

The Winding Path from Slavery to “Free” Labor

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The abolition of the slave trade and slavery paved the way for free labor but did not preclude new forms of coercion. In the Dutch colonies, slavery, forced labor, and contract labor could exist side by side. Sometimes, one was followed by the other. Studying the relationships between slavery, forced labor, and contract labor in the colonial context that legitimized all three can contribute to a better understanding of the transition from slavery to free labor.

The former Dutch colonies of Suriname, the Dutch Caribbean islands, and the Dutch East Indies differed sharply in terms of size, location, population, economy, and society. Therefore, the effects of abolition and the rise and persistence of forced and contract labor in the Dutch colonies can only be discussed in broad terms. One common denominator was that the economies, and thus the deployment of labor, were largely in the service of the colonial rulers who legitimized and controlled labor.

The Ban on the Transatlantic Slave Trade

In 1845, Francis Meynell, a British lieutenant of the Royal Navy, was sailing off the coast of West Africa on the warship *HMS Albatross*. His mission was to combat the slave trade. On March 1 of that year, the crew of the *Albatross* overpowered the Spanish ship *Albanez*, which was carrying more than seven hundred enslaved people. Lieutenant Meynell painted a watercolor of the ship's hold where the enslaved were locked up.

The *Albanez* was taken to the port of Freetown, Sierra Leone. No less than 148 enslaved people had died en route. The survivors regained their freedom, and the slave traders were prosecuted.



Francis Meynell painted the people in the hold of the *Albanez*, after it was seized in 1845. The enslaved people would later be brought ashore and freed.

The watercolor depicts the slave trade that evidently also took place in the Dutch Atlantic colonies after the English banned it in 1807. Incidentally, the British were not the first to abolish the slave trade—the Danes had preceded them in 1803. The English were in a position to impose the ban on the Dutch colonies because they controlled these colonies during the Napoleonic occupation of the Netherlands. After the restoration of Dutch control over the colonies in 1815, the ban on the slave trade remained in force.

Because slavery itself was still allowed, the demand for enslaved Africans did not abate on the plantations in Suriname, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, Martinique, and Guadeloupe. Operating from a trading hub on the Danish island of Saint Thomas, the Dutch islands of Saint Eustatius, Saba, and Saint Martin actively participated in this trade. Archaeologist and historian Ryan Espersen showed that this participation included providing the paperwork required to legitimize the illegal trade in enslaved people. Suriname, a country where about a thousand enslaved people were smuggled in annually, effectively combated this practice by punishing the traders and making the registration of enslaved people mandatory from 1826 onwards.¹

In the Surinamese plantation economy, where more than 90 percent of the population was made up of enslaved people, demographic figures show not only the consequences of slavery for people's lives but also why that system collapsed after the slave trade ended: the number of births would never exceed deaths. Life on the sugar plantations took its toll. When the import of new enslaved people came to a stop, planters' businesses felt the effects immediately.

On the islands, deaths did not outnumber births. This may have been due to a healthier climate and the absence of large-scale plantations like the ones in Suriname. Because of the lower death rate, it was long assumed that the slavery regime on the islands was less harsh. However, this idea is challenged by recent archaeological (bone) research and studies into oral traditions in the Caribbean islands by archaeologists like Felicia Fricke. Both lines of inquiry provide new perspectives on the living conditions of enslaved people, their diet, physical condition, possible injuries resulting from punishments, and hence also on resistance, and religion. These studies reveal differences between the islands. Future research of this type might also offer more information about the living conditions in the final phase of slavery, after the abolition of the trade.²

The abolition of the (illegal) slave trade prompted the colonial administration to make changes. Minimum requirements were set for food and living conditions, unlimited punishment was curbed, the sale or relocation of enslaved people was made more difficult, and Christianization was encouraged. In Curaçao, conversion to Catholicism had already begun in the eighteenth century, in contrast to Suriname, where the Protestant Moravians were admitted to the plantations a few decades before the abolition of slavery. However, Christianization would not threaten the survival of the Afro-American religions, languages, and cultures formed during slavery in Suriname and the islands.

In Suriname, the reforms were introduced in the hope of slowing the population decline. In both Suriname and Curaçao, they were aimed at preventing uprisings and ultimately, after the abolition of slavery, at founding a culture and economy based on European values with a corresponding work ethic.

