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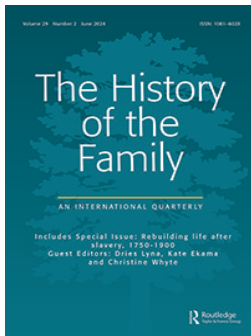
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'Whither do you now wish to go?': slavery, flight and longing in and around Manado (Indonesia) in the age of abolition

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ABSTRACT

The history of slavery in the age of abolition is full of contradictions. The fate of enslaved persons depended on coincidences, on bad luck and good fortune. To understand what this meant in practice, this article focuses on questions of flight and longing. It zooms in on the colonial enclave Manado, North Sulawesi (Indonesia), where slavery was both an indigenous-regional and a local-colonial phenomenon, two worlds that were never fully separated. This exploration centers around two sets of archives: a slave register and a series of interviews with runaways. These fascinating documents were produced at the same time and in the same space, but provides us markedly different perspectives. What do they tell us about motives and experiences of people who escaped slavery? To what extent can we reconstruct life in and out of slavery when we combine these two sets of sources? The critical exploration that this article presents is meant as a step towards a fuller comprehension of the history of slavery in colonial Indonesia.

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On 13 November 1846, 11-year-old Herkulus fled from the house of Jacob Lang, inhabitant of Manado.¹ Herkulus had been sold as a slave to Lang less than two years earlier. His escape from slavery was not a success, as he was soon brought back.² Less than two weeks later a man called Talarone was received by the *resident* (highest colonial administrator) of Manado. Just like Herkulus, Talarone had fled from slavery. But unlike young Herkulus, Talarone was a welcome guest and the *resident* asked him a number of questions out of interest. One of those questions was: 'Whither do you now wish to go?' Talarone immediately replied: 'To Tabukan, at the earliest opportunity.' He was born in Tabukan, a place on the island of Sangihe Besar, not far from Manado, and after two and a half years of life in slavery he wanted nothing more than to return home. And the Dutch *resident* let him.³

How is it possible that in 1846 these two people, who both fled from slavery, were treated so differently under the same administration? The history of slavery in the era of abolitionism is full of contradictions. The fate of enslaved people depended on coincidences, on bad luck and good fortune. To understand what this meant in practice, this article zooms in on the colonial enclave Manado, which was located on the fringe of the so

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called Dutch East Indies. Slavery there was both an indigenous-regional and a domestic-colonial phenomenon, but the two worlds were never entirely separated.

This study of the lived experience of life in and out of slavery draws heavily on the Dutch colonial archives. These archives are approached here with care, conscious of the fact that they were constructed for the containment of colonial subjects (Stoler, 2009). Yet they do keep valuable snapshots of lives in slavery, which can be teased out when reading the archive from its margins, rather than from the center (Carter & Wickramasinghe, 2018; Raben, 2019). Central to this article is the slave register from Manado and a set of interviews with refugees from slavery in a neighboring state held for the purpose of intelligence. By bringing these two sets of sources in conversation with each other, this article aims to reconstruct the experience of slavery, flight and longing from the perspective of the enslaved. A focus on actions of the individuals whose names emerge from the archives, rather than on the colonial containment of such actions, brings us closer to the world of the enslaved and occasionally allows us to capture their voice. It allows us to think through the moment of flight in the lives of (formerly) enslaved persons. Though life in slavery could be brutal, escaping from captivity was very risky as well. What drove people to take this risk? This article discusses and contextualizes the flight of individuals, whose paths crossed in Manado in the 1840s and 1850s. What life after slavery did they envisage, what did they long for?

