

Hans Christoffel Snij...

There has been much discussion and some confusion on the Geni forum regarding the paternity of Christoffel Snyman, son of Groote Catrijn van Paliacatta. I believe that this confusion is due to there having been two men with very similar names at the Cape at the time, rather than one man whose name was mis-recorded or transformed into the other.

Background

Mansell Upham in his essay, *Cape Mothers* (Upham 2014) proposes that the father of Christoffel Snijman was the soldier Hans Christoffel Snijder from Heidelberg, Germany. Upham presents the following references to support his proposition:

- Court Case 3 October 1665
Defendant is named as *Hans Christoffel Snijman* (Upham 2014, Appendix 3).
- Court Case 4 December 1665
Second defendant is named as *Christoffel Snijman* (Upham 2014, Appendix 3).
- Court Case 30 July 1667:
Defendant is named as *Hans Christoffel Snijman*. In an Attestation (witness statement) he is named as Snijder, but this is corrected to Snijman, and he is later named as Znijman. (Upham 2014, Appendix 3)
- 1666 Muster Roll
Listed as *Hans Christoffel Snijder van Heijdelberg* (Upham 2014, 52).
Upham also indicates that there is an erroneous duplicate entry for him as *Hans Christoffel Snijman van Hartsb.* (Upham 2014, 52).
- 1667 Muster Roll
Listed as *Hans Christoffel Snijman* (Upham 2014, 52).
- 1668 Muster Roll
Listed as *Hans Christoffel Snijman* (Upham 2014, 52).
- 1666 Church membership register
Listed as *Hans Christoffel Snijder* (Upham 2014, 54).

I have photographs of all the documents referenced and can attest that these references are correct. The full references to the actual documents can be found in Upham 2014.

We therefore have five references to Hans Christoffel Snijman, one to Christoffel Snijman and two to Hans Christoffel Snijder. Upham proposes that all these references are to the same person. This is simple and reasonable in respect of Hans Christoffel Snijman and Christoffel Snijman because there was only one soldier called Snijman listed on the muster rolls. Upham's linkage between Snijder and Snijman is via the evolutionary linkages of the two names and the potential that Snijman was substituted for Snijder.

It is not clear, however, as to why Upham believed that it was the Snijman entry in the 1666 muster roll that was the erroneous, duplicate entry rather than the Snijder entry. Examining these entries is, therefore, a good place to start.

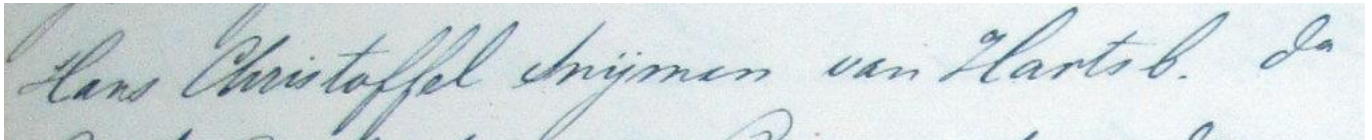
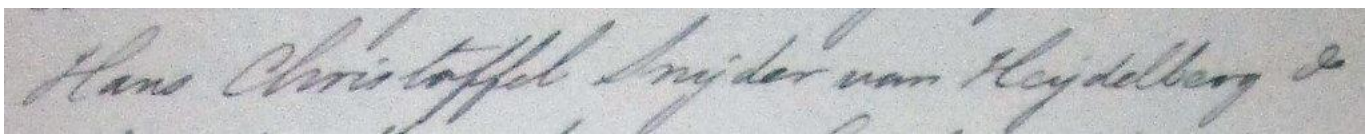
[ADDENDUM 16 JULY 2026: The First Fifty Years website has closed down and *Cape Mothers* is no longer available. Mansell Upham has, however, published a new article, *Groote Catrijn van Paliacatta (c. 1631-1683) & her slave Maria van Bengale*, on his own website. This article contains the same information regarding Hans Christoffel Snijman as the earlier article did. (Upham 2025)]

Monsterrolle

I have transcribed the rolls for 1666 and 1667 into a spreadsheet and analysed and compared them in detail.

