

# Household inventories at the Cape: Rich resources for local histories

Antonia Malan  
TEPC Transcription Project

SAMA 'Museums in Making'  
3 February 2006



## TEPC

### Transcription of Estate Papers at the Cape of Good Hope

What is the TEPC project?

Who we are and where we are working?

What we do and for whom

What we have produced and where to find it

How people are using the material

TEPC contacts

# The TEPC Project

## Transcription of Estate Papers at the Cape of Good Hope

- To digitally transcribe inventories and catalogue associated papers of deceased estates between 1693 and 1835 from the records of the Orphan Chamber
- To make this information available on the internet and locally
- To develop technical expertise and guidelines

## Workshops

- To liaise between academic and other researchers
- To promote the project and identify user groups
- To develop guidelines to using and developing the material
- To promote further research and funding proposals

## International Conference 2006

- To bring together scholars of 'social life under the VOC' from Europe, Asia and Africa
- To promote the exchange of information and ideas
- To initiate collaborative research, publication and teaching projects

# Progress so far

## Since October 2004 our team of skilled transcribers and specialist computer consultants have:

- transcribed and copy-edited more than 45 archival volumes of inventories and auction lists from deceased estates at the Cape
- developed protocols, templates and guidelines for the technical process
- sent the database to the National Archives in the Netherlands who will provide public access through the Internet
- collected relevant reference materials for transcribers and researchers
- drafted a glossary (in English, Dutch and Afrikaans) of hundreds of words commonly used in the 18th century Cape, and
- produced a CD with the documents transcribed to date, together with indexes and associated information

## During 2005 our workshop team:

- set up a network of interested researchers and user-developers
- organized three public workshops – a general introduction, a focus-group for materials for educators, and a general report-back (today)
- hosted an 'introduction to XML'
- updated and reprinted 'Slaves at the Cape: a guidebook for beginner researchers'
- researched and wrote Household Inventories at the Cape: a guidebook for beginner researchers'

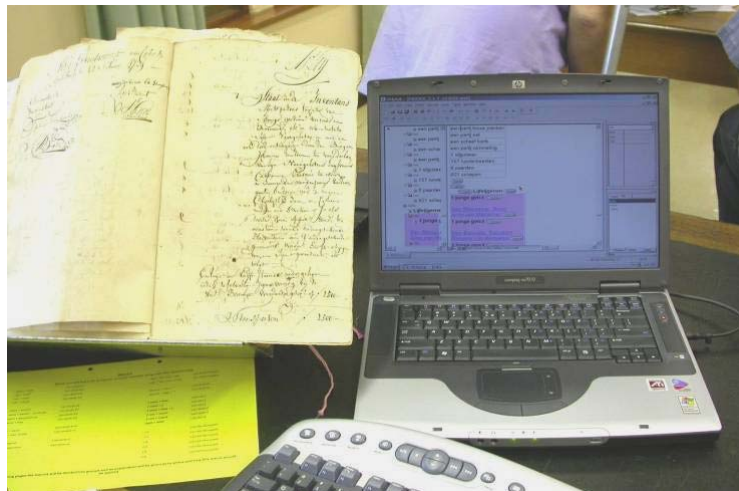
# The TEPC Transcription Team

Kobus Faasen – Erika van As – Annemarie Krzesinski  
Fiona Clayton – Helena Liebenberg – Illlona Meyer  
Maureen Rall



## Transcription Process

Precise replica of original document:  
the 'authentic' digitised version is archived and made  
available on Internet, and versions are made available for  
public use



# The Documents

Inventories & Auction rolls [MOOC8 & MOOC10]

## The Orphan Chamber at the Cape, 1673-1834

Acted on behalf of widows and orphans of free people\* where:

- someone died intestate (no will)
- heirs still minor children (under 25 years old)
- heirs unknown or overseas
- OC not precluded from acting as executors

\*Free people are 'free burghers' (freed from Company service) and 'free blacks' (freed slaves, convicts, exiles).



# Structure of a simple inventory

Reference: MOOC8/21.044 Date: 29 Augustus 1796

### Family, heirs and executors names:

Inventaris ... Margaretha Smit ... den burger Nicolaas Sertyn .... ab intestato ... van vaderszyde; Margaretha Smith huisvrouw van den burger Jan Mosterd; van Moeders zyde: de kinderen van wylen Klaas Muller; Jan Muller, Jacobus Muller .....

