

Full proposal form

Open Competition SSH 2021



Deadline **Tuesday 15 February 2022, 14:00 hrs CET.**

Section A. General information

1a. Title

Church and Slavery in the Dutch Empire: History, Theology and Heritage

1b. Summary

The involvement of the Dutch Reformed Church in the establishment, legitimation and abolition of slavery and slave trade in the Dutch colonial empire has hardly been studied. The proposed research aims to fill this gap by investigating a variety of data (texts, statistical information, material heritage, oral history) in a largescale, innovative and interdisciplinary project. The history and legacy of both the material (financial, administrative) and ideological (theology, exegesis) involvement of the church in four centers (Amsterdam, Batavia, Willemstad and Paramaribo) is analyzed during two historic phases: the rise and heyday of slave trade and slavery, and the abolition of slavery (1860-1863) and its aftermath. In the project multiple roles of the Reformed Church – like gate keeper, slaveowner, investor – are explored in different religious and political configurations. The research project aims to disclose the perspectives of the enslaved, free black people, and the indigenous, and their agency vis-à-vis the church. Multi-perspectivity is ensured through conscious methodological design, with emphasis on reading with and against the grain of the data as well as with a focus on oral history for the later historical period, and through strategic partnerships with NiNsee and the University of Curaçao. In order to create awareness about the involvement of Dutch churches in slavery and slave trade, both in- and outside Europe, and about the tangibility of this heritage today, the project includes valorizing initiatives to share research findings and stimulate debate and reflection in religious communities in the Netherlands and the former Dutch colonies.

1c. Public summary

Kerk en slavernij in het Nederlandse koloniale rijk: geschiedenis, theologie en erfenis
In dit onderzoeksproject bestuderen we de rol van de Gereformeerde Kerk in het Nederlands koloniaal verleden. We kijken naar de theologische en exegetische argumenten die vanuit kerk en academie werden aangedragen om slavernij te verdedigen dan wel te bekritisieren en naar het financiële, maatschappelijke en bestuurlijke aandeel van de kerk in de slavernij en de slavenhandel (missionair, pastoraal, als slaveneigenaar, investeerder, hoeder van de samenleving). Meerdere perspectieven (van slaafgemaakten, voormalige slaven, inheemsen, groepen van gemengde afkomst, witte kolonisten) worden in beeld gebracht én er is oog voor de erfenis van de slavernij in de kerken en samenleving van vandaag.
<i>Church and Slavery in the Dutch Empire: History, Theology and Heritage</i>
In this research project we study the role of the Reformed Church in the Dutch colonial past. We look at the theological and exegetical arguments put forward by church and academic theologians to defend or criticise slavery and at the concrete financial, social and administrative role of the church in slavery and slave trade (missionary, pastoral, the church as slave owner, investor, gatekeeper). Multiple perspectives are included (enslaved people, former slaves, indigenous people, mixed groups and white colonizers) and attention is paid to the legacy of slavery in today's churches and society.

1d. Domain

- Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH/SKW) Science (ENW)
 Applied and Engineering Sciences (AES/TTW) ZonMw

Section B. Scientific proposal

B1. Scientific quality

Introduction

In international research the interest for the role of slavery in Dutch colonial history has grown tremendously over the past two decades. The need for detailed (academic) knowledge about the way cities, institutions and individual citizens have participated in the slavery system is increasingly being met, also in the Netherlands (cf. Hondius e.a. 2014, -2019; Brandon e.a. 2020; Van Stipriaan e.a. 2020; Fatah-Black e.a. 2022). Remarkably, in this recent research the role of religion and church has been practically overlooked. The role of the Amsterdam classis in the Reformed Church (the privileged church in the Dutch Republic) for example was of great importance, as it (a) was involved in the start of colonial enterprises; (b) was responsible for the overseas colonial churches (together with the classis of Walcheren); and (c) regularly dealt with (former) enslaved and free black people on Dutch soil (e.g., Evenhuis 1965-1978; De Jong 1971; Hondius 2008). The church as institution was an integral part of the global supply chain of the West and East Indian and smaller Companies and continued its presence after these companies had been disbanded in the late eighteenth century, and after the slave trade and slavery were prohibited (1814 and 1860-1863). Recently, Noorlander has stressed the “strength and immediacy of the church-company relationship” in the case of the West Indies Company (WIC) (Noorlander 2019, 8). To the Dutch the interests of church and company were entwined; they often interpreted the activities of the WIC (and the East Indies Company – VOC – for that matter) as a divine mission.

In line with this entanglement of business and religion the Reformed Church was deeply involved in matters of slavery. This involvement took different forms: Reformed ministers like Udemans, Hondius, Smytegelt and Capitein participated in academic and ecclesial debates on the ethical and theological admissibility of slave trade and the exploitation of enslaved (see references below); the Reformed Church provided ‘ziekentroosters’ (consolators of the sick) and clergy at company ships that had enslaved as their cargo, as well as at slave trading-posts like Elmina (Ghana); through rites like baptism the church decided whether and under what conditions enslaved could become part of local (Christian) communities (e.g., Schutte 2001b, 45-75; Niemeijer 1996); and churches and ministers were involved in slavery by owning enslaved (‘kerkslaven’) or having financial interests in the slave trade or slavery (e.g. the first Reformed minister in Surinam, Johan Basseliers; cf. Van der Linde 1966). These examples show a wide range of material and theological involvement of the Dutch Reformed Church in slavery and slave trade. Nevertheless, the participation of the Reformed Church in the establishment, legitimation and abolition of the slavery system has hardly been studied in detail so far (compare Frijhoff 1995, 778; Noorlander 2019, 6). Moreover, the few existing studies (e.g., Van der Linde 1966; Kpobi 1995; Van Ort 2000) are not connected to the modern integral approaches used in recent historical studies (e.g., Hondius 2017, 2019) and do not (or barely) address the perspective of the (formerly) enslaved. Recent international slavery studies (e.g., Gerbner 2018; Boles 2020; Mosterman 2021) present possibilities for this connection, and newly digitized and searchable archival collections – at the National Archives, KITLV, Huygens ING Resources, the City Archives in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht, and international history and heritage projects at a.o. the Church of England, the Bank of England, De Nederlandsche Bank, and the Legacies of British Slave-ownership – provide ample inspiration for new archival research.