1. Slavery, flight and abolition in Dutch colonial Indonesia

The study of slavery and emancipation in colonial Indonesia specifically and in the Dutch empire more broadly has gained momentum over the past years. While traditionally slavery was studied as either a local or a colonial system, historians are now focusing more in the interaction between the various forms of slavery (Hägerdal, 2022; Knaap 2022, 499–516; Schrikker, 2023; Schrikker & Wickramasinghe, 2020). In early modern colonial society enslaved persons were used to perform heavy physical labour for the VOC in and around the harbors and the forts, but they also worked on private plantations and in households (van Rossum, 2015). For the continuity of this system, colonial society depended on the ‘supply’ of enslaved persons. Studies into regional slavery distinguish a number of circumstances under which persons were enslaved and traded: people sometimes sold themselves and their kin in times of scarcity and hunger. Natural disasters or war could be a cause for such duress. Debt formed another cause for enslavement: if debts were not paid off, the debtor could be forced into slavery to compensate the creditors. And slavery could be a punishment for a criminal offense. And finally, captivity as a result of warfare or explicit slave raiding was a frequent cause of enslavement (Reid, 1983, pp. 1–35). Historians have only recently begun to understand how the colonial slave market impacted on these regional forms of slavery, and how the incessant demand for slaves stimulated warfare and raiding (Hägerdal, 2022, pp. 553–573). This colonial complicity in enslavement is often overlooked. Slave raiding was publicly denounced, and formally seen as criminal offense as contemporary ordinances make clear. But in practice it was part and parcel of the lived experience of slavery as legal cases and contemporary witnesses reveal. In fact, the colonial system erased the violent history of enslavement through its legal procedures, once registered as slaves, there was no way back (Schrikker, 2020, pp. 18–24).

The history of slavery in and around the harbor of Makassar in South Sulawesi illustrates this point. Heather Sutherland estimated that throughout the eighteenth century 3000 persons were exported yearly from the town of Makassar as slaves, of whom the larger part will have been enslaved through raiding and other forms of violence (Sutherland, 1983, pp. 261–283). It was an open secret, and the Dutch authorities only acted against it seldomly. A unique case from 1786 reveals how two boys, raided from the beach near their village, were found by their family in Makassar in the hands of a European trader, who managed to get them registered as slaves by the authorities. Thanks to the intervention of the family the boys were set free and the raiders were apprehended, but the fraudulent legal registration of the boys as slaves was not subject of prosecution (Schrikker, 2021, pp. 109–124). The erasure of paths into enslavement in Dutch records had a lasting legacy into the 19th century, when the paths of Herkulus and Talarone, both refugees from slavery, crossed.

While the study of slave flight in the America's received much attention, there are only few studies on this topic that concern Dutch Asia (Pargas, 2021; van Rossum et al., 2019). A recent publication of Van Geelen et al. focuses on 18th century Kochi, South India, to discuss the practice of flight, and highlight the importance of social networks and the proximity of kin as success-factor in flight. They argue that such kin and social networks were especially relevant in environments where maroon-communities seem absent (Geelen et al., 2020, pp. 66–87). After all, where do you flee to when you took the risk to leave your 'owner'? The present article discusses the contradictory forces at work in the age of abolition in and around the town of Manado, when enslaved persons like Herkulus and Talarone took flight. It argues that the presence of family networks and community are only part of the explanation, it was their longing for home and family that gave them the courage to envisage a life after slavery. Whether they succeeded or not was capricious and depended amongst others on the way in which they were captured and framed in Dutch bureaucracy.

Manado today is a pleasant port town on the most north-eastern tip of the cultural diverse region of Sulawesi (Celebes). While many of these local cultures were rooted in animistic traditions, they over-time converted to either Islam or Christianity, a process that was still in flux in the 19th century (Lopez, 2017). The city of Manado itself has a large Christian community. These Christian roots date back to Portuguese times, when Catholic missionaries entered the scene. After the Dutch took over in the 17th century, They tried to convert the Catholics to Protestantism. Now it is a mixed city, with a large population that still has roots in the Portuguese era and are called Burgos (Schouten, 1998; Watuseke & Henley, 1994).

One reason why the VOC attached importance to keeping Manado was geopolitical: from Manado the Company could guard the border area with the Spanish Philippines (Schouten, 1998). The other was economic. The Dutch saw in North Sulawesi, also called the 'Minahasa', a potential granary. Through contracts with local rulers, they tried to profit from rice cultivation. In the course of the nineteenth century, the cultivation of coffee also became increasingly important and was ruled through a system of taxation and forced labour, similar to the cultivation system in Java. In other ways this impacted too. David Henley has discussed how the governing mechanisms of agricultural extraction and the expanding market economy led to an expansion of the nuclear family as foundation of social organization, even if land ownership often remained communal (Henley, 2005).