### Location:

Een plaats ofte hofsteede gent. de Poespaskraal gelegen agter de Steenbergens onder het Kaaps District.

### Contents of house, outbuildings & yard:

#### In 't woonhuis en aldaar in 't voorhuis

- 1 kleyn vierkant tafel
- 1 oude opslag etens tafel
- 6 oude stoelen

#### In de voorkamer ter regterhand

- 2 oude ledige kisten
- 10 ledige koorn zakken
- 1 hand zaag
- 1 oude kapstok

#### In de voorkamer ter linkerhand

- 1 wit ophaal gordyn
- 1 spiegelte met vergulde lysten
- 1 lessenaar
- 1 oude klederkast
- 1 ledikant met wit behangsel waarop 1 ben met zyn toebehooren
- 1 tafel met steene blad
- 7 oude stoelen
- 1 schiet geweer

#### In de agterkamer

- 3 oude rakken
- 1 broodmes
- 1 kelder met 5 ledige vlessen
- 1 oude vat
- 1 koper kandelaar
- 1 tinne kandelaar

- 2 koper coffy kannen
- 1 koper confoor met 1 tinne ketel
- 1 tinne schenkblad
- 1 tinne trekpot
- In de keuken**
- 1 combuis tafel
- 1 water halfaum
- 2 emmers
- 2 yster potten
- 3 schoorsteenkettings
- 1 kookketel
- 12 borden in zoort
- Op de werf**
- 2 oude wagens
- 1 oude ploeg en voorts wat pikken, graven en rommeling

### Livestock: Beestiaal

- 30 trek ossen
- 1 ryd paard
- 5 merrys

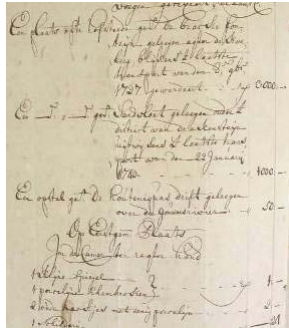
### Slaves: Lyfeigenen

- 1 slave jonge gent. January van Mosambicque, beeswagter
  - 1 slave jonge gent. January van Mosambicque, werksjonge
  - 1 slave jonge gent. July van Bengalen
  - 1 slave meyd gent. Dina van de Caab
  - 1 slave jongetje gent. Abraham van de Caab
  - 1 slave jongetje gent. Fredrik van de Caab
  - 1 slave meysie gent. Jeannet van de Caab
  - 1 slave meysie gent. Hannelte van de Caab
  - 1 luigent slaven meysie gent. Saartje van de Caab
- [the last five being children of Dina van de Caab]

### Debts & Credits

**Inneschulden:** Rixdollars 320  
**Lasten des Boedels** Rd 3666.32

### Signatories:



### 'Tagging' and 'standardisation' for quick searching

- Reference
- Date
- Location
  - District, block, street
  - Farm / house name
- Names
  - People (free and unfree)
  - Places
  - Ships
  - Etc.



### 'Tables' for systematic manipulation of information

- Lists of slaves
- Lists of heirs
- Lists of contents of boxes, cupboards
- Lists of stores
- Lists of products
- Lists of debtors and creditors
- Columns of money value

## Inventories ...

- They are rare records of local significance
- They precisely record date, person and place
- They can be linked to many other sources
  - Wills, liquidation and distribution accounts, etc.
  - Cadastral information – property ownership, maps and surveys, land use
  - Genealogies, family histories and oral traditions
  - Court cases and administrative reports
  - Slave records
  - Archaeological records
  - Church and mosque records
  - Pictures, plans, surviving objects
  - Etc.

## Who is using these documents?

- family & community researchers
- school & museum educators
- archivists & genealogists
- historical archaeologists
- researchers of slavery
- architectural historians
- economic historians
- and more ....

## Tracking people and places through time



Extract from a long list of the possessions and slaves of Anna de Koning, daughter of freed slave Angela of Bengal and owner of Groot Constantia

This house in Cape Town was recorded in three inventories – in 1768, 1784 and 1807

**MOOC8/13.5, 1768.**

Huis en Erf Tafel Valley in blok L, No.10: T 9.11.1759.

