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1 Negerhollands¹

Negerhollands is a creole language which emerged in the Virgin Islands around 1700 from the contact between varieties of Dutch and other (African and European) languages. It is now extinct, but it has been preserved in a remarkable collection of manuscripts, from the 18th century onwards.

The following illustration represents a late 18th-century manuscript (no. 3.2.2 in Stein 1986b). It is a piece of commentary from an introduction to a Negerhollands creole translation of the *Evangelienharmonie*, a compilation of the four gospels. The translation was undertaken by Moravian missionary Johann Böhner of the Moravian Brethren, also known as the *Herrnhut* missionaries, or in German *die Evangelische Brüdergemeine*. The commentary was written around 1780 in a language he called *Creole* (*Cariolsch*, *Criolisch* or *Creolisch*), and which has been known as *Negerhollands* since van den Bergh (1840). In this text, which is addressed to the Moravian slave community of the Virgin Islands and precedes the translation, the writer explains his purpose.²

Die ben noe al Sommig Jaar geleeden, dat ons
a ka leveer jender een Creol Psalm-Boeki, dat
jender a Sal Kan help vor Sing. wanneer ons
hab ons ver Samlingen, sooveel as van jender
ka leir vor lees, en vor mak gebruik van die
ookal, wanneer jender Seth na bin jender Hoer
Sonder, ~~Sonder~~ vor wees na Werk, vor Kombe
Kent met die Psalmen (of Liederen.)

1. An example of the first page of ms. 3.2.2 (± 1780)

Die ben noe al sommig Jaar geleeden, dat ons
DET BE now already some year ago, that 1PL
[Het is nu al enkele (sommige) jaren geleden, dat wij]

1 This introduction has been written conjointly by Hans den Besten, Pieter Muysken, Cefas van Rossem, Peter Stein and Hein van der Voort. We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Frank Nelson, Robin Sabino and Gilbert Sprauve. Pieter Muysken edited this text.

2 Below, a transliteration, a morphemic gloss, a line by line Dutch translation to provide a contrast, and a free translation are given. For a list of the abbreviations used in this book, see the section after the table of contents.

a ka Leveer jender een Creol Psalm –Boeki, dat
PST PRF supply 2PL a creole hymn –book, that
[jullie een creools psalmboek hebben geleverd, dat]

jender a sal kan help vor sing wanneer ons
2PL PST FUT can help FOR sing when 1PL
[jullie zal kunnen helpen zingen, wanneer wij]

hab ons versamling –en, sooveel as van jender
have 1PL meeting –PL, so.many as of 2PL
[onze bijeenkomsten hebben, zoveel als van jullie]

ka leer vor lees, en vor mak gebruik van die
PRF learn FOR read, and FOR make use of it
[hebben leren lezen, en om er gebruik van te maken]

ookal, wanneer jender sett nabin jender Hoes
also, when 2PL sit NA.inside 2PL house
[ook, wanneer jullie in jullie huis zitten]

sonder, [–sonder] vor wees na Werk, vor kom be
without [–without] FOR BE NA work, FOR come –
[zonder aan het werk te zijn, om bekend te raken]

kent met die Psalm –en (of Liederén)
known with DET hymn –PL (or song –PL)
[met de psalmen (of liederen)]

‘It has now already been several years since we provided you with a creole hymnal, that you could help sing when we hold our meetings, as so many of you have learned to read, and to make use of it also, when you are at home not being at work, to become familiar with the hymns (or songs).’

At first glance one is struck by the strong resemblance of the Negerhollands in this text to (older) Dutch. Still, a number of differences come to the fore, e.g. in the word order and the verbal system, which makes use of tense, mood and aspect particles instead of verb inflection. In the glosses we have sometimes used an abbreviation, such as DET ‘determiner’ or 1PL ‘first person plural’ because the Negerhollands forms do not always correspond directly to either an English or a Dutch form. Negerhollands *ons*, for instance, corresponds to Dutch *wij/ons/onze* ‘we/us/our’, and Negerhollands *die* corresponds to ‘it/the/that/which/etc.’, in short, the general notion of determination.

