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### Places of misery

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# Places of misery: mapping slavery of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), 1602-1799

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## Abstract:

Slavery under the Dutch in the so-called East Indies has – until very recently – been a marginalized topic in the historiography of the long-distance trading company: the Dutch East India Company, or VOC (abbreviated from Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie).

Due to several circumstances the study of the Asian perspective in Dutch global slavery has picked up momentum, leading to a boost in scientific and popular literature (among others: Van Rossum 2015). The dedicated exhibition *Slavernij* (Slavery) in the national history museum Rijksmuseum (May-August 2021) further stimulated public interest, and raised awareness for the topic of Dutch involvement in slavery and slave trade, not excluding the Asian perspective. Several years of research went into preparing the exhibition, also leading to carefully curated publications in Dutch and English (Sint Nicolaas 2021). Another huge incentive for research were the commissions by the authorities of some large Dutch cities who wished thorough investigation into their city's role and involvement in Dutch global slavery (Brandon 2020, Van Stipriaan 2020, Jouwe 2021). Finally, scientific and public interest for the topic is fuelled by the global *Black Lives Matter* movement, which also took root in The Netherlands.

However, this interest has not yet led to the serious study of maps, plans and topographical views for traces and evidences of slavery and slave trade in the Dutch settlements and occupied territories under the VOC. Other than using them for illustrations to visualise slavery and slave trade in several publications, the sources have barely been used as base for research. This contribution wants to serve as starting point by offering a database (see appendix) in which maps, plans and topographical views are mentioned on which slavery, slave trade, enslaved people (both visualised in literal or allegorical sense), or infrastructure connected to slavery can be observed. The database is intended as helpful tool for all those researching VOC settlements in the broadest sense, and slavery in particular.

The data to fill this database came from the seven volume spanning series *Comprehensive atlas of the United Dutch East India Company* (Van Diessen 2006-2010). It is a facsimile publication of all known manuscript maps, plans, and topographical views of the Dutch overseas settlements. The data is presented by volume/page number, inventory number of the work, geographical region, city or town, year of production, mapmaker(s) (if known), type (infrastructure or depiction), followed by the original description that can be found on the work. The Comprehensive atlas will be made available in open access by the National Archives of the Netherlands in the near future.

Four small case studies will be presented as examples of how maps, plans and topographical views can be used as base for research. The first will handle the depiction of infrastructure in the Dutch mining facilities at the island of Sumatra (Silida). The second case study will dive into the topic of gender, focussing on references of housing for enslaved women (the Dutch word for an enslaved woman is 'slavin') and looking for reasons why mapmakers mentioned this specifically. The third case study is about stereotyping. The work of artist Johannes Rach (1720-1783) was popular among contemporaries. A set of city views of Batavia will be discussed for the depiction of enslaved people, with special attention to followers and copyists of Rach. Unlike Rach, who travelled the Dutch empire in Asia, these copyists worked in the Dutch Republic and stereotyped enslaved people, even adding elements (like a typical black servant boy wearing orientalist dress) not present on the original drawings by Rach. In the fourth case study "remoteness" will be examined by looking at smaller Dutch settlements in Asia (Vengurla, Bimilipatnam), refuting traditional notions that Dutch slavery in Asia was to be found exclusively at the metropolises.

Finally, for the advancement of the study of slavery in general it is important to collect contemporaries' views and opinions on the topic. Remarkably enough the testimony of a VOC mapmaker has survived the ages in the archival records of the Company at the National Archives of the Netherlands (NA). The Prussian-born Carl Friedrich Reimer (c.

1740-1796) became the most productive in-situ mapmaker for the VOC (Bos 2020). In his records can be found his personal opinion about slavery on the island of Java. It offers a unique view on the matter, laced with late 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment ideas. Testimonies like the one by Reimer are rare, and found mainly by serendipity. The ongoing investment from the NA in artificial intelligence in handwritten text recognition (HTR) software means that the VOC handwritten records can be made searchable for keywords. This is important to reconstruct the link between many VOC maps and the original accompanying reports in the collections of the NA. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century archivist P.A. Leupe decided to separate maps and plans of the former VOC and WIC from the original records and store them separately. A decision that made sense in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, but regretted nowadays. Only with painstakingly archival research the broken link between map and report can be reconstructed. It is expected that HTR will ease this reconstruction. Likewise, anticipation is high that artificial intelligence will reveal many hidden stories, like Reimers testimony on slavery, from obscurity. A very promising future indeed.

