

Boenga van Johor: “My forced journey from Batavia to the Cape of Good Hope”

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Introduction

Novelists and playwrights are free to adapt stories from history according to their wishes and the tastes of their audience, but historians do not enjoy such freedoms. What liberty do they have to reconstruct the stories they find? Can they add details from other historical sources or fill in the gaps using informed imagination? How far can historians go? How can they fully reconstruct realistic historical actors based on scarce biographical material and rough sketches? These questions are particularly pressing for researchers who study subaltern groups, and especially challenging for those who study the lives and conditions of enslaved persons or their experiences after emancipation. We can trace many enslaved and emancipated individuals in the archives and identify them up to a point, but because of a lack of autobiographical material, in most cases it is nearly impossible to meet them as individuals with personal identities.

Historians trained in archival research are taught to stick to sources, but subaltern groups are rarely represented in sources, and even if they are we seldom hear their voices directly. The historical record remains flat and lacks nuance, individual expression and emotion, making it difficult to empathize with subaltern people. However, unearthing these voices from the archives is surely possible, as illustrated in an inspiring and interesting study by Saidiya Hartman who, in her book *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*, reconstructs the journey made by enslaved Africans from their homelands in the Ghanaian interior to “slave castles” along the coast of Ghana – the last stop before survivors were taken aboard ships to make the Middle Passage to America.¹ The book, in which she combines journalistic and scholarly skills, traces the fate of her forefathers, but also documents her

personal quest to understand her own identity. The notes appended to every chapter demonstrate that the narrative is informed by deep and detailed research. At the end of the narrative the reader better understands how the enslaved became “strangers” to their home culture and is able to empathize with them for the tragic fate they suffered, having been rudely severed from their cultures, homes and families.

Scholars of Atlantic history make use of slave autobiographies, and these allow readers to experience vicariously the lives and times of the authors; however, we must realize that contemporary (and later) editors would have polished, or even greatly adapted, parts of the texts. Such editorial processes become clear in a study by Marijke Huisman in which she discusses the reception of autobiographies written by enslaved American authors about their lives before emancipation, beginning with the well-known example of Olaudah Equiano (1789–1831).² Huisman researches the role of autobiographical witnesses in the genesis of knowledge about slavery and its past, focusing on the reception and appreciation of their writings in the USA, UK and the Netherlands. “Slave narratives” have become a much-discussed genre, and there have been critical debates about the authenticity of some of the texts. For example, scholars have queried whether Harriet Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, originally published in 1861 under the pseudonym of Linda Brent, was indeed written by Harriet Jacobs.³ Studies in the 1980s, however, have shown that the doubts cast on the narrative’s authenticity were unjust and that the text was indeed written by Harriet Jacobs.⁴ Soon afterwards, writes Huisman, her narrative was accepted as one of the major works of the genre and was canonized in the 1987 edition of *The Classic Slave Narratives*.⁵

Such a rich overview, however, is not available for the Indian Ocean world and, even worse, it cannot be written for the lack of autobiographical texts that tell “from within” the life stories of people enslaved in Asian countries. The regrettable scarcity of such documents was confirmed by the contributors to the “Being a Slave: Indian Ocean Slavery in Local Context” workshop, held in Leiden in 2017. The lack of so-called ego documents is of course a general phenomenon with respect to the underclasses.⁶ However, even among the subalterns, the enslaved are even more underrepresented in the archives, since their social status prevented them from expressing themselves in any way other than orally, both before and after emancipation.

There are, therefore, only very few surviving ego documents relating to members of the underclass from before the early twentieth century.

However, there are alternative sources that can inform us about the lives of the subaltern—judicial examinations and sentencing documents. By reading early-modern interrogations, we become invisible witnesses to another time and place, listening to the charged personal exchanges that took place during interrogations. Rudolf Dekker, writing about riots and revolts in Dutch cities, was an early champion of the use of such sources.⁷ Lotte van de Pol, in her study on prostitution in Amsterdam, also used criminal documents.⁸ Such criminal records have been maintained in archives in the Netherlands, and similar criminal papers have been preserved in the territories administered by the Dutch East India Company (VOC). The relevant documents are thus scattered over three continents, in VOC archives in The Hague, Cape Town, Colombo, Chennai and Jakarta. Robert Ross and Nigel Worden used Cape criminal records to demonstrate the potential of these documents as repositories of the social history of Cape Town in general, and slavery specifically.⁹ But much remains to be done. In the Sri Lanka National Archives, for example, the criminal records and related documents of Colombo's Raad van Justitie (Court of Justice) comprise more than 150 files, some of which are quite voluminous. In these records one finds a variety of incriminated persons—across all social groups—who inhabited the coastal territories of the VOC in occupied Sri Lanka. Among the many indicted and sentenced individuals we also find enslaved, or formerly enslaved, persons. M.W. Jurriaanse's examples from the inventory include Apollo of Macassar; Itam, slave of the captain J.C.E. van Berski; January, slave of Andries Willem Dhieme; Deidamie, slave maid of the Burgher ensign-bearer (*vaandrig*) Johannes Wilhelmus van Cuylenberg; and Lizarde, slave maid of Albertus Hissink.¹⁰ Kate Ekama analyses these cases in an imaginative way in her study of slavery in Colombo, as demonstrated in her contribution to this volume.¹¹ Together with the criminal records preserved in Jakarta, Chennai and Cape Town, these documents are a goldmine of information that bring us the voices of those who were tried and convicted. Especially in the interrogations they seem almost to speak to us directly. Thanks to such records, we are able to unearth the voices of individuals of the marginalized and oppressed slave populations in the Dutch colonies. Care must be taken, however, because even though some members of the judicial staff came from the Dutch Republic (or from other countries in Europe), the records were written by local clerks of Eurasian descent who worked in the service of the VOC. Therefore, we should assume that they may have had an equally biased outlook on the enslaved people brought to justice.

Though the VOC archives are a rich source of information, the records are far from complete, as is evident when one peruses the inventory of VOC records in the Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia in Jakarta.¹² The criminal sentences pronounced by the Court of Justice of Batavia, for instance, are available only for the years 1778–1785. Information on criminal justice can be also found under other headings, such as in files of procedural documents (*processtukken*). There, for instance, are documents pertaining to the criminal case against Fortuijn van Boegis, a Buginese person who was enslaved in, or traded from, Sulawesi in the Indonesian archipelago. Fortunately, many more records have been preserved from the lower court, the Schepenbank (College of Aldermen or urban court of justice, run by the aldermen or *schepenen*). The earliest criminal case lists from this archive date from 1621—deposited in the archives only two years after the foundation of Batavia in 1619! The criminal records run from inventory numbers 969 to 1092—files with criminal sentences date from 1623 to 1812. While only a small proportion of the criminal documents have been kept in Jakarta, an overwhelming proportion of relevant documents can be found in the Dutch National Archives in The Hague. These documents were sent to the Gentlemen Seventeen (the central board of the VOC), and were received by the Amsterdam and Zeeland chambers of the VOC which, by rotation, presided over this central board. Due to the webbed organization of the VOC, we decided to investigate multiple repositories of VOC records. This article, in fact, will show that it can be very rewarding for historians to trace the paper trail of life-convicted slaves across the Company's repositories, which document its activities in the Indian Ocean world.