In his culturally diverse landscape, there were societies that knew various forms of slavery, but in others it seems to have been near absent (Henley, 2005, p. 26). This in contrast to Manado's history, which had become deeply entangled with slavery since Portuguese times. In fact, Wigboldus argues that from the 17th century onwards, the Dutch demand for slaves led to an expansion of the rather limited forms slavery and slave trade in the region (Wigboldus, 1987). This did not change directly in the 19th century: slavery and the slave trade remained commonplace in colonial society for a long time.

In 1819, the Dutch had decided that keeping registers of slave ownership was obligatory at all posts. The purpose was to curtail the trade in slaves, in the sense that no new slaves could be imported from elsewhere. Similar registers were kept in Dutch Suriname and the Antilles, as well as across the British empire (Lamur, 2004; van Galen & Hassankhan, 2018). All inhabitants of settlements under the Dutch government were required to register their 'human property'. Children born in slavery were registered separately until the age of eight, during which period they were not allowed to be separated from their mother. But from their 8th year, they too were entered into the register as they could be bought and sold from that age. The owners were obliged to pay taxes, 'hoofdgeld' over their human property, and in that sense the registers also served the fiscal interests of the state. As elsewhere in the archipelago, a slave register was kept in Manado from 1819 to monitor slavery and the slave trade. Only a few fragments of these slave registers from the various Dutch enclaves now remain (Schrikker, 2021, pp. 139–154).

2. Life in registers

The Manado register for the period 1835–1845 however is still intact and offers us a glimpse into the lives of some six hundred people in slavery over a period of 10 years.⁴ One of the first things to notice is that the origin of the slaves here was mainly regional: they came from the Sangihe Islands, from the neighbouring towns of Kema or Amurang, Gorontalo, or from the Moluccas, such as Ternate and Banda. The owners were Dutch, Burgos and occasionally Chinese. In that respect the register, just like the registers in other colonial enclaves, reflects the composition of the town.⁵ In Manado, the share of Dutchmen and Burgos was larger than of other population groups.

A special feature of the Manado register is that it was a so-called 'dynamic register': this means that in the years following the registrations all kinds of additions were scribbled to the names. So we see girls giving birth to their first child, young boys fleeing, and the same boys being brought back. We regularly see people being manumitted, often through testamentary release. Sometimes the slave was already middle-aged. As was the case with Saima, who in 1845, at the age of 55, was manumitted by her owner Gua Djie. In 1851, a J.E. Paulus emancipated the woman Matilda and her four children, Basta, Benjamin, Marta and Tamar. Matilda had been part of the Paulus household at least since September 1835. On the 17th of May 1837 her eldest son Basta was born. Matilda was then 26 years old herself. Would Paulus have been the father of Basta, and later also of his brother and sisters? It happened more often than not that slave owners emancipated the children they bore to their slaves. Other children in Paulus's household, such as the 12-old boy Welkom, were however not set free. In fact, Welkom continued to live in slavery until 1859, when emancipation was enforced by Dutch law.⁶

The register shows that in these years there was still a lively human trade in the city. A striking example of an active human trafficker is L. Pagalottij, who appears time and again in the register as buyer and seller. He owned the young Spadili as a child and sold him on at age 19, shortly after an attempted flight, to Johannis de Kirewary, who in turn sold him on a year later to Major Albert Saerang. Spadili was originally from Manado, but other slaves owned by Pagalottij came from various places on Sangihe Besar. We can only guess at how they ended up in slavery: were they born into slavery and sold on by their Rajah? Were they convicted criminals or had they pawned themselves into slavery? Or were they victims of human robbery? By the way, Pagalottij not only sold slaves, he also took them over from others. For example, he bought the 18-old girl Nortjaya from Ternate by auction from J.A. Neys.

Such a sale could be quite a spectacle, an auction in which the highest bidder could obtain a slave. It was a kind of slave market, but these had been officially banned since the abolition of the slave trade. In his 1853 novella *Eene Slaven-Vendutie*, Dutch abolitionist Wolter Robert van Hoëvell criticized this situation (van Hoëvell, 1853b). He wanted to illustrate how ineffective the provisions for abolition of the slave trade had been up to that point. In the story, a Mr. van Spruit and a Mr. Nathaniel witness the public sale of the household effects of a European family. As part of the household effects, five people, including two girls, are publicly auctioned off as if it were a slave market. The story largely consists of a dialogue between Van Spruit and Nathaniel, in which Nathaniel expresses his disgust about the situation and Van Spruit justifies it, because a world without slavery is beyond his imagination: ‘Don’t I need my serfs as servants? I really would not know how to take care of myself?’ (van Hoëvell, 1853b, pp. 184–191). It was precisely this practice of slavery ‘as habit’ in the Indies that Van Hoëvell fought against in his writings.