**Johanna Sophia GRYLING** (died 2.10.1768). First marriage to Jan Albregt HERHOLD, then to Burger Pieter FAY. Children: (1) Jan Daniel Herhold, 18 years old (2) Hendrik Christiaan Herhold 14. (3) Geertruyda Herhold 12 (4) Albertus Herhold 10 (5) Coenraad Fredrik Herhold 9 (6) Maria Elisabeth Herhold 6 (7) Joel Herhold 4 and (8) Leopoldus Coenraad Fay aged 2 (died 18.10.1768).

**MOOC8/18.81, 1784.**

Huis en Erf Tafel Valley (occupied by Adam Sies), in 't blok L, No.10: 5000 Caab Guldens.

**Johan Lodewyk FESCH** (burger)

(died 14 February). Heirs: (1) Dogter van Broeder Johannes Fesch, Appolonia Fesch; (2-6) Kinderen van Zuster Appolonia Fesch & burger Paul Sies; Adam Sies op de Comp's paardenstal, Anna Margaretha Sies geh. Jacob Schonkel, Anna Maria Sies get. Burger Lange te Weinsheim, Johannes Sies, & Ludwig Sies beide tot Weidersheim geboortig.

**MOOC8/26.21, 1807.**

Een Huys en Erf staande ende geleegeen in deeze Tavelvalley in 't blok L, en aldaar No.10.

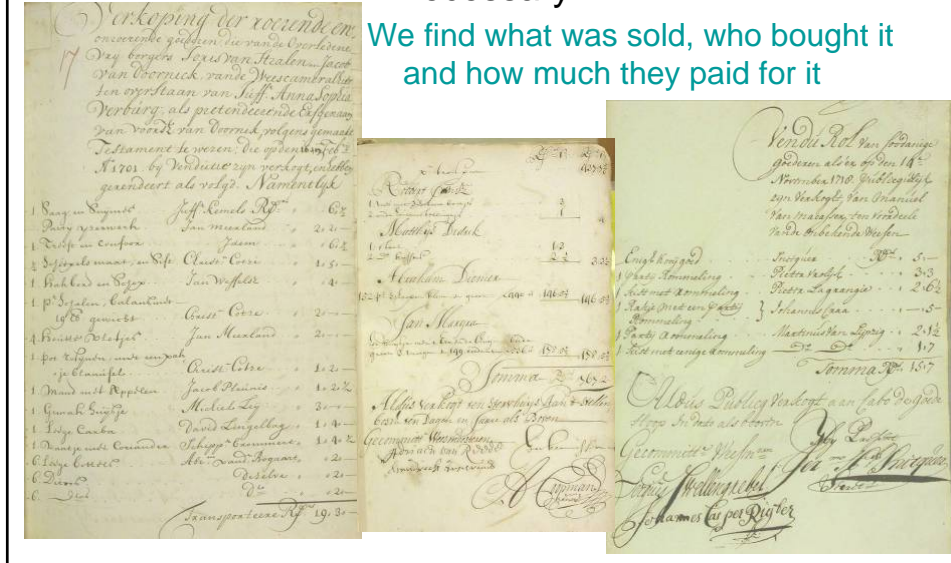
**Johan Adam SIES** Inventaris .. Donderdag 22 January 1807 Vijf Uren. Onbekende Uitlandige Erfgenaamen.



