

THE NOTEBOOK OF JOHANNES SMIESING (1697-1734), WRITING AND READING MASTER IN THE CAPE SLAVE LODGE¹

Archie L Dick

Introduction

In the 1714 census of the Cape Slave Lodge of the Dutch East Indian Company (VOC), seventeen year-old Johannes (Jan) Smiesing was identified as a third generation creole 'halfslag' slave.² When his request for manumission was granted on the morning of Thursday 8 November 1731, he was described in the VOC's Council of Policy Resolutions as a *Comps. lijfeijgene* (Company slave), and as a *schoolmeester* (school master).³ He was born in 1697, and baptized in the Lodge on 10 March of that year. Manda Gratia (daughter of Armozijn Claasz) and Jan Smiesingh of Amsterdam (an employee of the VOC) were his parents.⁴

Smiesing spent almost his entire life in the Lodge, where he went to school, met his wife Anna van Dapoer whom he later divorced, fathered some of his children, and worked as a teacher. He died in 1734 as a thirty seven year-old free black. Besides the notebook, evidence of his life as an intellectual included a writing desk, a book stand with books, and three bibles listed in the inventory of his possessions.⁵ A fuller biographical sketch of Jan Smiesing will be presented in a chapter of a forthcoming book, and the aim of this article is simply to introduce the notebook.⁶ In 1934, J.L.M. Franken first identified some features of Smiesing's notebook in an article on home education in the Cape from 1692 to 1732.⁷ Karel Schoeman's recent publications provide more clues about the contents of this notebook, which he describes as 'a unique personal record' of one of the 'inmates' of the Slave Lodge.⁸ Schoeman also points out that this notebook may be the only surviving piece of writing from the Slave Lodge.⁹

The full scope only became clear however when electronic scans of the entire notebook were made available.¹⁰ It is now possible to present a transcription of this fascinating text for the first time, and to begin to add some context. As a whole, Smiesing's notebook offers valuable general insights into life in the Slave Lodge in the early 18th century, and specific insights into the life of one of its occupants. More importantly, the kinds of questions prompted by this primary source open up new possibilities for scholarly research.

One opportunity is to explore connections between identity construction and the oral and textual cultures among the 18th century Cape slave and free black intelligentsia, and to compare them with the 'public sphere' debates of racial identity and print culture among middle class elites in the early 19th century.¹¹ Another opportunity is to uncover the Cape's alternative intellectual cultures, and their connections with wider 'alternative networks of authority' in the early modern period. The kinds of political and religious contacts between slave and free black elites and Muslim and other exiles from Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Java, and Makassar in a

small but highly diverse community at the Cape deserve further attention.¹² There are also other avenues for further research.

Smiesing's notebook

The notebook is really a kind of commonplace book with blank bound pages, which Smiesing filled with his notes probably using one of the quill pens supplied by the VOC. It is bound with bright red covers that have two leather ties to secure them. Smiesing's name and surname are inscribed on the cover. Just beneath his name is the date 1717, followed by the barely visible number 32. This is perhaps why Franken identifies 1717 to 1732 as the years covered by the notebook.¹³ The date 1734, which is the year in which he died, is however part of a calculation in his handwriting across the writing on one of the notebook's pages. The notebook consists of 14 unnumbered pages of writing.¹⁴ About six to ten pages have been neatly cut out of the book.¹⁵ Some passages of writing end abruptly and parts appear to be missing. Smiesing describes himself on one of the pages of his notebook as the writing and reading master in service of the 'Honourable East Indian Company', and on another page as the 'Schoolmaster'.

Johannes Smiesing
SCHRIF en LEES
MEESTER
In dienst de E Oostindische Comp

pieter samüel
Aan cabo de goede hoop
Jan Smüesing
Schoolmeester jnt
De I: Comp

There is no absolute certainty that Smiesing actually used some of the contents of the notebook for classroom teaching. He may have kept the notebook for his own purposes. His identity as the writing and reading teacher, however, indicates the probability of its use also for teaching. The sources of some of the contents of Smiesing's notebook will be traced, as far as possible, to contemporary literature. The contents are presented, for the sake of convenience, under the following headings: personal; writing and reading; arithmetic; morning hymn; and medical remedies. These sections do not therefore follow the sequence found in the notebook.

Personal

In just more than four pages, Smiesing lists the births, baptisms, deaths, and burials of his children and other relatives. He also records the arrival, inauguration, death, and burial of Pieter Gysbert Noodt who was governor at the

Cape from 1727 to 1729. It would appear from the several entries that Smiesing was locating himself within his family network, and reflecting on his own identity in a very self-conscious way. A comparison with other specimens of writing from that period is necessary to understand his writing style, and to place it linguistically in its proper historical context.

(Verso)

Int Jaar onses Heeren Jesu Christo
1727 de 13 (donderdag)¹⁶ febrüarius is den Wel Edelen Heer
gouverneur Pieter gysber Noodt geariveert
Aan Cabo de Goede Hoop met skip gent¹⁷
Gasperdam den 25 february op dingsdaagh
als gouverneur aangestelt de 25 April 1727¹⁸
1727¹⁹ den 18 April Vrydagh snagts
te half twaalf is anna van dappor
In de Craam gekomen van een
jonge soon den 27ste April gedoopt
Genaemt frans
1727 den 22 Jünij deter Evan geliüm Johannis
ii vers i: 2: 3: 4: op de kerk gang van de E: d: H
Anno 1729 Zaterdag nademiddag
te vier üuren op den 23 April
Is den Wel Edelen Heer gouver²⁰
neur pieter gysbert Noodt in den
Heere ontslapen en begraa²¹
Ven den a den 30 dito begraven

(Verso)