Consider now a fragment from text 59, line 12-14, of the recordings by anthropologist de Josselin de Jong in the early 20th century³:

Am a ko a hus. Am a see a shi shishi,
 3SG PST come NA house 3SG PST say NA 3POS sister,
 [Hij is thuis gekomen. Hij heeft aan zijn zuster gezegd:]

ju kaa trou een man, am mi een befergi! Nu shi shishi a see
 2SG PRF marry a man, 3SG BE a boar.pig Now 3POS sister PST say
 [jij bent met een man getrouwd, hij is een varken. Nu zei zijn zuster]

nu a waa! Di jung a see am: jaa, as ju nu gloo
 NEG be true. DET boy PST say 3SG yes, if 2SG NEG believe
 [het is niet waar. De jongen zei haar: ja, als je me niet gelooft]

mi sa wis ju wapi ju kaa trou een
 1SG FUT show 2SG where 2SG PRF marry a
 [zal ik je laten zien waar je een varken getrouwd hebt]

'He came home. He told his sister: you married a man, who is a pig. His sister said to him: it is not true. The boy said to her: yes, if you don't believe me I will show you where you have married a pig.'

Here the resemblance to Dutch is much more remote, at first glance. Still, it is the same language as the one in the earlier fragment: we notice the same tense and aspect particles *a* and *ka*, for instance. As this book is an attempt to document the various phases of Negerhollands and to make texts accessible for those interested, we will return to the differences between these texts, and offer explanations, below in 7.5.

Negerhollands (lit. 'Negro-Hollandic') is the original creole language, lexically closely related to Dutch, of the Virgin Islands (St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix). Whereas previously these islands were under Danish rule and were referred to as the Danish Antilles, since 1917 they are a United States colony officially called the US Virgin Islands. Negerhollands emerged as a separate language around 1700 and died out completely only a few years ago, having been gradually replaced by English in the course of the 19th century.

Because of the language contact due to the slave trade and plantation system, many creole languages have emerged in the Caribbean. These are characterized by lexicons of European origin: mostly French (e.g. Haitian) and English (e.g. Jamaican), but sometimes Portuguese or Dutch, as in the present case. It is somewhat ironical that in the colonies in the Caribbean that remained Dutch after the Napoleonic wars, the

3 The orthography which is used for the text of de Josselin de Jong is the somewhat normalized one by Ponelis (1988); cf. the section on abbreviations, orthography and notational conventions after the table of contents.

creoles are not lexically related to Dutch. In Surinam the main creole is Sranan, with an English lexicon, and in the Dutch Antilles Papiamentu, with a Portuguese and Spanish lexicon. Creoles with a Dutch lexicon emerged in (formerly British) Guyana -once a group of Dutch colonies - on the Berbice and Essequibo rivers (Berbice Dutch Creole and Skepi Dutch, respectively) and in the Virgin Islands.

From the text cited at the beginning, it becomes clear that the necessity to treat Negerhollands as a separate language in its own right was felt at least as early as 1780.⁴ Because of missionary activity, it became necessary to study this language seriously. Consequently, its creole nature was noticed, and it was discussed by Moravian Mission historian Oldendorp (1777 [1987:251]), who describes the situation quite graphically:

By the term Creole language I mean the language that is spoken by the Negroes on St. Thomas and St. John and to a certain extent by those on St. Croix. The domain of this language extends not further than these islands. It is not the only Creole language because every European language which is spoken in a corrupted manner in the West Indies is called Creole. So it is that Creole English is spoken by the Negroes of English masters who have come to St. Croix with them from other English islands.

The Creole language about which I speak here originated in St. Thomas where Dutchmen, Danes, Brandenburgers (most of whom spoke Low German), and Frenchmen lived among one another at the beginning of the Danish settlement. The Negroes learned the language of the masters.

Oldendorp denies, however, that Negerhollands is to be considered a separate language:

Thus, the elements of the Creole language have been drawn primarily from Dutch and Low German. The difference between the Creole and the latter two languages is in the mutilation and misplacement of words and generally in their foreshortening, which occurs primarily in the peculiar kind of alteration and adaptation of nouns and verbs. These characteristics do not seem quite far-reaching enough to cause the Creole to be considered a separate language.

Since, however, it is now already so well-established to speak of the Creole as a separate language, it can do no harm to allow the use of that term in this context.