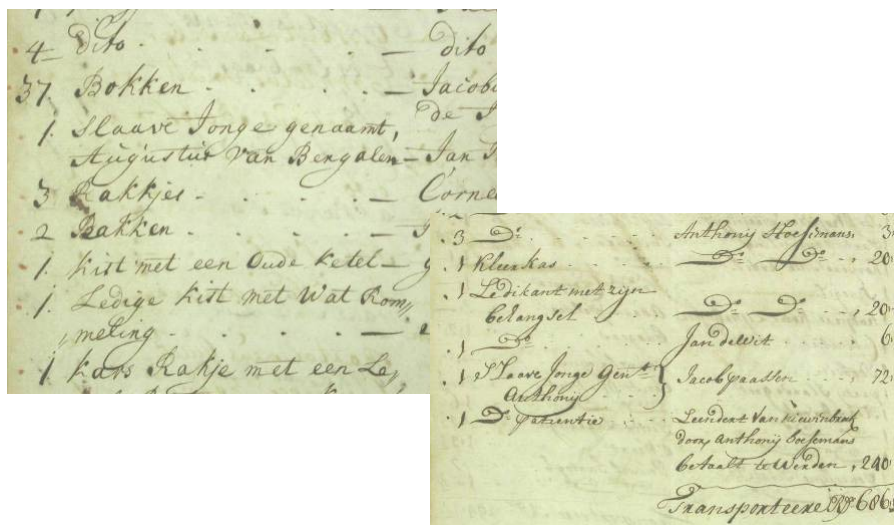
## Vendurollen / auction rolls

sometimes public auction of an estate was necessary

We find what was sold, who bought it and how much they paid for it

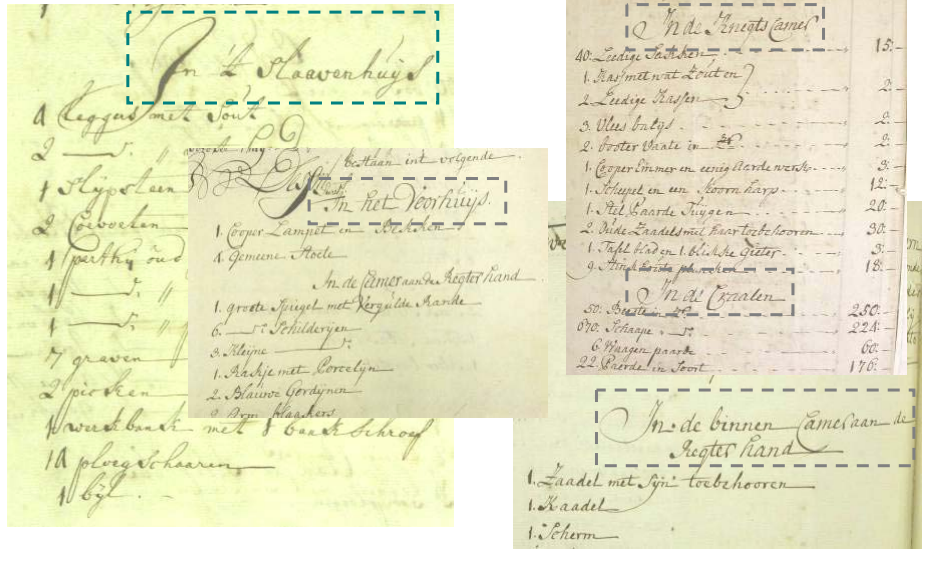


## Public auctions: everything goes - goats, slaves, furnishings, clothes

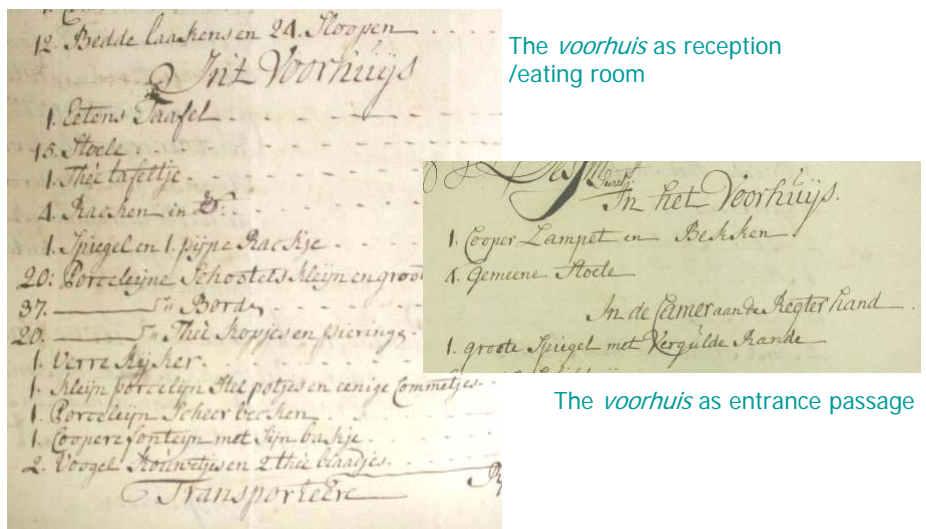




Inventories are often listed building-by-building, room-by-room



The function of rooms is shown by their contents



The voorhuis as reception /eating room

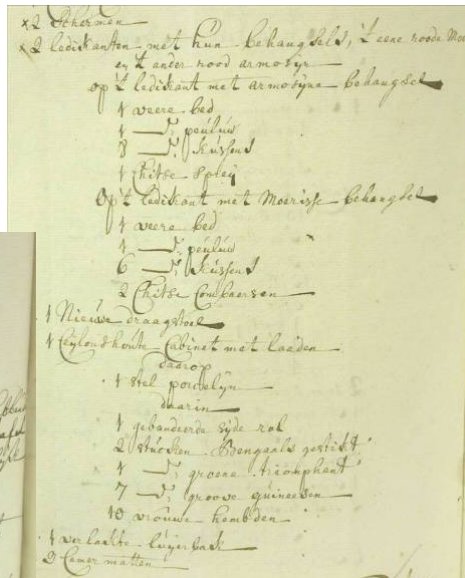
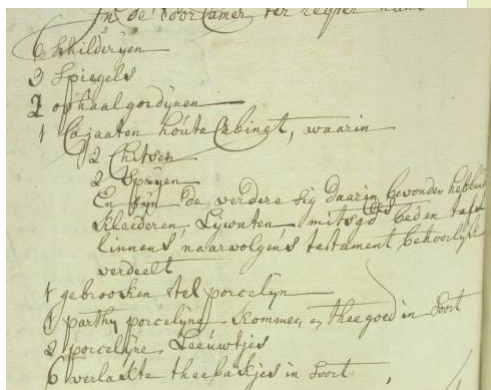
The voorhuis as entrance passage

Rich people's inventories list slaves separately – there are so many



Ex-slaves, ex-convicts and slave descendants owned slaves too

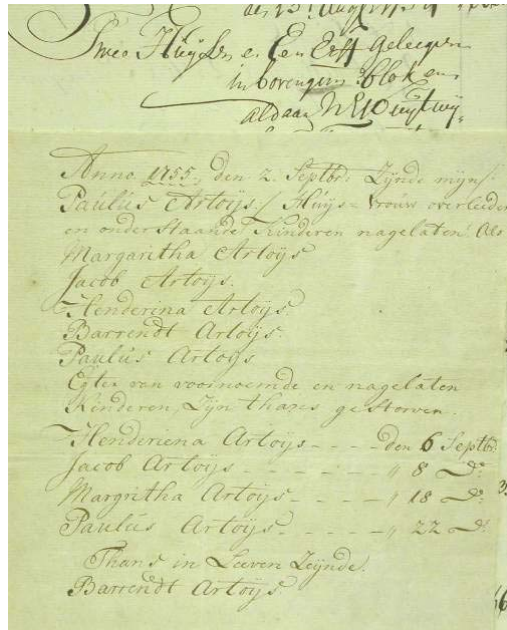