In den Jaere onses HEERE
Jesús Christus 1725 den 23 oeb²⁸
Dingsdag morgen te drie üure
Is anna van dappor is²⁹ de Craam
Gekomen van een Jonge soon en
den Heijligen doop ontfangen
den 28 october genaemt
Johannis
1727 den 18 April Vrijdagh
snagts te half twaalf in de
Craam gekomen van een
jonge soon den 27 April 1727³⁰
gedoopt get³¹ frans
Anno 1706 den 16 Augüstus
Is pieter Cornelisze Hartoch
geboren op den 10 Augüstus
1728 overleden op dingsdag
18 1728³² 28 de onnozee kinder dag
6³³ dingsdag middag te Elf üure is
anna Van dapoer bevallen van
Een jonge Zoon gedoopt & Genaemt³⁴

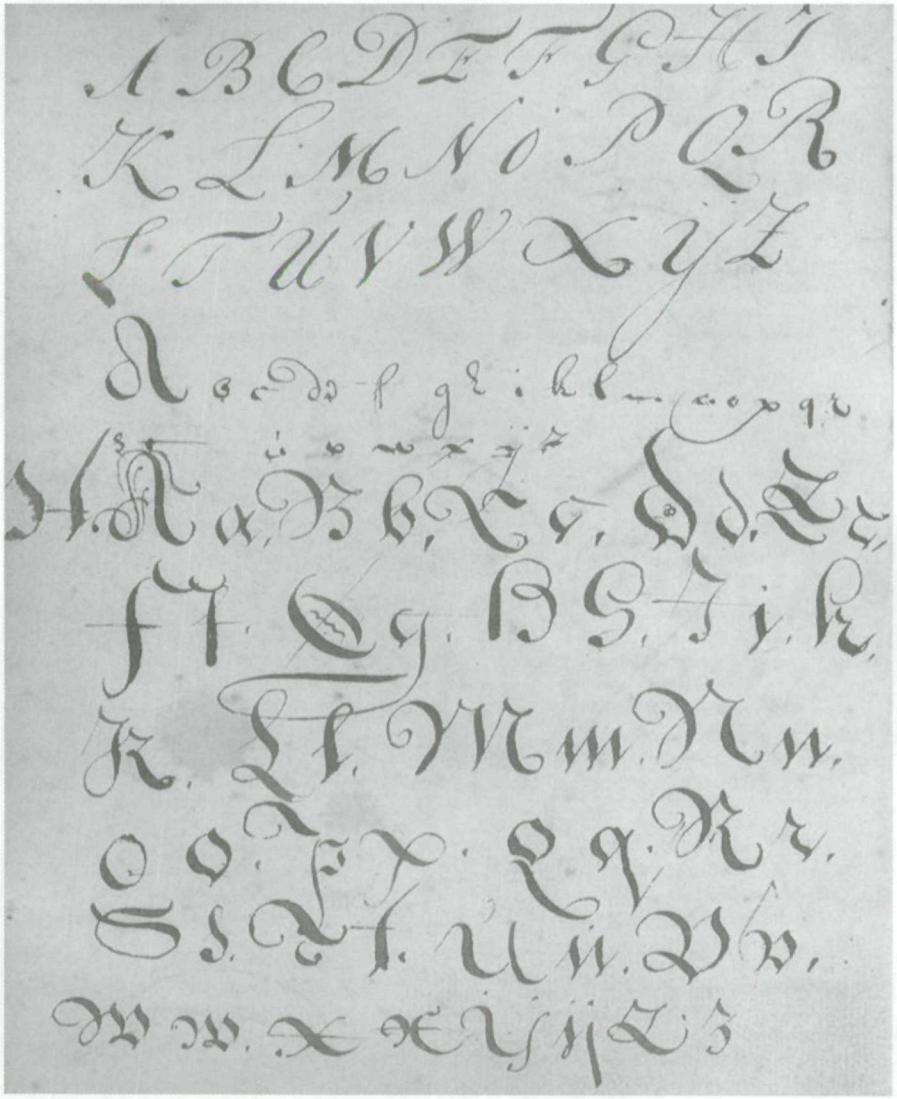
(Recto)

Anno 1731 In den Jarren onses Heeren Jesu Christus
den 30 December is Johannis Smiesing in die
selven tegen waardige Huijs Vrou anna Van
dapor in den getenstaat⁴² getreden
Rouwe van mijn moeder manda Grazia
In den HEERE ontslapen
den 10²³ Maaij 1719 d 27 Maaij
In den Jaere onses HEERE
1724 den 10 Januariüs mandag
smorgens te 7 üure is anna van
dappor in de Craam gekomen
Van Een Jonge dogter den
16 Januariüs den Heer²⁴ Heijlige
doop ontfangen genaemt
Manda
In den Heere ontslapen
den 29 Maay 1726²⁵
& woensdag morgen te drie üure
de 3i dito begraven
1727²⁶ den 17 Jünij Gillijam Frisnet orleede
1729 den 29 November is myen meyd Bevalle²⁷
—van een dogter genaemt dina

(Recto)

Anno 1703 den 5 november is geboren
Armosina Jonas
Anno 1707 den 28 Januarij Anna Elizabeth
Jonas geboren
Anno 1708 den 11 Jülj maria barens gebore
Anno 1713 de 5 Januarij
Anno 1713 den 5 febrüarij maria geertruij
frisnet geboren
A³⁵ 1728 den 28 desember is Anna
Van dapoer bevallen Van
een Jonge Zoon & den
23 Januarij 1729 gedoopt
genaemt pieter lambertüs
Anno 1730 op woensdag den 4 Januariüs
in den Heere ontslapen den 7 dito
begraven
Anno 1731 den 9 January op dingsdags morgens
te halve tien üuren is anna Van
dappor bevallen van een Jonge
dogter & den 4 Februarij Gedoopt