Many convicted people were sentenced to be banished to Robben Island at the Cape of Good Hope to perform forced public works labour (*ad opus publicum*). The work traditionally consisted of the maintenance of roads, canals, moats and bridges, of preparing construction sites and of building the walls of fortresses. On Robben Island the forced labourers spent most of their time breaking rocks and cutting stones. Among them were many enslaved people, including Boenga van Johor, about whom the National Archives in Jakarta have no detailed information, but whom I accidentally discovered in the National Archives of Sri Lanka, in Colombo. Though some records give some background information about the sentenced individuals, the sources found do not give a clue about an earlier social life of Boenga van Johor.¹³



Figure 5.1. Silhouette of Flora, enslaved maid of the Lutheran minister Jan Brandes, Batavia (now Jakarta), 1780-1785. Sketch Book of Jan Brandes.
Source: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv.nr. NG-1985-7-3-13.

Boenga van Johor¹⁴

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the authorities of the VOC in Batavia (now Jakarta) sent hundreds of convicts to the Cape to do forced labour and remain there after serving their sentences; they were banished for 15, 25, 50 years, or even for the rest of their lives.¹⁵ One of those convicts was the slave maid Boenga van Johor, sentenced in 1735 by the Schepenbank of Batavia for having broken her chains. She was sent on board the VOC ship *Barbestein*, which was due to sail to the Netherlands via Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and the Cape. On 22 October 1735, however, the East Indiaman¹⁶ was shipwrecked in the Bay of Galle, a maritime centre in south-west Ceylon. All of the crew and convicts—Boenga was not the only person on board with a banishment sentence—were saved. Later, Boenga continued her forced journey aboard the *Meerlust*. Her spectacular story traces the forced journey from Batavia to her final destination, Robben Island.

The voyage was a terrifying experience, the shock of which may well have caused lasting psychological trauma. From archival sources, however, we can only reconstruct her voyage and the miseries she experienced, as we have no ego documents detailing her presumed despair and agony. Though her arrival at the Cape in 1736 was documented, and the documents were filed by clerks of the Cape Court of Justice, she disappeared soon afterwards—no subsequent documents mention her whereabouts or situation.¹⁷ I became curious about her fate and regretted that Boenga had not left behind any autobiographical texts that could have given us a glimpse into her experience of enslavement and a life without cultural identity and social relations. Her journey after her sentence, and especially the accident in the Bay of Galle, makes one realize how fully dependent she was on others, perhaps being able to dream but lacking any rights or the chance of changing her situation. Contemplating her forced journey, her fellow convicts on board the ship, and the particular circumstances of Robben Island, I considered the options she had to alter her situation, if only in a very limited way. She was, of course, a convict; nothing could change that. However, in my imagination, I saw her asking for a favour—to be freed from daily confrontations with the frightening sea surrounding her, especially after the shipwreck she had experienced. Cape weather can be rough and the waves in the Bay of Good Hope threatening. In my imagination, the following document appeared:

*Yang Mulia Tuan Jan de la Fontaine, Gubernur dan Kepala di Cabo da Boa Esperança*¹⁸

I, Boenga van Johor, submissively beg for the attention of the blessed ears of Your Honourable, Gubernur and Chief of the Cape Colony, hoping Your Honourable will listen to Your miserable servant though she does not deserve such a merciful gesture.

I, Boenga van Johor cannot read or write the language of Your Honourable Gubernur. In all my miseries, however, it seems that a lucky star in heaven has witnessed my ill fate and sent me a co-convict, Imam Malintam from Minangkabau. He can speak and write Malay, the language I learnt as a child in Johor. He assured me that Your Honourable does understand my native tongue; therefore, I begged Imam Malintam to entrust my humble request to the paper in his learned handwriting, which he agreed to do.

I do understand, Your Honourable, that by releasing my chains I acted against the rules of the Honourable Company and I accept my banishment to the Cape. However, Your Honourable Tuan, I beg you, listen to my sad story. For quite a long time after my sentence I was locked up in a dark prison, first on Pulau Edam, then below deck on a great ship. I could not see where I was, nor understand what was happening around me. I only heard the creaking sound of the ship's hull and of people shouting and swearing, day and night. Then suddenly an enormous clash occurred, and water poured in. Only after many hours, a few sailormen came down and released me and my fellow convicts who shared one and the same quod. We all were in shock and feared for our lives. Then after ages, we were put in a tiny vessel and, over a stormy bay, rowed to shore. There we were locked up again and kept under surveillance by black people we could not understand at all. From some white men, however, we understood that we had been shipwrecked off Galle on the Island of Ceylon, halfway between the great city of Batavia and our final destination.

Your Honourable Tuan Gubernur, we were then transferred to a great ship and again sat in the dark, chained up for many weeks or months. I could not count the days because we never saw the sun. Now I am at a place one calls Robben Island, and everywhere I look, I see breakers and endless masses of water. Your Honourable, I cannot stand anymore to see waves threatening to grasp me, to carry away my helpless body and kill me.¹⁹

Therefore, Your Honourable Tuan Gubernur, please have mercy and transfer your miserable servant to the mainland You call Kaap die Goeie

Hoop. There, far from the swelling waves I swear I always will work hard, without any complaints or resistance, if only, Your Honourable, I never need see the frightful and horrible sea again in my life.

This request has been brought to paper by me, Malintam van Minangkabau and signed on Robben Island on 10 April 1736, 28-Dhu al-Qidah of the Islamic year 1148.²⁰

This, however, is fiction—Boenga did not write anything. She is like the convicts in Clare Anderson's study "who did not write memoirs of their experiences, but whose archival trace is substantial enough to maneuver them into the heart of histories of colonialism in the Indian Ocean".²¹ Anderson suggests—and I agree—that men and women like Boenga, "because of extraordinary circumstances, came to the attention of the colonial authorities, and left more substantial traces in the archives than are usually discernible".²²

If I were telling Boenga's story in the form of a novel, I would have inserted such a request in order to provide a point of departure for her further adventures after her transfer to the mainland. For a fictionalized account I would have closely studied *Unconfessed*, a beautiful and convincing novel by Yvette Christiansë about Sila van den Kaap, "slave woman of Jacobus Stephanus van der Wat of Plettenburg Bay in the Cape Province".²³ Christiansë reconstructs a life based on the historical trial of Sila, who is charged with killing her own child. In the novel, trying to imagine what desperation might have driven Sila to this, Christiansë succeeds in giving voice to Sila's emotions and constructing an identity for Sila and women like her by evoking a life so rudely affected by the sad fate of slavery.

