

Fortuin heeft een zeer lezenswaardig boek geschreven dat de complexiteiten en tegenstrijdigheden van het leven in voormalig Nederlands-Indië in verschillende tijdperken goed weergeeft.

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Ramona Negrón et al. (eds), *The Dutch Transatlantic Slave Trade. New Methods, Perspectives, and Sources* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2025). 272 pp. ISBN 9789048560493.

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This volume contains nine essays, most of which are written by junior scholars who are either working on their PhD dissertation or have recently completed a master's degree. Part of the objective of the volume is to showcase the variety of subjects being explored by young scholars working on the history of the Dutch Atlantic slave trade. In this objective the volume succeeds, offering a broad range of topics related to the slave trade. Most of the chapters are based on archival material of the two largest Dutch slave-trading companies: the West India Company (WIC) and the Middelburgsche Commercie Compagnie (MCC). The chapters, respectively, deal with: the evolving role of the Island of São Tomé in the WIC slave trade; the role of gun trade in MCC slave voyages; shipping on MCC return voyages; a microhistory of two MCC slaving voyages; the impact of ship captains on insurrections aboard MCC ships; nutrition and the effects of malnutrition on enslaved people aboard a MCC ship; the role of African sailors on MCC and WIC ships; a discursive analysis of the racializing economic language adopted in MCC documents; and, finally, a personal history of a British commissary judge in Suriname.

Much of the research in the book exemplifies an emerging trend in Dutch slavery and colonial history studies, in which researchers make use of archival collections that have been digitized over the last five to ten years. While all but the last two chapters refer exclusively to digitized material, the exact way that this material shaped the research could have been elaborated on in more detail, particularly given that the volume claims to present new methods. For instance, in the first chapter Florian Herrendorf does state that digitization enables one to 'establish connections' and 'shed new light' on source material but

does not explain how it has been done and what the potential pitfalls are. It would have been insightful to include a description of how the documentation was collected and selected, what kind of gaps exist in that material, and which connections can be established. This information is especially pertinent since the chapter demonstrates the value of such methods by unearthing the previously obscured history of the island of São Tomé's role in the slave trade through the analysis of scattered source materials. Chapter six by Lucas Oosterwijk presents the most explicit discussion of methodology, contributing to discussions on nutrition on board slave ships by reconstructing the caloric intake of enslaved people trafficked across the Atlantic and the effects of malnutrition. To my knowledge, it is the first time this analysis has been conducted in the context of slave ships.

Each of the chapters is interesting and merits attention. They advance classic and developing research themes such as the organization and management of the slave trade, the conditions and experiences of those involved, labor relations, and contemporaneous discourse on the trade. Several chapters stand out to me for their explicit positioning within the international literature. Chapter two by Philip Huber makes a clear intervention in the discussion on the gun-slave hypothesis, showing that evidence from Dutch ships diverges from previous findings on the English trade. Chapter five by Luc Meijboom argues that discussions on the frequency and causes of slave rebellion on board ships should be revisited. Additionally, chapter seven by Matthias Lukkes demonstrates that based on Dutch sources, the previous assumption that all African labor aboard slave ships was always forced labor may need to be revised.

However, the wide variety of chapters also poses a challenge for the volume. It is partially a product of the genre of edited volumes to have a broad scope, but in this case the editors could have accommodated this breadth more in their own assessment of the contents. In the introduction, the editors call for a Dutch field of *Middle Passage Studies*, focusing on life and conditions aboard ships crossing the Atlantic Ocean. Such an ambition to expand the focus of a field of scholarship with different material is commendable, but it comprises only around half of the articles in the volume which focus specifically on the voyage from the African coast to the Americas as well as the associated experiences of individuals or groups aboard slave ships. Scholars interested in this topic will thus find plenty of material within the book, but the specific framing risks undervaluing the other contributions. Perhaps this shortfall could have been resolved by writing more broadly

about the combined contributions of experiences, practices, and narratives relating to the Dutch Atlantic slave trade.

Furthermore, in the introduction the editors describe how, since the last decade, the centrality of the WIC and MCC in the historiography of the Dutch slave trade has been displaced in favor of a more contextualized approach, incorporating new research on the private trade. However, many of the chapters in the volume focus heavily on material from the MCC and WIC archives, centering their business and management practices rather than stressing the relative institutional unimportance of these companies. Here the contribution of the volume could have been more strongly foregrounded by pointing toward the fact that these chapters offer interesting new insights from that material and demonstrate that much work remains to be done on the role and operation of these companies. It might have been more impactful overall to present the chapters more generally as contributing to various subfields of research, even as they share the common denominator of working on topics that are Dutch, Atlantic, and focussed on the slave trade.

By and large, the work contained within the book is valuable and speaks to a variety of ongoing debates. Scholars working on the history of slavery and the slave trade will find welcome contributions in this volume, and for that reason it is worth adding to one's collection.

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Rose Mary Allen et al. (eds), *Slavery and the Dutch State* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2025). 490 pp. ISBN 9789087284787.

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Slavery and the Dutch State starts out with the acknowledgement that the Netherlands now recognizes that the country's relationship with slavery is a "very painful, important, and until recently underexposed part of our shared history" (p.11). In this edited volume, the editors and contributors examine the socioeconomic, political, and societal contexts in which Dutch involvement in slavery emerged and evolved. In addition, *Slavery and the Dutch State* traces both the immediate and long-term consequences of slavery in the Netherlands and in the societies subjected to Dutch colonial rule. This volume broadens its