(Verso)
 genaamt anna
 Anno 1732 den 26 November snagt tusjen 10 & 11 uren
 Is mijn Huys-vrouw anna Van dapper bevallen
 Van een Jonge Zoon & den 30 dito gedoopt
 genaamt Jacobus



Letter types used in Smiesing's notebook. WCARS, A1414

Writing and reading

There are different sets of letter typefaces of the alphabet in both upper and lower cases on one of the pages. These letters may have been copied out of an ABC book, and may have been used also to prepare additional ABC boards for the Lodge school. The VOC supplied ABC books and ABC boards to the Lodge School.³⁶ The ABC board (*ABC bordje*) was similar to the hornbook, and intended for beginning readers. The hornbook, a primer for study, usually consisted of parchment or paper attached to a small paddle-shaped wooden board. It contained the letters of the alphabet (in upper and lower case, and cursive), and was commonly protected by a sheet of transparent horn.³⁷ Although not very different, the Dutch ABC board was more of a tablet or wooden board usually without the handle. The alphabet was usually followed by the 'Lord's prayer'. It was used widely in Holland in the 17th and 18th centuries, and was considered to be a good method to teach children in a very short time.³⁸

The Dutch ABC book or *Abecedarium* was used for reading exercises by more advanced learners, and would typically include the alphabet (in Roman and cursive letters).³⁹ It contained also Christian religious items such as the Ten Commandments, the 'Paternoster' and *Ave-Maria*, the Catechism, morning and evening prayers, as well as Christian proverbs that began with the letters of the alphabet. Franken suggests that some letters on this page in the notebook are in the Gothic type.⁴⁰ This claim, and the full range of letter typefaces on this page, requires further investigation.

Arithmetic

I traced the exact examples of addition and subtraction in the notebook to one of the several editions of Willem Bartjens' *Vernieuwde cyfferinge*, which was in circulation at the Cape at the time.⁴¹ This work had already been available in the Netherlands since 1607, and subsequent editions were continuously corrected to improve the text.⁴² Smiesing's arithmetic notes end with a promise of multiplication but with no actual lessons, and it is now possible to find in Bartjens' *Vernieuwde cyfferinge* the very examples he must have used. This book contains also worked examples to explain counting, division, how to calculate interest, profits and losses, how to convert international currencies, weights and measures, and other practical applications of arithmetic. We can only speculate on how much of this was taught in the Lodge school.

The edition of Bartjens' *Vernieuwde cyfferinge* in the NLSA explains in its title page that the text had been improved by Jan van Dam, and later revised and re-worked, and that all errors were removed by Klaas Bosch. It is revealing that the very first arithmetic example in Jan's notebook, which explains how to add three three-digit figures, is preceded by the word *ellen*. This is the plural form of *el*, which is an old Dutch unit of length (usually an arm's length - a metre after metrication in the Netherlands in 1820), and was primarily used for measuring cloth.⁴³ It is possible that the entire approach to teaching arithmetic to slave children in the Lodge school was to promote its practical applications for future use.⁴⁴

Additio⁴⁵

(RECTO)			(VERSO)					
Additio beteekent een Vergadringe VeLer kLijne Sommekens om daer van eene algemijne groote somma te maken	3	76	5	430i	6	i0003	9	5555
		39		i03i		57836		6666
		46		4573		56037		7777
		3i		7011		3090		8888
		i0		777		90i		9999
		3		888		9i		77i7
		49		799		7		4 ⁴⁹ 179
1 ⁴⁶	ellen	99		23		38		9999
	376	76		27		716		8888
	203	43		37		1596		7007
	i79	i0		74		23704		6776
	758	ii		11		39000		5667
		37		9		40030		5667 ⁵⁰
2	i	76		8		66566		8754
	2	606		19569		299615		7897
	3							9876
	4	4	i24	7	9874	8	409	8967
	5		2i5		6789		508	7876
	6		670		8895		607	8789 ⁵¹
	7		767		9786		506	i4i286 ⁵²
	8		76		8999		405	
	9		56		9876		304	
	8		150		7993		203	
	7		100		6887		304	
	6		i30		7559		909	
	5		202		7687		808	
	4		592		9998		707	
	75		437		8886		606	
			999		7779		806	
			110		8989		907	
			4628		6798		907 ⁴⁸	
					7667		909	
					8899		809	
					9898		905	
					153264 ⁴⁷		809	
							11421	

Eijnde Van
Additio
en de Volgt
Substractio

Substractio⁵³

Substractio, beteekent
aftrecken d'eene Somme
van't andre stellende
altijt de minste onder d'meste,
alst volgt

89	Van
57	Treck
32	rest
89	proef

Substractio⁵⁴

(RECTO)					
Van ⁵⁵	543	V	347	V	7623789923274843
Treck	421	T	136	T	4698096986293981
rest	122	R	211	R	292569293698085 ⁵⁶ 2
proef	543	P	347	P	7623789923274843
V	4592	V	92652	V	⁵⁷ 7623789923274843
T	1410	T	51431	T	4698096986293981
R	3182	R	41221	R	2925692936980852
P	4592	P	92652	P	7623789923274843
V	965403	V	6378506	V	876376000378634178
T	265401	T	1435034	T	468909812782946099
R	700002	R	4943472	R	407466187595688079
P	7 ⁵⁸ 65403	P	63784 ⁵⁹ 06	P	876376000378634178
V	540637803				Eijnde Van Substractio en de Volgt MultiPLICatio ALs VoLgt
T	193717802				
R	346920001				
P	7 ⁶⁰ 40637803				
V	976401383212				
T	419564394701				
R	556836988511				
P	976401383212				
V	703000034783i2				
T	29832101984304				
R	40467901494008				
P	70300003478312				

