

Anthonij van Bengale's Estate

Anthonij van Bengale's estate is a central element in Christoffel Snijman's story and is discussed at some length by Mansell Upham in his essay, *Cape Mothers*. This is the reference source for this analysis – especially the verbatim transcripts of the relevant estate papers that are reproduced in Appendix 5 on page 151. I also have photographs of all the documents referenced.

The records show that Anthonij's worldly goods were all auctioned off on 17 December 1682. Payments from the estate were then itemised with the final balance of the estate being paid to Christoffel Snijman as 'universal heir'.

The payment receipts provide a lot of information on interactions with the family, the people doing the interacting and the dates of the interactions. The records, however, are incomplete because an inventory and the Final Distribution and Liquidation Account that would usually accompany an estate are not available, and there is no will. Other documents might, therefore, also be missing. Some of the documents are badly damaged.

There are a number of questions in relation to this estate. This analysis seeks to answer some of them and offers alternative explanations from some presented by Upham.

The people

A quick overview of the family will probably be helpful for readers who are not familiar with all the detail.

- Catharina van Paliacatta (Groote Catharina) was a convict and VOC company slave who was pardoned and freed in 1671.
- At the same time, she formally married Anthonij van Bengale, another freed slave.
- Also included in the family were Catharina's children (not by Anthonij), Petronella (baptised 1665) and Christoffel (baptised 1669)
- Petronella baptised a daughter, Petronella Jnr, on 13 December 1682. The witness and godmother at the baptism was Catharina Wagenmakers who was married to Andries Beijer/Bayer – the VOC wagon maker.
- The late Anthonij van Bengale's estate was sold in its entirety by public auction on 17 December 1682.

The documents

The documents that survive comprise the Vendu Roll from the auction of assets and a series of receipts for sums paid to various people. The lack of a formal inventory is explained, at least in part, by the Vendu Roll. This provides a detailed description of goods sold and the amounts received. It, therefore, provides the detailed itemisation and valuation of the estate which the inventory would have done.

The financial transactions detailed in the documents are as follows:

Date	Description	f	s	f
Receipts				
17/12/1682	Vendu Roll	2,608	9	12
Total Receipts		2,608	9	12
Payments				
3/2/1683	Catharina Wagenmakers: 1 month care of Petronella Jnr	12	0	0
16/3/1683	Catharina Wagenmakers: 1 month care of Petronella Jnr	12	0	0
20/3/1683	Jan Luis: Attending Petronella at Anthonij house	12	0	0

Date	Description	f	s	f
-/4/1683	Godfried Meijhuijsen: 'Funeral' costs	168*	12	8
10/4/1683	Roeloff de Man: Settlement of debt to Andries Houwer	480	0	0
20/4/1683	Lijsbeth van Angola: Care of Petronella at Anthonij house	9	0	0
1/5/1683	Roeloff de Man: Salary for MOOC secretary	130	0	0
6/5/1683	Jan Babtist: Debt to Andries Houwer	390	0	0
13/6/1683	Andries Beijer: 1 month care of Petronella Jnr	12	0	0
1/9/1683	Roeloff de Man: Payments for Christoffel education	96	0	0
28/9/1683	Catharina Wagenmakers: 2 month care of Petronella Jnr	24	0	0
20/10/1683	Jacob Budewik: Medical care of Petronella Jnr	10	18	0
2/1/1690	Christoffel: inheritance	300	0	0
16/7/1690	Christoffel: inheritance	300	0	0
3/8/1690	Ernst Walter: Payment in respect of Christoffel debt	78	0	0
10/11/1690	Christoffel: inheritance	63	0	0
31/3/1691	Christoffel: inheritance	30	0	0
8/4/1691	Christoffel: inheritance	303	19	4
Total payments		2,431	9	12
Balance		177	0	0

* Total recorded is incorrect. See section on 'The double funeral' below.

The receipts and payments do not quite balance, but the error is not large and is undoubtedly due to items whose records have not survived. The documents appear to be a close to complete record of the financial affairs of the estate.

