

Fast, Carina (2007), *Sju barn lär sig läsa och skriva: familjeliv och populärkultur i möte med förskola och skola*. Doktorsavhandling. Uppsala: Uppsala universitet.

Gear, Adrienne (2015), *Att läsa faktatexter: Undervisning i kritisk och reflekterande läsning* Stockholm: Natur & Kultur.

Hallesson, Yvonne, Visén, Pia, Folkeryd, Jenny W., & af Geijerstam, Åsa (2018), "Four classrooms–four approaches to reading. Examples of disciplinary reading in social science subjects in years five and twelve". *L1 Educational Studies in Language and Literature* 18: 1-29.

Langer, Judith (2017), *Litterära föreställningsvärldar: litteraturundervisning och litterär förståelse*. Göteborg: Bokförlaget Daidalos.

Langer, Judith (2011), *Envisioning knowledge: Building literacy in the academic disciplines. New York*: Teachers College Press.

Liberg, Caroline. (1999), *Läs- och skrivprocessen som ett led i undervisningen*. Nationella kvalitetsgranskningar 1998. Skolverkets rapport nr. 160. Stockholm: Liber.

Lindh, Christina. 2019. *I skrivandets spår: Elever skriver i SO*. Doktorsavhandling. Malmö: Malmö universitet.

Lindholm, Anna (2019), *Flerspråkiga elevers läsförståelse på svenska. Om lässtrategier och läsutveckling på mellanstadiet*. Doktorsavhandling. Karlstad: Karlstad universitet.

Lindholm, Anna (2016), "Stöttning med hjälp av lässtrategier i det flerspråkiga klassrummet". I Christina Olin-Scheller & Mikael Tengberg (red), *Läsa mellan raderna*. Malmö: Gleerups Utbildning, s. 173–196.

Martin, J. R., & Rose, David (2008), *Genre relations: Mapping culture*. London: Equinox.

Martinsson, Bengt-Göran (2018), *Litteratur i skola och samhälle*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Nygård Larsson, Pia (2011), *Biologiämnets texter: text, språk och lärande i en språkligt heterogen gymnasieklass*. Doktorsavhandling. Malmö: Malmö högskola.

Olin-Scheller, Christina, & Tengberg, Michael (Red.). (2016). *Läsa mellan raderna*. Malmö: Gleerups Utbildning AB.

Olvegård, Lotta (2014), *Herravälde. Är det bara killar eller? Andraspråksläsare möter lärobokstexter i historia för gymnasieskolan*. Doktorsavhandling. Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet.

Palincsar, Annemarie S., & Brown, Anne L. (1984), “Reciprocal teaching of comprehension-fostering and comprehension-monitoring activities”. *Cognition and instruction,* 1(2): 117-175.

Rose, David & Martin, J. R. (2013), *Skriva läsa lära: Genre, kunskap och pedagogik*. Stockholm: Hallgren & Fallgren.

Rosenblatt, Louise (1994), *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work*. Carbondale: SIU Press.

Schmidt, Catarina (2013), *Att bli en sån' som läser. Barns menings- och identitetsskapande genom texter*. Doktorsavhandling. Örebro: Örebro universitet.

Sellgren, Mariana (2011), *Den dubbla uppgiften: Tvåspråkiga elever i skolans mellanår arbetar med förklarande genre i SO*. Stockholm: Stockholms universitet.

Skoog, Marianne (2012), *Skriftspråkande i förskoleklass och årskurs 1*. Doktorsavhandling. Örebro: Örebro universitet.

Skolforskningsinstitutet (2019), *Läsförståelse och undervisning om lässtrategier. Skolforskningsinstitutets systematiska översikter*. Solna: Skolforsknings-institutet.

Skolverket (2019), *Läroplan för grundskolan, förskoleklassen och fritidshemmet 2011*. Reviderad 2019. Stockholm: Norstedts juridik.

Tengberg, Michael & Olin-Scheller, Christina (2016), ”Argumenterande text i årskurs nio”. I Christina Olin-Scheller & Michael Tengberg (red.). *Läsa mellan raderna*. Malmö: Gleerups Utbildning, s. 113–150.

Thavenius, Marie (2017), *Liv i texten: om litteraturläsningen i en svensklärarutbildning*. Doktorsavhandling. Malmö: Malmö högskola.

Walldén, Robert (2021), “You know, the world is pretty unfair” – Meaning perspectives in teaching social studies to migrant language learners. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*.