The Abolition of Slavery

In the Dutch East Indies, slavery formally ended on January 1, 1860. Recent research has revealed how extensive and deeply rooted slavery was in the Dutch East Indies. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) had owned and traded enslaved people there on a massive scale since the early seventeenth century. The enslaved people came from East Africa and various countries in Asia. They were put to work in households, mines, workshops, and construction (for building military forts).³

After the abolition of slavery, a small number of slave owners in Java received compensation for the human “property” that they had lost. On the other Indonesian islands, there were fewer cases of compensation, but slavery did not immediately end there either, in spite of the ban; it was tolerated in various manifestations including debt slavery (labor to pay off debt). In addition, other forms of coercion persisted in the Dutch East Indies after the abolition of slavery. Under the Cultivation System introduced in 1830, farmers were obliged to use part of their land to grow export crops, which they paid as rent to the government (see also Chapter 12 by Jan Breman).

The colonial legal system made it possible to send prisoners sentenced to forced labor on military expeditions of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL), although initially this could only be done with the prisoner’s consent. From 1873, forced laborers sentenced to more than three months could also be deployed outside their region. These forced laborers were derogatorily called “chain bears” because they were sometimes chained together. The mortality among the forced laborers in the KNIL was high. The exact numbers are not known, but during the Aceh War (1873–1914), an estimated 25,000 of them died. Forced laborers were also used in road and harbor construction, mining, and agriculture. In the twentieth century, the use of forced laborers in the KNIL decreased because fewer military expeditions were organized, not because it was forbidden; in principle, this form of forced labor was still allowed in the Dutch East Indies.⁴ The Cultivation System and the deployment of forced laborers in the KNIL are proof that the abolition of slavery did not put an end to forced labor.

More than three years after abolition went into effect in the Dutch East Indies, slavery was abolished in Suriname and the Dutch Antilles. The end of slavery in Suriname and the Antilles had become inevitable because these areas were surrounded by British and French colonies that had abolished

slavery in 1834 and 1848, respectively. Enslaved people escaped, albeit in modest numbers, from the Surinamese border area, Nickerie, to British Guyana and from Saint Martin and Saint Eustatius to the British islands of Saint Kitts and Anguilla. The abolition of slavery by the French led to escape attempts from the Dutch half of Saint Martin in the south, to the French-ruled north. Many who remained on the Dutch part of the island refused to work as enslaved people any longer. This led to a de facto abolishment of slavery there. Slave laws were repealed and wages were paid. When slavery finally was officially abolished in Suriname and the Dutch Caribbean, on July 1, 1863, it was the culmination of a long process of lobbying and procrastination.



Writer and artist W.E.H. (Willem) Winkels satirized the abolition of slavery in 1863. He criticized colonists for whom the slave trade had been "gold mining."

In a series of cartoons, the writer, artist, and former plantation overseer Willem Winkels portrayed the abolition of slavery as doomed to fail, suggesting that formerly enslaved people would no longer work for the planters and that it would lead to economic decline. He denounced the planters who mistreated the enslaved and thought only of their own profit. This line of thinking continued until the abolition of slavery. The planters successfully demanded compensation for the loss of human "property." In Suriname, compensation amounted to 300 guilders per freed person. In Curaçao, Bonaire, Aruba, Saint Eustatius, and Saba, planters received a rate

of 200 guilders. Since slavery in Saint Martin had effectively already ended in 1848, the owners there were paid only 100 guilders per freed person. The freed people themselves received nothing.⁵

The abolition of slavery in Suriname was followed by a decade-long transition period. Under what was called state supervision, the formerly enslaved were obliged to work on plantations for another ten years. They could sign annual contracts with plantations of their choice. Changing employers was one of the few ways that they could taste labor freedom and impress upon planters that they were dependent on the laborers' willingness to work. However, the wages they received were barely sufficient to support a family, while older people without contracts often lived on the plantations in poverty.⁶

On the Dutch Caribbean islands, there was no state supervision. The islands were trading colonies, not economies that depended on the massive deployment of enslaved people; the island plantations mainly produced for local markets. An exception was Bonaire, where enslaved people worked in the salt pans.