For the moment, however, I will stick to the material evidence at my disposal and will reproduce the source material from the archives of the former Dutch East India Company that are scattered across the Indian Ocean. In that respect, my basic method does not differ greatly from the way Clare Anderson retrieved facts from the archives she visited. Like Boenga van Johor, Dullah, the first protagonist in Anderson's study, left no ego documents; in *Subaltern Lives*, however, we learn in great detail about the fate of this convict who was sentenced on 6 December 1816 by the British colonial authorities to "imprisonment and transportation beyond sea for life".

Records documenting convicts sent to the Cape

The “note books of convicts sent from Batavia (Jakarta) and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) to the Cape (Cape Town)”, kept in the archives of the Western Cape, refer to two East Indiamen that arrived in 1736, delivering a total of seven convicts or “bandits”.²⁴ One such ship was the *Wickenburg*, which had departed from Galle on 16 January 1736 and arrived at the roadstead of the Cape on 4 April the same year.²⁵ On board were the crew, repatriating military men and artisans, and three convicts.

The first convict listed in 1736 was Assena Manka, a Muslim slave sent to the Cape to do public works labour on Robben Island for 50 years. His sentence by the Court of Justice in Galle was approved by the governor and councils of Ceylon on 12 February 1735. The second person listed was a certain Colombege Adriaan, born in Colombo.²⁶ He was sentenced to work in chains in public works for fifteen years, and after the fulfilment of that part of his sentence he was not allowed to leave the Cape, for he had been banished for the rest of his life. The notebook states that he died in 1755, which means that he lived at the Cape for some four years after having served his punishment of forced labour. The third *bandiet*—another Sinhalese—was named Moedoe game Game Bastiaan, sent to serve fifteen years in chains. The notebook mentions that he was released on 4 October 1766, after more than 30 years!

The *Wickenburg* was accompanied by the *Meerlust*, a “flute” ship owned by the Amsterdam Chamber of the VOC.²⁷ Under the responsibility of the skipper, Kornelis van der Hoeven, four convicts were delivered to the Cape. The people first mentioned were Louis and October, two slaves owned by Evert Lanius, an auctioneer (*vendumeester*) in Batavia.²⁸ After those two, the notebook mentions a certain Malintam from Batavia, a Muslim priest. The last convict mentioned as being on board the *Meerlust* was a slave maid, Boenga van Johor.

Boenga’s status and social situation were not at all exceptional. In 1739, Batavia and Ommelanden (the districts immediately surrounding Batavia proper) had a population of 86,531 people, among whom 24,322 were enslaved (28.4 per cent of the total population) and another 6,286 people (7.29 per cent) were “Mardijkers”—manumitted slaves and their descendants.²⁹ Compared with the number of Europeans and Eurasians (altogether about 2,500 to 3,000 people), the number of slaves is astonishing. Most of them worked as domestics; an unknown number, however, was leased out to work elsewhere—some hired by private enterprises, others by the Company.

A steady flow of convicts

The transfer of convicts to the Cape was part of a standard procedure followed by Company authorities in Batavia and Ceylon. A look at the notebooks kept in Cape Town (discussed above) reveals that the people sentenced to do public works consisted mostly of European servants, free Chinese people, other Asian people with free status and enslaved people. It may be useful to provide a few examples from the notebook to illustrate the kinds of convicts that were sent to the Cape before 1736, when the abovementioned seven convicts arrived on board the *Wickenburg* and *Meerlust*.

For 1731 there is a list of sixteen Chinese convicts, all from Batavia. The notebook mentions that ten of them were sent to do forced labour on farms, and that five of them died at sea during the journey. Further, we read about an Adriaan Samson, who was banished for life by the Council of Justice in Galle. Then we find three other males—a “free Buginese from Batavia”, a “free Balinese from Batavia”, and an emancipated slave from Batavia. In 1732, four convicts arrived. Two of them—Christina “alias Anna Maria” and Pasquaal Barbeda—had been sentenced to twelve years. A third person (also from Ceylon) had been banished for 50 years by the Council of Justice in Jaffna. Convict number four was a European servant of the VOC named Adolf Wessel, from Amsterdam.³⁰ The last was sentenced by the Council of Justice in Colombo to serve in chains in public works for three years. For 1733 the notebook lists a Jan Pietersz Bak from Lossum near Copenhagen, sentenced by the Council of Justice in Colombo to serve in chains for six years on Robben Island. In the same year, two slaves from Batavia had each to serve two years in chains, and were sentenced to then stay there, banished “for their whole life”. A Chinese person from Batavia shared this fate, as did two free Javanese from Batavia.

In 1734, two European convicts arrived at the Cape. The first was Christiaan Schoonheer from Amsterdam, sentenced by the Council of Justice in Colombo to be banished for five years (the notebook states that he was released—*verlost*).³¹ The second European was Jonas Jansz, also from Amsterdam, banished for five years³² and also released. The third convict was a Sinhalese named Tottagamme Nainde Appoe,³³ sentenced by the Council of Justice of Galle “to be whipped with the rope round his neck, to be marked by the iron, and to be banished to Robben Island in chains for all his life”.

In 1735 nine convicts arrived, including one Chinese and one person from the Maldives who was in the service of a certain Narichaen, a Muslim

nachoda (captain) residing in Ceylon.³⁴ The remaining seven originated from several ethnic communities in Ceylon. Remarkable among them was a slave named Domingo—born at Kelaniya; heathen (read: Buddhist); and owned by a high-ranking Sinhalese man named Wierakon Appoehamie.³⁵ Domingo was sentenced by the Council of Justice in Colombo to do public works for 50 years; the sentence was confirmed by the governor and councillors of Ceylon on 13 July 1734.

These examples give a fair impression of the composition of convicts sent from Batavia and Ceylon to the Cape, though the composition may differ from the average for other years (as they are listed in the notebooks in the Cape archives), where we see that an unusually large number of convicted slaves sometimes arrived; and, indeed, in other years no slaves at all arrived.³⁶ Typically, however, we see quite a mix of origins and social status, such as in 1736, the year Boenga van Johor arrived.