Research Aims and Question

The proposed research has three aims. Firstly, it wants to reconstruct and clarify the moral and theological involvement of the Reformed Church in the (in)admissibility of slave trade and slave ownership. Hence, the project aims to disclose the historical exegetical and theological narratives that ministers used in formulating their stance towards slavery.

The second aim of the project is to present an analysis of the concrete financial and administrative involvement of churches and their ministers in the slave trade and slave ownership. It is one of the innovative objectives of the proposed research to produce statistical information on the involvement of churches in slavery over time (e.g., the number of enslaved they and their ministers owned) and on the role they fulfilled as gatekeepers of the Christian colonial society, by means of ritual practices (e.g. baptism, marriage, funerals). Attention will also be paid to doctrine, moral teaching, disciplining, administrative measurements, lobby for legislation, etc. Researching both quantitative and qualitative perspectives enables the project to answer questions of the mutual influence of the societal, financial and administrative involvement of the church with slavery and the theological and exegetical positions of churches and ministers. This research will also address the contemporary heritage of the church’s involvement with slavery, both materially (e.g., church buildings) and ideologically (e.g., the actual role of racism and white supremacy) and aims at promoting awareness and dialogue.

The third aim of the project is to disclose the perspective of the enslaved and/or their descendants vis-à-vis the church. Traditional church historiography on slavery, as far as it exists, focuses on the role of individual ministers, missionaries, WIC and VOC directors, colonists and colony administrators, but overlooks questions like: How did indigenous people, enslaved and free, experience, judge, and react to the role and function of the church? How did

they negotiate between, on the one hand, African, Asian and American indigenous spiritualities and religious practices, and, on the other hand, Christianity as it was handed down to them? We aim to include multi-perspectivity through conscious methodological design (see below) and through cooperation and partnerships with black researchers, NiNsee (National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy), and the University of Curaçao Research Institute (UCRI).

On the basis of the three aims and perspectives outlined above, the following main research question emerges:

Which roles did the Dutch Reformed Church exert in the successive historic phases of slavery and slave trade, and abolition in the Dutch colonial empire, from the perspectives of (1) theological narratives and prescriptions, (2) concrete financial and administrative involvement and (3) the agency of affected individuals and groups, especially indigenous and enslaved people, and their descendants?

Research Delimitations

The project focuses on two historic phases: the rise and heyday of slave trade and slavery, and the abolition of slavery and its aftermath.

To keep the project feasible we focus on four centers in the Dutch colonial empire: Paramaribo, Willemstad, Batavia (now Jakarta), and Amsterdam. We will approach these centers as nodes in larger networks, connecting these cities with the countryside and with other nodal points in the empire (cf. Fatah-Black 2018). Paramaribo and Batavia for a long time were the centers of respectively the Western and the Eastern part of the Dutch empire. Willemstad was a center for the Atlantic slave trade for the WIC and is an interesting case study because of its societal divide between a majority of Catholic enslaved and a minority of free and white Reformed (cf. Schunck 2019). Furthermore, these three non-European cities have been selected because of the (almost) continuous Dutch presence there over the period of research, which makes it easier to identify continuities and discontinuities and fits our focus on *Dutch* churches and slavery; in addition, communities and churches from these three centers are still present today in Dutch postcolonial and decolonizing society (e.g., Reformed Church, Lutheran Church [both merged now in the PKN, the Protestant Church of the Netherlands], Moravian church [EBG], Moluccan Evangelical Church). This allows for a study of the impact of Dutch slavery history on these churches today and enables us to engage descendants of the enslaved in our project. In this light we should mention that the PThU (main applicant's home institution) has institutional ties with several of these churches. The fourth center, Amsterdam, was the administrative and theological center of the Dutch empire and functioned as such, and because of its port, as a nodal point between the other three centers.

Finally, we focus on the Dutch Reformed Church in our research because of its dominance within the WIC/VOC, its governmental backing and the specifics of Protestant theology and the Protestant stance towards slavery and people of color (e.g. Gerbner 2018).

Methodological Framework

An interdisciplinary approach is needed to answer the research question outlined above, employing and combining methods from the fields of history, statistics, archival research, theology/religious studies and anthropology. By studying the financial/administrative and the theological perspective in conjunction with material heritage and oral histories, we study individuals, institutions and events in a number of dimensions and expect to uncover connections between them, resulting in a richer, intersectional analysis of slavery and the church. In the analysis of these entanglements the research team works with critical theories and concepts from e.g., postcolonial and feminist studies about reconstructing lost voices and reading texts against the grain. Moreover, the hermeneutical lens of resistance aids researchers to retrieve traces of agency in the lives of oppressed and obliterated people like the enslaved (Dragtenstein 2002, 2004). However, in order to disclose the perspectives of the enslaved and other non-white historical actors there is also the need to tap into new sources of data. For this project we concentrate on oral history and products of orality (folk tales, songs etc.; cf. Araujo 2010). Team member Allen has conducted extensive research on the oral history in the Dutch Caribbean and shown its validity for bringing forward the perspectives of the enslaved on colonial history (Allen 2009, 2014, 2021).

