

KITLV

1500-2000

The Atlantic World and the Dutch

13h30 – 17h00

Atlantic Day
1 April 2010

Tropenmuseum, Linnaeusstraat 2, Amsterdam

Marronage and Maroon communities: a Common Atlantic History?

Maroons were slaves who escaped from the Dutch and other European slave systems across the Americas. Many built autonomous lives for themselves, separate from colonial society. Some formed vibrant communities. To what extent is this a shared history and does this have implications for the present?

A panel of renowned experts including [Prof. Alex van Stipriaan Luiscius](#) (KIT & Erasmus University Rotterdam), [Dr Linda Rupert](#) (University of North Carolina Greensboro and Scaliger Institute, Leiden University), [Dr Rômulo Xavier](#) (University of Pernambuco), [Andrea Mosterman MA](#) (Boston University) and [Dr Frank Dragtenstein](#) (NiNsee) will present their recent projects and research findings on marronage in a discussion and public debate. Moderator of the discussion is Dr [Fridus Steijlen](#) (KITLV). Presentations and discussion will be in English.

PROGRAM

Entrance at the Tropenmuseum, Linnaeusstraat 2*

13h30 – 14h00 Reception at museum Café-restaurant Soeterijn

14h00 - 16h30 Expert meeting and discussion

17h00 – 19h00 Drinks and snacks at Café-restaurant Soeterijn

***Before 13h30, with the museum entrance ticket, you may visit the exhibition ‘[Art of Survival. Maroon culture from Suriname](#)’, edited by Alex van Stipriaan Luiscius and Thomas Polime.**

‘Maroons have lived in Suriname for around three hundred years. Originally snatched from African and shipped to Suriname as slave labor for the Dutch, they managed to break free and sought shelter along the rivers in the bush. Some people say that they are the best preserved piece of African culture outside the African continent. But their culture has been constantly changing – right up to the present day’.

EXPERTS DISCUSSION PANEL

ROMULO XAVIER on the 'bosnegers' in Dutch Brazil

Between 1630 and 1654, the Dutch settled in Brazil, in the State of Pernambuco. During this period they were forced to deal with many administrative problems. One of the problems faced by the Dutch administration was the escape of slaves. These runaway slaves were known by the Dutch as "Bosnegers". This work aims at pointing out problems involving the West Indies Company and the so called "Bosnegers".

Romulo Xavier, PhD in Modern History (Universidade Federal Fluminense, 2008) and Associate Professor at the University of Pernambuco. Author of thesis: 'The Discomfort of Governance': Aspects of Administration in Dutch Brazil. Lately, he has written works about slavery in 17th century Brazil and he is about to publish a study on the *Quilombo dos Palmares* in a book edited by Flavio Gomes (UFRJ), along with other renowned scholars as Marcus Carvalho, John Thornton, Joao Jose Reis and Luis Filipe de Alencastro. He recently participated in a debate on runaway slaves during the Dutch period in Brazil at the Biblioteca Nacional. He frequently collaborates with the Revista de Historia da Biblioteca Nacional.

ANDREA MOSTERMAN on Marronage in Early New York

This presentation examines marronage in Early New York. While marronage occurred in most American colonies, the surviving colonial records reveal no significant evidence of such slave resistance in this region before 1664, when it was still the Dutch colony New Netherland, even though about a third of the population were African slaves by 1638. Examination of the Dutch colonial records demonstrates many of New Netherland's slaves "worked the system," a concept first introduced by historian Jane Landers, as an alternative to marronage. The case of New Netherland demonstrates that in some instances resistance to slavery did not require fleeing from slavery. As the English took control of the region in 1664 and the use of slave labor increased, African Americans' opportunities to obtain certain freedoms within the system decreased significantly; consequently, enslaved Africans now more often chose to run away. These runaway slaves sought refuge in New York City, amongst Native Americans, free blacks, or on the ships that frequented the New York harbor. Through comparison of the stories of eighteenth century runaway slaves to those of the earlier African descendants who chose to work within the system instead, this presentation examines why this shift in slave resistance occurred, which should contribute to a better understanding of marronage in Early New York as well as the Americas in general.

Andrea Mosterman, Lecturer at Trinity College University and Ph.D. Candidate in History at Boston University, where she specializes in Colonial American and Atlantic History. Her dissertation examines the origins and development of African-Dutch practices and traditions in New York from 1626 to 1826. While her dissertation is a cultural history of New York, her scholarly interests also include Colonial America, the Atlantic World, the African Diaspora, race and racism, and representations of history.