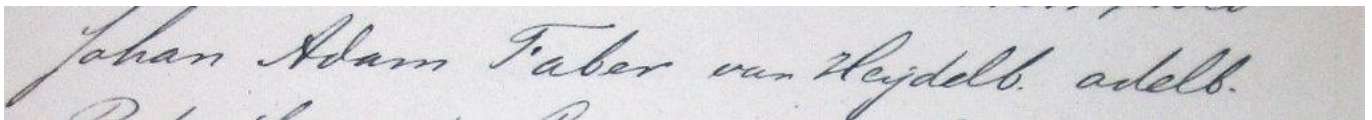
1666 Monsterrol

The 1666 roll contains 433 names. It starts with a main section headed by the Commandeur, Zacharias Wagenaer, and contains 260 names including *Hans Christoffel Snijman van Hartsb. do [ditto = soldaet]*. The main section is followed by five sections headed: Zeelandt (59 names); Delft (20 names); Rotterdam (12 names); Hoorn (21 names); and Enckhuijsen (61 names including *Hans Christoffel Snijder van Heijdelberg do [ditto = soldaet]*). The Snijman and Snijder entries in the rolls are as follows:

A close-up photograph of a handwritten entry in a cursive script. The text reads "Hans Christoffel Snijman van Hartsb. do". The ink is dark on a light-colored paper.A close-up photograph of a handwritten entry in a cursive script. The text reads "Hans Christoffel Snijder van Heijdelberg do". The ink is dark on a light-colored paper.

Zeelandt, Delft, Rotterdam, Hoorn and Enckhuijsen were the names of five of the six Chambers of the VOC. The lists of names were therefore for those employed by the individual chambers.

There has been a suggestion that Snijman's place of origin as *Hartsb.* was a mis-transcription of *Heidelb.*, the abbreviation for Heidelberg. I don't believe that this is sustainable because the roll does contain just such an abbreviation for Johan Adam Faber:

A close-up photograph of a handwritten entry in a cursive script. The text reads "Johan Adam Faber van Heijdelb. adalb.". The ink is dark on a light-colored paper.

The abbreviations are distinctly different in appearance and a skilled transcriber would not have confused them.

There are no duplicates in the list of names. Given the careful grouping of names according to Chamber, I do not believe that the entry for Snijman is an erroneous duplication of the entry for Snijder. We have different family names, different places of origin and different Chambers as employer. These two entries have a very low probability of being for the same person. Given names are notoriously unreliable for matching.

1667 Monsterrol

The 1667 roll is quite a lot longer than the 1666 roll with 517 names and only 187 carrying across from the 1666 roll. So quite a lot of turnover in personnel. Amongst the carry-overs is *Hans Christoffel Snijman do [ditto = soldaet]*. No place of origin is given.

Comparing the entries in the 1666 and 1667 rolls is interesting. In the tables below, I have selected the list of names from above and below the entry for Hans Christoffel Snijman for each year. They are in order as recorded in the respective rolls. I have greyed out the names in the 1666 roll that are not repeated in the 1667 roll. Excluding these three names, the comparison shows that the same twenty people are recorded in the same order for both years with Hans Christoffel Snijman at the centre. There is a very high probability that they are the same person.

This, I believe, makes it clear that the record for Snijman in 1666 was not an erroneous duplication. It was, in fact, the record of a real person along with his fellow soldiers just as it was in 1667. Snijder and Snijman were two different men, with different family names, from different places, employed by different Chambers who just happened to have had the same given names – both of which were, and are, quite common German names.