Inventories list contents of cabinets and cupboards, and the bedding on curtained bedsteads



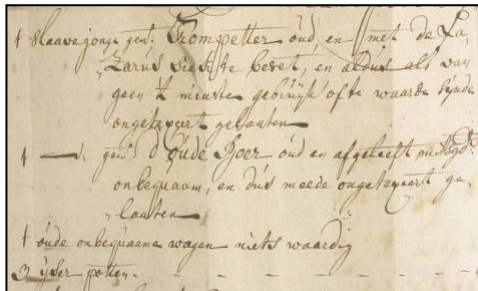


Causes of death ...  
smallpox,  
childbirth,  
old age ...

The Artoijs family lost four  
of five children in the  
smallpox epidemic of 1755



Slaves endured similar fates to their owners, as  
well as other burdens



... met de  
Lazarus siekte ...  
oud en afgeleeft  
...  
in de ketting aan  
de batterij ...



Slaves sometimes received gifts and gained freedom at their owner's death ... but more often they were bequeathed to heirs or sold off

Nota nog word in den boedel gevonden twee goude kraakblijen en een Silber haarnaald die door de slavinn Rebecca, nuft vorius stift & heftgemaakt is, ge-  
 segt word verpand te sij door Broeritta Klapin van der Combael Van Elden voor drie nydel?