FRANK DRAGTENSTEIN “Alles voor de vrede”, De brieven van Boston Band tussen 1757 en 1763 [in Dutch]

Alles voor de vrede laat de correspondentie zien tussen de tot slaafgemaakte Boston Band en het koloniaal bestuur in Suriname. De brieven van Boston zijn uniek, enerzijds omdat ze in het midden van de 18^e eeuw door een (ex-)tot slaafgemaakte zijn geschreven, in een periode waarin tot slaafgemaakten niet of nauwelijks schreven of het hen zelfs verboden was te leren lezen en schrijven. Deze brieven zijn van grote betekenis in de historiografie van de slavernij omdat heel weinig schriftelijke getuigenissen uit boven genoemde periode zijn overgeleverd. Boston heeft door zijn correspondentie met het koloniaal bestuur in Suriname de vrede tussen dat bestuur en de Marrons in het oosten van dat land bewerkstelligd en vorm gegeven. Het is bijzonder dat gebeurtenissen in de geschiedenis van de slavernij en verhoudingen met de slavenhouder of kolonisator ook vanuit het perspectief van een Marron worden belicht. Uit de briefwisseling blijkt dat in de periode tussen 1757 en 1763 Boston zijn stempel heeft gedrukt op de verhouding tussen het bestuur en gevluchte slaven in Suriname. Met de brieven van Boston wordt aan de bestaande publicaties over de Marrons het perspectief van een tijdgenoot, ex-slaaf en Marron zelf, toegevoegd.

Frank Dragtenstein is werkzaam als onderzoeker bij het Nationaal instituut Nederlands slavernijverleden en erfenis (NiNsee) in Amsterdam. Hij is gespecialiseerd in de geschiedenis van de Surinaamse slavernij, de marronage en de geschiedenis van Afrikanen in de diaspora. Hij promoveerde in 2002 aan de Universiteit Utrecht op het proefschrift “*De ondraaglijke stoutheid der wegloopers*”; *Marronage en koloniaal beleid in Suriname, 1667-1768*. Verder is hij co-auteur van het boek *Manumissies in Suriname, 1832-1863* (1997). In 2004 verscheen “*Trouw aan de blanken*”, *Quassie van Nieuw Timotibo, twist en strijd in de 18de eeuw in Suriname*. In 2009 publiceerde hij “*Alles voor de vrede*”, *De brieven van Boston Band tussen 1757 en 1763*.

LINDA M. RUPERT on Curaçao’s Fugitive Slaves in Venezuela

During the 17th and 18th centuries hundreds of enslaved Africans fled from Curacao to the mainland of Venezuela. There, many of them participated in the thriving inter-colonial contraband trade. Curaçao’s fugitive slaves did not disappear into anonymity. Nor were they marginal. Rather, as documents from Dutch and Spanish colonial archives reveal, these intrepid men and women played a central role in developing Venezuela’s economy, culture, and society. By forging ties across imperial boundaries, these refugees played a role in shaping colonial networks in the early modern Caribbean. Their fascinating stories provide a very human picture of how runaway slaves were an integral part of the Atlantic World.

Linda M. Rupert, Assistant Professor at the Department of History of the University of North Carolina-Greensboro and visiting researcher at Scaliger Institute. Her research and teaching areas include the early modern Atlantic and Caribbean, European expansion, the empires and colonialism, creolization and comparative slavery. She has published several studies including “Marronage, Manumission and Maritime Trade in the Early Modern Caribbean,”

(*Slavery and Abolition*, September 2009), and "Contraband Trade and the Shaping of Colonial Societies" (*Itinerario*, November 2006). She is completing revisions on a book manuscript titled *Creolization and Contraband: Curaçao in the Early Modern Atlantic World*.

ALEX VAN STIPRIAAN LUISCIUS on the 'heritage houses' in the interior of Suriname

As a follow up to the exhibition on Maroons in Suriname, 'Art of Survival', a new project has been recently started that aims to establish two cultural centers in the interior of Suriname. These cultural centers will act as a kind of heritage house, having a function archives and museum as well as providing a platform for cultural and artistic activities for the communities living there.

Alex van Stipriaan-Luiscius will further illustrate this project and its implications.

Alex van Stipriaan Luiscius, Professor Caribbean History at Erasmus University and curator at the Tropenmuseum. His research is mainly devoted to the history and cultures of Suriname and what is now the 'Black Atlantic' is mentioned - the interconnected histories of West and Central Africa, Afro-America and Western Europe. He has nearly thirty years of research experience in this field. He is particularly interested in forms of creolization in both visible and hidden cultural aspects. Recently he worked on the exhibition 'Art of Survival. Maroon culture from Suriname'.