Project Design and Work Packages

The figure below visualizes the design of the project. Each 'sphere' represents one of the three perspectives from the main research question: History, Theology and Heritage. The database and the synthesizing output connect all the elements with each other. It can be seen as a co-created 'cultural archive' of slavery, revealing a "deep structure of inequality in thought and affect based on race" (Wekker 2016, 2), produced throughout by all team members. Each sphere has a main researcher (postdoc/PhD candidate) and a supervising team. Each sphere also has its own 'ecosystem' of other related projects and research taking place at the VU and PThU. Moreover, the project is situated in and communicates with a field of stakeholders, international experts and media. The three spheres and their overlap are broken down into six work packages that are described below.

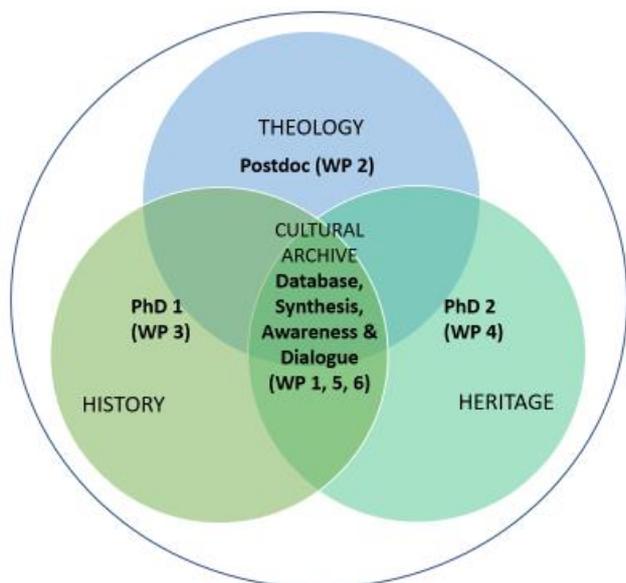


Figure 1: Visualization Project Design

Work Package 1: Database

It is one of the objectives of this research project to develop a relational database that encompasses a number of datasets:

1. Theological and exegetical data, including bible commentaries, sermons, and treatises on 'classic' biblical texts on slaves/slavery;
2. Statistical information with regard to baptism, wedding, church membership, burials, slave ownership by churches, etc.;
3. The material heritage of slavery that is visible in churches in the Netherlands and its empire (e.g., church buildings, graves, paintings, statues);
4. All forms of oral history, like interviews, songs, folk tales etc., that highlight the perspectives of the enslaved and their descendants.

After meta dating the different files on the basis of the FAIR-principles, this database enables project members to find connections between persons, places, dates and employed theological sources. It is important to notice that the database is not completist in its aims, but that it serves to (a) help the researchers store, categorize and analyse their own material with regard to the theme of slavery and the churches; (b) showcase and communicate their finding to the general public; and (c) allows for other researchers (and possibly non-specialists through citizen science) to study the material and contribute to it.

Work Package 2: Postdoc Theological-Exegetical Attitudes in the Dutch Reformed Church

In the discussions on slavery in the context of Dutch colonial history arguments from the Bible and exegesis play an important role. For instance, Johan Picardt (1600-1670) referred to the curse of Ham (Gen. 9:20-27) to defend slavery; Bernardus Smytegelt (1665-1739) rejected slavery as a form of theft of human beings (Ex. 21:16); and the Réveil adept Nicolaas Beets (1814-1903) invoked for his abolitionist position the "spirit of Christendom" (Lev. 19:18; Luke 6:31/Matthew 7:12) (see Stoutjesdijk 2020). The research question of this work package is: What were the exegetical and theological narratives that influenced and informed debates in and outside the church on slavery in the 17th to the 19th century?

It is the explicit intention of this research project to go beyond an anecdotal discussion of prominent ministers/theologians, as often presented in secondary literature (e.g., Groenhuis 1980; Schutte 2001a, 27-44; Joosse 2008, 511-529; Mulder 2017; Noorlander 2019, 166-173; Balai 2019, 33-36; Den Heijer 2021, 32-43). We want to focus not only on the work of ministers but also on two other hitherto neglected domains:

- The academic exegetical domain, which we want to disclose through a close reading of early modern Bible commentaries; this assumes command of Hebrew, Greek and (neo)Latin. Bible commentaries not only offer a (systematic) explanation of slavery-related texts, but also form a useful entry point to learn more about the insights by which ministers, church administrators and average church members were guided.
- Exegetical reasoning used in the administrative and/or political domain, which can be made accessible by a study of the correspondence of (at least) the classis Amsterdam on slavery issues.

In the postdoc project the focus will be on theological-exegetical debates on slavery in the center Amsterdam and its academic hinterland. These debates had an impact on slavery in both the East and the West, since the Reformed Church regarded the companies as “participants in a kind of global mission” (Noorlander 2019, 7).

Work Packages 3 and 4: PhD Projects

The two PhD projects focus on the actual co-existence (Walzer 1997) of the various white, indigenous and black communities in the two transitional phases and in the four slaveholding and slave trading centers identified above. This research has three perspectives: (1) the administrative, financial and theological role and function of the church in slave trading and slaveholding. What was the actual attitude towards slaves and slavery, and what was the social status of slaves in and outside the church (Kidd 2006)?; (2) The agency and strategy of the (enslaved) black and indigenous communities towards the public and religious role of the church, resulting a.o. in merging African or Asian religion(s) and Christianity (Sensbach 2005); (3) The overall perspective of differences and similarities regarding slavery between the four centers. Was a general policy developed in the mother country, or was slavery a local issue, and if so, were there different and independent policies per center (Van den Broeke 2019)?