It is quite clear, in retrospect, that Negerhollands did become a separate language and is structurally quite different from Dutch. Before we come back to this matter, we will

4 Actually, the printing of the first booklet in Negerhollands indicates that the independent status of Negerhollands was already acknowledged by the Moravians by 1765 (see section II, 2.2.1). The manuscript evidence goes back even further, namely to 1736.

introduce the islands, their people and their history, insofar as they concern our linguistic purpose.

to the islands, their people and their history, insofar as they concern our linguistic purpose. The islands are... the people... the history... insofar as they concern our linguistic purpose.

to the islands, their people and their history, insofar as they concern our linguistic purpose. The islands are... the people... the history... insofar as they concern our linguistic purpose.



to the islands, their people and their history, insofar as they concern our linguistic purpose. The islands are... the people... the history... insofar as they concern our linguistic purpose.

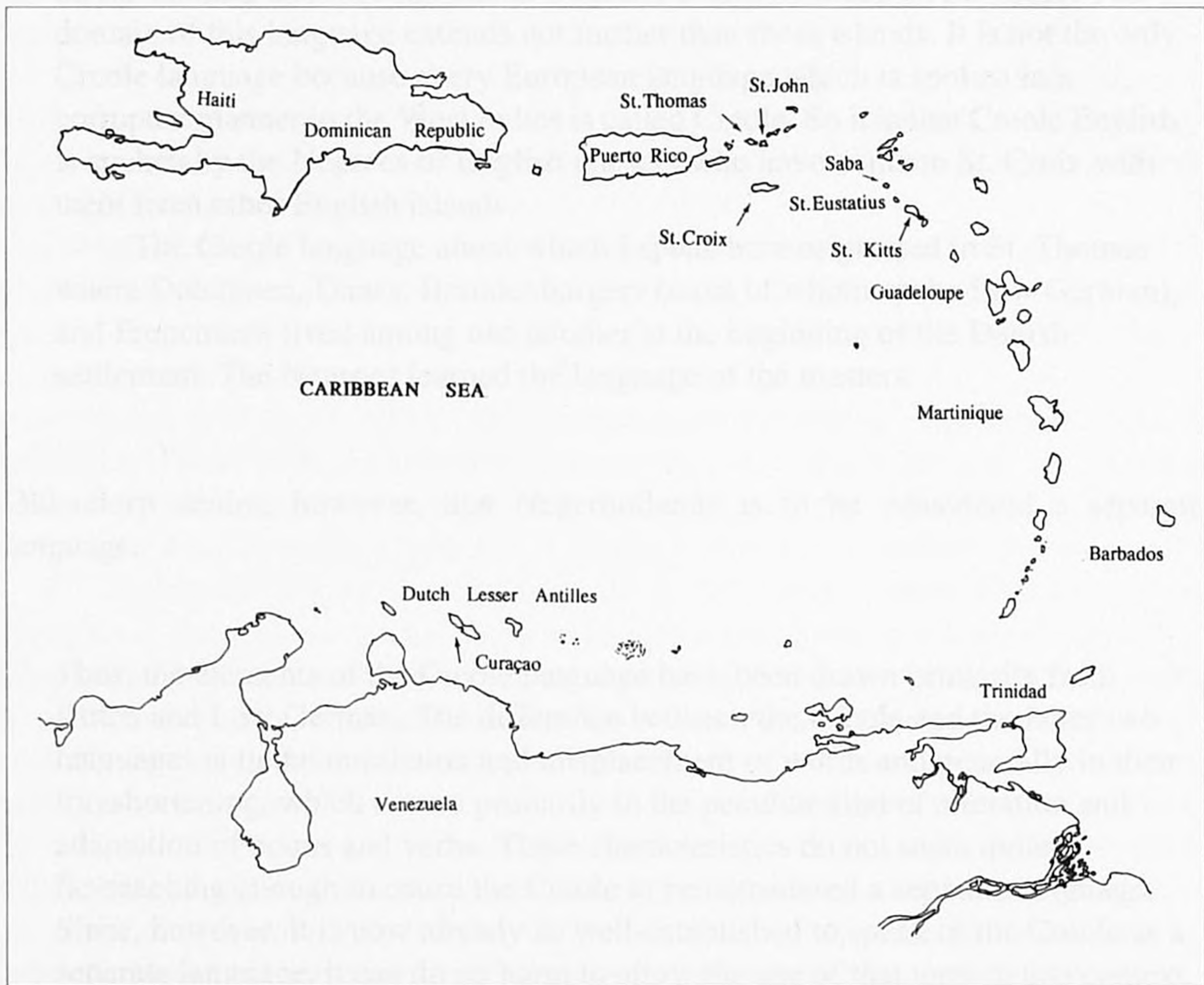
to the islands, their people and their history, insofar as they concern our linguistic purpose. The islands are... the people... the history... insofar as they concern our linguistic purpose.

to the islands, their people and their history, insofar as they concern our linguistic purpose. The islands are... the people... the history... insofar as they concern our linguistic purpose.