The Vendu Roll is a long and very detailed list. Rather than reproducing it in full, the following is a list of the major items and a sampling of the others:

Vendu Roll items	f	s	f
Sale of goods and chattels	852	9	12
House and yard	920	0	0
Garden and 45 sheep	500	0	0
One slave	336	0	0
Total	2,608	9	12

The goods and chattels included the following:

- Work items:
 - 2 horses
 - 2 wagons
 - 4 barrels and some old barrels
 - Some copper wire
- Kitchen, dining, cleaning
 - Plates, dishes, saucers (porcelain and 'tin'), cups, bowls
 - Glasses
 - Knives, forks, spoons (some silver), tongs
 - Trivets and an ash scoop
 - Multiple pots and pans, cake pans, jugs, kettles (tin, iron and copper), gridles/grills
 - A meat block (ie as a butcher would use)
 - Tea pots

- Some salt meat
- Sewing, and related
 - Irons (for clothes) and brazier
 - Reels of thread, beads, rags (*lappen*), sheets
 - Buttons (some silver, four gold), buckles
 - 1 sewing cushion
 - 1 work cushion
 - A hatband
- Clothing
 - 2 shirts, dresses and one length of cloth
 - 1 satin suit of clothes
 - 2 pairs of gloves
 - 1 dress of silver cloth
 - 1 red armosyn/ormuzine suit (silk)
 - 1 red dress
 - 1 dress and chintz samaer/zamaer
 - 4 Cabaijs (1 linen, 2 chintz) – loose flowing tunics
 - 2 embroidered mules (shoes) and 2 veils
 - Pants and socks
 - 1 white undergarment/petticoat
 - 1 bodice/corset
 - Batch of old clothes
- Jewellery
 - Six rings
 - 2 gold earrings
- Household
 - 1 box with dolls
 - 6 pairs of paintings
 - 2 books
 - 1 black crib
 - 1 bed
 - 1 lantern
 - Parts of an old gun
 - Copper candelabra
 - An iron chain and lamp
 - Chests and boxes (various)
 - A bench
 - A tictac board

The Vendu Roll is in two parts. The so-called ‘rough draft’ is the actual roll that was used at the auction with each lot itemised with the buyer and price. This document is signed by Elbert Diemer and Philip Theodor Welcker as Commissioners of the Orphan Chamber, and also by Willem Adrian van der Stel to certify it as a true record of proceedings. All three confirm that they were present at the auction. The other document is simply a statement of account in which the items purchased, and their prices have been aggregated by buyer to facilitate payment and reconciliation. This approach is fairly common practice for auctions where items are sold by lot, but paid for by buyer.

There are some issues with the monetary values provided, both in the transcript, and in the original. There are three errors in the transcript:

- The amount spent by Elbert Diemer [Mon: Diemer] was f18:13:8 and not f105:4:8. The f105:4:8 is the sub-total for the page from the line below Diemer’s entry.

- The amount for Jan Dirckse de Beer was f44:18:8 and not f44:18:0. The 8 Penning is obscured in the binding, but can be ascertained from the individual items.
- Borghart [Boger] Brant spent f6:3:12 and not f7:6:4. The f7:6:4 was copied from the line above by mistake.

The total of the amounts bid was f866:14:12. This amount was recorded on the document as the total, but was crossed out and a total of f852:9:12 substituted. The difference is f14:5:0 suggesting a shortfall in payment for this amount somewhere. There was only one item purchased for this price at the auction and that was 1 *bractje schort* purchased by Juffrouw Breugel. It is possible that she chose not to take the item, and this was simply reflected in the total rather than being carried through sub-totalling over three pages.

As Upham indicates, the item for Jan Cornelissen Bombam is not carried across from the Vendu Roll to the Statement of Account for some reason. It wasn't overlooked as it is checked off on the Vendu Roll like all the other entries. The fact that the entry was not included in the Statement of Account, suggests that Bombam did not take the *oud kelders* and did not pay the 11½ Schillings bid.