Free labor did not mean equal opportunities on the islands, where color, class, and religion had long determined the status of both the free and unfree islanders. Abject poverty prevailed due to a scarcity of work and land. The descendants of enslaved people were the hardest hit. The lack of available fertile land and work sometimes drove the freed people back to their former owners. In Curaçao, for instance, economic hardship left them no choice but to continue living on their former owners' land. In exchange, they worked for the landowner (the *paga tera* system). Large numbers of people, mainly men, left the islands to escape poverty (see Chapter 15 by Charles do Rego).

A turning point was the rise of the oil industry in the 1920s after Royal Dutch Shell built refineries in Curaçao and Aruba. Oil refining gave a huge boost to the economy, provided employment, and attracted many migrants to the islands. However, the unprecedented economic growth was not sufficient to break down the deeply rooted racial barriers. The oil company was firmly rooted in the colonial past. *Koninklijke Olie*, the company founded in 1890 in the Dutch East Indies that later became a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell, built the foundation for the Shell empire there, where it could set favorable conditions for itself and exploit the labor (under unfavorable working conditions) of Chinese and Javanese contract workers—at that time disparagingly called “coolies.”

Contract workers were the solution for many of Suriname's plantation owners during the period of state supervision, as they sought new ways to run their plantations on cheap labor. At first, they brought in relatively small numbers of contract workers from Madeira, China, and the Caribbean, but from 1873, labor was recruited en masse in Asia. More than 34,000 British-Indians and nearly 33,000 Javanese left for Suriname, where they worked under harsh conditions on the sugar cane plantations. Workers who breached their contract were prosecuted, as stipulated in the penal sanction policy.⁷ And so a new form of unfree labor took the place of the slavery system and remained there until World War II. For contract workers who migrated from the Dutch East Indies to Suriname, it must have felt like there was no escaping the colonial regime.

The formerly enslaved people who were replaced by the recruited contract workers gradually left the plantations where they had tried to eke out a living. It was not easy to build up a life in a colony where large-scale agriculture based on cheap contract labor was the standard. There were some opportunities in gold and rubber extraction in the new frontier areas of the Surinamese interior (areas on the boundary with cultivated land). Some free people found jobs working for the colonial government.

To this day, little is known about what opportunities existed in the free labor market in the decades after the abolition of slavery. Did the free workers band together in solidarity, or did new barriers arise between the different groups among them?

Navigating between Change and Preservation

The abolition of slavery and the ensuing introduction or continuation of contract labor and unfree labor required adjustments in the organization of governance and the maintenance of law and order. The royal family played a symbolic role in shaping and reforming the colonial state. In Suriname and the Caribbean islands, King William III was portrayed as the initiator of abolition, although in reality all he did was sign the decision. The authorities encouraged gratitude towards the monarch and used it to promote obedience, diligence, Christianity, and loyalty to colonial authority. In the Dutch East Indies, the crown was used to create a sense of unity between the metropole and the colony after the troops had performed their repressive tasks: Indonesian princes signed loyalty declarations and were invited to royal celebrations.⁸

During the period of state supervision in Suriname, an administrative system of districts and district commissioners was set up to register and control labor. The authorities issued ordinances against vagrancy and refusal to work, which could lead to imprisonment or forced labor. Participation in “heathen rites,” that is, Afro-religious rituals, was banned to promote assimilation.

In Suriname, the abolition of slavery gave rise to the introduction of a police force: the *corps marechaussee* became active on July 1, 1863. Discipline and law and order had to be enforced differently now that social relations were no longer determined by slavery. Plantation owners had lost their instruments of control; they could no longer sentence and punish workers as they had during slavery. An additional factor the authorities had to contend with was the population growth of nearly 37 percent between 1863 and 1900 due to the influx of Asian contract workers. On the islands, it was not so much the abolition of slavery that changed law enforcement and policing, but the rise of the oil industry in the 1920s, which also triggered enormous population growth and thus prompted the reorganization, expansion, and militarization of the police force. In the vast Dutch East Indies archipelago, the police force was more developed in the early twentieth century than in Suriname and the Antilles. This modernization process came to a halt in the 1930s, when the rise of nationalism and the population’s growing political self-awareness led to increasing friction with the colonial state, as the police strove to maintain the state’s grip on power by means of repression and violence.