Morning hymn

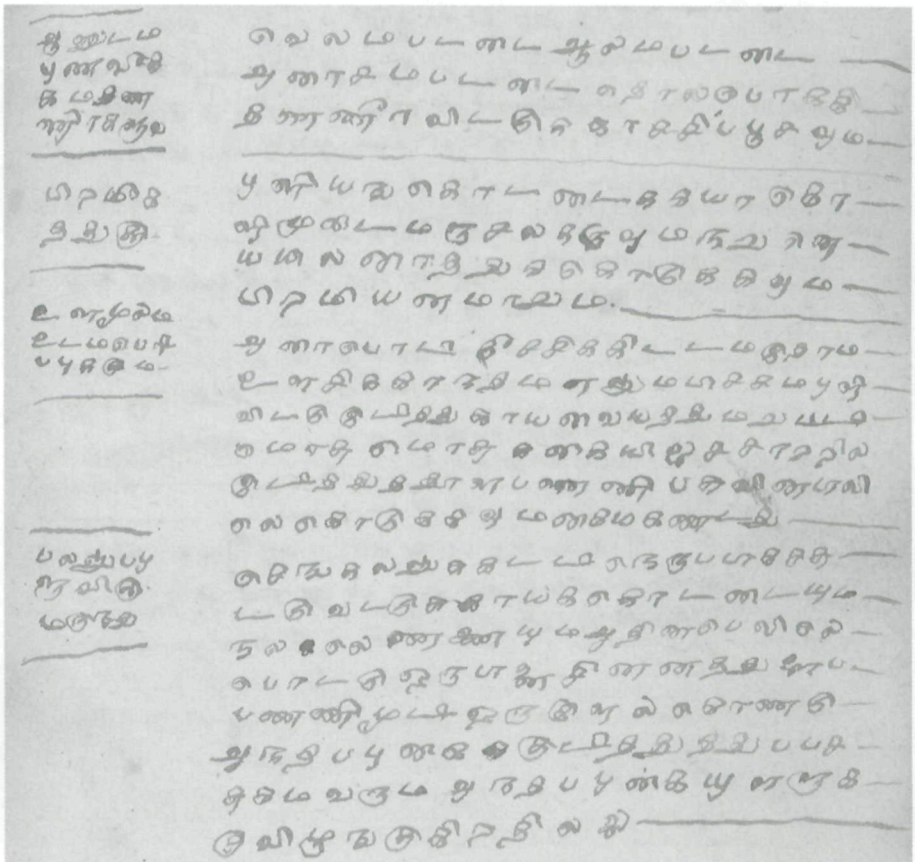
I discovered the source of the morning hymn (*morgen gesangh or morgenlied*) in Smiesing's notebook in an edition of *Vernieuwde Urania*, a hymn book by Dirk Pietersz Pers published in Amsterdam in 1648.⁶¹ It is one of several hymns in that hymn book that was sung to the tune of the German Lutheran hymn *Auss meines Herten Grunde*.⁶² There is a consistent indication that Dutch Reformed schoolmasters at the Cape were expected to teach children to sing psalms.⁶³ These psalms of David were set to rhyme by Petrus Dathenus (c. 1531-1588), and sung to French tunes from the Genevan Psalmbook of 1562.⁶⁴ In this context, it seems that this morning hymn instead of a psalm in Smiesing's notebook was a little unusual. Was it a sign of an alternative religious outlook? The tune of this hymn must have been well-known at the Cape at the time because it was played by VOC trumpeters on incoming ships every morning.⁶⁵ The music is a fuguette composed by Johann Christoph Bach (1642-1703), who was a second cousin of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). In the Bach family there was more than one Johann Christoph Bach. This one was an organist at Eisenach in Germany, and he was well-known for his compositions for keyboard instruments of the time.

The tune is available on YouTube, and it is now possible for the first time to hear what this morning hymn sounded like in the Slave lodge school in the early 18th century.⁶⁶ The melody consists of eight two-bar phrases. The first and second phrases are repeated in the third and fourth phrases, and they return in the seventh and eighth phrases. This structure was typical of early post-Reformation hymns that kept melodies simple to encourage congregational singing by facilitating learning and memorization.⁶⁷ The third verse of the hymn is incomplete in Smiesing's notebook. It ends abruptly with the first four lines of that verse at the bottom of the page. It may have continued on the next page, which could have been cut out, and there may possibly have been more verses, or the entire hymn. It could even have been followed by an evening hymn. A comparison with the earlier version of the hymn in Pers shows some differences and possible copying errors in words and lines.

Ô Christi, HijL en LeVen,
Ô god Van Eúwighz.⁶⁸
Û WiL ik de Eere geven,
Met waere danckbaerhz;
Omdat gij mij behoedt,
Wil ik met hert en mondt,
In desen morgen stonde,
ontslúijten mijn gemoedt,
Û LiefLijkhz en Z⁶⁹eden,
Blinck aLs't morgen roodt,⁷⁰
Waerdoor ik heb Skreegen,
Het Leven door de Dood,⁷¹
ALLeen door ú gena,
Heb gij mijn Lij⁷²voor qúaaaden
Mijn Zie⁷³Voor misdaaden, bevrijdt van
ALLe schaade⁷⁴ —
Ik⁷⁵ heb dan stof te Looven,
úijt een oodt moedighendz,⁷⁶
dat [door] ú⁷⁷gúnst Van booven,
mijn troost is in mijn Smerte⁷⁸

Medical remedies

This is probably the most fascinating section of the notebook as well as the most mysterious. This medical knowledge probably marked Smiesing as an intellectual and as a 'barefoot' doctor. Several questions however still remain unanswered. These include: how and from whom did he obtain this list of remedies; how widespread was the use of the Tamil language and the circulation of Tamil writings at the Cape at the time; how did this Siddha tradition of Tamil medicine relate to the medicine practiced at the VOC hospital;⁷⁹ and, how were these remedies adapted locally? For convenience, the arrangement here is different from Smiesing's page layout. The meanings of the words in bold in this transcription are still unclear. Underlining is found in some places in the original text, and is used here for ease of reading.