**Lijfgeenen**  
 1 Slavinn gert. Rebecca Van Bengalen met  
 haer twee kinderen gert. Jan, & Apollonia  
 Van de Caak.  
 Nota Deere Meeten volgend a testament  
 van der overledene in vrijdom gabelt  
 worden.  
 1 Slaave jonge gert. Anthony Van Eufken. Deets,  
 is en voorn. Rebecca & haer kinderen  
 vermaakt.

Verkoop Medezakebar -  
 Doringe, Bengalen ofte over alle by 1/2  
 met van der overledene van een staet en  
 eijnde deese slaavjonge by acoengen  
 en de wijgegevene slavinn Maria Van Nalle  
 een gelykerte -  
 Taperlaas van de Gert Comand -  
 Vanath - Lima

1 Slaant met zijn betangsel	Jan de Wit	20-
1 Slaant	Jan de Wit	6-
1 Slaant jonge gert Arthimij	Verkoopster	72-
1 Slaant	Landme van de overledene van Anthony van Eufken	betraht te winnen, 240-

## Personal histories

### Angela of Bengal

**Vendit Rol** van alle  
 Soedanijse goederen als ex. Gij  
 Publieke Venditie op den 21  
 Novemb- 1719-ten Lijpe van  
 Ausla van Bengalen 2 jre  
 Verkoft, waan gelatten En niet  
 en doer onthuynt door die die  
 Bafon, kamentijpe 39/1  
 et 3 Provisande Westhuysen  
 De Die 317 1/2

17 1/2 **Vendit Rol** van een  
 mede geaant Schonekla Van  
 de Claas met haer kind, voor  
 de Bafon 0100 1/2 en a am van  
 Michiel Bafon Nematijpe  
 171-  
 Tomas Vixje  
 Verkogt op de Venditie van 21 Junij 1720  
 Gecomiteerde Nieuwmueteren  
 at 1/2 1/2 1/2  
 171-  
 171-  
 171-

1698  
 dit is de land + bekening  
 van ausdlaan van Bengale  
 171-

## More curiosities for connoisseurs

1 Babelsche borch met zijn Schyven  
 1 groote bybel met zijn Knaep  
 1 Flavius Josephus  
 2 Vophaal gordynen

1 flavius josephus ... ??



Watermarks

Watermark text: ... BUREAU ...

Vendij Rol van alle voorrijg  
 goecken, als 'er zijn naangelatzen  
 en met 'er dood ontlauffent  
 by Wijlen Dionisius van aarfen  
 t'n Voordele van

22 glaz bottels  
 1 Keldex met 12 L. Leffen  
 26 Kellen en 6 bier glazen  
 45 Wijn roegkers

Dionisius lived up to his name ... the god of wine

## Documentary sources for local histories: The Drakenstein

Twee plaatsen ofte Hofsteden genaamt Aarnhem  
 hem en ... beyle gelegen onder  
 het District van Drakenstein onder  
 de Bergh van't Hoode Sacht  
 mens & Latote transport nu aldaer  
 21. Novemb. 1728. Daarvan verliest

Farms in the Drakenstein  
 District: Aarnhem, Bloemendaal  
 ...

Jon gstaert syn op de wolgende  
 woffle aante  
 Twee plaatsen ofte Hofsteden genaamt Overveen  
 en Bloemendaal byaan Draken  
 hem gelegen - - - - - 1500: -  
 Twee opstallen genaemt Claas Voogds rivius, en Den  
 Wijnvlucht gelegen aan en af de  
 Hoekelmant Roof - - - - - 100: -  
 Transportheere ry 1600: -

1. Slave jonge gent Marcus van Limboen  
 2. Barend Meuwischerken weegus en een  
 hem verhoete Caarde Waagen - - - - - 60:  
 11 Jan Commering weegus gekaerde Wijn - - - - - 4:  
 11 Dicks Coetke weegus een Wagt heit - - - - - 10:  
 11 Rijbovoet aan Contant - - - - - 40:  
 11 Jan Surrian Schreuder negens Wijn - - - - - 52:  
 Legger Wijn - - - - -