2 Early History and Demography of the Virgin Islands

To use a traditional opening, in 1493 Columbus gave the Virgin Islands their present-day name and met some Amerindians on St. Croix. The St. Croix Taínos were subsequently decimated by genocide and epidemics (see Sale 1991, Taylor 1977). A more comprehensive work on the Taínos was produced by Rouse (1992).

From 1600 onward the islands were being populated by Europeans of various descent and slaves imported from Africa. The year 1653 marked the founding of the Danish West-Indian Company, and hence the (late) entry of Denmark into the European colonizing efforts.



2. Map of the Caribbean

In 1665 the first attempt was made by the Danish to settle on the island of St. Thomas, the most sought-after of the three Virgin Islands because of its natural harbour, but it was without success. In 1671 the Danish West-Indian Company obtained a monopoly over St. Thomas, and in 1672 the Danish colonization proper of the island began, with 113 inhabitants. The Danes surely were not the first European settlers of the island, but we lack precise information on what happened before their arrival. The island seems to have been abandoned and uninhabited when the Danish settlers arrived.

The English had been raiding, among others, the Dutch Windward Antilles since 1666. Shortly afterwards a group of Dutch planters, who had fled from St. Eustatius to escape from the English (Goslinga 1971), settled on St. Thomas. According to Goodman (1985), they possibly brought a Dutch pidgin or creole with them, spoken by their slaves, although Sabino (1990) argues that the number of slaves brought along was probably very limited. It is also not unlikely that a pidgin or creole based on African, Dutch and other languages was used around the European forts on the West African coast (see Tonkin 1971). There the slaves were held in confinement by Dutch and other slave traders for some time up to six months or longer, until enough were gathered to fill a slave ship for the Caribbean. There are reports of West Africans who had learnt English and Dutch (Ardener 1968). However, no data of a possible Dutch-influenced contact language in West Africa have been found yet. At the height of Dutch activity in West Africa, the lingua franca was an already extant Portuguese pidgin. It was only replaced by West African Pidgin English when the English became dominant.

Now consider for a moment the constitution of the European population of the Virgin Islands in what is taken to be the formative period of Negerhollands. In 1688, when the first official census was held, there were 422 slaves in St. Thomas, as noted above, and 317 whites, among which there were (see Arends & Muysken 1992, and for an inventory based on slightly different figures Stein & Beck forthcoming):

66	Dutch households
32	English
20	Danish
8	French
3	German
3	Swedish
1	Holstein
1	Portuguese

These figures show that the slaves were faced with a potentially very heterogeneous primary 'target' language, dominated by Dutch (mainly in Zealandic and Flemish varieties). We can also expect English and Danish (lexical) influences, and those turn out to be there as well.

On the basis of archival research, Sabino concludes in her dissertation (1990) that in 1692 already a fifth of the slave population consisted of children born in St. Thomas. This is a relatively fast development, especially when considering that in Suriname for instance there was only a large group of locally born slaves after one century of colonization.

We should also consider the homogeneity of the slave population of that time. Often they were abducted from various places far away from the West African coast. According to Feldbæk & Justesen (1980) the large majority of the slaves imported in the period between 1672 to 1739, the formative period of Negerhollands, consisted of Twi-speaking Akan. Nevertheless we do not find clear traces of this Akan influence.

In fact, Sabino (1988) hypothesises that Ewe-speakers constituted the most important group in terms of African lexical substrate influence.

One might assume that Negerhollands would become a creole language diverging rather strongly from Dutch, judging by the relatively short period between colonization and the emergence of a locally born slave community. There was no time for a very gradual acculturation of the imported slaves to the colonial languages and cultures. We should point to the fact, however, that apparently the natality figure (the number of children being born) of the population was so high (which also transpires from Sabino's data) that a creole emerged which was quite close to Dutch. It must have been the locally born slaves who created Negerhollands, and they would have learned better Dutch than the newly arrived.