In this story, he mainly portrayed the Chinese and Arab traders as evil slave owners, who profited from the sale and in whose hands the enslaved were unsafe. This was a conscious rhetorically choice, as was the choice to zoom in on the two young girls.⁷ This allowed him to evoke the most empathy from his readers. At the time in the Netherlands elite, bourgeois women in particular were involved in the lobby to abolish slavery (Janse, 2013; van Stipriaan, 2020, pp. 322–326). Externalizing the worst excesses of slavery by portraying the Chinese and Arabs as ‘the real bad guys’ was a recurring colonial rhetorical strategy among abolitionists (Baay, 2020; Levecq, 1997). Historians today rightly question such self-perceived innocence of the Dutch.

3. Old habits die hard

In the Manado register, we see that people regularly sold enslaved person through public auctioning. But in contrast to the perpetrators in Van Hoëvell’s novella, both sellers and buyers were usually of European or Eurasian descent. The fact that sales could turn out badly for the enslaved and that they could end up in an unsafe situation with their new owner, like the girls in Van Hoëvell’s novella, is also reflected in the register: entry number 554 mentions the boy Herkulus, born in Ternate and apparently owned by a man called Brochetty, his mother’s owner after his birth. At the age of nine, Herkulus was separated from his mother and sold by Brochetty to Jacobus Lang. As described in the introduction of this article, the boy ran away from his new owner within two years. A year later Herkulus was sold again to someone else.

Herkulus, of course, was not really called Herkulus, just as the boy Welkom must have been given a different name by his mother at birth. Many names of enslaved persons sound strange to us now: Cupid, Apollo and Kalypso were popular names, as were weekdays or months. These were names imposed on them by their owners, a common phenomenon in the history of slavery more broadly. In Surinam and the Antilles, the sale on the slave market of people who had been transported from Africa was accompanied by a ritual of renaming. Often, the 'owners' made insipid and tasteless choices. In Asia it was no different. A textbook example is Nooit Gezien (Never Seen), or slave number 53 from the register of 1835, born 60 years earlier in Timor. Nooit Gezien passed away on 18 December 1835, a few months after his name was entered in the register.

In the multicultural environment of the port cities of colonial Indonesia we sometimes find Malay versions of these mocking names, such as Hitam (black), miskin (Poor) or Jumat (Friday). In other cases, enslaved were registered under their own names, and we often find men referred to as Djamboe or Abdullah. Sometimes the enslaved were renamed after they were sold, this happened with one group of enslaved persons, owned by a Mr. Lans: Boy, Miskin, Esculaap and Layton were renamed by Lans when they were entered into the register as Ruby, Sephiye, Djamboe and Nias. Perhaps, Lans also considered the slaves names invented by the previous owner distasteful. But the renaming might also disguise other practices of slave trading.

Slave trading was after all prohibited, but the resale of already registered slaves did occur. Children were sold on at the age of eight or nine, usually not long after they themselves were legally registered as slaved. This preference for young enslaved persons is also known for the eighteenth century and little changed in that respect in the nineteenth century (van Hoëvell, 1848, 1853a). Although perhaps the abolition of the slave trade caused scarcity, making children more popular subjects of trade than ever. In Semarang, for instance, there are examples of babies being sold immediately after birth, even if they were to stay with their mothers for the first eight years.⁸ This investment in the trade in children who were born in slavery was perhaps an unforeseen consequence of the abolition of the slave trade. In any case, Van Hoëvell was particularly concerned about this in one of his writings. It was precisely the trafficking of children that formed one of his most compelling arguments for the immediate emancipation of slaves.

Van Hoëvell was also familiar with the registers. He emphasized time and again that, if they were intended to counteract slave trading, they would miss their goal. He believed that the registers were a distortion of reality. Many more people lived in slavery than was recorded in the registers. He also pointed to subversive maneuvers of owners who, for example, did not report the death of their slaves in order to keep new slaves under the names of the deceased. In this way, they managed to avoid the ban on trade and additional taxation (van Hoëvell, 1848). Perhaps the practice of renaming the enslaved, as Mr. Lans frequently did, also concealed this.