Boenga van Johor—From sentence in May to departure from Batavia, 23 July 1735

On 19 May 1735, Boenga van Johor, a slave owned privately by a free *Christen vrouw* (Christian woman) named Clarinda van Timor,³⁷ was sentenced in Batavia—the capital of the VOC trade empire in Asia—to be sent to the Cape of Good Hope to serve *ad opus publicum* for five years over and above the period that she was already serving from an earlier sentence. In the eyes of the VOC, Boenga had seriously offended Company rules—with the help of others, she had undone the chains that she wore after having been sentenced for an earlier criminal offence. In the marginal notes of the resolutions of the meeting of the Schepenbank, the remark made to Boenga by the bailiff of the Batavian Ommelanden, *drossaart* (bailiff) Justinus Vinck, makes it clear that Boenga had, indeed, repeated her crime:

The plaintiff addressing the prisoner Boenga, [said] that only a short time after she had been punished and chained in front of the Townhall [*Stadhuijs*], she again had released herself from the chains but was arrested; then on the order of the mandur or overseer [*mandadoor*] of the Crafts Quarter of Batavia, she was whipped on her buttocks and chained again, therefore she now has violated [the sentence] of being banished in chains twice.³⁸

Like other convicted persons in the same trial, Boenga was then whipped *gestrengelijk* (seriously) on her naked back. However, unlike the other slaves and first offenders sentenced in this trial (Cate van Mandhaan, Ganty van Boeton and Mina van Batavia), Boenga was marked by the iron—a standard procedure in the Dutch Republic to make convicts who were sent to the houses of correction (*tuchthuizen*) identifiable.

Since no ship was scheduled to leave soon, Boenga was sent to the island of Edam (now Pulau Damar Besar, one of the so-called Thousand Islands), some eighteen kilometres north of Batavia. The island was gifted by the Batavian Government to Johannes Camphuys (1634–1695) when he left his post as governor general in 1691. Edam was famous for its Japanese-style country houses, beautiful gardens and menagerie. Jan de Marre (1696–1763), who arrived as a skipper of the East Indiaman *Heesburg* in 1728,³⁹ visited the island of Edam during his stay in the East Indies and described it in quite exalted terms. Boenga certainly did not obtain relief from her misery by seeing “the beautiful Edam”, nor did she enjoy a “stroll under the green and eye-catching shade”.⁴⁰ Her only consolation may have been the company of three other convicts—Louis and October, the abovementioned enslaved servants of the auctioneer Evert Lanius, and a Muslim priest named Malintam from “Maningcabo” (Minangkabau, the highlands of West Sumatra).⁴¹ The four convicts may have stayed in a slave lodge on the island, for the Batavian ship repair wharf had three locations—Onrust, a neighbouring island named Kuiper and Edam. Edam was not only the leisure island of the governor general, but there were also warehouses and a sawmill powered by a Dutch-type windmill similar to the two on the wharf island of Onrust. The Company owned hundreds of slaves, and hired even more private slaves to work at the three locations of the wharf, housing them in a huge slave lodge on Onrust.⁴² (The one on Edam was apparently quite modest.⁴³) It is quite possible that the four convicts were kept separate from the enslaved labourers, and that they were housed in a temporary shed in one of the warehouses. Boenga was kept chained; possibly this was a measure to prevent her from walking off and committing suicide. This tragic form of resistance was by no means exceptional, as we have seen from the example of Ontong in Geelen et al.’s contribution to this volume. There we read that Ontong tried to break free but failed to take his own life—consequently he was brought to court “to defend himself against the hefty charge of attempted suicide”.⁴⁴

With her fellow convicts, Boenga stayed on Edam for about eight weeks, then the four were transferred to the *Barbestein*,⁴⁵ which lay at anchor in the

roadstead of Batavia. On 21 July 1735 the authorities of the ship signed a declaration stating that they were taking over the responsibility of taking the convicts to the Cape. The document concerning Boenga reads:

The authorities of the ship *Barbestein* take over in good security from the employees of the Honourable Aldermen of this city [Batavia] and transfer under good surveillance via Ceylon to the Cape of Good Hope, the slave maid Boenga van Johor, in order to serve there the time of her banishment in chains, according the appointment by Their Honourables of 19 May last, and accordingly by the resolution of Their Honourables [Governor-General and Councillors of the East Indies] taken on the 27th of that month, the original signed by [Adriaan] Valckenier and [Johannes] Thedens [Councillors].⁴⁶

Together with the *Ketel*,⁴⁷ *Wickenburg* and *Meerlust*, the *Barbestein* left the roadstead of Batavia on 23 July 1735.⁴⁸

The journey to Ceylon to the arrival in the Bay of Galle, 22 October 1735

It is not quite clear what route the ships took. From the *Generale Missiven* one learns that the ships carried Japanese copper to be delivered in Tuticorin on the south-east coast of India, and rice for Ceylon.⁴⁹ Because of the stop at the Madurai Coast the voyage took two months, a horrifying experience for the four involuntary passengers.⁵⁰ It is likely that they were kept below deck at all times, in lockups specially made for the occasion. The food may have been the ordinary fare prepared for the sailors and soldiers; on the leg between Batavia and the Cape the diet will have contained rice and cadjang beans (lentils)—acceptable fare, though there would have been no fruit. Their situation must have been unbearable—not knowing where they were, how things would go, or how, when and where their misery would end—until at last the ship arrived in the roadstead of Colombo on 22 September. Even if the convicts had been informed about their arrival in Ceylon they would not have understood where they were. One can only speculate about this part of the journey, but the fact that the ship anchored safely in the Colombo roads may have given the captives some feeling of security.

After unloading and reloading, the four ships left Colombo and sailed southwards to Galle, where goods were waiting for transhipment to the

Netherlands. The *Barbestein* sighted the bay on 20 October 1735 but stayed outside, anchored at the so-called Outer Roadsted (*Buyten-rede*) because of strong winds and waves. The next day, 21 October, the *Barbestein* lost one anchor after the other. The pilots, Barend Joosten and Heere Jansz, decided to take their chances and try to enter the Bay of Galle, in the hope that spare anchors could be supplied. But that hope was misplaced, and without anchors the ship fell prey to the waves. Three cannon shots were fired to warn the authorities ashore that the vessel was on the brink of shipwreck. The master of equipment (head of the Maritime Department), Carel Pieter Swensen, could not be of any help, as heavy breakers made all rescue attempts hopeless. Around 8 a.m. on 22 October 1735 the ship ran aground and started leaking. Sand filled the inlets of the pumps and within an hour the lower deck was flooded.