If we accept the theory of Goodman (1985) that Negerhollands perhaps emerged gradually in St. Eustatius before being taken to St. Thomas, then it is clear that internal migration (i.e. inside the Caribbean) played an important role in the genesis of Negerhollands. The sudden impulse of an established group of Negerhollands-speaking slaves at the beginning of the Virgin Islands colony could have been the decisive factor.

We saw above that in 1688 the slave population in St. Thomas outnumbered the white population. In 1725 their number had increased to 4490. In 1717 St. John came under Danish occupation, but by 1721, 25 of 39 planters on St. John were Dutchmen, and only nine Danes (Hall 1992:11). It was reported quite soon that the slaves on that island also spoke Negerhollands, which is perhaps an indication that the creole must have already existed early in the 18th century.

In 1733 St. Croix was bought by the Danes from the French, but by 1741 there were already five times as many English on the island as Danes (Hall 1992:13). The Danes asked the Herrnhut missionaries to participate in the colonization of St. Croix, but they were unable to do so; the majority of the settlers in 1733 were Moravians, but many became ill and soon passed away due to the climate. Thus, Negerhollands came to be used much less here than on the other two Danish Antilles, and an English creole emerged. Nevertheless, there are a few Creole slave letters from that island (see II, 1.2.6).

Some decades later, the resulting language situation in the three Virgin Islands was summarized (in Negerhollands) by the Moravian missionary Auerbach (1774) as follows:

Die hab well twee drie onder die swart Volk, die sender a leer voor verstaan beetje van die hollandisch Taal, as sender woon na die Stadt, en hoor die ider Dag van die Blanco, maar die Plantey-Volk no kan vor verstaan die soo. Doch, die no sal maak een Verhinder, as die lieve Broeer will skriev eenmaal na sender, maski die ben Hollandisch of na die Hoogduytsch, soo die sal maak sender moeschi bli, en ons sal lees die Brief voor sender na Creol. Na St. Croix die hab meer van die Negers, die sender kan verstaan English, as na St. Thomas en St. Jan, maar doch sender English Praat ka mingel ook altoeveel met die Creol- en Guinee-taal... Da Neger-English die ben.

'There are some among the black people who have learned to understand a bit of the Dutch language, as they live in town, and hear it every day from the whites, but the plantation folk cannot understand it. This should not be an impediment if the dear brethren will write to them some time, albeit in Dutch or High German, for this will make them very happy, and we will read the letter for them in Creole. On St. Croix there are more blacks who can understand English than in St. Thomas and St. John, but still their English speech is mixed very much with the Creole and Guinea languages. It is Negro-English.'

We conclude our historical sketch at this point as the Negerhollands language is definitively established and documented. The history of the Virgin Islands after the formative period will be detailed in various places. It is related to the sociolinguistic development of Negerhollands in sections 5 and 7.4. It is also dealt with in relation to the history of the missions and their consequences in section 6. For further reading about the history of the Virgin Islands, we refer among others to Brøndsted (1953), Degn (1974) and Hall (1992).

3 Negerhollands and Creole studies

Unlike other languages, creole languages are by definition languages of which we know when and (in some cases) how they emerged as separate linguistic systems: that is, when peoples speaking mutually unintelligible languages come into contact, the possible creole emerging from this contact could not have existed before. This gives us a unique opportunity to study aspects of the process of language birth and its results, particularly in the case of the relatively recent creole languages, such as those that developed on plantations in the Caribbean under European occupation. The study of language birth can provide us with important insights into how linguistic systems in general are constituted and what is needed to make them function adequately as systems of human communication.

In addition, the circumstances of language birth can tell us something about the drastic linguistic change and innovation which may take place in situations of language contact. Thus, many characteristics of the European languages which provided the vocabulary for creole languages are not at the same time reflected in the structure of these languages. So when creole languages came into being, only certain components of other languages were transferred, whereas particular other linguistic components of creoles do not originate from either one of the languages in contact. For this reason, creole languages cannot be seen as (defective) varieties of contributing other languages. This has been the reason for the emergence of a separate subdiscipline: creole studies.

As language structure, function and ecology became central concerns of linguistics, creole studies moved from the not-quite-respectable fringes of historical linguistics at the beginning of this century towards the center of linguistic research.

The creole languages do not constitute a family in the sense of historical linguistics, although some of them are clearly related. A common way to classify them is in terms of the language that has contributed most of the vocabulary. Thus, we have creoles based on African languages, and on the major colonial languages such as French, English, and Portuguese. Most of these languages are spoken in the Caribbean, West Africa, the Indian Ocean, South East Asia, and the Southern Pacific. There are several hundred pidgin and creole languages known.