Walldén, Robert (2020), *Pedagogisk kommunikation i svenska som andraspråk: Språk, texter och samtal*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Walldén, Robert (2019a), *Genom genrens lins: pedagogisk kommunikation i tidigare skolår*. Malmö: Malmö universitet.

Walldén, Robert (2019b), ”Genrekunskaper som ett led i läsförståelsearbetet: textsamtal i årskurs 1 och 6”. *Forskning om undervisning & lärande,* 7(2): 95-110.

Öhman, Anders (2015), *Litteraturdidaktik, fiktioner och intriger*. Malmö: Gleerups Utbildning.

Contributors in this issue

Thematic issue

Hans Hägerdal is a Professor in History at Linnaeus University. His research interests include East and Southeast Asian history, colonial contact zones, and the history of slavery.

Michael Charles Reidy is an independent scholar, based in London. His research interests include the trade and transportation of slaves in South Africa and the Indian Ocean.

Filipa Ribeiro da Silva is a Senior Researcher at the International Institute for Social History (IISG), Amsterdam. In her research, she focuses on the history of labour, population, migration, and trade in Africa during the pre-colonial and colonial periods.

Akanksha Narayan Singh is an Assistant Professor at Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi. She conducts research about slavery, bondage, and dependency in colonial India.

Lodewijk J. Wagenaar is a Lecturer in History at the University of Amsterdam. Among his research interests is the history of Dutch Ceylon (Sri Lanka).

Other contributors

Annika Langwagen arbetar som förstelärare på mellanstadiet i Burlövs kommun. Hon genomför sitt förstäraruppdrag med ett särskilt fokus på att främja elevernas läsning av faktatexter.

Karin Ljuslinder är docent i medie- och kommunikationsvetenskap vid Umeå universitet. Hon har forskat om medierepresentationer av funktionshinder sedan 1995.

Hanna Söderlund är fil. dr. och lektor i svenska vid Umeå universitet. Hon har främst forskat om humor och makt i offentliga samtal, ofta med fokus på genusaspekter och intersektionalitet.

Robert Walldén är docent i svenska med didaktisk inriktning vid Malmö universitet. Han undervisar på lärarutbildningen i svenska som andraspråk och forskar om språk- och kunskapsutvecklande samtal i flerspråkiga klassrum.

Josefine Wälivaara är fil. dr. i drama-teater-film. Hon har i första hand forskat om normativitet, sexualitet, funktion, genus och berättande i populärkultur med särskilt intresse för spekulativa genrer och fantastisk.

Tidigare nummer av HumaNetten hittar du på
https://open.lnu.se/index.php/hn

Vårnumret 2021   Är ett temanummer om förhållandet mellan språket
                        och rättsliga förhållanden, från polisens
                        informationskampanjer till asylberättelser

Höstnumret 2020   består av två separata huvudteman: transpråkande
                        respektive småländsk litteratur och kompletteras
                        med tre andra refereegranskade artiklar

Vårnumret 2020   är en festskrift tillägnad Gunilla Byrman, mest om
                        språk

Höstnumret 2019   är en festskrift tillägnad Maria Lindgren och
                        innehåller en blandad samling studier
                        om språkvetenskap och didaktik

Vårnumret 2019   har temat ämnesspråk och ämneslitteracitet, samt
                        tar en titt på 70-talets kulturdebatt

Höstnumret 2018   handlar bland annat om pirat- likväl som
                        demonbekämpning

Vårnumret 2018   granskar posthumanistisk litteratur och publicerar
                        några nyblivna professorers
                        installationsföreläsningar

Höstnumret 2017   är ett jubileumsnummer tillägnat 10 år av
                        litteraturvetenskapliga sommarkurser som bland
                        annat innehåller artiklar om så skilda ämnen som
                        vampyrer, bilderbokshajar, Harry Potter och Astrid
                        Lindgren

Vårnumret 2017   granskar olika aspekter av språk och kön och tar en
                        titt på behovet av ordentliga språkkunskaper på
                        exportföretag

Höstnumret 2016   diskuterar staters historiska utveckling i en rad
                        länder från Afrika till Asien, lyssnar på röster från
                        Umeå och kollar in läromedel

Vårnumret 2016   tar oss från postkoloniala studier till litteratur och
                        svenskt språkbruk