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### Appendix

Database slavery on manuscript VOC maps, plans and views.

## Appendix 1

SERIES VOLUME	INSTITUTIONAL INV NR	REGION	CITY/TOWN/LOCALITY	YEAR(S)	MAPMAKER(S)	TYPE	ORIGINAL DESCRIPTION
I I-5c	NA 4.VEL-828	Africa	Cape of Good Hope	c. 1700	Isaak de Graaf	infrastructure	Slavenhuysen; 't ontwerp van een slavenhuys welkers fundament muuren mede bijna geleyt sijn; Loots voor de slaven
I I-5d	NA 4.VEL-830	Africa	Cape of Good Hope	c. 1700	Isaak de Graaf	infrastructure	Een provisioneel slavenhuys konnende na desen tot smiths, wagenmakers, en kuypers winkels gebruykt werden
I I-17	NA 4.VEL-885	India	Vengurla	c. 1700	Isaak de Graaf	infrastructure	eenige wooninge binnen 't begrip van de logie zo voor de thuyniers, slaven, etc.
I I-23g	NA 4.VEL-986	Sri Lanka	Colombo (Governor's House)	c. 1700	Isaak de Graaf	infrastructure	Een afdak tot logiment der lijfeygenen; vier secreeten en washuysjiens voor de slaven; een trap langs welke de slaven en het vee na boven tot de gemeene grondt opgaan
I I-25c	NA 4.VEL-1083	India	Nagapatnam	c. 1700	Isaak de Graaf	infrastructure	Slavekamerties; slave kamer; der slaven secreet; slavenkamer; slave kamer; slave secreet; slavensecreet
I I-25e	NA 4.VEL-1087	India	Sadrangapatnam	c. 1700	Isaak de Graaf	infrastructure	Combuysen en slavenkotten
I I-25e	NA 4.VEL-1087	India	Porto Novo	c. 1700	Isaak de Graaf	infrastructure	Combuysen en slavenkotten
I I-29b	NA 4.VEL-1101	India	Houghly	c. 1700	Isaak de Graaf	infrastructure	Combuysen en kuffen voor de slaven
I I-36b	NA 4.VEL-1145	Indonesia	Cinkuk Gadang	c. 1700	Isaak de Graaf	infrastructure	T woonhuys voor s' Comp:s slaven, slavinnen en banditen
I I-36b	NA 4.VEL-1145	Indonesia	Barus	c. 1700	Isaak de Graaf	infrastructure	Der slaven wooningh
I I I-24	NA 4.VEL-1341	Indonesia	Saparua	c. 1700	Isaak de Graaf	infrastructure	Slavenhuys
I I I-26a	NA 4.VEL-1359	Indonesia	Bandanaira	c. 1700	Isaak de Graaf	infrastructure	Slaven quartier
II 28-29	UBL Bodel Nijenhuis Port 56 N 59	Indonesia	Java	1718	Hadriano Relando	allegorical	[depiction of enslaved people in the cartouche, allegorical]