In theory, the registers formed a closed system, whereby only slaves who had been registered as such (since 1819) and their children could be traded. The idea was that slavery would disappear by itself. What is striking in the Manado register, however, is the continuous movement of human transports between islands, especially between Manado, Ternate and other Moluccan islands. Ternate had traditionally been an important hub in the slave trade, because of its contacts with Papua, where many persons were looted and sold. The initial number of persons who were registered as slaves on 30

September 1835 (the first entry date), was 350. Within 10 years 254 new names were added, of whom 48 were children born in slavery who reached the age of eight in Manado (in total, around 100 were born in this period). This means that 206 people were added to the register through mobility and trade. At least 189 times one or more slaves were subject of a commercial transaction, often shortly after their registered arrival in Manado. Slavery and slave trade did not slowly 'phase out' as colonial administrators had argued, but remained a dynamic feature of colonial society. This is also clear if we look at the ways out of slavery: only thirty persons were manumitted. Three enslaved persons were banned to Ambon to work in chains because of a criminal offence (one of them returned after five years of banishment and was sold on immediately by her owner). Around ten persons made an attempt at flight out of slavery. Death was still the most important and successful route out of slavery: in the course of those 10 years, 106 persons died in slavery.⁹

Although the owners of the imported enslaved persons will have had to produce legal evidence of their legal status as slaves, the mobility might have created a grey zone, where meddling with such legal notices could remain under the radar. Elsewhere, I have shown how in the eighteenth century people did not hesitate to forge property deeds that proved the status of individuals as being enslaved and owned (Schrikker, 2020, pp. 18–24). There is little reason to believe that such practices did not continue in the nineteenth century, precisely because the formal rules surrounding the slave trade became stricter.

Registration of existing slaves was a must because no new persons were to be enslaved. This was a bureaucratic logic, that guided the present. But then on occasion enslaved persons arriving with their owners from elsewhere were entered into the register, even if there was no proof that the persons in question were indeed already registered as enslaved. The importation of enslaved persons from other islands provided scope for cheating the system. Take for instance Jayo, a fifteen-year-old girl from Batavia, who was sent by J.C. Meijer in 1843 to his son F.W.J. Meijer in Manado. A separate note explained that her transport certificate had remained in Batavia.¹⁰ Whether it actually existed and was indeed forwarded from Batavia at a later moment is not clear.

Slaveholding and slave trade remained a persistent colonial custom until well into the nineteenth century, despite growing moral discomfort. At least this is how it looks from the perspective of the Dutch and the urban colonial world. From the perspective of the enslaved, the world looked very different. For them, slavery was not at all a habit to be accustomed to, and for some it was a situation to actively resist. A forceful example are the Balinese men in the 1820s, who the Dutch government bought as 'recruits' for the Dutch army. As they really did not want to leave Bali at all, they were chained as slaves and drugged, even the officer in charge admitted that in reality they were slaves, more than soldiers. In 1825, a group of them violently resisted through mutiny on the way to Java (Creese, 2016; Schrikker, 2021). In the archives, we regularly encounter dramatic cases, such as that of the young woman Bien in Ternate who desperately fled her masters, because of heavy physical abuse, to find herself sold back into slavery by the Dutch authorities, after her master was convicted. She first sought protection with her father, who lived in freedom in the nearby island of Tidore, as well as with Tidore's Sultan, before she turned to the Dutch administrators for help.¹¹

The Manado register remains silent about the causes for flight. We do not know from what kind of situation Herkulus fled, perhaps he simply longed for his

mother, perhaps he could no longer endure Mr. Lang's treatment. They were not the only ones. Fifteen times the words 'gedrost', 'gevlucht' or 'weggelopen' (ran away) were scribbled next to a name in the registers, usually one or two weeks later followed by the scribble 'terug' (returned). Most of those who fled were young adult men, in their late teens and early twenties. Were they driven by hope and opportunity or were they fleeing from despair? Sondag (Sunday), aged 18, fled three times from the same owner, in one year, before his owner sold him to someone else. Herkulus was the youngest refugee of all. What he had been longing for when he decided to run away, we will never know. What we do know is that for people living in colonial slavery, fleeing was a risky affair, even if family or kin was nearby. Colonial slavery was guarded by bureaucracy and enforced through policing and flight was seldom successful, if we go by the register.