Höstnumret 2015	befinner sig på resande fot, i Belarus (Vitryssland), i Indien och på Östtimor
Vårnumret 2015	reflekterar över 2014 års valresultat, sakprosa som begrepp och språkets böjningar samt tänker på tankesmedjan Humtank
Höstnumret 2014	firar förläggaren m.m. Peter Luthersons födelsedag, följer norrmannen Peter Hauffs äventyr i (förra) sekelskiftets Indokina samt tar en djupare titt på en serie kopparstick från 1700-talet
Vårnumret 2014	är en festskrift till nordisten Per Stille som under året håller på att gå i pension, varför innehållet till stor del kretsar kring runor
Höstnumret 2013	sysslar med makt, kritik och subjektivering i Foucaults anda, fortsätter att fundera över arbetets eventuella mening samt firar 100-årsminnet av Martha Sandwall-Bergströms födelse
Vårnumret 2013	funderar över arbetets mening, bytandet av livsstil under stenåldern samt förekomsten av varumärken och andra tidsdetaljer i modern litteratur
Höstnumret 2012	intresserar sig för det aldrig sinande intresset för Hitler, modernitet och genus hos Wägner och Nordström, undervisning i franska samt åldrandet och språket
Vårnumret 2012	är en festskrift till litteraturvetaren Ulf Carlsson, och innehåller texter om såväl verkliga författarskap som gojor och musicerande vildsvin
Höstnumret 2011	ser tillbaka på efterkrigsdeckaren, studerar våldets filmiska ansikten, fortsätter i spåren efter holländaren Van Galen samt betraktar en småländsk kulturrevolution
Höst 2010 – Vår 2011	funderar över bibliotekets idé och Ryszard Kapuściński oefterhärmliga sätt att skriva reportage

Vårnumret 2010	handlar bland annat om deckaren som spegling av verkligheten, individuella studieplaner och Van Galens memorandum
Höstnumret 2009	behandlar bl a våra polisstudenters språkbehandling, Nina Södergrens poesi och berättelserna om den danska ockupationstiden
Vårnumret 2009	minns särskilt en av "de fyra stora" svenska deckarförfattarna, H. K. Rönblom, samt tar upp "Kampen om historien"
Höstnumret 2008	ställer frågan om samerna tillhör den svenska historien samt försöker höra den Andres röst bakom kolonialismens slöjor
Vårnumret 2008	behandlar såväl dagens miljöaktivism som (förra) sekelskiftets intellektuella ideal och en ny läsning av Beckett's Tystnaden
Vår och Höst 2007	är ett dubbelnummer som spänner mellan Carl von Linné och Vic Suneson, mellan intermedialitet och historiemedvetande
Höstnumret 2006	handlar bl.a. om vägarna till ett akademiskt skriftspråk och om slavarna på Timor
Vårnumret 2006	tar upp den diskursiva konstruktionen av "folkbiblioteket", kvinnors deltidsarbete, Maria Langs författarskap samt funderar över muntlig historiskrivning
Höstnumret 2005	gör nedslag i vietnamesisk historia, i indisk och sydafrikansk litteratur samt ger en posthum hyllning till Jacques Derrida
Vårnumret 2005	behandlar bl.a. intertextualitet i poplyriken, Stieg Trenter och ett yrke i förändring
Höstnumret 2004	tar en titt på tidningarnas familjesidor, den kanske gamla texten Ynglingatal och den nya användningen av verbet äga
Vårnumret 2004	för oss på spännande litterära vägar

Höstnumret 2003	rör sig fritt över horisonten, från Färöarna till Lund, från tingsrätter till tautologier
Vårnumret 2003	är ett blandat nummer där vi bl.a. bevistar en internationell konferens om sexualitet som klassfråga och möter idrottshjälten Gunder Hägg
Höstnumret 2002	behandlar etniska relationer
Vårnumret 2002	ägnas helt och hållet åt temat genus
Höstnumret 2001	domineras av texter från årets Humanistdagar och från ett seminarium om historieämnets legitimitet
Vårnumret 2001	försöker svara på frågan: "Where did all the flowers go?"
Höstnumret 2000	gör oss bekanta med en filosof, en överrabbin och en sagoberätterska
Vårnumret 2000	diskuterar frågor kring historiens slut, litteraturvetenskapens mening, översättningar och den moderna irländska romanen
Höstnumret 1999	speglar årets Humanistdagar vid Växjö universitet
Vårnumret 1999	rör sig såsom på vingar och berättar om nyss timade konferenser i Paris och Växjö
Höstnumret 1998	Här går det utför! Såväl med svenskan i Amerika och den tyska litteraturen i Sverige som med Vilhelm Mobergs sedebetyg
Vårnumret 1998	bjuder på en 'lycklig humanistisk röra' av europeiska författare, svenska lingon i fransk tappning och stavfel(!)
Höstnumret 1997	speglar årets Humanistdagar som hade temat Möten Mellan Människor