Testamentary or intestate succession?

The testamentary status of Anthonij's estate is a bit confused because the available estate papers do not contain a will and Upham makes the following ambiguous statements in this regard:

Page 4: 'he [Anthonij] dies intestate at the Cape (c. December 1682)'

Page 7: 'Christoffel Snijman becoming sole universal heir to the testate deceased estate of his step-father'

Page 63: 'He [Anthonij] leaves no will'

Page 85: 'only Christoffel Snijman inherits testately as universal heir'

It is possible that the will has been lost, but the actions of the Orphan Chamber are not consistent with them having acted in response to a will. A will would have appointed an executor and would have specified how assets were to be disposed of to heirs. The Orphan Chamber's role would have been to confirm the validity of the will and to oversee the actions of the executor. Their role would have been similar to the role they played in formalising the arrangements by which Christoffel became the foster father for Ernst Walter's orphaned child (Upham page 119).

Instead, the Orphan Chamber took full control of the estate. All actions and transactions in respect of the estate were carried out by the Chamber or on its behalf. These actions of the Chamber are only consistent with them having acted on behalf of an intestate estate, but an intestate estate in a special position.

Anthonij and Catharina were legally married which would have meant in Community of Property. Under Community of Property all assets and liabilities (even those acquired before the marriage) are merged into a joint estate during the marriage, in which each spouse has an undivided half-share. At the time, this joint estate would have been under the control of the husband. The wife would have been legally incompetent.

In relation to the death of one of the partners, the most significant consequence of Community of Property is that half the estate automatically reverts to the control of the survivor – irrespective of whether there is a will or not – because it is theirs. If there is a will, it deals with the deceased partner's half of the estate. If there is no will, the rules of intestate succession apply to that half. In the simplest form, the surviving spouse would then share equally with the deceased partner's children in the deceased partner's half of the estate.

In our case, if Catharina had survived Anthonij, she would have received her half of the joint estate plus one-third of the other half for a total of two-thirds of the estate. Petronella and Christoffel would each have been entitled to one-sixth of the estate. Furthermore, because the children were underage, Catharina would have retained control of the entire estate, but would have been responsible for ensuring the children received their shares. The role of the Orphan Chamber would have been merely to ensure the transfer to Catharina and that the children ultimately received their shares.

The assets would have passed to Catharina's ownership and/or control. The family would have required the use of the assets both for a place to live and as a means of earning an income. The cash value of the assets would have been of no use to them. The estate would not have been liquidated.

For the Orphan Chamber to have taken full control of the estate and to have completely liquidated the assets, the estate must have been intestate, and Anthonij and Catharina must have both been dead. The Orphan Chamber would have been acting to protect the interests of the children who were not in a position to take control of the assets themselves.

The Vendu Roll for the sale of the assets reinforces the proposition that Catharina was dead. If alive, half the assets would have been hers and she would not have stood by and watched the auctioneer sell her possessions – and it is impossible to believe that the dresses, jewellery and sewing requisites were not her possessions. The Orphan Chamber would also not have had the right to sell them.

Anthonij and Catharina both died intestate prior to the date of the auction, 17 December 1682, and, because there is no separate liquidation of Catharina's estate, it seems possible, even probable, that she predeceased Anthonij.

I don't believe that there is any evidence that Christoffel Snijman inherited by testamentary succession.

Petronella

Upham comments on page 83 that Petronella died around March 1683. This view appears to be based on the payments from the estate to Lijsbeth van Angola on 20 April 1683 and to Jan Luis on 20 March 1683 and there being no further payments, as well as payments for 'funerals' signed off in April 1683 that are discussed below. The assumption appears to have been that the payments were in respect of support being provided to Petronella at about the same time as the payments were made. The receipts, however, suggest otherwise.