## People in the Drakenstein District

Inventari van alle vordanige  
geboorten als ab inteste hyn naarslaas,  
ten en met is lood ontuynd door  
Claudina Lombaart huysvrou  
van den Landbouwer Gerrit van  
Hoeting, ten voordede van haar  
naagelaatene man Gerrit van  
Hoeting ter ewe of haare naars-  
gelaatene kinderen met naame  
Jan en David. Al. Bi  
by wijlen haar eerste ma-  
rie Bougen in hurelij-  
keit, metagt: Claudina  
Maria oud of Magdale-  
en Johanna Margaretha  
Hoeting euid 12 Jaaren  
bovengen man Gerrit van  
in est vervecht ter ande  
voo kende in diervegen a  
vroegedde Gerrit van  
practice van voorn. Va  
me blygen hyn aange-  
gaders by de vordergette G.  
Waalme = bevonden hyn  
int volgende namentl:

Claudina Lombaart huysvrou van  
den Landbouwer Gerrit van Hoeting  
... en haar naargelaatene kinderen  
... 1 slaave jonge genaamt  
Trompetter ... 1 slaave jonge  
genaamt d'oude Boer ...

Transport  
1 slaave jonge geut Trompetter oud en met de Ja-  
Larius viedste beest, en aldus all way  
geer 1 minckes gebruyk of te waarde hyn  
ongelapert gelaaten  
1 geut d'oude Joer oud en afgeleeth met ge-  
onbequaam, en d'oud maede ongelapert ga-  
Laaben

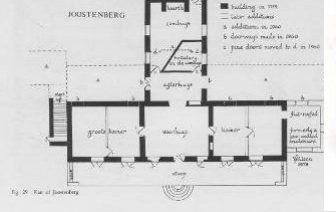
Maps,  
pictures,  
photographs,  
diaries,  
surveys ...

## Linking with other sources



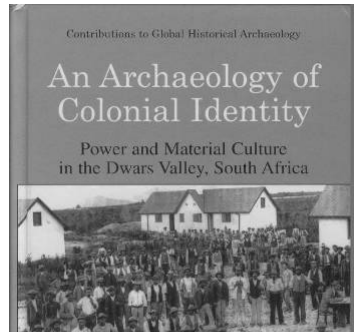
In the more usual glass house, the kitchen of the  
outer three-walled dwelling, was covered into a  
bedroom or, if a new L-plan house was built, a  
bedroom occupied with a passage, then along a final  
rectangular block consisting of a central window with  
a bedroom on each side. The kitchen was done and  
behind the window to have the central wing of the  
and the fourth wing, with its chimney stack, occupied  
the entirety of the central wing (Fig. 20, 21). The  
kitchen was raised high from the window and elevated  
from the outside. By using the kitchen in the end of  
the central wing, the corners were largely removed from  
the living quarters and the danger of the slipping the  
household possessions was considerably reduced.

In many of the L-plan houses a part of the kitchen-  
wing was occupied by a laundry (square or hexagon).  
Great Bunkers (now Auklands), in the Tzitziberg,  
in 1788 had a wooden room on the right-hand corner  
on the kitchen, a laundry and a kitchen. Jonkerberg  
apartment in 1788 had a laundry and a kitchen in square on  
the kitchen, evidence of which is still visible (Fig. 20).



A Boer and his wife. By Lady Anne Bannard. This  
is a most interesting sketch. It shows the Boer in his  
short blue jacket and trousers and a hat befringed,  
steeple crowned round hat. His wife is even more  
interesting for she wears a head and her simple dress  
and kerchief are very like those worn by trekker  
women nearly forty years later. The pocket over-  
pinned from a tape in the waistband of her apron is a  
charming feature, peculiar at the Cape.

## Memories, academic research, objects, traditions ...



## Products ...

- Searchable database and indexes on Internet and CD
- Teaching and lecturing material
  - Articles and books
  - Tour guide books
- Museum interpretations
  - Genealogies
- Personal, family and community histories
- Maps of where people lived
  - Dictionary / glossary
  - And more .....