II 96	Westfries Museum 02020	Indonesia	Batavia	c. 1627	Anonymous	infrastructure	Huysing van des Comp [slaven]
II 99	Atlas van Stolk, No. 1672	Indonesia	Batavia	1629	Gilles Venant	infrastructure	T Nieuwe quartier van slaven
II 122	NA 4.VEL 1232	Indonesia	Batavia (Castle)	c. 1698	anonymous	infrastructure	Sekret voor de slaven
II 123-a	Rijksmuseum, SK-A-1901	Indonesia	Batavia	1663	Andries Beeckman	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people on the market of Batavia]
II 123-b	KIT, 118-167	Indonesia	Batavia	c. 1656	Andries Beeckman (attributed)	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people on the market of Batavia]
II 126-b	Atlas van Stolk, TOP 1043	Indonesia	Batavia	1779	Johannes Rach	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
II 127-a	Rijksmuseum, RP-T-FM-74	Indonesia	Batavia	1775-1779	Hendrik Kobell jr	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
II 128-a	PNRI, BW 3	Indonesia	Batavia	1772-1775	Johannes Rach	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
II 129-a	Rijksmuseum, RP-T-FM-75	Indonesia	Batavia	1775-1779	Hendrik Kobell jr	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
II 172-a	Atlas van Stolk, TOP 1045	Indonesia	Batavia	1764	Johannes Rach	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
II 187-b	ANRI, H 82	Indonesia	Batavia (Onrust)	1803	Dominicus Michel Barbier	infrastructure	Logie der lijfeigene
II 192-a	NA 4.VMF 849.7	Indonesia	Edam Island	c. 1780	Anonymous	infrastructure	Gevangenis voor Slavinen; Banditen hujs
II 246	NA 4.VEL 1171	Indonesia	Karawang	1730	Anonymous	infrastructure	Slaven Quartier
II 262-b	PNRI, BWN 6	Indonesia	Batavia (Molenvliet)	ca. 1778	Johannes Rach	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
II 366	NA 4.VEL 1264	Indonesia	Semarang	1787	Anonymous	infrastructure	Gevangen hujs voor de gecommenneerde Slaven
II 383-b	NA 4.VEL 1276	Indonesia	Rembang	c. 1709	Anonymous	infrastructure	Woonhujs Gemaakt voor de inlanders
III 57-b	NA 4.VEL 1144	Indonesia	Silada	1737	C. Stiegehuis, F. Markscheider	infrastructure	Quartieren voor 's Comp: slaven
III 114-115	NA 4.VEL 1113	Indonesia	Malacca	1791	P. Elias (copy of C.F. Reimer)	infrastructure	S Komps slaven Vertrecken
III 136	NA 4.MIKO 164	Indonesia	Banjarmasin	1810-1830	Jan Theunis Busscher	infrastructure	Slaaven Vertrek
III 162-163	NA 4.VEL 1293	Indonesia	Macassar	1693	Anonymous	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people in the cartouche, allegorical]
III 189	NA 4.VEL 1304	Indonesia	Bantimurung	1735	F.J. Steinfeldt	infrastructure	Hujsen voor de Bergluiden

III 228-a/b	KIT, 3728-540A / KIT, 3728-541A	Indonesia	Kupang (Fort Concordia)	1756	Anonymous	depiction	depiction of enslaved people, working]
III 251	NA 4.VELH 555	Indonesia	Ternate (Castle Orange)	c. 1663	Anonymous	infrastructure	Slavenhuijs
IV 42-43	NA 4.MIKO W42	Sri Lanka	Ceylon (whole)	1751	Baltus Jacobsz van Lier	depiction	[cinnamom carriers and slaves (?) in cartouche, allegorical]
IV 60b	Centrale Bibliotheek Rotterdam, 86 L 8	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1688	Jan Christiaensz Toorzee	infrastructure	School van s' Comp:s lijffeijgenen; Slaven hospitaal; Slaven quartier
IV 63	NA 4.VEL 945B	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1693	Jan Christiaensz Toorzee	infrastructure	[in the description:] d' Sluijs QR, en het daar neven uitgaande poortie nae 't Slaven quartier AP
IV 64-65-a	NA 4.VEL 945	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1697	Jan Christiaensz Toorzee	infrastructure	Brug om na 't Slaven quartier te gaan; Slaven Quartier
IV 64-65-b	NA 4.VEL 946	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1697	Jan Christiaensz Toorzee	infrastructure	Bruggen na 't Slaven Quartier; Slaven Quartier
IV 66	NA 4.VEL 947A	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1697	Jan Christiaensz Toorzee	infrastructure	Poortie om na 't Slaven Eijland te gaan; Bruggetje om na 't Slaven Eijland te gaan
IV 69	NA 4.VEL 948	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1698	Jan Christiaensz Toorzee	infrastructure	Poortje om na 't Slaven Eijland te gaan; Bruggetje om na 't Slaven Eijland te gaan
IV 71-a	UBL, Bodel Nijenhuis 002-11-065	Sri Lanka	Colombo	c. 1721	Anonymous	infrastructure	Co[m]pagnies] Slaven Neg[erij]
IV 74	NA 4.MIKO W24	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1753	Baltus Jacobsz van Lier	infrastructure	[on map:] Slaven quartier
IV 75	NA 4.MIKO W25	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1756	Baltus Jacobsz van Lier	infrastructure	Het 's Comp:s Slaven quartier
IV 77	NA 4.VELH 335	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1760-1765	Christiaan Conrad Wohlfarth	infrastructure	s E: Comps. [Slaven] Quartier
IV 78-79	NA 4.VEL 953	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1762-1765	Carel David Wentzel	infrastructure	s E: Comps. Slaaven Quartier
IV 80	NA 4.VEL 954	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1785	Samuel Pieter Foenander	infrastructure	[on map:] Slaven quartier
IV 86	NA 4.VEL 962	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1787	Elias Paravicini di Capelli	infrastructure	[in the description:] De Afsnijdingen van een gedeelte van den Voorground aan den Oost en West Zijde so wel als van het Slaven Eijland...

