

their one-sidedness and other limitations. Rightfully, the book gives pride of place to African agency. The logical structure of the book serves the main argumentation well. As an economic historian I would have welcomed more quantitative data and analysis on the economic performance of the HCB concession over time. Was it really as unprofitable as suggested by Henriët? How did wages paid to HCB workers compare to world palm oil prices and to wages paid in other Congolese industries? Answers to these questions would have further strengthened the argumentation by adding more context, but I also recognize that such figures are notoriously hard to come by.

The interest of the book reaches well beyond the topic of the history of a palm oil concession in a remote region of the Congo. It analyses the mechanisms by which both colonialism and capitalism were imposed on a traditional society, the consequences this had and how these societies reacted trying to regain control of their own lives. Of course, force, coercion and violence – in other words ‘potency’ – are integral to this story. However, by focussing on the real and relative impotence shared in different ways by all actors involved, Henriët has succeeded in providing in a multi-faceted, balanced and convincing narrative.

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Andrea C. Mosterman, *Spaces of Enslavement. A History of Slavery and Resistance in Dutch New York* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021). 230 p. ISBN 9781501715624.

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The last few decades have seen an explosion of research on slavery in places – like New Netherland – where it has long been considered economically and socially marginal. The central thrust of this research has been that even where enslaved people were a small demographic minority, slavery had wide-reaching effects that profoundly shaped society. Andrea Mosterman’s study of slavery in New Netherland and Dutch New York makes an important contribution to this literature. By centering physical spaces, from the kitchens, garrets, and yards where enslaved people largely lived and worked, to the churches where they and their enslavers worshipped, to the larger geographies of control that shaped their movement in public spaces, Mosterman offers new in-

sights into enslaved people's lives and the role of enslavement in colonial governance.

Mosterman argues that there was little distinctive about slavery in New York and New Netherland, and that 'slaveholding practices, justifications, and regulations were really not that different from enslavers elsewhere in the Americas' (5). *Spaces of Enslavement* roots this argument in exactly the evidence most commonly used to argue for slavery's flexibility in northeastern North America – the participation of enslaved people in courts and churches, their residence in the home, and the existence of tenuous paths towards freedom, such as the conditional freedom some enslaved people achieved in New Netherland. In the latter case, Mosterman demonstrates that the West India Company acted in its own interests in setting up a hierarchy of enslavement that offered conditional freedom to some and its antithesis, hard labor in chains, to others. The company needed this flexibility because it relied on enslaved people's presence and labor to claim space and secure settlement.

Thus, Mosterman provides a useful contribution to one of the more persistently vexing questions facing historians of Northern slavery – how to balance the evidence that Northern slavery was, in many individual cases, more flexible than Southern or Caribbean slavery, with, at times, gradations between freedom and unfreedom, against the equally compelling evidence that the practices and technologies of control were fundamentally the same, and that enslaved people in the North, in Mosterman's words, 'endured physical and emotional abuse *every single day*.' (135, emphasis in original). Mosterman shows that, in fact, the flexibility of Northern slavery, when and where it existed, served to more effectively inscribe racial hierarchies into colonial spaces, to control and discipline enslaved people, and to promote settler-colonial claims to mastery over people and space alike.

The first three chapters of *Spaces of Enslavement* move roughly chronologically. Chapter 1, *The Role of Enslaved Labor in the Settling of New Netherland*, argues that slavery's significance for the Dutch West India Company was not limited to the work enslaved people did, as the company used enslaved people's presence to claim space in foreign territory. Chapter 2, *The Geography of Enslaved Life in New Netherland*, and chapter 3, *Control and Resistance in Public Space*, examine geographies of control and resistance over time. Mosterman shows that a relative lack of spatial restrictions in New Netherland, and proximity to colonial spaces like churches and courts, allowed some enslaved people to improve their circumstances. As the colony expanded following English

conquest, these opportunities were increasingly foreclosed, as Dutch Americans ‘used their dominance over spaces to control, contain, segregate, and monitor the men, women, and children they enslaved’ (20).

The final two chapters, *Enslavement and the Dual Nature of the Home* and *Slavery and Social Power in Dutch Reformed Churches* use precise spatial analysis to illuminate the role of slavery in public and private life and the experiences of enslaved people. Drawing on archival and archeological evidence, Mosterman explores how the increasing exclusion of enslaved people from the central areas of the household and into peripheral spaces like yards and detached kitchens over the course of the eighteenth century served both to control and monitor enslaved people’s activities, while at the same time creating the potential for ‘semi-autonomous spaces’ (91). Likewise, Dutch reformed churches ‘became spaces of exclusion and segregation’ that white congregations shaped into ‘important tools in reinforcing social power’ (132).

Mosterman’s study will be of use to anyone interested in slavery in colonial New Netherland and New York, techniques of spatial analysis, or slavery in the many colonies where it was demographically marginal, and yet central to those colonies’ character and development. Despite Mosterman’s argument that slavery in Dutch North America was fundamentally like other Atlantic slaveries, and, as an institution, was barely, if at all, inflected by Dutch culture, the book should also be of great interest to scholars of Dutch empire. For if that they were Dutch does not tell us very much about slavery in New Netherland or New York, the reverse does not hold true: that they were enslavers tells us a great deal about Dutch colonialism, its aims, its structure, and how it was experienced by enslaved people and their enslavers alike.

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Delphine Sirks, *Fire and Life Insurance in the Dutch Republic. Development and Legal Aspects* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2022). 233 p. ISBN 9783428183500.

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This volume is the latest in the innovative series *Comparative Studies in the History of Insurance Law*, edited by Phillip Hellwege (Augsburg). The focus of this book, the author’s PhD, is an in-depth examination of