The payment to Lijsbeth is described on the receipt as follows:

de somma van negen gulden voor negen dagen oppassen bij de dochter ten huisen van Anthonie van Bengale
(the sum of nine guilders for nine days care of the daughter **at the house** of Anthonie va Bengale)

This is also the case for the payment to Jan Luis:

voor mijn waaken en oppassen [bij de dochter] ten huisen van Anthonie van Bengale Saliger.
(for me watching [over] and caring for the daughter **at the house** of Anthonie van Bengale **deceased**)

This second entry has the words *[bij de dochter]* added to the text in a different hand to the receipt above the words *ten_huisen_van_Anthonie* (which are written with the connectors between words). The wording is however the same as for Lijsbeth van Angola.

The total payments were f21 which, at f1 per day, indicates that 21 days of care were provided. Importantly, the receipts state that the care took place at Anthonij van Bengale's house. This house as well as all household goods and chattels were sold on 17 December 1682 so these three weeks of care must have taken place prior to that date. The dates on the receipts are not indicative of Petronella's date of death. They simply show when payments were made to the care givers.

Petronella's putative date of death, around March 1683, is, therefore, in question. Her daughter was baptised on 13 December 1682 and she is recorded as the mother which suggests that she was present. However, we have the example of Christoffel Snijman's youngest daughter, Elizabeth, who was baptised on 21 March 1706 with him shown as the father despite having died the previous year. There is nothing to say when precisely Petronella died, but it was likely earlier than March 1683 and even as early as December 1682, but after her step-father.

Petronella Jnr

The payments in respect of the care of Petronella Jnr are different in nature from those for the care of her mother. Payments for five months of care were made in instalments in February, March, June and September 1683 to Petronella Jnr's godmother, Catharina Wagenmakers, and Catharina's husband. This, together with the invoice for blacking for a coffin in September 1683, support the proposition that she died later in the year and probably towards the end of September.

The first payment, for one month's care, was made on 3 February 1683. With the usual delays for bureaucratic processing, this would suggest that the care was for January 1683, and may even have been for a period that began in December 1682. Whichever it is, the care would appear to have started soon after the baptism at the latest.

This raises further questions about mother Petronella's date of death by further suggesting that it was earlier, but does nothing, unfortunately, to resolve the matter.

Christoffel's inheritance

Following the deaths of Anthonij and Catharina, entitlement to their joint estate would have passed in equal shares to Petronella and Christoffel. On Petronella's death, her entitlement would have devolved to her daughter, Petronella Jnr. Petronella Jnr had no descendants so, on her death, her entitlement would have passed to ancestors along the bloodline. There were, however, no available candidates in her direct ancestral bloodline. Her mother was dead. Her mother's parents were dead. Her mother's grandparents were unknowable and untraceable. The entitlement therefore passed to her mother's closest blood relative, Christoffel.

Christoffel was therefore the sole beneficiary and heir – the 'universal heir'.

The double funeral

Upham at page 84 of Cape Mothers refers to the document signed by Godfriedt Meijhuijsen in April 1683 as itemising expenditures in relation to the funerals of Catharina and Petronella – which he also assumes took place at about that time. I don't believe that this is the correct interpretation of this document.

The document is not a receipt like the other items. It is an itemisation of sundry payments made by Meijhuijsen from Anthonij's estate, reconciled to a total and signed by him in April 1683, thereby certifying it as an official record. It is a statement of account. There are payments to at least three different people, but there are no dates for the payments and therefore no reason to believe that they took place in April 1683.

There is an error in the reconciliation. The total shown on the document is f159:12:8 whereas the true total of the individual amounts is f168:12:8. The error is on the original. It was Meijhuijsen's.

Some of the payments clearly relate to two funerals, but others do not, and some relate to events as early as December 1682. Two payments that do not relate to the funerals are the following:

<i>aen Mons:[ieu]r [Elbert] Diemer, over geleent strijck gelt</i>	<i>f6:0:0</i>
<i>aen Guilliam Eems [Heems], over geleent strijckt gelt</i>	<i>f18:0:0</i>

Upham indicates that the payments were for ironing (ie smoothing clothes), but this raises some obvious questions:

- The payments are in respect of *geleent strijck gelt* – ie ironing money lent to the Orphan Chamber. Why would someone lend money to the Orphan Chamber for ironing?
- The money was paid to two men. Men, even today, generally avoid ironing if they can and in 1683 avoided it altogether.
- f24 would have paid for a lot of ironing. What large amount of ironing would be needed at a funeral?