The term pidgin refers to a contact language that is not spoken natively in any speech community. Contrasting creoles with pidgins, we can define creoles as contact-induced languages which are spoken as the mother tongue of a speakers' community. Pidgins are by definition acquired as a second language. The theory that creole languages are the result of the acquisition of pidgins as a first language is widely accepted but hardly proven.

While they are not related in historical terms, creole languages have often been thought of as belonging to one typological class. In the following section a number of 'typical creole features' will be mentioned. However, in recent years attention has shifted to the grammars of individual languages and to the study of areas in which the creole languages differ from each other structurally.

While five major European languages have been involved in creole genesis, the Ibero-Romance (Portuguese and Spanish) and the Dutch-based creoles have been underrepresented in research. Most of the insights gained so far derive from English-and French-lexicon creoles. This bias has several serious consequences.

First, the fate of a number of potentially very interesting grammatical features of Ibero-Romance and Dutch (e.g. word order, optional subject pronouns, verb clusters and verbal particles) under creolization has remained unstudied so far.

Second, the groups of both Ibero-Romance and Dutch creoles are much less homogeneous, structurally, than the English and French creoles. Therefore, the fact that so many English and French creoles resemble each other may be due to accidental reasons of historical relatedness rather than to properties of the process of creole genesis as such.

In addition, the field of creole studies has remained surprisingly a-historical, given its strong conceptual links with historical linguistics, and the consensus among creolists that the actual socio-historical circumstances of creole genesis must have been crucial for their formation. While it is clear that the earliest available documentary sources for creoles should be examined if we want to gain an insight into the field, these have remained relatively inaccessible and unstudied.

In recent publications (e.g. Carden and Stewart, 1988; Arends, 1989) the question was brought up of whether creole genesis is a gradual or a single-generation phenomenon. The study of early texts makes it possible to be much more confident regarding statements about which grammatical structures early creoles did or did not have, and to what extent the stabilization of the creole languages was an extended process. The substantial collection of 18th- and 19th-century Negerhollands manuscripts and edited texts (Stein, 1982a,b, 1985, 1986a,b,c, 1989, 1991), the folk tales recorded at the beginning of this century (de Josselin de Jong 1926), and recent recordings of which this book gives an overview makes it possible to look at the language in its historical context and to study its development.

4 Negerhollands: a brief sketch

Without pretending to be either complete or original we shall now illustrate a few features of Negerhollands, in part through the analysis of a few Negerhollands proverbs from Magens' grammar of 1770. Magens was a Danish citizen born on St. Thomas. His 80 page booklet is written in Danish and is the first ever printed grammar of a creole language. It follows the model of Latin grammar, and it gives a large number of sentence examples, fragments of everyday speech, and proverbs, e.g.:

- (1) Pampuen no kan parie Kalbas (1770)
Pumpkin NEG can bear Calabash
'A pumpkin cannot give birth to a calabash.'
Dutch: Een pompoen kan geen kalebas voortbrengen.

Example (1) demonstrates the fixed Subject - Negation - Verbal Complex - Complement word order of Negerhollands. It contrasts with that of Dutch, where the auxiliary *kan* occupies the second position, and the main verb *voortbrengen* occurs at the end of the sentences, preceded by the object. There is also a difference with respect to the position of the negation. Generically used nouns, common in proverbs, do not get an article. Notice also the occurrence of both Spanish or Portuguese (together labeled as Ibero-Romance) elements: *parie* 'give birth to' (< *parir*), and Dutch ones: *kan* 'can'. The form *no* 'not' can be both English and Spanish, but the latter is more probable.

- (2) Branmier val na Malassie, da sut hem ha vind (1770)
Ant fall NA molasses, because sweet 3SG PST find
'He gets what he deserves.'

Sentence (2) contains the all-purpose locative preposition *na* (probably <Port. *na* < *em a* 'in the (fem.)'; cf. also Du. *naar* 'to', older form *na*). There is an example of fronting for the purpose of focus or stress: In a construction with *da*, *sut* is placed early in the secondary clause and becomes emphasized (*da sut*). The particle *ha* (<Du. *had* 'had' or a dialectal form of the infinitive of the verb 'have') is used to mark tense. Notice that *hem*, the stressed non-subject form of the pronoun in Dutch, is used for the subject, the direct and the indirect object in Negerhollands.