Table 1. 1666 Monsterrol

Given	Second	Family	Toponym	Occupation
Perul		Tiets	van Hamburg	adelb
Jacques		Pieters	van Antwerpen	adelb
Hendrick		Courts	van Deventer	tamboer
Hendrick		Boos	van Connicxwinter	soldt
Jurgen		Vrijdag	van Worms	soldt
Velte ?	Steffens	Cuijper	van Lutsenb.	soldt
Jan		Vriese	van Caspel Speck	soldt
Ernst		Vriese	van Caspel Speck	soldt
Barent		Hendrick	van Swal	soldt
Dammianns		Formantijn	van Roermonde	soldt
Gerrit		Jans	van Oldenseel	soldt
Hans	Christoffel	Snijman	van Hartsb.	soldt
Carel		Robberts	van Leeuwarden	soldt
Jurgen		Mulder	van Coppenhagen	soldt
Marten		Nainhart	van Machalt	soldt
Lourens		Juffroij	van Brussel	soldt
Bartel		Barents	van Ulde	soldt
Jan		Arents	van Leyden	soldt
Pieter		Heggeltges	van Lin	soldt
Hans	Christiaens	Reijnhart	van Branb.	soldt
Christoffel		Mulder	van Minden	soldt
Frans		Douw	van Tonningen	soldt
Jurgen		Gulson	van Lubecq	onder cuijper

Table 2. 1667 Monsterrol

Given	Second	Family	Toponym	Occupation
Paulus		Tiets	van Hamburg	landbouwer
Jacques		Pieters	van Antwerpen	adelbst
Hendrick		Courts	van Deventer	tamboer
Hendrick		Boofs	van Connicxwinter	soldt
Jurgen		Vrijdag	van Worms	soldt
Jan		Vriese	van Caspelspieck	soldt
Ernst		Vriese	van Caspelspieck	soldt
Barent		Hendricks	van Swal	soldt
Gerrit		Jans	van Oldenseel	soldt
Hans	Christoffel	Snijman		soldt
Carel		Robberts	van Leeuwarden	soldt
Jurgen		Mulder	van Copenhaven	soldt bandijt
Marten		Nainhart	van Nachat	soldt
Laurens		Jaffroy	van Brussel	soldt
Barten		Barents	van Ulden	soldt
Jan		Arents	van Leyden	soldt
Pieter		Heggeltes	van Lin	soldt
Christoffel		Mulder	van Muden	soldt
Francois		Douw	van Tonningen	soldt
Juriaen		Gulson	van Lubeck	ondr cuijper

Other references

I am not going to comment on the other references for Snijman as they are self-explanatory.

The corrected reference to Snijder in the Attestation for the 30 July 1667 court case is, I believe, what it looks like – an error corrected. All other references in the court documents are to Snijman/Znijman.

The reference to Hans Christoffel Snijder as a *lidmaat* of the church would appear to be in respect of the soldier from Heidelberg. This listing would have been undertaken by the *dominee* rather than a company official and, I believe, he would have been careful with the naming.

Hartsb.

Hans Christoffel Snijman's place of origin is shown as *Hartsb.* Using the usual convention demonstrated in the rolls, this would have been Hartsburg, or, with a German spelling, Harzburg. This is the district on the border between Lower Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt that includes the Harz mountains and the town of Bad Harzburg.

Opinion

I believe that there has been confusion regarding the paternity of Groote Catrijn's son, Christoffel Snijman, because there were two soldiers at the Cape at the time with very similar names. Hans Christoffel Snijder (probably Hans Christoph Schneider) is a distraction to the story.

Christoffel Snijman's father was Hans Christoffel Snijman, a trouble-making soldier from Hartsburg in Germany.

References

Upham, Mansell. 2014. *Cape Mothers*. First Fifty years. (No longer available)

_____. 2025. *Groote Catrijn van Paliacatta (c. 1631-1683) & her slave Maria van Bengale*.

<https://mansellupham.wordpress.com/2025/07/25/groote-catrijn-van-paliacatta-c-1631-1683-her-slave-maria-van-bengale/>

Hartsburg/Harzburg - Map:

<https://www.google.com.au/maps/place/Bad+Harzburg,+Germany/@51.9466785,10.3181075,10z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x47a514ce6a1f388d:0x425ac6d94ac3f60!8m2!3d51.8866888!4d10.5522144>



Alun Stevens
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