4. Guarding slavery, welcoming of runaways

The colonial situation was full of contradictions. While on land escaped slaves were rounded up and brought back, at sea they were liberated. After the Restoration in 1815 the Dutch navy had slowly begun to combat maritime robbery, or piracy, which included human raiding (à Campo 2006, 78–107; Lapian, 2010, pp. 131–146; Teitler et al., 2005). Thus, in the 1840s, at the same time that Herkulus made his first attempt to escape, people who had fled slavery in the nearby Sulu Archipelago were gently received in Manado. This border region between Mindanao and Kalimantan had become home to the Iranun, a seafaring people who from the second half of the eighteenth century took advantage of a power vacuum in the region and capitalized on a growing world trade and corresponding demand for slave-labour. Chinese traders found their way to Sulu and, in addition to slaves, brought back bird's nests and tripang (sea cucumber). These products were much sought after in the Chinese market. In Sulu itself, agriculture flourished. Most people in Sulu were not involved in the raiding of and trade in humans. In many ways, life for the enslaved there was similar to that in the Dutch enclaves: it was small-scale and slavery was mainly about work in and around the house and gardens (Sutherland, 2004, pp. 133–157; Warren, 1981, 2010). The most important group of pirates was the Sama Balangingi, from the island in the Sulu archipelago that carried the same name. The Sama Balangingi formed a mixed ethnic group, who became almost exclusively equated with the term 'pirates' by the colonial powers in the region such as the Dutch, British and Spanish. The incorporation of ethnically diverse captive people resulted in what Jim Warren calls a 'diasporic identity' (Warren, 2011)

Because the Dutch navy was engaged in fighting piracy, they welcomed all information on the Balangingi. This was an important reason for welcoming the slaves who fled from Sulu to Manado in the 1840s. The Archives in Jakarta keep a series of 25 interviews with these refugees, all men.¹²

Most of the questions were about the Balangingi: what is their route, where do they get their water supplies, who helps them, where do they hide their weapons? But some questions were also about the refugees themselves, for example: how did you manage to escape?

5. Raided in the twilight

There are a lot of similarities in the escape stories that emerge from the interviews. Escapes invariably took place in the dark, in groups of at least three persons, always male. The most important thing was that they managed to get hold of a *prahu*, a small boat. Pedro Hua, a man over 40, said that after 35 years of slavery, he decided to flee when two others approached him with their escape plan. They then drifted for 10 days in the open sea and got caught in a heavy storm after which they were picked up by Ternatan fishermen and taken to Manado. So fleeing was certainly not without risk. Most of the refugees who ended up in Manado spent two or three weeks on the open sea before reaching one of the ports of Sangihe, to the north of Manado.

The questions the refugees were asked were very direct: when were you raided, how did they treat you, who bought you? The answers recorded were equally direct and concrete: most of these men who fled their slavery came, like the registered slaves, from the wide region, from Banda and Ternate to Makassar, from Gorontalo to Sangihe. Indeed, when we compare these data with the origins of the enslaved population of Manado itself, there is remarkably little difference in the regions of origin. Most of the refugees had been raided at dusk when they were teenagers, or when still in their early twenties, while fishing at sea or drying tripang on the beach. They are unequivocal about their treatment at sea: it had been terrible, they had been tied up at the bottom of the *prahu*. The word inhumane (onmenselijk) keeps cropping up in their answers to the questions about how the raiders treated them. Sometimes they had been underway under these circumstances for a fortnight before they could set foot ashore, but sometimes even for months.

The interviews expose the practice of human theft with sharp clarity. Sometimes men were captured in groups of six or ten, but more often it was a smaller group of two or three. Sandae, one of the interviewees, was at sea himself, on his way from Makassar to Selayar, a group of islands further south, to sell coconuts, when his *prahu* was boarded. He lived in slavery for four years until he had a chance to flee. Kadasa from Hitu, near Ambon was twelve when he was raided while fishing at night with his father and brother.