In cooperation with the postdoc, both PhD-students will collect data on the actual co-existence and the church in their period in the four centers. After 18 months the results will be discussed in an expert meeting, after which the research of each student will concentrate on a selection of the centers and case studies.

Work Package 3: PhD project 1: Slavery, Church and Co-Existence in the Dutch Colonial Empire till the 19th century

PhD work package 3 deals with the heyday of enslavement and slave trade until the early 19th century. The focus is on the prescriptive, mediating and controlling role of the local church in the actual co-existence of the various communities, within the boundaries set by the magistrate or the trading companies. What was the social and religious impact of slavery and slave trade, and its theological rationale, on the local churches, and on the various communities involved? How did local ecclesial policies relate to the monitoring role of the church authorities in nodal point Amsterdam? And what was the effect of the growing European criticism and enslaved and indigenous resistance against enslavement from the late 18th century onwards on the practice of slavery and slave trade?

The project is based on a feasible set of qualitative and quantitative data of ten sample years, investigating in (digitized) archives of churches (e.g. Dutch church deputies for overseas relations, resources on church and religion overseas, and of mission in Huygens ING and KITLV), trading companies like VOC, WIC and Middelburgsche Commercie Compagnie (MCC), and other organizations, active at the four centers. Quantitative data will be collected from lists of churches regarding baptism, membership, marriage, slave-ownership, land-ownership, church legal issues, and burial records.

Though church historical research has been done previously in Dutch colonial archives, slavery has hardly been covered (Schutte 2002; Jooisse 2008). This means that the first phase of this PhD project will be of an explorative nature, while the second phase will probably concentrate on a part of the empire. And since most if not all of the archives in this historical phase represent the white focus, it is important to read these sources against the grain to detect counter-voices and the voice of enslaved and free blacks and indigenous people (decolonizing the archives).

Work Package 4: PhD project 2: The Reformed Church in the Dutch Colonial Empire since 1830: Impact and Response

Work package 4 focuses on the period directly before and the aftermath of the abolition (1860/1863) in the Dutch colonial empire. After collecting data on all four centers, the second phase of this PhD project will probably focus on the west part of the empire. In Suriname and Curaçao, the conversion to Christianity of the enslaved Africans and their descendants was mainly left to the Moravian and Roman Catholic missions (Schunck 2019; Lampe 2001). Exceptions to this rule exist (Fatah-Black 2018, 144-145) and will be investigated. The main questions are: What did it really mean that the Dutch Reformed Church was the privileged church in these colonies and how did the non-White communities accept, adapt to, or resist the Church's views and attitudes, especially in the periods immediately before and after the abolition? The study will look at the ways in which those of non-Dutch descent could access baptism, Church membership, education, marriage (including interracial marriage and co-habitation) and funeral services, as well as the ways in which the Church prohibited the African-rooted rituals of winti (Wooding 1972; Jones 1981) and tambú, and prosecuted its practitioners. In answering these questions, race, ethnicity, colour, religion and faith, but also dimensions such as class, gender and sexuality will be taken into account.

Next to archival documents of the Dutch Reformed Church, the slave registrations (1830-) and the emancipation registers, for this project products of orality and new oral histories will be crucial to provide important data for researching the way in which the non-White population experienced and responded to the Church during the last half of the nineteenth century. For Curaçao, the digitized oral history collection Zikinzá by Paul Brenneker and Elis Juliana (1955-1969), Allen (2007) and others will be relevant; for Suriname, the work of Trudi Martinus Guda (1981), Charles Wooding (1972) and others.

Work Package 5: Awareness & Dialogue

Given the societal and ecclesial debates on the project's subject, the dissemination of its knowledge and findings is seen as an integral part of the project. Within this work package we distinguish two concrete projects that both focus on today's material and mental heritage of slavery history in the Dutch Reformed Church.

5a) Mapping Slavery and Church History & Heritage

The aim of this subproject is to create public awareness about the involvement of the Dutch Reformed Church, both in- and outside Europe, in slavery and slave trade, by showcasing its material heritage. In this project, to be launched in 2023, a first sample of forms of religious heritage (e.g., churches, graveyards, statues) in the Netherlands and the former Dutch colonies that refer to slavery and slave trade will be presented in a brochure and a website with digital maps, accompanied by illustrations and short texts that offer historical context, and with texts and questions for meetings in which the topic of slavery will be addressed. The brochure is modelled after the 'Mapping Slavery'-series and is supervised by its initiator, VU-historian Dienke Hondius (Hondius 2014, 2019, and the 'Mapping Slavery' website). The brochure can be presented at locations visited by the travelling exhibition from 2023 onward.

5b) Travelling Exhibition

The travelling exhibition Church and Slavery is an initiative of the working group 'Heilzame Verwerking Slavernijverleden,' in which team member Dorottya Nagy participates. The focus is on the mental and societal heritage of the slavery past. In a number of panels, which will be extended building on the project's findings, the relation between slavery and churches in the Netherlands is explained and illustrated. This exhibition shows how slavery affects both black and white communities, and how this is reflected in the relationship between 'white' and 'black', but also between 'black' and 'black'. The exhibition is specifically designed to travel and be exposed in church buildings in the Netherlands and the former Dutch colonies, with the aim of facilitating encounters in different religious and cultural communities. As such, the exhibition is geared towards stimulating dialogue, healing inherited wounds, bridging the differences between black and white, and working on a shared future.