In the late nineteenth century, the colonial police in Suriname, the Caribbean islands, and the Dutch East Indies represented both security and control, that is, both justice and discipline. Providing security legitimized the police force, but that security was also a necessary precondition for the colonial economy to function properly. In the scholarly literature of the 1980s and 1990s, repressive police action was described as an effective display of colonial power. However, modern studies regard it more as a sign of weakness in the colonial state and law enforcement.⁹

From the moment the Antillean police force was created, it saw a significant influx of Dutch military and civil personnel. The police in the Dutch East Indies consisted almost entirely of Indigenous Indonesians, except for the highest ranks. In Suriname too, the police force ended up consisting of mostly non-white people. Following Curaçao’s example, the ideal had been to establish a civilian police force there, made up of former European

military personnel, that relied heavily on military discipline and the show of force. It proved impossible to create a fully white corps *marechaussee*; there were simply too few suitable white ex-military people available. This led to the foundation of an Indigenous police force, manned with Creole people (formerly enslaved people and their descendants) in addition to the white police force. Hence, Suriname ended up with two police forces, segregated by color. This rigid distinction was remarkable because during slavery, plantation owners had been assisted by *basyas*, Black overseers. The racial distinction in the police can be explained as a redefinition of social boundaries after the abolition of slavery. As historians Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler state in their analysis of colonial societies, the Otherness of the colonized was not a given, but had to be continually reaffirmed. A white police force represented the colonial state and symbolized the unbroken authority of the white colonial population after the abolition of slavery.¹⁰ In practice, maintaining two police forces, separated by skin color, turned out to be an untenable situation in the long run, so in 1895 both forces were merged into a single armed police force, and before long its officers mainly consisted of men of Creole descent.

Historian Michael Rothberg introduced the concept of the implicated subject to describe individuals associated with, or part of, a system or institution like the police, without having any influence on that system.¹¹ This begs the question to what extent individuals are responsible for the institutions that they serve. The police force in the Dutch colonies was established in an ambivalent context of conservatism and change. Local officers' knowledge of the local geography, language, and people was increasingly recognized and valued, but at the same time, local police officers never gained the colonial state's full trust, and the army was always kept in reserve as a loyal ally.

Underpaid and mistrusted, with hardly any career opportunities, local policemen also faced racism and exclusion—which they themselves helped preserve through their work. This clearly shows the complexity of a colonial state in transition and also illustrates how winding the path to free labor was.

Further Research

To understand the transition from slavery to free labor in the colonies, it would be useful to study this in conjunction with other forms of unfree labor. How could free labor develop in an environment where unfree labor was the norm? Was social mobility possible in societies where ancestry determined status? What opportunities and constraints existed? How can a concept like the implicated subject help us understand the dilemma of colonized people in government service? What did the abolition of slavery mean for enslaved people who had already been freed before the abolition? Did they show solidarity, or were new barriers erected?

Attempts to make the voice of enslaved and other unfree people heard are, of course, not new. Their voices are absent from the sources, which were written by colonial administrators, planters, and other entrepreneurs. Thus, a biased historiography seems inevitable. In the early 1980s, historian Ranajit Guha wrote that it is better to acknowledge this bias and treat it like a source of information that shapes historiography. By viewing and analyzing this bias as a given, we can approach the obscured past. Anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot also writes that “silences” are unavoidable in historiography. He believes that re-reading and re-evaluating sources allows us to better understand those whose voices have been lost.¹² These insights remain valuable, but in addition to written sources, we can access the material and immaterial cultural heritage of the colonized through oral traditions, museum exhibitions, questions about the restitution of heritage, making photo material accessible, revaluating on-site cultural heritage, such as plantations, factories, cemeteries and monuments, and archaeological research. These developments must be encouraged and financed.