IV 86-87	NA 4.VEL 964A	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1787	De La Lustrière	infrastructure	Quartier des esclaves de la Compagnie
IV 89	NA 4.VEL 968A	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1787	Carl Friedrich Reimer	infrastructure	[on map:] 't Slaven Eyland
IV 90	NA 4.VEL 966	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1787	Carl Friedrich Reimer	infrastructure	[on map:] 't Slaven Eyland
IV 99	NA 4.VEL 978	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1789	Carl Friedrich Reimer	infrastructure	[on map:] Het Slaven Eyland
IV 100-b	NA 4.VEL 980A	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1790	P. Elias (copy of G.E. Schenk)	infrastructure	[on map:] Het Slaven Eyland
IV 101	NA 4.VEL 975	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1790	G.E. Schenk (copy of C.F. Reimer)	infrastructure	[on map:] Het Slaven Eyland
IV 112-a	PNRI, BWN 32	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1775-1780	Johannes Rach	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
IV 112-b	Rijksmuseum, RP-T-1904-18	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1772	Carl Friedrich Reimer	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
IV 114-a	KIT, 48 M-7	Sri Lanka	Colombo (Hospital)	c. 1771	Anonymous	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
IV 119-a	Rijksmuseum, RP-T-00-3250	Sri Lanka	Colombo	c. 1755	Anonymous	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
IV 119-b	Rijksmuseum, RP-T-00-3247	Sri Lanka	Colombo	c. 1755	Anonymous	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
IV 120-b	Rijksmuseum, NG-1985-7-3-18	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1785	Jan Brandes	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
IV 120-b	[private collection]	Sri Lanka	Colombo	1785	Jan Brandes	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
IV 141-b	Rijksmuseum, NG-1985-7-2-100	Sri Lanka	Toppuwa	1785	Jan Brandes	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
IV 143-b	Rijksmuseum, NG-1985-7-2-86/87	Sri Lanka	Toppuwa	1785	Jan Brandes	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
IV 166-b	Rijksmuseum, RP-T-00-3248	Sri Lanka	Kalutara	c. 1755	Anonymous	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
IV 190-191	NA 4.VEL 1059	Sri Lanka	Galle	1787	De La Lustrière	infrastructure	Hôpital des esclaves e la compagnie qui sert de cazernes aux troupes Malaises
IV 200	NA 4.VEL 1071	Sri Lanka	Galle	1790	G.E. Schenk	infrastructure	Slaven hospitaal
IV 291-b	Rijksmuseum, RP-T-1902-A-4670	Sri Lanka	Jaffnapatnam	c. 1730	[Caspar Steiger]	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
IV 292-a	Rijksmuseum, RP-T-1902-A-4661	Sri Lanka	Jaffnapatnam	c. 1730	[Caspar Steiger]	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
IV 291-b	Rijksmuseum, RP-T-1902-A-4664	Sri Lanka	Jaffnapatnam	c. 1730	[Caspar Steiger]	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]