Work Package 6: Synthesizing Output

The project leaders and senior researchers (Merz, Harinck, Hondius, Allen, Zorgdrager, Dragtenstein, Nagy) will oversee the project as a whole and bring together the various research lines and projects in order to answer the project's main question(s). They will do so by (1) contributing to the project with publications from the perspective of their own expertise (e.g. reception history bible, oral history, colonial history); and (2) ensuring the international embedding of the project, by maintaining contact with the project's advisory board and inviting international experts to contribute. Specifically, (3) they will be responsible for organizing regular seminars for the project members and for hosting three larger events: a popular-scientific symposium in 2023, an expert meeting in 2024 and an international conference in the fall of 2025 (see B6).

B2. Embedding, organisation, and budget

2a. Project team composition

Main applicant

Title, first name, surname	Affiliation	Role
Prof. Dr. Annette Merz	Protestant Theological University	Project leader/team member

Co-applicant(s), if applicable

Title, first name, surname	Affiliation	Role
Prof. Dr. George Harinck	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	Promotor/team member

Other team members

Title, first name, surname	Affiliation	Role
Prof. Dr. Rose Mary Allen	University of Curaçao	Promotor/team member
Prof. Dr. Heleen Zorgdrager	Protestant Theological University	Promotor/team member
Dr. Dienke Hondius	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	Copromotor/team member
Dr. Frank Dragtenstein	NiNsee	Copromotor/team member
Dr. Martijn Stoutjesdijk	Protestant Theological University	Post-doc/team member
Unknown	Protestant Theological University	PhD candidate/team member
Unknown	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	PhD candidate/team member

Prof. Dr. Dorottya Nagy	Protestant Theological University	Team member
Unknown	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	Post-doc/team member
Unknown	Protestant Theological University	Research assistant/team member
Prof. Dr. Ulbe Bosma	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	Advisor colonial financial history
Dr. Victor de Boer	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	Advisor digital humanities
Dr. Jan Krans	Protestant Theological University	Advisor digital humanities

2b. Selected output Main and Co-applicants

- G. Harinck, "'Frontaanval op apartheid.' Herman Bavinck als inspiratiebron voor de Zuid-Afrikaanse theoloog Bennie Keet," in C. Dullemond, B. Henkes and J. Kennedy (eds.), *'Maar we wisten ons door de Heer geroepen.' Kerk en apartheid in transnationaal perspectief* (Verloren: Hilversum, 2017), 85-106.
- G. Harinck (guest editor), Special issue on neo-Calvinism and race, *Journal of Reformed Theology* 11 (2017).
- G. Harinck, "'Wipe out lines of Division (Not Distinctions).' Bennie Keet, Neo-Calvinism and the Struggle against Apartheid," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 11 (2017), 81-98.
- G. Harinck and J. de Bruijn, *Een Leidse vriendschap. Herman Bavinck en Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje over christendom, islam en westerse beschaving* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2021 [rev. ed.]).
- G. Harinck, "A Popular but Questionable Version of the Dutch-American Story. Kuyper's Heliotropic View of History as Rooted in Common Grace", in Don Bruggink a.o. (eds.), *Telling, Sharing, and Preserving Dutch-American Stories* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 2022), forthcoming.
- A. Merz, "Believers as 'Slaves of Christ' and 'Freed Persons of the Lord': Slavery and Freedom as Ambiguous Soteriological Metaphors in 1 Cor 7:22 and Col 3:22-4:1," *NTT Journal for Theology and the Study of Religion* 72, no. 2 (2018), 95-110.
- A. Merz, „Paulus und der Streit um die sozialen Folgen der Geschwisterschaft von SklavInnen,“ in A. Merz, *Die fiktive Selbstausslegung des Paulus. Intertextuelle Studien zur Intention und Rezeption der Pastoralbriefe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2004), 245-267.

2c. Motivation of embedding, organisation and budget

Team members

The research group consists of eleven team members and three local advisors, from four different (research) institutes. Their roles, qualities and expertise are briefly described below.

- Annette Merz (PThU): project leader theological perspective / supervisor postdoc. Professor of New Testament, with a research focus on the (reception) history of slavery in early Christianity.
- George Harinck (VU): project leader historical perspective / promotor PhD-project 1. Authority on the field of the history of Dutch Protestantism in an international context, with neo-Calvinism and race as one of his research foci.
- Rose Mary Allen (University of Curaçao): project leader heritage perspective / promotor PhD-project 2. Expert on the oral history of the Dutch Caribbean islands with special attention to slavery and enslavement, cultural heritage, migration and diaspora, gender studies and cultural diversity (2009, 2014, 2021).
- Heleen Zorgdrager (PThU): promotor PhD-project 2. Systematic theologian with expertise on intercultural theology, missiology, gender studies and postcolonial theory.
- Dienne Hondius (VU): copromotor PhD-project 1 / 'Mapping Slavery and Church'. Expert on the history and legacy of slavery, racism and racialization (2008, 2017). Hondius initiated and is head of research of the 'Mapping Slavery' project (2014, 2019) and member of the scientific board of NiNsee.
- Frank Dragtenstein (NiNsee): copromotor PhD-project 1. Co-founder of NiNsee and an independent researcher with a wealth of experience and publications on the field of colonial history and slavery (2002, 2004).
- Martijn Stoutjesdijk (PThU): postdoc / coordinator database. Wrote a PhD thesis on slavery in early Christianity and early rabbinic Judaism (2021) and did prizewinning research on the role of Dutch Protestant ministers in both critiquing and defending slavery (2020).
- Dorottya Nagy (PThU): travelling exhibition. Professor of Theology and Migration, with a research interest in migration studies, mission studies, and ecclesiology (cf. 2021) and involved with CASSAC, a research project on present forms of human exploitation and their relation with slavery.