MOOC8/1.12  
 [Hillebrants, Trijntjen 16950310]  
 Trijntjen Hillebrants 10 Meert 1695

Inventaris en staat der roerende en onroerende goederen nagelaten bij de overledene vrijburgeresse **Trijntjen Hillebrants** ten behoeven van haar egte man **Willem van Wijk** ter eener, en twee minderjarige kinderen ter anderen sijde, soo als de selve bij opgamelde Willem van Wijk is opgesteld en aan de E:E:Weesmeesteren heeft overgelevert, bestaande in meenigte en waarde als volgd, namentlijk

<i>f</i>	
600	1 plaats gelegen op Drakensteijn genaamt Soedewijk groot 60 morgen
1200	40 p:s beesten groot en klein a <i>f</i> 30 et p:s
120	60 p:s schaapen groot en klein a <i>f</i> 2 et p:s
1200	4 p:s slaven (unnamed) a <i>f</i> 300 et p:s
340	40 mudd: tarve a <i>f</i> 8:10 et mudd
180	2 p:s paarden, met een veulen, tesamen
140	1 wagen
1	ploegh
1	eegde
50	weijnigh huijsmeublen
100	de boedel moet hebben van Arij van Wijk
3930	

## Index of Names

MOOC8/9.13b	17550815	Bek, Catharina Martha
MOOC8/8.12b	17550628	Bek, Henricus
MOOC8/6.74	17440614	Bengalen, Carel Jansz van
MOOC8/10.53	17620416	Bentfeld, Hans Jochem
MOOC8/9.41	17550901	Bergh, Aletta van den
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MOOC8/6.116	17470826	Bierman, Frederik
MOOC8/8.36	17551110	Biesel, Johannes
MOOC8/6.121	17461202	Billion, Bernardus van

## List of Terms

Language	Term	Explanation
NL	aker	emmer, metal
EN	bucket, pail	
NL	alcatief, alcativ	tapijt uit wol of zijde geweven, meest met patronen van goud- of zilverdraad; afgeleid van de stad Al Qatif aan de Persische Golf
EN		carpet woven from wool or silk, usually with patterns in gold or silver thread; word derived from the city of Al Qatif in the Persian Gulf
NL	aldus	
EN	thus	
NL	amandel	
EN	almond	
NL	ambonhout, amboyna	zeer hard, rood of goudgeel palmhout uit Ambon
EN	amboyna (wood)	the reddish brown wood of the Pterospermum indicum, found in Ambon, often used as veneer
NL	ampliatie	toevoeging, aanvulling, uitweiding
EN	ampliation	amplification, enlargement
NL	anker	in de wijn- en vishandel gebruikelijk inhoudsmaat: het vierde van een aam, 38,8 liter
EN	anchor	measure containing about 33 quarts
NL	apotheek	
EN	apothecary's shop	
NL	apotheker	
EN	apothecary	
NL	arm blaker	kaaarsenhouder; blaker
EN	candlestick, sconce	
NL	arm, armpje	
EN	bracket	
NL	armozijn	dunne zijde of satijnachtige stof, veel als voering gebruikt. Naar de stad Ormuzd genoemd
EN	sarsenet, sarcenet	a very fine and soft silk material used chiefly for linings

## Future archives-based projects depend on receiving support, proposals and initiatives from users and institutions

We have been awarded further funding for TESPAC Phase 2 in order to

- Keep the Team together and productive - we don't want to lose the unique skills and knowledge that they have built up
- Transcribe the rest of the MOOC inventories and related sources
- Support the Archives by making the archival sources and research process user friendly and accessible to a wider public
  - Continue the series of guidebooks for school, beginner and community-based researchers'
  - Publish an illustrated glossary of terms found in 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century inventories
- Organise an international / intercontinental conference to showcase our archival resources and set up exchanges of people and ideas

We need you – Museums, The Archives, Departments of Arts & Culture, specialist research groups and societies, etc. - to

- Develop new ideas for using the materials
- Disseminate information
- Promote research and funding initiatives
- Collaborate at institutional and community levels



## TEPC Contacts

- TEPC Project
  - [www.capetranscripts.co.za](http://www.capetranscripts.co.za)
- TEPC Funder
  - Royal Netherlands Embassy, Pretoria  
[www.dutchembassy.co.za](http://www.dutchembassy.co.za)
  - Consul-General of The Netherlands, Cape Town  
[www.dutch-consulate.co.za](http://www.dutch-consulate.co.za)
- TANAP database host
  - [www.tanap.net](http://www.tanap.net)