This kind of information gives an idea of the structure of human raiding, which could be small-scale and large-scale at once. The Balangingi had fixed routes and the timing of their journey depended on the monsoon. The raids appear modest in scale at first sight: Along the way, they would pick people off the beaches and out of the water, at vulnerable moments, in unguarded places, at dusk. But every fleet consisted of about sixty Balangingi *prahu*'s. And they traveled usually around for about five months, so the total 'catch', to say it bluntly, was actually considerable (see also: à Campo 2006, 78–107; Lapien, 2010, pp. 131–146; Teitler et al., 2005).

The men whose experiences are recorded in the interviews were all sold to residents of Sulu. Others may have been sold on to Chinese or European traders, and it is not unlikely that some of those captured by the Balangingi ended up on one of other markets in the archipelago where slavery was still common, such as Manado.

That there was indeed trade between Sulu and Manado, we know from the account of the Eurasian man Cornelis Pieters, who fell into the hands of the Balangingi in 1834 when his *prahu* lay off the coast of Gorontalo, near Manado. His story confirms the dehumanization on board, but he was treated quite well by his owner in Sulu. When he was captured, Pieters deliberately concealed the fact that he was the captain of the *prahu* and

pretended to be a slave, as some of his prahu's crew actually were. He told the raiders that his name was Jumat, Friday, a commonly used slave name, that also appears in the Manado register. After he was sold in Sulu, his new owner renamed him Kantores (singer). That culture of renaming was clearly not restricted to the European spheres of slavery only. Although Pieters writes he was not badly treated by his owner, he longed for home. He eventually managed to make contact with the wife of a Chinese trader he knew from Manado. She arranged for a befriended captain to go to Sulu and eventually buy back Cornelis, alias Kantores (Pieters, 1858, pp. 301–312). So Cornelis Pieters did not have to take the risk to flee like Sandae and the others, but what they shared was how they longed for home.

For the purpose of the present analysis, one of the most interesting questions in the interviews is the sixth: 'Where do you wish to go now?' the answers are always short and sweet: to my island, my city, my home village, my family. Even Philipino Pedro Huau, who took the step to flee after 35 years in slavery, simply wanted to return to his native Manila. Some had already worked out a plan during their flight. Thirty-year-old Rupas, for example, who had lived for two and a half years in slavery, wanted to go home first to see his wife and child, and then return to Manado to work, so that he could buy cloth. Textiles had traditionally been one of the most important goods to express personal wealth and were still of great symbolic value in the nineteenth century (Henley, 2005). Pelapen, a man ten years younger than Rupas from the area around Amurang, near to Manado, had lived in slavery since he was seventeen. He envisaged it like this: earning a bit of money first, then returning to his village rich and marrying a girl from the village. This longing for a home, for roots and for family will have been common to many living in slavery. What the home they longed for looked like, we will not know. In the ethnically diverse landscape of the region around North Sulawesi the home they imagined might have differed, while it might have been shaped too by their experience in slavery.

6. An entangled world of slavery

Some historians have ventured into comparisons between local and colonial forms of slavery. It has been argued that life in Sulu must have been better for the enslaved there than for those in the colonial enclaves. The main argument is that slavery there, even for those who had been raided, was not absolute and infinite. Male slaves, for example, married girls from Sulu and thereby gained their freedom. Some worked at the court of the sultan and lived in wealth. Others eventually became pirates themselves and joined the raids of the Balangingi. Raided women, who were more wanted than men, also found their way into society through marriage. However, it should be noted that we only know these stories from the male perspective. We have no examples of women who fled Sulu after so many years of slavery, let alone testimonies (Warren, 1981).

In fact, it may not be possible to actually assess which situation was worse or less bad. But the question is whether that matters. What is more interesting and relevant is the observation that there are so many parallels between the two slave societies and in the aspirations of those who fled from their situation. The enslaved came from the same regions, performed the same type of forced labor and often they or their ancestors had been raided. Yet the Dutch colonial government saw a fundamental difference between slavery in Manado and in Sulu. Those who were raided and ended up in Sulu were in the

Dutch view unlawfully enslaved and deserved freedom. Those who were registered as slaves in Manado, like young Herkulus, could not escape that status. This double standard is characteristic of the Dutch treatment of slavery in the archipelago in this period.