Notes

- 1 Ryan Espersen, "Better than We': Landscapes and Materialities of Race, Class, and Gender in Pre-Emancipation Colonial Saba, Dutch Caribbean" (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2017), 79–80; Ryan Espersen, "Fifty Shades of Trade': St. Thomas during the early 19th Century," *New West Indian Guide* 94 (2019): 41–68.
- 2 Alex van Stipriaan, *Surinaams contrast: Roofbouw en overleven in een Caraïbische plantagekolonie, 1750–1863* (Leiden: KITLV Uitgeverij, 1993); Gert Oostindie, *Het paradijs overzee: De Nederlandse Caraïben en Nederland* (Leiden: KITLV Uitgeverij, 1997), 33; Felicia Fricke, "The Lifeways of Enslaved People in Curaçao, St. Eustatius, and St. Maarten/St. Martin: A Thematic Analysis of Archeological, Osteological, and Oral Historical Data" (PhD diss., University of Kent, 2019); L. Jason Laffoon, Ryan Espersen and Haley Mickleburgh, "Life History of an Enslaved African: Multiple Isotope Evidence for Forced Childhood Migration from Africa to the Caribbean and Associated Dietary Change," *Archeometry* 60, no. 2 (2018): 350–65.
- 3 Reggie Baay, *Daar werd wat gruwelijks verricht* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum, 2021); Matthias van Rossum, *Kleurrijke tragiek* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2015).
- 4 Petra Groen et al., *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie: Opkomst en ondergang van Nederland als koloniale mogendheid, 1816–2010* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2021), 184; Fred Lanzing, "Het KNIL: Enkele beelden en feiten," *Indische Letteren* 19 (2004): 53.
- 5 Dirk J. Tang, *Met Hollandse bedaardheid: Hoe Nederland tussen 1800 en 1873 slavernij in de koloniën afschafte* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2021); A. F. Paula, "Vrije" slaven: Een sociaal-historische studie over de dualistische slavenemancipatie op Nederlands Sint Maarten, 1816–1863 (Zutphen/Willemstad: Walburg Pers, 1993).
- 6 Ellen Klinkers, "De strijd gaat door: Creools verzet na de afschaffing van de slavernij," in *Ik ben een haan met een kroon op mijn hoofd: Pacificatie en verzet in koloniaal en post-koloniaal Suriname*, ed. Peter Meel and Hans Ramsোধ, (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2007), 136–139.
- 7 Rosemarijn Hoeft, "Plantation Labor after the Abolition of Slavery: The Case of Plantation Marienburg (Suriname), 1880–1940" (PhD diss., University of Florida, 1987).
- 8 Gert Oostindie, *De parels en de kroon: Het Koningshuis en de koloniën* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 2006), 51–53.
- 9 Marieke Bloembergen, *De geschiedenis van de politie in Nederlands-Indië: Uit zorg en angst* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2009); Aart G. Broek, *De geschiedenis van de politie op de Nederlandse Caribische eilanden, 1839–2010: Geboeid door macht en onmacht* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2011); Ellen Klinkers, *De geschiedenis van de politie in Suriname, 1863–1975* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2011); David Anderson and David Killingray, eds., *Policing the Empire: Government, Authority and Control, 1830–1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992); David Arnold, *Police Power and Colonial Rule. Madras 1859–1947* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986); Robert Bickers, *Empire Made Me: An Englishman Adrift in Shanghai* (London: Columbia University Press, 2004); Georgina Sinclair, *At the End of the Line: Colonial Policing and the Imperial Endgame 1945–1980* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).
- 10 Ellen Klinkers, *De geschiedenis van de politie in Suriname, 15–57*; Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler, eds., *Tension of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
- 11 Michael Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019).
- 12 Ranajit Guha, "The Prose of Counter-Insurgency," *Subaltern Studies II. Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 1–42; Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

Research Method: Archaeology

Archaeology can make an important contribution to our understanding of Dutch slavery heritage. This discipline focuses on the objects, structures, and other evidence (such as glass fragments, ruined walls, and plant remains) that people in the past left behind. Archaeology makes it possible to explore subjects that are seldom mentioned in historical documents, as well as the perspectives of those who did not write anything down. It is interdisciplinary, using different kinds of data and overlapping with disciplines such as anthropology, history, and sociology. Most archaeological information comes from excavations, where objects, structures, and changes in soil color can provide information about the existence of a house, a village, or a town. During and after an excavation, a number of scientific analyses can be conducted that examine, for example, the chemistry of a shard of pottery or the biology of an animal bone. From these data, archaeologists can reconstruct trade routes and subsistence patterns. Archaeology can also be an effective method for studying slavery and enslaved people.