Advisors:

- Ulbe Bosma (IISG/VU): expert on colonial financial history and empirical research into labor and labor relations.
- Victor de Boer (VU): computer scientist and expert on digital humanities.
- Jan Krans (PThU): biblical scholar with expertise on the use of digital humanities in this particular field.

Embedding: institutions, researchers in ecosphere, sounding board and international advisory board

From an institutional perspective the combined strengths of the partners is crucial. PThU is a theological university institutionally affiliated with the PKN and has ties with a number of other Protestant churches. VU historically has a deep connection with the Calvinist community of the Netherlands. The University of Curaçao is the national university of the island of Curaçao with strong local and regional roots. NiNsee is the only nationally recognized knowledge institute on slavery in Dutch history and an important conversation partner for local and national authorities on matters of slavery.

While they are not part of this research proposal in the strict sense, the following researchers from PThU and VU have already shown interest to contribute to the research project and its database from their ongoing research, and are as such part of the research project's *ecosphere*: Erica Meijers (working on the colonial origins of diaconal funds), Leon van den Broeke (maritime affairs of the classis Amsterdam), Gert van Klinken (17th century minister Picardt), Paul Sanders (slavery texts in the Hebrew Bible), Kirsten van der Ham (Christianity and racism in contemporary Dutch churches).

An *advisory board* of international experts on either colonial history and/or the role of the Churches will help us keep track of international developments on these fields:

- Dr. Vincent Bacote, expert on Protestant theology and race (Wheaton College).
- Dr. Peter Cruchley, leader of the program 'Legacies of Slavery' of the Council for World Mission.
- Prof. Dr. David D. Daniels III, expert on black theology and Afro-American church history (McCormick Theological Seminary).
- Dr. Binsar Pakpahan, expert on theology of forgiveness and reconciliation (Jakarta Theological Seminary).

On the *sounding board* see under B3.

Motivation request budget/budget modules

The major part of the budget is spent on salaries of the postdoc, two PhD candidates and a student assistant. They are necessary to collect new data, make them accessible in the database and evaluate them in the light of the three perspectives of our research question. At the University of Curaçao, subproject leader Allen will be paid for 0,2 fte for her tasks of PhD supervision, contributions to capacity building/societal impact activities as well as new fieldwork and theoretical reflection with regard to the contribution of oral sources to a multi-perspectival study into the churches' relation to the (former) enslaved. A postdoc will be appointed for 0,1 fte for 1 year to develop the 'Mapping Slavery' brochure and website, with accompanying technical assistance for 0,05 fte.

Costs for the database (25k) include installation costs and professional support in the building phase; paid project members (postdocs, PhD candidates, student assistant) will further develop and stock it, knowledgeable advisers (De Boer, Krans, librarians) are approachable. The budget items to host an international conference and for travel and accommodation (45 k) are appropriate for a project of this international range which will include intercontinental travel for a.o. archive work.

The PThU will cover all costs that exceed the NWO limit and will keep the database online and researchable for at least 5 years after the completion of the project.

2d. Justification budget modules (if applicable)

A slight exceedance of the maximum budget for knowledge utilization by 4.7k (total 29.7k) is justified because of the expected high impact of the publicity materials that will be developed in work package 5a (Public website and brochure 'Mapping Slavery and Church,' 7.75k) and the symposium to be held when it is launched in the commemorative year 2023 (Launching Symposium, including 60 hours of work from PThU knowledge center and communication staff, 10k). Meetings with the sounding board of stakeholders have been calculated at 2k. The expansion of the existing travelling exhibition (Work package 5b) developed by PThU and the working group 'Heilzame Verwerking Slavernijverleden' both with new content from the project and in physical size will provide the opportunity for congregations to facilitate large meetings and provide profound information on site for a longer period (10k).

2e. Money follows Cooperation (MfC)

Not applicable.

B3. Scientific and/or societal impact

Scientific impact

The involvement of the Reformed Church, and Dutch churches in general, in the rise, heyday, abolition and aftermath of the slavery system in the Dutch empire has, aside from some detail studies, never been investigated multidisciplinary and comprehensively. Hence, we expect that our project will have a vast impact by expanding scholarly knowledge on the role of the churches and also by transforming that knowledge by the project's scope, volume and its incorporation of the black perspective. We aim to realize this impact by the (Open Access) publication of two PhD theses and a monograph by the postdoc, as well as the publication of an academic edited volume and a number of (peer-reviewed) articles. Moreover, by collecting, sharing and inviting scholars to contribute data for our database, we will help move the fields of colonial and church history forward. Apart from publications, the international conference that we intend to host, as well as the diverse composition of our own research team helps us to transcend both national and disciplinary borders. In this way, we expect that we will set a new standard for research of the churches' roles in the colonies and the motherland.

Societal impact

In 2013 the Council of Churches in the Netherlands issued a statement 'Accounting for the history of slavery,' in which the 19 churches that participate in this Council acknowledged their involvement in "sustaining and legitimizing slave trade" and their wish to work with the descendants of slaves "to seek a society in which human life, freedom, responsibility, solidarity and respect are elementary values" (Raad van Kerken 2013). In line with this statement, several churches and organizations (Lutheran Church of Amsterdam [part of PKN], EBG Amsterdam and NiNsee) have called for a study of their own (church) history (Welschen 2020, 178-179) and/or have asked researchers of PThU and VU to carry out this work (Protestant Church Amsterdam [part of PKN]). Hence, an important group of societal stakeholders for our research project consists of a variety of Protestant churches (e.g. PKN, Lutheran, EBG, Moluccan Evangelical Church), Christian organizations (like SKIN [Platform for Migrant Churches], Council of Churches, Kerk in Actie, Netherlands Mission Council [NZR]), and organizations for the descendants of the enslaved, most notably NiNsee. With these stakeholders we have formed a sounding board that formulated input for this research proposal with respect to scope, questions and possible contributors. By working together with societal stakeholders at this early stage the chances that our project will generate societal impact have considerably increased. In regular meetings with the sounding board interim results will be presented to receive feedback/input and stimulate dialogue.