If something is clear: human trafficking and keeping people in slavery was a custom of people with power and capital. They could be pirates, residents of Sulu or Dutch city dwellers in Manado. People who lived in slavery suffered this fate. Not everyone resisted not everyone fled. But that does not mean that they reconciled with their fate. Longing for a reunion with family, whether after two months or after 35 years of slavery, was something that most must have shared.

The stories told by the refugees from Sulu showed that life in slavery there was very similar to life in the Dutch enclaves. The enslaved of Sulu and Manado came from the same places. What the refugees wanted, to go home, to have their own home, would that not be what most people who lived under Dutch slavery probably wanted too? People like young Herkulus and old Nooit Gezien may have aspired that too. The history of slavery in the Dutch East Indies is and remains complicated because of its interwovenness with other forms of slavery and serfdom, such as pawning and debt bondage, as well as human raiding.

The fragmented personal histories presented here, each one worthy of unravelling and reflecting upon, constantly shine a different light on life in slavery and the everyday colonial situation. This can be done through a court case, a register, correspondence or even interviews with enslaved persons. If we combine these, a multifaceted picture of life in – and out of – slavery emerges, from the perspective of the enslaved themselves. If one thing becomes clear from all these stories, it is that the entanglement of indigenous and colonial slavery was a reality from the start.

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Notes

1. This chapter is an adapted translation of Chapter 8 of my book *De Vlinders van Boven-Digoel, Verborgene verhalen over kolonialisme* (Amsterdam, 2021). It was first presented as paper presented on 7 december 2020 during the (online) workshop 'Life after Slavery' van de Radboud Universiteit in Nijmegen, under the title 'Caught in the Twilight. European Slavery and Slave Trade in Indonesia in the Age of Abolition'. I would like to thank Dries Lyna and two anonymous peer-reviewers for their helpful comments.
2. ANRI (Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia), Manado, 210: 'register der lijfeigenen uit Menado'. (register of slaves from Manado).
3. ANRI, Manado 37/1: 'Verklaringen van ontvluchtte personen uit de handen van de zeerovers, 1845–1849'. (Statements of refugees from pirates, 1845–1849.)
4. ANRI, Manado, 210: 'register der lijfeigenen uit Menado', In the context of the namen-muur (name-wall) project of the Wereldmuseum Amsterdam for their exhibition *Onze Koloniale Erfenis*, Pouwel van Schooten transcribed the register into a database under my supervision. This database was ready only after the first publication of this paper in Dutch, this version of the article is enriched with some of the quantitative data from the transcribed register.
5. For more information and analysis of the data in the other registers, see Schrikker, *De vlinders van Boven-Digoel*, chpt.7.

6. ANRI, Manado, 63–3, ‘Stukken slaven 1859’.
7. In the interpretation of his writings I follow Christine Levecq, (1997) and Reggie Baay (2020). The remark on the broader reference to the role of women in the abolitionist movement is based on Maartje Janse, (2013). The local case of the Rotterdam ‘Ladies anti-slavery committee’ is derived from Alex van Stipriaan (2020), p. 322–326.
8. See Chapter 7 of *De Vlinders van Boven Digoel*. The suggestion concerning trade in children is based on an observation made by Lieke Broekman in her MA thesis (2019) on the Semarang slave register and related documents from the Semarang residency archives, that people were taking options on babies born in slavery. She notes that this could have been a by-effect of the restrictions on the slave trade: ‘The slave register of Semarang: the dichotomy of slaves and slave owners.’
9. All these data are derived from the register, see.
10. ANRI Manado 210, last page.
11. Alicia Schrikker, *De Vlinders van Boven-Digoel*. (Hoofdstuk 7: Oude gewoontes en nieuw ideeën). The case can be found in ANRI, Ternate, 170.3: ‘Procespapier over mishandeling van een slavin genaamd Bien’.
12. ANRI, Manado 37/1: ‘Verklaringen van ontvluchtte personen uit de handen van de zeeroovers, 1845–1849’. (Statements of refugees from pirates, 1845–1849.) I gratefully used the transcription of the 25 interviews made by Charlotte Warnders who used them for her BA thesis; The interviews are a unique set and also appear in the work of Jim Warren, who used them primarily to reconstruct the world of the Samal Balangingi. The Manadonese historian Ad Lapien also discussed the interviews in his work on piracy: Lapien, A.B., (2004) 3–16. And Lapien, A.B., (2009).

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