Some of the particles used to mark tense, mood and aspect in Negerhollands derive from verbs. As a result there is a small class of frequently used homophonous verbs and particles. *lo* (assumed to derive from Dutch *loop* 'walk') belongs to this class, and it is not always clear in what capacity it is used. A 20th-century example in which it occurs as a main verb, a verb which introduces a purpose clause, and a progressive aspect marker, in that order, is:

- (3) am fo lo a hus lo du wa bin da lo wak fo am. (1926)
 3SG FOR go NA house go do what be there go wait FOR 3SG
 'He has to go home to do what is there waiting for him.'

Consider now another 18th-century proverb:

- (4) Hunder wil si Kikkentje alteveel.
 Chicken want 3POS chick alltoomuch
 '(S)he loves her/his children.'

In (4) we encounter an example of the invariant possessive pronoun *si* (Negerhollands has no grammatical gender) (<Du. masc. SG. *zijn*) and of the (pidgin-like) periphrastic adverb *alteveel* 'all too much' as a degree marker. Hesseling (1933) argues that the use of *wil* (<Du. *willen* 'want') for 'love' also betrays Papiamentu influence, since in Ibero-Romance *querer* means both 'love' and 'want'.

- (5) Hogo no hab Deer.
 eye NEG have door
 'I can't help seeing it.'

Example (5) is given here to illustrate two phonological features: the replacement of Dutch /ö:/ (in Du. *deur* [dö:r] 'door'), a marked sound and therefore difficult to learn, by /e:/ in *deer* and the occurrence of, it appears, an extra vowel in *hogo*, which yields an (unmarked, i.e. easy to learn and to pronounce) CVCV-pattern⁵. Such vowels are termed epithetic. Later in this introduction we will return to the issue of whether, and to what extent, Negerhollands has epithetic vowels.

- (6) Als die Vier ka yt, klein Kint le jump na die Hassesje.
 When DET fire PRF out little child HAB jump NA DET ashes
 'They do with him/her as they please.'

Example (6) shows that the particle *yt* 'out' can be used as a verb, meaning 'go out', unlike Dutch. This type of reinterpretation from a particle to a verb is typical of the relation between a creole language and its lexifier. It is furthermore preceded by the perfective aspect marker *ka* (<Port./Spa. *acabar* 'finish'), an element which occurs in many creole languages in one form or other. The article (when present) is invariant *die* 'that'. It is not unusual in creole languages and, for that matter, in other language families for the article to be derived from the demonstrative pronoun. Notice that in the second clause there is no inversion of subject and verb, as in Dutch (where we would have had *springt het kleine kind* 'jumps the little child'); in this respect the Subject-Verb-Complement order of Negerhollands is very strict.

5 Incidentally, the initial *h* in *hogo*, absent in standard Du *oog*, may well be due to hypercorrection with relation to Zeelandic or Flemish.

- (7) Gras le gruj na Dootman sie Door.
 Grass HAB grow NA dead.man 3POS door.
 'Nobody takes care of widows and orphans.'

Here we notice a typical creole possessive construction with both the possessor *Dootman* preposed to the noun and the resumptive third person possessive *sie*. While in an earlier example we had *deer* 'door' from Du. *deur*, here we have the more usual form *door* (20th century *do:/do:^h*) possibly derived from English, or from the 17th century Du. variant form *door*.

In both of the previous examples there is a particle marking duration or habitual, *le*, possibly from Dutch *leggen* 'lay'. Many descriptions of Negerhollands mention a shift in the tense/mood/aspect system in the course of time, but concentrate only on a change in the lexical items involved. An example is the gradual replacement of the durative marker *le* by *lo*, which was accomplished at the beginning of the 19th century. Because of the association of *lo* with its original verbal meaning 'go' (<Du. *loop* 'walk'), this element is ambiguously used as a progressive marker and a (near?) future marker, thus entering in competition with the older, well established future marker *sa(l)*. The following 20th-century example clearly indicates that *lo* must have different functions:

- (8) mi lo lo mankan mi ju (1926)
 1SG GO go together with 2SG
 'I will accompany you.'

Another proverb:

- (9) Mie jammer Ju tee mie kries Ju, tee mie neem Steen veeg mie Hogo.
 1SG bewail 2SG till 1SG cry 2SG till 1SG take stone wipe 1SG eye
 'I pity you to the point of crying for you, of wiping my eyes with a stone.'