It is not difficult to imagine that the people aboard the *Barbestein* feared for their lives. Below deck, Boenga must have heard the initial panic of crew members shouting and rushing hither and thither. Was she kept in chains during the voyage from Batavia? And, if so, how long was it before orders were given to release her and the other convicts, and move them from their perilous situation to safety? For Boenga and her fellow convicts the sounds of the ship running aground must have been sickening and frightening, for they were locked up and unable to fully understand what was happening. From the sources, however, we know that they were all released and safely taken ashore. They may have been locked up again in the depot (*materiaal-huis*) in Black Fort, where convicts and Company slaves were kept.

Ship lost, ship's papers salvaged

The Dutch East India Company has become famous for its diligent record keeping. Many files concerning the shipwreck of the *Barbestein* have been kept and can be studied in the Sri Lanka National Archives. From the letters to and from Colombo,⁵¹ many of which have detailed reports, we learn that on the day after the disaster the commander and councillors of the Galle Commandment set up tents on the shore close to the site of the shipwreck near the watch-house (*gravet*) of Unawatuna.⁵² From there, Commandeur (Commander) Jan Macaré (1686–1742) coordinated the rescue of goods and people; also, there was a steady flow of letters to Colombo to inform Governor Diederik van Domburg (1685–1736) of the fate of the *Barbestein* and to obtain instructions. Among these files are copies of the salvaged ship's

papers, including documents on the convicts sent from Batavia. Louis and October, “both slaves from Ternate”, had been sentenced for having committed “violence and hooliganism” and for issuing threats and so on—neither had confessed and both denied the accusations.⁵³ The Malay “priest” (*imam*) Malintam, from Minangkabau (spelled “Manin Cabo”), had been sentenced for plotting murder, to which he had confessed.⁵⁴ Boenga was sentenced for breaking her chains and for violating her banishment.⁵⁵

From several documents we learn exactly what happened to the goods on the *Barbestein*—the sugar and saltpetre in the hold of the ship, understandably, were lost; however, much of the other cargo—such as the textiles from India (which appear to confirm that the *Barbestein* had earlier sailed to Tuticorin)—was successfully removed.⁵⁶ The textiles were bleached, dried and sorted, and the items that were not of export quality were allocated to be sold in Galle.⁵⁷ We also learn about the rescue of useful parts of the ship, such as masts and yards. Some documents actually confirm the saving of everyone on board, but there is no record of the distribution of crew, passengers and convicts on the returning ships—the *Ketel*, *Wickenburg* and *Meerlust*.⁵⁸ We know, however, that Boenga was transferred to the Cape with the other convicts on board the *Meerlust*, for that has been documented in the abovementioned notebook of convicts sent to the Cape.

Within a few days the *Barbestein* broke into three.⁵⁹ The reports inserted in the resolutions of the Council of Galle give a thorough account of the investigations by the commander and council to find out what had happened and what exactly had caused the loss of the ship. There we also find evidence given by the skipper, mates and other ship’s officers, as well as the local VOC pilots based in Galle.⁶⁰ It is not known what happened to Boenga after she was taken ashore. She may have joined the other convicts and slaves and been forced to work in the depot or elsewhere in Galle, which she may have preferred to her next forced journey by sea—the last leg of her voyage from Ceylon to the Cape.

The *Meerlust* sails to the Cape

On 16 January 1736, the East Indiamen—*Ketel*, *Meerlust* and *Wickenburg*—left Ceylon and sailed to the Cape.⁶¹ Dirk Prest, who had lost his ship, the *Barbestein*, was appointed first mate of the *Ketel*—he was later chosen by the ships’ council to replace skipper Adriaan Krielaard, who had died on the voyage.

Little is known about the ships' journey since no ships' logs have been kept. On 9 April 1736 the three ships arrived safely at the roadstead of the Cape, where they stayed until their departure for the Netherlands on 27 April.⁶² In the meantime, the four convicts were registered and their names inserted in the notebook of convicts. From that moment on their names seem to disappear from Company files. A further search of the Cape archives for more information about Boenga may be worthwhile, though there is only a small chance of finding out more. The Company meticulously recorded the names of the convicts sent back to Batavia or Ceylon. We find in lists between 1750 and 1781 a certain Pasquale van Colombo, who was sentenced on 25 May 1723 to 25 years of forced public works labour and, as the lists show, was sent back in 1751.⁶³ Oursson van Sambouwa (Sambawa) was sentenced in Batavia in 1737 and sent back there on 10 October 1750, following the decision of the Cape Government. Baatjoe van Boegis (Sulawesi), an enslaved domestic owned by Christoffel Schultz, *Backmeester* of the Utrecht Gate of Batavia, was sent back in 1751. He was sentenced in 1740, and sent back in 1750 aboard the East Indiaman *Vrijburg*, which had departed from Zeeland on 18 May 1750, lay at anchor in the Cape roads between 19 September and 26 October, and arrived in Batavia on 3 January 1751.

There is no mention at all of Boenga van Johor. No message of transfer, being sent back, or demise. She may have stayed at the Cape until the end of her life. One thing is certain—she had arrived in a society which, like Batavia, was fully dependent on slave labour, so the Company would not have released her without reason. Boenga may have set her hopes on a better life after serving her punishment; however, I did not find recorded any mention of her after her arrival in 1736.

Discussion

Mentioned in Kerry Ward's *Networks of Empire* as one of many forced labourers shipped to Cape Town from South and Southeast Asia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Boenga comes to life in the sources connected with the shipwreck of the *Barbestein* on 22–23 October 1735. This East Indiaman transported four convicts, three slaves and one Muslim priest. The files kept in the ship's box (*scheepsdoos*) and the documents kept in the Cape archives give ample evidence of judicial procedures, sentences and the execution of the verdicts in Batavia. Combined with data retrieved from sources such as

the *Generale Missiven* and publications such as *Dutch–Asiatic Shipping*, it is possible to reconstruct the fate of Boenga van Johor; however, first-hand testimonies of people like her are extremely rare. With the help of the available sources, historians can try to understand what she may have experienced, and accordingly they can reconstruct for the public some aspects of the lives of enslaved people. One is tempted to use fiction to work more freely with historical facts, thereby escaping the historian's traditional methods and constraints, which require sticking to scarce facts as retrieved from sources.