In the Dutch Caribbean, there is a growing body of work on the archaeology of enslaved people, exploring the construction methods that they used, the food they ate, the illnesses they experienced, and their West African origins. Archaeology has also been used to investigate slavery in Suriname. Examples of this include the study of villages built by Maroon communities, genetic studies, and population-wide analyses of human remains. In South Africa, archaeologists have carried out mathematical analyses of the human skeleton that examine labor patterns, biomolecular analyses that explore population movements, and studies of rock art made by enslaved people who escaped and mounted a guerrilla resistance. Some archaeological research has also been conducted in Indonesia, including a landscape study of social control on a plantation in the Banda Islands.¹

While such archaeological studies provide amazing insights into the lives of enslaved people that are often unavailable from other sources, there are also shortcomings. These mainly revolve around the (neo)colonial aspects of a discipline that often does not consider itself accountable to local, descendant, and Indigenous communities. There have been several cases of poorly handled excavations of burial grounds, for example. In 2021, archaeologists at Golden Rock Plantation on the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Eustatius excavated the remains of almost 70 people without community consultation. Following widespread public complaints, changes to heritage management structures on the island are now being implemented to ensure that this does not happen again. Other challenges in the archaeology of Dutch slavery heritage include that of preservation in warm, humid climates, where archaeological remains may be less complete than elsewhere and decay faster after excavation.

Fortunately, strategies for improving the discipline of archaeology in terms of its community consultation and engagement already exist, such as the rubric for engagement with descendant communities developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund and James Madison's Montpelier in the USA. Additionally, the 1980s excavation at the New York African Burial Ground is often held up as an example of good practice implemented after public complaints. Within the Dutch colonial sphere, there are also local initiatives seeking to restructure the relationships between archaeologists, government, and community. For example, the Saint Eustatius Afrikan Burial Ground Alliance, the Statia Heritage Research Commission, and the Statia Cultural Heritage Implementation Committee have all been working on heritage issues arising from the excavation at Golden Rock Plantation in 2021. Community campaigners, young scholars, and practitioners often lead the way in changing the attitudes of archaeologists.²

Finally, extraordinary methodological advances are constantly being made in the wider discipline of archaeology that may be of use in the study of Dutch colonial slavery, for example the extraction of DNA from a pipe stem in Maryland (USA); improved mapping methods; and the identification of disease proteins in dental calculus. There is also great potential for collaboration between historians and archaeologists, producing more thorough and nuanced scholarship than either discipline can achieve alone.

The future of the archaeology of Dutch slavery heritage is therefore one of increasingly detailed insights into the lives of enslaved people, facilitated by scientific developments and produced in partnership with local communities.

Notes

- 1 See, for example, David R. Carlson and Amy Jordan, "Visibility and Power: Preliminary Analysis of Social Control on a Bandanese Plantation Compound, Eastern Indonesia," *Asian Perspectives: Journal of Archaeology for Asia and the Pacific*, 52, no. 2 (2013): 213–43; Felicia Fricke et al. "Delayed Physical Development in a First Generation Enslaved African Woman from Pietermaai, Curaçao," *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, 30, no. 1 (2019): 43–52; Brent SinclairThomson and Sam Challis, "Runaway Slaves, Rock Art and Resistance in the Cape Colony, South Africa," *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, 55, no. 4 (2020): 475–91; Cheryl White, "Archaeological Investigation of Suriname Maroon Ancestral Communities," *Caribbean Quarterly*, 55, no. 2 (2009): 65–88.
- 2 See, for example, Julie M. Schablitsky et al., "Ancient DNA Analysis of a Nineteenth-Century Tobacco Pipe from a Maryland Slave Quarter," *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 105 (May 2019): 11–18.

Abstract

This chapter examines the relationship between abolition and emancipation. The Dutch did not abolish the slave trade voluntarily, but under pressure from Britain. Although official documents relating to the abolition of chattel slavery on July 1, 1863 speak of “emancipation,” what actually took place was merely a legal act. Emancipation is far more than legal abolition, however, as it entails a process in which a stigmatized and subjugated social grouping struggles to improve its collective condition. This emancipatory process is still unfinished, while the memory of slavery—especially the collective memory—lingers. As a result, knowledge production has also been slow and is as yet largely incomplete.

Keywords: chattel slavery; abolition; emancipation; legacy of slavery; Netherlands