Extract from Smiesing's notebook showing medical remedies in Tamil script.

(Recto)

kuppaimēṇi peruṅkāyaṅ kūṭuṅ kaṭuku veḷḷuḷi noṅpamāṇa nervāḷam noyya teṅkāy niṅaṅ kūṭṭi arpa marunteṅṅēṅāmal aṅalil vetuppiḱ koḷḷa vīrā(/a)ya keṅpavācuk⁸⁰ karaincotoṭāk keṭutiyaṅe pu[^ṅ]kuntiṭume.

Mix *Acalypha indica* leaves and *asafoetida* together with mustard, garlic, fine croton and flesh of a tender coconut - do not think this is a cheap medicine (without effect) – and leave it to dry in the sun. The [vīrā(/a)ya] flatulency in the womb will dissolve together with the [infection?].⁸¹

yīlaikka maruntu.

cūkkiri mor kāṭi elumpiccam puli arai poṭi kiḱcikkiṭṭam kayāḷam⁸² poṭṭu mūṅṅu ṅāḷayir piṅaku kācci vaṭittuk koṭukkavum. uppup puli viṭavum. yīlai māṅum.

A remedy against wheezing.

Make a decoction of **cūkkiri**, buttermilk, vinegar (?), lime, tamarind and a half sniff of iron dross, boil and filter it after three days, before administering it. Avoid (taking) salt and sour. The phlegm will go away.

pala vicāṭikkum cūraṅam vakai.

cīriyar iruvaruṅ ciṅanta mūva[ru]ruṅ uriyar oruṅ[ruṅ] koṭiya kāy arum āriyaṅ āṭṭiṅil alacam/acai tākamum nerpaṭak kūṭamal nerupporuṭākkume.

A kind of medicinal powder against many ailments.

(The meaning of this passage is unclear)

yavirruk katuppukku.

naṅcīrakattai poṅṅiṅamāka vaṅuttu mātāḷaṅ kāy tol kūṭayitṭu veṅṅit taṅṅīrile⁸³ ākutaḷ tayirile ākutaḷ koṭukkavum.

Against griping pain or irritation in the stomach.

Fry the cumin until it becomes gold-coloured and crush a citrus (?) rind and all before administering it either in warm water or in curd.

vīrocanaṅ panna vakai.

āmaṅakku eṅṅai kottāṅ verum ilaic cāṅṅu veḷḷai veṅ eḷaiyam kūṭak kācci vaṭittuk kācciṭai koṭukka veṅṅit taṅṅīr kūṭiḱ koṭukkavum.

A method to purge.

Put together the oil extracted from the castor oil seeds, the root of the *Cassitha Filiformis*, juice extracted from (betel?) leaves and white cardamom, boil and filter it and cook it again before administering it in warm water.

(Verso and Recto)

piramīkattukku⁸⁴

viṭṭuṅkiṅāṅṅi veruṅe piṭuṅki niḷavil ulatti⁸⁵ iṭṭittuṅ tūḷ paṅṅi ciṅuṅṅīrile koṭukkavum. uppup puli viṭavum. **piramīkam** māṅum.

against gonorrhoea(?)

Pull the *Evolvulus Alsinoides* out by its root, leave it to dry in the shadow, crush it and make it into powder before administering it in urine. Avoid [taking] salt and sour. The Gonorrhoea will reduce.

kāccalukku

vallāral yilai [4] veṅkempum⁸⁶ **kuventiṅṅu⁸⁷** pākkuc cīval arivaṅuttuk kūṭap ppoṭṭu⁸⁸ taṅṅīrīl kuṭiṅṅīr kāccik koṭukkavum. curam niṅṅum.

against fever

Fry leaves of the Indian pennywort, [4 pieces of] dried ginger, [?] areca-nut parings and sift it. Put it together and boil it in water, as (to make it) drinking water, before administering it. The fever will come to an end.

kattu vicātikku vakai

mañcal veļļai veñkāyam teṅ cuṅṅāmpu kūṭa araittup pūcavum.

a remedy against a tumor

Grind turmeric, white onion, honey together with lime and smear it.

makotara vīkkattakku

oru pal veļļai veñkāy [] **kumī[ñu]p pirettum vīñu** kūṭak kācci koṭukkavum.

against dropsy

Boil a white onion with only one bulb, *kumīñup* (Portuguese for cumin??) *pirettum* (?) together with wine (P. *vīñu* ?) and administer it.

cattikku [marai]

cukku vayamp⁸⁹ **pā/(para)vu viṅumel pāvu koviri kirāvu** pūļi elam arakku uṭaṅe kācci vaṭittu koṭukkavum.

[against] vomiting (?)

Boil and filter dried ginger, sweet flag, ?? tamarind, sesame, together with lac⁹⁰ before administering.

cinan tūram vakai

nervālam⁹¹ nīrvālam⁹² pājacāṅam añcu vakai ituvellām oru teñkāy muļā⁹³ tiṅantu poṭtu aṭait ttaṅṅir oṭukiṅa vāykkāliḷe 8 eṭṭu nāļ putaittu vaiyttat tillam⁹⁴ pāl viṭṭu araittu veppeṅṅai viṭṭu araittu ceppil aṭaittu vaiyttuk koṭukkavum. pala vicātikku mallatu.

a remedy against inflammation (?)