One important suggestion that we received from the sounding board was that the research project should, by design, produce output that would propel contemporary debates/conversations between black and white about their shared past. This is one of reasons why we will develop a 'Mapping Slavery and Church'-website and brochure (*work package 5a*), which makes the slavery past of churches tangible and stimulates readers and visitors to look for information and traces of this past themselves (a form of citizen science). In 2023 (150th commemorative year of the *de iure* abolition of slavery) we will present both a brochure (interim deliverable) on the basis of work package 5a, together with conversation material/dialogue starters for the ecclesial context. We will launch these initiatives at a popular-scientific symposium that aims at a large audience of fellow scholars, stakeholders, ministers, policy makers and interested people in general. Moreover, the research project will contribute to the further development of the existing travelling exhibition on churches and slavery (*work package 5b*).

We expect that the commemorative year 2023 will also provide us with unforeseen opportunities, like a lot of (media) attention for our project, as well as the rise of new questions or perspectives that we might want to add to our research design. Since the first 1,5 year of the project is mainly reserved for data collection, with an evaluation and reflection moment during an expert meeting in the Spring of 2024, this leaves room to incorporate new insights when defining the focus of the case studies of the PhD projects. Moreover, depending on the public activities in the commemorative year 2023, we can – if necessary – recalibrate the form and content of our own (popular-scientific) output.

We are convinced that our project has the potential for societal change on several levels. First of all, by the project's findings and its numerous ties with Protestant churches we expect to start a process of increasing awareness and reflection in Dutch (Protestant) churches on their own role in the slavery past and heritage, as well as their position in the public debate on issues like racism, migration and labor conditions. Secondly, by its design, team composition, sounding board and proposed output the project hopes to bring black and white (within and outside the churches) in conversation with each other about their shared past and future. Finally, we should emphasize that the interest in our project is not limited to churches. In society there is great interest for this research, illustrated by

the media attention for the announcement of this project in October 2021 (e.g. NOS, Trouw, nu.nl, KRO-NCRV, RD, Tubantia, ND). With the help of national media – we have been contacted by several media partners already – we are sure that our project will contribute to the development of a new narrative of the Dutch past, in which our assumptions on the relations between toleration, racism, trade, slavery and Protestantism have to be fundamentally revised (see e.g. Gerbner 2018, Schunck 2019, Parker 2022).

With both forms of impact – scientific and societal - the proposed research project intends to function as a catalyst for research and debate with regard to the slavery past of the Dutch churches and Dutch society – black and white – as a whole.

Chosen impact focus:

- Scientific impact
- Societal impact
- Both scientific and societal impact

B4. Word count

Number of words in section B1 + B2c: 3604 + 871 = 4475

Number of words in section B3: 971

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B6. Work plan and planned deliverables

The project is structured according to the three perspectives of the research question and broken apart in six work packages with each its own main researchers. The content of the six work packages is described in part B1 and the work division and deliverables are outlined schematically in table 1. All scholarly output of the project is meant to be published open access online.

The research project as a whole will last five years, but – as table 2 shows – not all work packages will cover the entire period. It is important to notice that the postdoc will start earlier to make preparations for the database that the PhD candidates (and other team members) are meant to use. As previously mentioned the first 1,5 year of the PhD projects is mainly reserved for the collection of data, that will be stored in the project's database; after an evaluation and reflection moment suitable case studies or foci will be selected. The three envisioned events – a Dutch, popular-scientific symposium, an expert meeting and an international academic conference – form three important pillars in our project's time schedule (see below).



In the commemorative year 2023 the brochure and website of the 'Mapping Slavery'-work package will be launched. This launch will be accompanied by a popular-scientific symposium with contributions from the project team. After approximately 1,5 year an expert meeting will be organized in which the PhD candidates and the postdoc present their findings to a small international audience of experts. With the help of the input from this meeting the PhD candidates decide on their focus/case studies for the next 2,5 years of their tenure. In the fourth year a final, international conference will be organized where the PhD candidates present their research and collect feedback before finishing their theses. The international conference will result in an English language edited volume. The collecting and storing of finds for the database by the postdoc, the PhD candidates and the other team members will continue for the whole length of the project. In the last year the database will be converted to Data Linked, so that it will remain possible to contribute and refer to the database after the termination date of the project. Moreover, there is the potential to use the database for the publication of a guide on 'Mapping Slavery and Church' in 2026-2027 for a broader audience. The travelling exhibition will be employed for the duration of the project, and will be revised twice within this time span in the light of the project's new findings.

Table 1: Work division/deliverables

Work Package	Who is responsible	Output	How published/communicated
WP 1 Database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and design: Martijn Stoutjesdijk • Contributions/execution: all team members, notably the postdoc and the PhD candidates 	Database	Open access online

WP 2 postdoc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execution: Martijn Stoutjesdijk • Supervision: Annette Merz 	Monograph; Min. 2 articles; Conference contribution	Open access online
WP 3 PhD candidate 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execution: PhD Candidate • Supervisory team: George Harinck (promotor), Dienke Hondius and Frank Dragtenstein (copromotores) 	PhD Thesis; Min. 2 articles; Conference contribution	Open access online
WP 4 PhD candidate 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execution: PhD Candidate • Supervisory team: Rose Mary Allen and Heleen Zorgdrager (promotores) 	PhD Thesis; Min. 2 articles; Conference contribution	Open access online
WP 5 Awareness & Dialog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Mapping Slavery and Church’: George Harinck, Dienke Hondius, Rose Mary Allen and the student assistant 	Interim deliverable: brochure & website; Final deliverable: book proposal Guide	Through stakeholders, media
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travelling exhibition: Dorottya Nagy 	Exhibition	In main city churches, at exhibition locations
WP 6 Synthesizing output	Annette Merz, George Harinck, Rose Mary Allen, Dorottya Nagy and Heleen Zorgdrager	Symposium, expert meeting and conference; Edited volume; Articles	On invitation Open access online

Table 2: Time Schedule

(N.B. The color gray indicates covered by NWO funding.)