One may question, however, whether writing a novel delivers a better result than a historical study. Sue Peabody clearly discusses the implications of telling the story of Furcy in three competing genres. Furcy was a slave born around 1786 who fought for 26 years for official recognition of his freeborn status. On 23 December 1843 he finally obtained the judgment of the French judicial system that he had been born free (*"Furcy est né en liberté"*).⁶⁴ Earlier, the journalist and author Mohammed Aïssaoui had written the novel *L'affaire de l'esclave Furcy*,⁶⁵ but Peabody, though admitting that "the novel offers interesting narrative possibilities", chooses the genre of microhistory because "it joins the elemental power of good storytelling (characters, plot, description) with a postmodern commitment to revealing the architecture of historical research and exposition".⁶⁶ In the attachment to the article, she tries to explain the essential differences between microhistory, biography and fiction by tackling three times, and in three different ways, a crucial episode in the life of Furcy's mother Madeleine that had sad implications for her son's life.

Peabody's experimental works are kept short, like the imagined document I inserted at the beginning of this chapter, which can also be considered experimental. In the case of my experiment, however, its main purpose is to show what could have been learned had Boenga left us ego documents to tell us about her miseries.

Notes

1. Sadiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.
2. Marijke Huisman, *Verhalen van Vrijheid. Autobiografieën van Slaven in Transnationale Perspectief, 1789–2013*. Hilversum: Verloren, 2015.
3. Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, edited by Nellie Y. McKay and Frances Smith Foster. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002.

This is a perfect edition, with contemporary responses and selections of Jacobs' other writings, an introduction to her world, and a section with critical essays.

4. Huisman, *Verhalen van Vrijheid*, 160.
5. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (ed.), *The Classic Slave Narratives*. New York: New American Library, 1987.
6. The term *ego document* refers to sources which contain information on personal lives and experiences written by authors themselves. The term was coined around 1955 by the Dutch historian Jacques Presser. For a short article on ego documents see the website of the "Center for the Study of Egodocuments and History," <http://www.egodocument.net>, accessed 20 March 2019.
7. Rudolf Dekker, *Holland in Beroering: Oproeren in de 17de en 18de Eeuw*. Amsterdam: Ambo, 1982.
8. Lotte van de Pol, *Het Amsterdams Hoerdom: Prostitutie in de Zeventiende en Achttiende Eeuw*. Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 1996; revised edition: *Sociaal-Historische Studie Naar de Prostitutie Door Vrouwen in Amsterdam Tussen ca. 1650–1750*. Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 2003, published in English: *The Burgher and the Whore: Prostitution in Early Modern Amsterdam*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, translated by Liz Waters.
9. Robert Ross, *Cape of Torments. Slavery and Resistance in South Africa*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983. Nigel Worden and Gerald Groenewald, *Trials of Slavery. Selected Documents Concerning Slaves from the Criminal Records of the Council of Justice at the Cape of Good Hope, 1705–1794*, *Van Riebeeck Society Second Series* 36. Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 2005.
10. M.W. Jurriaanse, *Catalogue of the Archives of the Dutch Central Government of Coastal Ceylon, 1640–1796*. Colombo: Ceylon Government Press, 1943. This inventory can be accessed through "Towards a New Age of Partnership", TANAP.net.
11. See also Kate Ekama, "Slavery in Colombo" (Master's diss., Leiden University, 2012). For a discussion of these cases in a legal history context see A. Schriker and Kate Ekama, "Through the Lens of Slavery: Dutch Sri Lanka in the Eighteenth Century," in *Sri Lanka at the Crossroads of History*, edited by Zoltán Biedermann and Alan Strathern, 178–193. London: UCL Press, 2017.
12. G.L. Balk, F. van Dijk and D.J. Kortlang, *The Archives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and the Local Institutions in Batavia*. Leiden and Boston MA: Brill, 2007, with contributions by F.S. Gaastra, Hendrik E. Niemeijer and P. Koenders. This inventory can be accessed through TANAP.net.
13. Seen from a social perspective, Boenga as a person appears rather nondescript, so to speak. Extraordinary in this respect is the example given by Paul Bijl,

- Wange van Balie (1798-1869), who in his autobiography spanning the years 1802-1810 gives evidence of a family world inhabited by his father, grandmother and brothers. See Paul Bijl, "Acts of Equality: Writing Autonomy, Empathy, and Community in an Indonesian Slave Narrative", chapter 7 in this volume.
14. Boenga (*bunga*) in the Malay language means "flower". European slave owners usually gave their enslaved domestics a new name after acquisition in order to avoid having a stranger in the household. Her owner, the free *Christen vrouw* Clarinda van Timor, apparently had no objection to her originally given name, since Malay as *lingua franca* was not strange or hostile to her.
 15. From the very beginning of its presence at the Cape, the VOC used Robben Island as a concentration camp. A famous example is Eva van Meerhof (?1643-1674), the wife of the Danish surgeon Peter Havgard (in VOC documents called Pieter van Meerhof). As a child of twelve the Khoi girl Krotoa, renamed "Eva", entered the service of the Van Riebeeck family. In that capacity she also acted as interpreter and hence as mediator between the Company and Khoi people. In 1665 she followed her husband when he became overseer of Robben Island. After his death Eva's uncontrolled drinking habits got her into trouble, and consequently she was sentenced to be sent to the island—then as a condemned criminal. The story of "Krotoa-Eva" plays a major role in the history and historiography of South Africa. See, for example: Trudie Bloem, *Krotoa-Eva: The Woman from Robben Island*. Cape Town: Kuele Books, 1999; Dan Sleigh, *Islands*. London: Secker & Warburg, 2004. (Translation from: *Eilande*. Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 2001).
 16. An East Indiaman, a three-masted sailing vessel, of different tonnage and design. The returning *Barbestein* was an East Indiaman of the first charter, about 160 feet long and with a loading capacity of 1,100 tons. The flute ship *Meerlust* belonged to the third charter—it measured 130 feet and could transport a load of 600 tons.
 17. See text below, and endnote 9.
 18. "To the right honourable Jan de la Fontaine, Governor of the cape of Good Hope".
 19. The main argument in this constructed request ("I cannot stand anymore to see waves threatening to grasp me, to carry away my helpless body and kill me") differs sharply from the concept of the sea as a gate to freedom, as described by Anne Marieke van der Wal. See her contribution to this volume, "'Hoera, dit skip seil uit oos'. The Sea as a Site of Memory in the Folk Songs of the Enslaved Community and their Descendants at the Cape".
 20. Retrieved from the past by Lodewijk Wagenaar for the "Being a Slave" workshop at Leiden University, 29–30 May 2017.

