



## Introduction lesson

### Lesson 3.2: Western Africa

#### Instructions

The day prior to departure from Middelburg the captain was given three documents with instructions for the voyage by the Middelburg Commerce Company:

1. The instructions, in this the destination(s) was (were) clearly stated.
2. The private instructions, in it the manner in which trade should be conducted was described.
3. The additional private instructions, in it the destination following the purchase of the slaves was clearly defined.

#### Trade regions in Western Africa

The Unity's voyage from Zeeland to Western Africa lasted over two months. The Unity first sailed to the Upper Coast, then to the Ivory Coast and finally to the Gold Coast. Along the West African coast, the captain and first mate tried to trade as much merchandise as possible for slaves, gold, ivory water and rice.

#### Prices per trade region

Per trade region the demand for trade goods and offer of enslaved Africans varied. Generally speaking the Upper Coast (in The Unity's case this is the region we now know as Libia) was cheaper than the Gold Coast (Ghana). Men were more expensive than women and boys more expensive than girls. The age of maturity from an adult to a boy or girl was around the age of 17, while the age until which children were allowed to stay with their mother while on board was approximately 13.

#### Textile, gunpowder and liquor

From all the trade goods textile was the most important. Most textiles were cotton, but there was also linen and silk. Following textile, gunpowder was the second most important trade good and liquor third. Knives and beads followed. The remaining cargo consisted of copper bracelets, kettles, basins, trumpets, mirrors, tobacco pipes, non-lubricated metals, padlocks and wine and beer glasses.

#### Trading from the longboat and rowing boat

The Unity was equipped with two smaller vessels, a longboat and a rowing boat. The boat had a mast with two sails and even had a cooking kettle. Part of the crew could take the boat out to trade independently for a several days.

#### More information

Instructions: <http://eenigheid.slavenhandelmcc.nl/trajecten-van-de-reis-en/voorbereiding-en/instructions-for-the-captain/?lang=en>

Trade strategy in Western Africa: <http://eenigheid.slavenhandelmcc.nl/trajecten-van-de-reis-en/afrika-en/handelsstrategie/?lang=en>

Trade book: <http://eenigheid.slavenhandelmcc.nl/trajecten-van-de-reis-en/afrika-en/handelsboek/?lang=en>

Trade load or cargo: <http://eenigheid.slavenhandelmcc.nl/trajecten-van-de-reis-en/afrika-en/samenstelling-cargazoel/?lang=en>

Textile: <http://eenigheid.slavenhandelmcc.nl/trajecten-van-de-reis-en/afrika-en/samenstelling-cargazoel/textiel-slavenhandel/?lang=en>