IV 294-a	NA 1.04.02 9714, fols. 1422-1423	Sri Lanka	Nallur	1690	Anonymous	infrastructure	Slave plaats van d[itt]o
IV 324-a	NA 4.MIKO W31	Sri Lanka	Trincomalee	1756	Baltus Jacobsz van Lier	infrastructure	Slaven hos[pitaal] en Smitswinkel
IV 334-a	NA 4.MIKO 29	Sri Lanka	Trincomalee	c. 1756	Baltus Jacobsz van Lier (attributed)	infrastructure	Slaaven hospitaal en Smitswinkel
IV 335	NA 4.MIKO 28	Sri Lanka	Trincomalee	1755-1760	Anonymous	infrastructure	Het slaven Hospitaal
V 75	NA 4.VEL 824	Africa	Cape Colony	c. 1660	Pieter Potter	infrastructure	Compagnies gemene volcx ende slave Combuijs ende bakerij
V 78	NA 4.VEL 826	Africa	Cape Colony	c. 1663	Zacharias Wagenaer	infrastructure	De keuken daerin dagelijks voor de stecken en des E. Comp:s slaven gekooct wort, mitsgaders 't brouw en Backhuijs al onder een schoorsteen te brengen
V 79	NA 4.VEL 825	Africa	Cape Colony	c. 1665	Hendricq Lacus	infrastructure	Comp:s gemene volcx en slaven Combuijs en Bakerij
V 95-b	PNRI, BWN 27-A	Africa	Cape Colony	1762-1780	Johannes Rach, apprentice or follower	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
V 100-101	UBL, Bodel Nijenhuis 006-25-031/38	Africa	Cape Colony	c. 1760	Carel David Wentzel (attributed)	infrastructure	['S E. Compagnies] Slaaven Logie
V 115-b	NA 4.TOPO 15.94	Africa	Cape Colony	2nd of April 1790	H.P. Wijting Schull	infrastructure	[on plan:] Slaven vertrek
V 132-a	NA 4.TOPO 15.83	Africa	Cape Colony	c. 1790	Anonymous	infrastructure	Slaavenwooning
V 137-a	Iziko William Fehr Collection, E 41	Africa	Cape Colony	c. 1800	I.N. Wildt	infrastructure	Plan of the Slave Lodje at the Cape of Good Hope
V 137-b	NA 4.TOPO 15.92	Africa	Cape Colony	c. 1788	Louis Michel Thibault	infrastructure	[on plan:] Logement des Eslaves
V 138-139	NA 4.VEL 838	Africa	Cape Colony	1767	C.F. Brink	infrastructure	['S E. Compagnies] Slaven Logie
V 143	NA 4.VEL 842	Africa	Cape Colony	1791	J.W. Wernich	infrastructure	Slave prison
V 144	NA 4.TOPO 15.84	Africa	Cape Colony	1785	Anonymous	infrastructure	[on map:] SE Comp. Slave logie
V 145	NA 4.TOPO 15.85	Africa	Cape Colony	1785-1790	Anonymous	infrastructure	[on map:] De Slaven Logie
V 152-a	Atlas van Stolk, TOP 1055	Africa	Cape Colony	1764	Johannes Rach	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
V 152-b	PNRI, BW 72	Africa	Cape Colony	1770-1780	Johannes Rach, apprentice or follower	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]



V 282-283-b	Private Collection	Africa	False Bay	1787	Jan Brandes	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
V 340-b	NA 4.TOPO 15.95	Africa	Plettenberg Bay	1789	Anonymous	infrastructure	[on plan:] Slaaf Vertrek
VI 108	NA 4.VEL 869	India	Surat	1698	Anonymous	infrastructure	T slaven secreet; 'T Slaven-huijs
VI 113-c	Book publication Begin ende Voortgangh	India	Surat	c. 1634	Anonymous	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
VI 165	NA 4.MIKO W37	India	Coasts of Malabar and Coromandel	1752-1757	Pieter de Bevere	allegorical	[depiction of enslaved people in the cartouche, allegorical]
VI 239	NA 4.VEL 619.48	India	Cochin	1690-1700	Anonymous	infrastructure	Slaven quartier boven de matroses logis
VI 361	NA 4.VEL 1090	India	Pulicat	1708	Jan Christiaensz Toorzee (attributed)	infrastructure	Slaven kamertje
VI 381	UBL, Bodel Nijenhuis 002-09-034	India	Bimilipatnam	1756	C.P. Keller	infrastructure	slave vertrekjes
VI 382-a	UBL, Bodel Nijenhuis 002-09-040	India	Bimilipatnam	1756	C.P. Keller	infrastructure	[on plan:] Slaaf kamer
VI 402	Rijksmuseum, SK-A-4282	India	Hooghly	1665	H. van Schuylenburgh	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
VI 404-b	Private Collection	India	Chinsura	c. 1817	Anonymous	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
VI 405	Rijksmuseum, SK-A-4283	India	Cossimbazar	c. 1665	H. van Schuylenburgh	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
VI 410	NA 4.VEL 1106	India	Patna	c. 1733	Anonymous	infrastructure	Plaats daar eenige slaave huysjes staan
VII 329-a	NA 1.04.02 7577, fols. 92-93	Indonesia	Batavia (Kuiper island)	1769	Johannes Rach	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
VII 332	Private Collection	Indonesia	Batavia	1779	Jan Brandes	depiction	[depiction of enslaved people, working]
VII 363	UBL, Bodel Nijenhuis 002-10-024	Indonesia	Fort Nassau (Sulawesi)	c. 1775	J.A. Mol	infrastructure	Slaven woningen

Table 1. Database slavery on manuscript VOC maps, plans and views