Gather two varieties of Croton (seeds) and five sorts of dried cowdung, open a coconut that has sprouted before planting and put all these things in it. Let it sink in a canal with flowing water during 8 days, then pour sesame and milk into it and grind it and hereafter add Margosa oil and grind it again. Secure [the prepared medicine] in a bottle and administer it. It works well against many ailments.

parañki vicātikku maru

itaramum karuñcirakamum mutal muṅai nellūtta viṭamal iṭṭu irāṅṅa muṅai mocumokakkai yilaic cāṅṅil iṭikkavum mūṅṅām muṅai kuppaimēṅi ilaic cāṅṅu viṭṭu iṭṭu piṭam⁹⁵ paṅṅi añcu nāļ koṭukkavum. uppu puļi viṭavum.

a remedy against venereal diseases

First crush quicksilver and black cumin while continuously adding [paddy] and crush it a second time in the juice of the Bristly byrony leaves and then crush it a third time while you pour the juice of the Acalypha Indica leaves into it, preserve it by burying it under the earth before administering it five (successive) days. Avoid (taking) salt and sour.

ānutampun vīkkam tannīrkaḷum

velam paṭṭai ālam paṭṭai **araicam** paṭṭai tol pokki taṅṅir viṭṭuk kācci pūcavum.

(against) swelling of the penis and [retention]

Remove the skin of the bark of the Babul tree, the Banyan and the Pipal⁹⁶ tree, then add water and boil it before smearing.

piramīkattukku

puļiyañ koṭṭaik **kayar koṣa muṭai** mañcal karuvum naṅṅeyyil araittuk koṭukkavum.

piṅamiyaṅ māṅum.

against Gonorrhoea

Grind tamarind seeds, soft top of a coconut (?) *koṣa muṭai* and yolk in cow's ghee and administer it. The Gonorrhoea will stop.

ulmūlam utamperippukku

arai poṭi kīccikiṭṭam itaram ūcikkāntam elumpiccam puli viṭṭu iṭṭu kāya vaiyṭṭu maruṭaṭi mocumocukkai yilaic cārīl iṭṭuttu tūl paṇṇi pacuviṇ pāle koṭukkavum. kaiy kaṇṭatu.

Against piles and burning

Pour a sniff of iron dross, quicksilver, load-stone, lemon, tamarind, together, grind it and leave it to dry. Then again grind it in the juice of Bristly Byronia leaves and make it into powder before administering it in cow's milk. It will take effect immediately (?).

pallup puluvikku maruntu

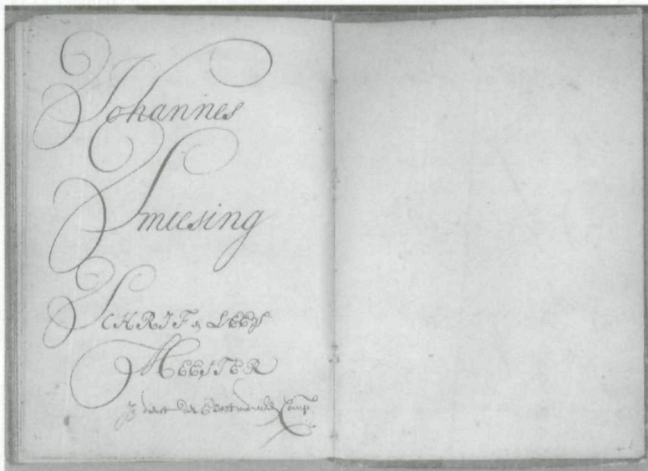
ceṅkalluk kaṭṭi neruppākac cuṭṭu vaṭṭuk kāyk koṭṭaiyum nalleṇṇaiyum aṭiṇ pelile poṭṭu oru pāṇai ciṇṇat tuṭaiṇ paṇṇi mūṭi oru kuṭal koṇṭu antap pukaik kuṭittut tuppac cukam varum. antap pukaiyuḷḷukku viṭaṅkukiṭṭaillai.

remedy against tooth infection

Gather together bricks, bake them and leave them to dry. Add seeds of green fruits (?) and sesame oil to its grit. Make a small hole into the vessel and close it. Take a tube and suck that steam (into your mouth) and spit it out (again). You will become healthy. You should not inhale that steam.

Conclusion

Jan Smiesing's notebook offers rich insights into everyday life in the Cape Slave Lodge in the early 18th century. It compels the revision of views on self-identity and slave and free black intellectuals. It invites a fresh appreciation of the reading, writing, and arithmetic skills of slaves. It provokes the need for further investigation into alternative traditions of worship and medicine in early modern Cape Town. It also raises awareness about the diversity of cultures and languages in the Cape slave and free black communities. One wonders, for example, how many slaves, convicts, and exiles from Tamil-speaking regions there were at the Cape around 1730. Finally, it stimulates the search for more information about the upward mobility of families like that of Jan Smiesing, and about the impact of slave lodge teachers on intellectual life at the Cape.