21. Clare Anderson, *Subaltern Lives. Biographies of Colonialism in the Indian Ocean World, 1790–1920*, 4. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
22. Anderson, *Subaltern Lives*, 6.
23. Yvette Christiansë, *Unconfessed*. Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2007.
24. Western Cape Archives and Records Service, Inventory of the Archives of the Court of Justice of the Cape Colony (CJ), 1652–1843; Documents Regarding Convicts and Exiles 1722–1822; Note Books of Convicts (1722–1786), “Attestatieboek—Banditen. *Lijste van zodanige banditen als er uijt India na herwaarts zijn gesonden, als van Batavia [en Ceylon]*,” inv. no. 3186, 1722–1757.
25. The ship *Wickenburg* was built in Middelburg by the VOC Chamber Zeeland in 1722; it could carry 850 tons of freight and was taken out of service in Batavia in 1748 after having made eight journeys to the East Indies. After its departure from the Cape on 27 April 1736, the ship arrived at the roadstead of Rammekens (Zeeland) on 29 August 1736. Her skipper was Pieter Zwanendrecht. See J.R. Bruijn, F.S. Gaastra and I. Schöffers, *Dutch–Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, 3 vols. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987. From here, the ship numbers given in volumes II (outgoing) and III (homebound ships) are given as “DAS,” followed by the number and the digit indicating the particular number of the outgoing or homebound voyage. The arrival on 29 August 1736 was of DAS 6960.5.
26. His origin is given by the Sinhalese suffix “ge” after Colombe (Colombo).
27. The flute *Meerlust* was built in 1725 at the Company’s wharf in Amsterdam. Weighing 600 tonnes, it made five journeys to the East Indies and was taken out of service in 1744. DAS 6959.3 mentions that the ship stayed at the Cape from 4–27 April 1736 and arrived at the roadstead of Texel on 28 August 1736. On board was a crew of 89 sailors (inclusive of the skipper and officers). Also on board were three categories of VOC servants being repatriated—eleven soldiers, five artisans and fourteen *impotenten* (sick or handicapped servants). The ship was loaded with goods to the value of 155,904 guilders. The skipper was Kornelis van der Hoeve.
28. Evert Lanius was auctioneer in Batavia from 1712. See François Valentijn, *Oud en nieuw Oost-Indiën*, vol. IV, pt. 1, 413. Dordrecht: Joannes van Braam; Amsterdam: Gerard onder de Linden, 1726.
29. Remco Raben, “Batavia and Colombo. The Ethnic and Spatial Order of Two Colonial Cities, 1600–1800” (PhD diss., Leiden University, 1996), 89–93.
30. The research guide, *VOC Opvarenden*, of the National Archives (The Hague) mentions an Adolf Wessels from Amsterdam who entered the service of the VOC in 1735. He was possibly repatriated from the Cape in 1738. See “VOC Opvarenden,” Nationaal Archief, <http://www.gahetna.nl/collectie/index/ntoo444>, accessed 20 March 2010.

31. VOC *Opvarenden* mentions a Christiaan Schoonheer from Amsterdam who left service in Asia in 1733. That was the year of his sentence—convicts were then formally dismissed and their contracts terminated.
32. VOC *Opvarenden* mentions a Jonas Jansz who entered service in 1730. He left the service in Asia on 29 May 1734—possibly the year of his sentence.
33. *Nainde*: a husbandman of low caste who performed menial tasks as compulsory service, such as the transport of timber and cinnamon; the word “appoe” (Sinhalese: *appu*) suggests that he occupied a high position within his group.
34. *Nahada*: possibly the clerk meant a *nachoda*, which is the word related to Chinese skippers.
35. Wierakon Appoehamie: today, his name would be spelled “Wirakon”. “Appuhamy” is an honorific for sons of high-ranking native chiefs in the Company’s territory of Ceylon.
36. See in particular the chapters, “Crime and Punishment in Batavia, circa 1730 to 1750” and “Forced Migration and Cape Colonial Society,” in *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* by Kerry Ward, 85-125 and 239-282. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. On page 261, Ward briefly mentions Boenga of Johor and her sentence of banishment for five years, in addition to her previous sentence for having broken out of her chains in Batavia—information retrieved from the Convicts Rolls, vol. 3188 (1728-1795), kept in the Cape Town Archive Repository (CA).
37. Slaves were named after their region of origin or after the port of embarkation they left for transport after sale. Thus, Clarina came from Timor. Later on, she was manumitted on the condition that she convert to Christianity. People like her were categorized as “free Christian women”. Many emancipated slaves possessed slaves in their own right.
38. Western Cape Archives and Records Service, CJ 2563, “Copies of Sentences of Persons Banished from Batavia, Ceylon and Elsewhere, 1736-1742” (*Vonnissen der personen dewelke soo van Batavia als Ceylon herwaarts zijn gesonden. Beginnende met den jaare 1736 en eindigende met den jaare 1742*), 110; sentence of 19 May 1735, copied a week later, on 26 May, in Batavia. The Dutch text reads: “De heer eisser voegende de gev[angene] daarbij, dat zij maar weijnig tijds nadat alhier voor ‘t Stadhuijs was afgestraft en in de ketting geklonken daarna wederom opgevat is, wanneer zij ter ordre van den mandadoor in ‘t Ambagtsquartier op haar billen gegeselt en aldaar de novo in de ketting geklonken is, zulx zij nu twee malen haar banissement in de ketting heeft gevioleerd.”
39. DAS 2735.3: the *Heesburg*, built in 1720 for the Amsterdam Chamber of the VOC, left the roadstead of Texel for its third outward voyage on 10 May 1728,