	Months 1-5 (from 1/8/2022)	Month 6-17 Commemorative Year 2023	Months 18-29 (2024)	Months 30-42 (2025)	Months 43-60 (2026-31/7/2027)	
WP 1 Database	Design and implementation database by postdoc	Collecting data; storing in database	Collecting data; storing in database	Collecting data; storing in database	Converting database to Data Linked	
WP 2 Postdoc	Start postdoc project with development database	Publishing peer-reviewed article	Contributing to expert meeting; Publishing peer-reviewed article(s); Submitting manuscript monograph	Publishing monograph; Participating conference		
WP 3-4 PhDs		Start PhD project with data collection	Ongoing data collection	Contributing to expert meeting; Selecting and researching case studies	Researching case studies; Participating conference	Finishing and defending PhD theses; Writing contribution edited volume

WP 5 Awareness & Dialogue	Collecting data	Launching interim-deliverable: brochure and website 'Mapping Slavery'; presenting renewed version exhibition	Collecting data; integrating further research finds and input from citizens and stakeholders	Collecting data; Revision travelling exhibition	Finishing manuscript guide 'Mapping Slavery and Church'
WP 6 Synthesizing output	Preparation symposium; conducting research	Organizing and contributing to Popular-scientific symposium commemorative year 2023	Organizing expert meeting; Preparation international conference; Writing peer-reviewed articles	Organizing and contributing to closing international conference	Editing and writing volume contribution(s)

Section C. Data management and ethical aspects

C1. Data management

1. Will data be collected or generated that are suitable for reuse?

Yes.

2. Where will the data be stored during the research?

During the research the database will be stored and run from the PThU, possibly initially only in a rudimentary form.

3. After the project has been completed, how will the data be stored for the long-term and made available for the use by third parties? To whom will the data be accessible?

After concluding the project, the PThU will keep the database online and researchable for at least five years after the completion of the project. After those five years, the data remain freely accessible for both scholars and the general public by storing it with DataverseNL. PThU has a subscription with DANS to use this repository. The data collection in Dataverse is stored for a long time, can be found through a search interface, and is indexed by several important (research) websites. The existence of the research data is thus widely publicized, and it is also sustainably and securely archived. Also, it is our intention to convert the original, internal database eventually to Data Linked, because this opens up more possibilities for sharing and reuse of our data.

4. Which facilities (ICT, (secure) archive, refrigerators or legal expertise) do you expect will be needed for the storage of data during the research and after the research? Are these available?*

Aside from the data capacity that DataverseNL offers, as well as some expertise on digital humanities that we have secured by including Victor de Boer and Jan Krans as advisors to our team, no other facilities are expected to be needed.

C2. Ethical aspects

	Not applicable	Not yet applied for	Applied for	Received
Approval from a recognised (medical) ethics review committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approval from an animal experiments committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Permission for research with the population screening Act	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section D: Administrative details and statements

D1. Administrative details

Main applicant

Title(s), initial(s), surname	<i>Prof. dr. A. B. Merz</i>
Institution	<i>Protestant Theological University (PThU)</i>
Birth date	<i>01 / 12 / 1965</i>
Date PhD defence	<i>18 / 04 / 2001</i>
Position	<i>Full Professor</i>
Type of appointment	<i>Fixed</i>
End of contract date	<i>Not applicable</i>
Phone number	<i>06-34916368</i>
Email address for correspondence	<i>a.b.merz@pthu.nl</i>
Postal address for correspondence	<i>Het Gebient 2, 9356 CP Tolbert</i>

Co-applicant(s)

Title(s), initial(s), surname	<i>Prof. dr. G. Harinck</i>
Institution	<i>VU</i>
Birth date	<i>15 / 05 / 1958</i>
Date PhD defence	<i>01 / 10 / 1993</i>
Position	<i>Full professor</i>
Type of appointment	<i>Fixed</i>
End of contract date	<i>31 / 07 / 2027</i>

D2. Statements

- According to the formal eligibility criteria, the main and any co-applicants are no longer eligible as applicants in the NWO Talent Scheme ('Vernieuwingsimpuls').
- The main applicant and any co-applicants have a paid appointment at one of the qualifying host institute(s) for the full duration of the application process and the project that is applied for.
- The main applicant and any co-applicants meet all other conditions for applicants listed in the call for proposals.
- By submitting this document I declare that I and all other individuals involved in this proposal satisfy the nationally and internationally accepted standards for scientific conduct as stated in the *Netherlands Code of Conduct for Scientific Practice 2018* (Association of Universities in the Netherlands)
- By submitting this application form, I declare that I have discussed the final version of this proposal with all individuals or parties mentioned in this proposal as team members, collaborators, advisors and in any other role. All such individuals or parties mentioned are aware of and agree with their role and intended contribution to the project, should this be awarded funding.
- By submitting this document I declare that I follow the NWO policy on data management.
- I have completed this form truthfully.

Name: Annette Merz

Place: Tolbert

Date: 15-02-2022