ENDNOTES

1. I am grateful to Robert Shell for letting me have a copy of this text, and for encouraging me to transcribe it. I am grateful also to Simon Schmidt of the French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP) in India for the Tamil transcription and translation. The assistance of Joukje Geertsema and Lakshmi Subramaniam with translations, and the comments of Karel Schoeman, are gratefully acknowledged.
2. Jan's surname appears in official documents in several forms, such as Smesing, Smiesing, Smeedige, and Smüesing. He was also identified as Jan van Manda van de Caab. Creole means locally or Cape-born. The Dutch used 'Halfslag' to refer to a 'halfbreed' or 'halfcaste' person as someone who had also had partial European ancestry.
3. *Resolutions of the Council of Policy*, C. 88, pp. 69-71, 8 November 1731. Available at: <http://databases.tanap.net/cgh/> (Accessed 10 February 2010).
4. For a biography of Armozijn Claasz, see Karel Schoeman, *Armosyn van die Kaap: die wêreld van 'n slavin*, 1652-1733, 2nd ed. (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 2005).
5. Masters of the Orphan Chamber, MOOC 8/5.69, 5 November 1734. Available at: <http://databases.tanap.net/mooc/> (Accessed 10 February 2010).
6. See Robert Shell and Archie Dick, 'Literacy and identity in the Slave Lodge: Jan Smiesing, schoolmaster and healer, 1697 to 1734', forthcoming in a book on social identities in eighteenth century Cape Town, edited by Nigel Worden. A fuller analysis of the notebook itself will be presented in a forthcoming article by the author.
7. J.L.M. Franken, *Huisonderwys aan die Kaap, 1692-1732*, (Kaaipstad, Bloemfontein en Pretoria: Nasionale Pers, Beperk, 1934), 7-8.
8. Karel Schoeman, *Early slavery at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1717*, (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2007), 367. See also: Schoeman, *Armosyn van die Kaap*, 658-9.
9. Schoeman, *Armosyn van die Kaap*, 659.
10. Western Cape Archives & Records Service (WCARS): A1414, Accessions section of the Cape Archives Depot, Cape Town. It is unclear how the notebook landed in the Accessions possession of documents, which originated with private persons and organizations.
11. For the possession of books by free blacks in the early 18th century, see Vybeke Pieters, *Boeken aan de Kaap: een onderzoek naar de Desseniaanse bibliotheek in haar sociaal-culturele context*, (Doctoral dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 1997), 70-2; for Arabic and Malaysian literacy, and a manuscript culture, see Achmat Davids, 'Words the Cape slaves made: a socio-historical-linguistic study', *South African journal of Linguistics*, 8 (1), 1990, 1-24; for early 19th century print culture, see Andrew Bank, *Liberals and their enemies: racial ideology at the Cape of Good Hope, 1820 to 1850*, (Unpublished Doctoral thesis, Cambridge University, 1995), 17-22; K. McKenzie, *The South African Commercial Advertiser and the making of middle class identity in early nineteenth-century Cape Town*, (Unpublished Masters thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993).
12. Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire: forced migration in the Dutch East India Company*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 179, 185-237.
13. Franken, *Huisonderwys aan die Kaap*, 7.
14. Schoeman, *Armosyn van die Kaap*, 658.
15. Robert Shell speculates that these pages may have contained a secret history of Smiesing's family.
16. 'donderdagh' is inserted above '13' in a lighter shade of ink, and may have been added at a later date.

17. Probably an abbreviation for 'genaemt'.
18. There is an unclear symbol here and 'Jaarig', preceded by an apostrophe, is inserted below 25 April 1727.
19. The five lines of text from '1727' to 'frans' are scored out. Many other lines in the text are also scored out by Smiesing.
20. There appears to be what looks like a quote mark (") here, perhaps to indicate the incomplete word.
21. There is a stroke here, perhaps to indicate the incomplete word.
22. This word is unclear; there appears to be a smudged letter ('i'? with a diacritical mark beneath it) between the letters 'g' and 'e'.
23. This number is scratched out but it looks like the number 10 or 19.
24. This word is partly smudged.
25. Written across these three or four lines in bolder strokes are calculations of the number of years elapsed by subtracting one year from another. The three calculations from left to right are: 1724 minus 1720 with the answer given as 4; 1734 minus 1721 with the answer given as 13, of which the numeral 1 is smudged; and 1721 minus 1705 with the answer given as 16, which is preceded by the numeral 1.
26. This date is underscored.
27. The first letter looks a smudged capital 'B'. The last letters of the word are inserted above the rest.
28. Probably an abbreviation for 'october'.
29. This may be an error since 'in' is used in the same phrases elsewhere in the text.
30. Written beneath 'April', and not scored out.
31. Probably an abbreviation for 'genaemt'.
32. This date is written large in the left margin. There seems to be some confusion or error about the birth and death dates.
33. This number is written large in the left margin.
34. The name is not given.
35. Probably an abbreviation for 'Anno'. The rest of the lines of text on this page are scored out.
36. For a list of school supplies, see H.C.V. Leibrandt, *Precis of the Cape Archives: Journal, 1676: 276*.
37. See: <http://www.iupui.edu/~engwft/hornbook.html> (Accessed 8 February 2010).
38. Andrew W. Tuer, *History of the Horn Book*, (New York and London: Benjamin Blom, 1968), 143.
39. P.S. Du Toit, *Onderwys aan die Kaap onder die Kompanjie, 1652-1795: 'n kultuur-historiese studie*, (Kaapstad en Johannesburg: Juta, 1937), 4.
40. Franken, *Huisonderwys aan die Kaap*, 7.
41. Willem Bartjens, *De vernieuwde cyfferinge van Willem Bartjens.../herstelt, vermeerdert ende verbeterd door Mr. Jan van Dam en nu in desen laatsten druk op nieuws... nagesien, bewerkt en van alle... fouten gesuywert door... Klaas Bosch* (Amsterdam: Joannes Kannevet... 1732-1745), 9-11. There is an entry for this title in the catalogue of the private library of Joachim Nicolaas Von Dessin (1704-1761), see: Joachim Von Dessin, *Catalogus Librorum Bibliothecae Publicae; Capitis Bonae Spei*, Octavo first series, Item 991, p. 158.
42. Du Toit, *Onderwys aan die Kaap*, 5.
43. See: El (lengtemaat) Uit Wikipedia, de vrije encyclopedie, at: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_\(lengtemaat\)](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_(lengtemaat)) (Accessed 4 February 2010).