- stayed at the Cape from 27 September until 23 October, and arrived in the Bay of Batavia on 21 December 1728. DAS 6820.3: Jan de Marre left Batavia on 13 October 1731 as skipper of the same vessel (then sailing in charter for the Zeeland Chamber) and arrived on 18 June 1732 in the roadstead of Rammekens.
40. Jan de Marre, *Batavia. Begrepen In Zes Boeken*, 231. Amsterdam: Adriaan Wor, en de Erve G. onder de Linden, 1740: “Stelt u, ô schoon Edam! in heuchelyker licht./ Wien lust het niet zich hier ‘t ontheffen van zyn kommer?/ Te wandlen onder ‘t groen van ‘t oogverrukkend lommer? [...]”. About Jan de Marre as skipper, examiner of the seamanship of the Amsterdam Chamber of the VOC, director of the Amsterdam City Theatre and author see Jaap R. Bruijn, *Schippers van de VOC in de Achttiende Eeuw, Aan de Wal en Op Zee*, 94–97. Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 2008.
 41. Sri Lanka National Archives (SLNA), 1/5220, *Letters from Colombo to Galle, With Annexes*, 29 July–30 December 1735, no. 149, *Extract of the Resolutions Taken by the Council of the Dutch East Indies*, 27 May 1735: [in translation] “[...] to send Louis and October, slaves of the auctioneer Evert Lanijus; Malintam van Maningcabo, Malay [speaking] priest, and also Boenga van Johor via Ceylon to the Cape to serve their banishment in chains, and to station and keep them temporarily on the island of Edam”.
 42. In 1757, the number of Company slaves in the Artisans’ Quarter in Batavia and on Onrust totalled 1,846; see Raben, “Batavia and Colombo”, 100. In 1735, the numbers were perhaps a few hundred less. The number of slaves labouring on Onrust would have included the ones working at Edam and Kuiper—the latter were returned every night to the neighbouring island of Onrust.
 43. Lodewijk J. Wagenaar, “Het Eiland Onrust Bij Batavia als Onderdeel van het VOC-Scheepsbedrijf in de 17de en 18de Eeuw,” *Antiek* 25, no. 2 (1990): 65–80; on slaves and convicts see especially pages 74–76.
 44. Alexander Geelen, Bram van den Hout, Merve Tosun, Mike de Windt and Matthias van Rossum, “Between Markets and Chains. An Exploration of the Experiences, Mobility, and Control of Enslaved Persons in Eighteenth-Century South-West India”, in this volume.
 45. *Barbestein*: built in 1717 by the VOC Chamber Zeeland, 1,100 tonnes; the ship made six outward journeys; at the end of the sixth voyage, the ship arrived in the roadstead of Batavia on 10 April 1733 (DAS 2875.6).
 46. SLNA 1/5220, no. 126:
 De overheden van ‘t schip Barbestein, nemen van de bedientens van Heren Schepenen dezer stede, in goede verzekering over en vervoeren onder goeden toezicht over Ceilon naar Cabo de Goede Hoop, de slavinne

Boenga van Johor, ten einde aldaar volgens haar Eerw.¹: appointements de dato 19. majj jongstleden, en Harer Hoogedelens daarop genomene resolutie op de 27. dies maants, den tijd van haar bannissement in de ketting uit te dienen. Batavia, in 't Casteel, den 21. Julij, Ao. 1735 / [orig. get.] Valckenier [en] Thedens [Achter stond] Ordonnantie van den 16. Julij op de overheeden van 't schip Barbestein verleent.

47. *Ketel*: built by the Rotterdam Chamber in 1721, 810 tonnes. The ship made seven outward voyages and was sold in 1748 to Spanish merchants in Manila. See DAS 2503.1 and later voyages.
48. "Resources," *Boekhouder-generaal Batavia. Het goederenvervoer van de VOC in de achttiende eeuw*, <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/boekhoudergeneraalbatavia>, accessed 20 March 2019, gives the departure date of the four ships as 23 July 1735. *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (GM), volume 9, edited by J. van Goor, 663. The Hague: s.n, 1988, gives, wrongly, 23 June.
49. *Generale Missiven* 9, 663.
50. *Generale Missiven* 9, 735.
51. SLNA 1/5220, *Letters from Colombo to Galle, With Annexes*, 29 July–30 December 1735.
52. SLNA 1/5339, *Letters from Galle to Colombo*, 4 August–30 December 1735, Letters dated 20–25 October 1735.
53. SLNA 1/5220, no. 150, *Verdict of Wednesday 2 February 1735 by Pieter Boockesteijn, Bailiff (Baljuw) of Batavia, Contra Louis and October, Slaves from Ternate*.
54. SLNA 1/5220, no. 151, *Verdict of Wednesday 20 April 1735 by Justinus Vinck, Bailiff (Drossaart) of the Batavian Countryside (Bataviase Ommelanden), Contra Malimitam from Manin Cabo, Malay Priest*.
55. SLNA 1/5220, no. 152, *Verdict of Thursday 19 May 1735 by Justinus Vinck Contra Eleven Persons, Among whom Boenga van Johor*.
56. Tuticorin (now known as Thoothukudi) was the VOC centre on the Coast of Madure where cloth from the hinterland was collected. It came under the administration of the Government of Dutch Ceylon.
57. SLNA 1/5339, *Letters from Galle to Colombo*, 4 January–30 December 1735, Letter of 25 October 1735 (sent at 6:30 p.m., when it was already dark!).
58. *Generale Missiven* 9, 768: the High Government in Batavia initially planned to send the *Iepenrode* from Batavia to replace the *Barbestein*, but there were not enough goods to make equipping a fourth ship profitable. DAS 6991.2: On 1 January 1737, the *Iepenrode* left Batavia, but was shipwrecked on 21 May 1737 at the Cape.

59. Because the *Barbestein* was shipwrecked, it was never added to the list of ships leaving Ceylon. Since *Dutch–Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries* does not register the Batavia–Ceylon section for homebound ships leaving from Ceylon (this is, of course, not relevant to the ships which plied directly between the Netherlands and Ceylon), there is no DAS number for the *Barbestein* after its arrival in the roads of Batavia on 10 April 1733. From the *General Missiven* and the archives of the Bookkeeper General, however, we know that following its arrival the ship made trips to Persia (via Cochin on the Malabar Coast, where seven slaves were bought) and Cheribon. See *Generale Missiven* 9, 514, 627, 643, and 663; “Resources,” *Boekhouder-generaal Batavia. Het goederenvervoer van de VOC in de achttiende eeuw*, <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/boekhoudergeneraalbatavia>, accessed 20 March 2019. The ship arrived on time in Batavia, to be re-equipped for the homeward voyage via Ceylon. As we have already seen, the *Barbestein* had left Batavia on 23 July 1735.
60. SLNA 1/5043 *Ordinary Minutes of the Political Council of Galle*, 1 February 1734–10 March 1736 (not paginated), Meeting of 7 November 1735.
61. See DAS 6958.5 (*Ketel*), DAS 6959.3 (*Meerlust*), and DAS 6960.5 (*Wickenburg*).
62. The *Ketel* arrived in the Texel roads on 27 August 1736; the *Meerlust* followed the next day; the *Wickenburg* anchored at Rammekens on 29 August 1736. Together they had transported goods to the value of 572,007 guilders.
63. Western Cape Archives and Records Service, CJ 3190: “Lists of Exiles Sent Back to India After the expiration of their Sentences, 1750–1781” (“Naamrollen van sodaanige Bannelingen als derselver Bannissementen uijtgedient hebbende weederom successievelijk naar India terug gesonden suijn etc. etc. Beginnende met den 10 Octobr. 1750 en eindigende met [1781].”).
64. Sue Peabody, “Microhistory, Biography, Fiction. The Politics of Narrating the Lives of People Under Slavery,” *Transatlantica 2*, *Association Française d’études Américaines* (2012): 1–19.
65. Mohammed Aïssaoui, *L’affaire de l’esclave Furcy*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2010.
66. Peabody, *Microhistory*, 8.