The payments were not for ironing or related to funerals. *Strijkgeld*, also called *plokgeld*, *steekgeld*, *trekgeld* or *verhooggelden* is an inducement offered at auctions to encourage bidders to bid. The highest bidder receives a rebate on their final bid, frequently paid at the point of sale. This rebate is the *strijck gelt*. These payments would have been for the auction on 17 December 1682. (See References)

It is unclear why the Orphan Chamber was indebted to Diemer and Heems for the *strijck gelt*. They were both at the auction and Diemers signed the Vendu Roll as a representative of the Orphan Chamber – *Ons prasent als gecommitteerdens*. It is, therefore, possible that it was they who advanced the *strijck gelt* to winning bidders at the auction and consequently needed to be recompensed.

The payments in respect of shoes (*een paer schoenen – f1:10:0*), the making of a bodice/corset (*voor stoffagie, en't maecken van een rijghlijf – f4*) and the making of children's/baby's clothes (*voor't maecken van't kinder goet – f7:10:0*) also do not appear to be in respect of a funeral. Why would a new pair of shoes have been required for a funeral? Why would a newly made bodice have been required for a burial? Why would children's clothes have needed to be made for a funeral at which no children were being buried – especially f7:10 worth? I suspect that this last payment was simply for clothes for Petronella Jnr for normal use – although there is no evidence for this.

Some payments clearly relate to funerals:

Tobacco for bearers <i>aen taback voor de draegers 1lb</i>	<i>f2:0:0</i>
Digging of two graves <i>voort maecken van 2 graeven</i>	<i>f6:0:0</i>
Celebrant for two funerals <i>voor den ansprecker van twee begraefnissen</i>	<i>f12:0:0</i>

The purchases of fabric (*chits – f12:0:0; mouris – f9:0:0*) and ribbon (*aen wit lint – f0:18:8*) could have been for funerals, as linings and decoration for coffins or shrouds for instance, and it is not clear why else the estate would have been buying them.

The purchase of firewood is consistent with a wake as are the remaining payments for food and drink – sugar, cheese, brandy, vinegar, oil, butter, beer, eggs, wine (two big barrels) and 1½ sheep. It seems very unlikely that the beer, wine and brandy would have been bought for normal everyday consumption by two underage children. A very nice party with a sheep braai and lots of grog!

The evidence indicates that Catharina died at about the same time as Anthonij rather than at about the same time as Petronella. This together with the apparent size of the wake leads me to the view that these funerals and the party would have been for Anthonij and Catharina rather than for Catharina and Petronella and that they took place around December 1682. The claims for payment would then have come in, along with others from this period and later, and were finally itemised, recorded, and signed off in April 1683.

Summary

In summary, I believe that the records for Anthonij van Bengale's estate show:

- Catharina and Anthonij both died prior to the auction on 17 December 1682 and, in fact, must have died some little while prior to that date to allow the Orphan Chamber time to take control and issue notices for the auction.
- A double funeral and large wake were held for the two of them around December 1682.
- Catharina's daughter, Petronella, died sometime from late 1682 to early 1683.
- Catharina's grand-daughter, also Petronella, died towards the end of 1683, probably around September.
- Anthonij and Catharina both died intestate as did Petronella.
- Christoffel inherited via intestate succession to be recognised by the Orphan Chamber as 'universal' heir.

References

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<https://books.google.com.au/books?id=10xY5zAsGfcC&pg=PA164&dq=strijkgeld&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewjSptXA5YjjAhUSSX0KHaMeDrcQ6AEIKjAA#v=onepage&q=strijkgeld&f=false>

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