44. See C.A.L. van Troostenburg De Bruijn, *De Hervormde Kerk in Nederlandsch Oost-Indië onder de Oost-Indische Compagnie, 1602-1795*, (Arnhem: HATjeenk Willink, 1884), 538-9.
45. 'Additio' is written in larger and bolder letters. The page is divided into two columns, which contain sections with four worked examples of addition, and some text. For convenience, the arrangement here is different from Smiesing's page layout.
46. The numeral 1 (one) sometimes appears as 'i' in the examples, and differs from the usual 'i' in its shape and use of the special diacritical mark. This is not consistent, however, and sometimes either the *i* is used without the diacritical mark, or the usual 1 is used.
47. The correct sum total should be 153259, and the given total is either the result of copying errors from the edition that Smiesing used, or because subsequent editions of Bartjens' *De vernieuwde cyfferinge* made improvements to examples. The edition in the NLSA has 7998 instead of 7993, and 8889 instead of 8886, with a total of 153267.
48. This figure (907) is repeated mistakenly because the given sum total (11421) is smaller than the true sum of all the preceding numbers by exactly 907. Also, 907 is listed once only in the NLSA edition.
49. This figure is smudged but it is the numeral 4.
50. This figure (5667) is repeated mistakenly. It is listed once only in the NLSA edition.
51. This is a copying error. The figure should be 8798 in order to give the correct total.
52. This total figure is only correct without the copying errors.
53. 'Substractio' is written in larger and bolder letters.
54. 'Substractio' is written in larger and bolder letters and without the diacritical mark above the 'u'. The page is divided into two columns, which contain sections with worked (unnumbered) examples of subtraction, and some text.
55. In order to understand these examples, you have to subtract row 2 from row 1 to get row 3; then add row 2 and 3 to get row 4, which must be same as row 1. In this way, as Smiesing explains, you have proof that the answer is correct. The first letters (V, T, R, P) of these words are repeated for each example.
56. This figure should be 6, and is a copying error.
57. This is the exact repetition of the example directly above it.
58. This figure should be 9, and is a copying error.
59. This figure should be 5, and is a copying error.
60. This figure should be 5, and is a copying error.
61. D.P. Pers, *Vernieuwde Urania, of Hemel-Sangh: Zijnde het 11 deel van Bellerophon of Lust tot wysheyt waer in veele historiale en Christelijke gesangen, stichtelicke liedekens*, (Amsterdam: Nicolaes Van Ravestyn), 1648, Song number 128, p. 214.
62. I am grateful to Reino Ottermann for this information.
63. Du Toit, *Onderwys aan die Kaap*, 47; Schoeman, *Early slavery*, 165; van Troostenburg De Bruijn, *De Hervormde Kerk*, 481; A. Moorrees, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in uid-Afrika, 1652-1873*, (Kaapstad: SA Bybelvereniging, 1937), 49.
64. G.C. Cillié, *Waar kom ons Afrikaanse gesange vandaan?*, (Kaapstad: N.G. Uitgewers, 1982), 34; See also J.H.H. Du Toit, *Die Gesangkwessie: Rondom die bundel "Evangelische Gezangen" - met besondere verwysing na Suid-Afrika*, (Unpublished Doctoral thesis, University of Pretoria, 1971), 27-8.
65. Fanie Jooste, 'Die optrede, leefwyse en lotgevalle van die VOC-trompetters en -tromspelers aan die Kaap van 1652 tot c.1700', *South African journal of cultural history*, 20 (2006): 143-62.

66. See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BjFGWYWIGvk&feature=related> (Accessed 15 March 2010).
67. I am grateful to Sean Adams for this information.
68. The 'z' here and in other places is a sign that indicates '-heid'. I am grateful to Karel Schoeman for this information.
69. This letter looks a little unusual. In Pers this word is 'zeegen'
70. In Pers this word is 'beckregen'.
71. In Pers this line is 'Het leven upt den dood'.
72. In Pers this word is 'ziel'.
73. In Pers this word is 'lichaem'.
74. In Pers this word is 'schae'.
75. This word is written in a way that it appears to commence the preceding line also ('ALLE schaade').
76. In Pers this line is 'Uyt een ootmoedigh hert'
77. In Pers the word 'door' comes between 'dat' and 'ú'. This may be a copying mistake by Jan.
78. In Pers this line is 'My dit geschoncken wert'.
79. Siddha medicine is a form of south Indian Tamil traditional medicine.
80. Kerpavācu is karpavāyu, 'flatulency in the womb causing hysteria'.
81. For convenience, the arrangement here is different from Smiesing's page layout. The meaning of all the words in bold in this transcription are still unclear. Underlining is used for clarity; this is used in some places in the text.
82. Kayālam is kiyālam, 'decoction'.
83. Venṇit taṇṇīr in venṇit taṇṇīrile has been taken as venṇīr, 'warm water'.
84. Piṛamīkam in piṛamīkattukku has been taken as piramēkam, 'Gonorrhoea'.
85. Ulatti is ulartti, 'having left to dry'.
86. Verḱempu is verkompu, 'dried ginger' (Sri Lankan Tamil).
87. The meaning of kuventiṭu remains unclear.
88. Ppoṭṭu contains one 'p' too many.
89. Vayampu is vacampu.
90. Sealing wax.
91. Nervālam is nervālam, 'Croton tiglium'.
92. Nīrvālam is nervālam. Probably the Chinese croton seed and the Hindu croton seed are meant since these are used in medicines, see T.V. Sambasivam Pillai, Tamil-English dictionary of Medicines, Chemistry, Botany and allied sciences, (Madras: The Research Institute of Siddhar's Science, 1938-1998).
93. teṅkāy muḷa has been interpreted as muḷaitteṅkāy.
94. Tillam is tilam, 'sesame'.
95. Piṭam is puṭam.
96. araicam has been taken as a corruption of aracam (Pipal, Ficus religiosa).

Copyright of Quarterly Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa is the property of Association of Friends of the National Library of South Africa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.