In sentence (9) it is striking that the first person pronoun expressing the subject here, *mie*, is derived from Du. *mij* 'me', a non-subject form; it is furthermore also used possessively. The preposition or conjunction *tee* may well derive from Port. *até* 'until', and we see that the verbs *jammer* and *kries* can be used transitively (with a human object in this case), which they cannot in the language from which they are derived, namely Dutch. Many originally Du. verbs thus have acquired other syntactic properties.

A remarkable feature is also the serial verb construction *neem ... veeg ...* 'take ... wipe ...', in which the object of the verb *neem* is marked as an instrument. Many researchers connect these constructions with West-African languages. Various authors have tried to argue against the existence of serial verb constructions in Negerhollands. Serial verb constructions do not seem to be used very often in earlier Negerhollands, but we did encounter some instances of it, for example in (10):

- (10) *sellie ha loop slaep mit tien yer* (1770)
 3PL PST walk sleep with ten hour
 'They went to bed at ten o'clock.'

In one reading of this example, 'walking' and 'sleeping' are to be regarded as separate actions whose sequence and consecutiveness is iconically represented by juxtaposition of the verbs ('walk and then sleep'). In the more probable serial reading, however, walking has an inchoative meaning, and the construction indicates what in non-serializing languages would be expressed through subordination by means of complementizers and the like ('start to sleep'). In example (11), different subjects are in play:

- (11) *Em a roep een van die knechten kom bi em* (±1780)
 3SG PST call one of DET servants come at 3SG
 'He called one of his servants to him(self).'

Although we have not found abundant evidence so far for verb serialization in earlier sources, later sources such as de Josselin de Jong's texts (1926), in (12) and (13), and recent recordings (cf. Sabino, forthcoming) do abound with serial constructions:

- (12) *Ju fo lo wapi di 'lion' sinu bi lo sini en fa shi klen*
 2SG FOR walk where DET lion 3PL BE walk cut one of 3POS small

fingu, hal di brin ko gi mi (1926)
 finger get DET bring come give 1SG
 'You must go where the lions are (and) cut one of his little toes
 (and) bring it for me.'

- (13) *Am a see shi meester, dð kiniŋ loo koo ki am* (1926)
 3SG PST say 3POS master, DET king ASP come see 3SG
 'He told his master that the king was coming to see him.'

In fact, when looking at these 20th century sources of Negerhollands, they give a much more Creole-like impression than the 18th-century sources do (although of course the fact that the 18th-century sources use Dutch orthography is very deceptive). We can at least distinguish 'complementizer' serial verbs *roep ... kom* in (11), aspectual *loop ... slaep* in (10), directional *brin ... ko* in (12), and benefactive *ko ... gi* in (12) serial verbs. Before we finish on the subject of serial verbs, however, we would like to point out that in the 18th century their existence was noticed by Oldendorp. In his manuscript dictionary of 1767-8 (published in Stein forthcoming b), he comments under the entry *breng, bring* 'to bring': "In general *kom* is added to it: *Mi breng die kom* 'I bring it' [lit.: I bring DET come]. *bring kom mi die hieso* 'bring it here to me' [lit.: bring come with DET here]." [our translation]. Notice, by the way, that *bring* could also be used without *kom*, as in (14):

- (14) di kining a fraa, apee fa am gut wa am kaa bring (1926)
 DET king PST ask where FOR 3SG thing what 3SG PRF bring
 'The king asked where is that thing that he has brought.'

The early writers of Negerhollands were European missionaries, who understood the sentences containing serial verbs, but they did not produce them because they may not have been aware of their peculiarity to creole languages. They possibly even avoided using them because they wanted to follow the European model, which lacks serial verb constructions. This was also the case in the letters written by slaves who were taught by the missionaries to write in Dutch. The rarity of occurrence of serial verbs in our 18th-century Negerhollands material may thus in the first place be due to the missionary factor.

A proverb illustrating the use of *ka* again is:

- (15) Als Volk ka qwaet na Ju, sender gief Ju Makut for tap Water
 if people PRF angry NA 2SG, 3PL give 2SG basket FOR tap water
 'Your enemies will always find something to take revenge.'

Example (15) shows how an etymologically non-verbal element, *qwaet* 'angry', can be used as a predicate 'become angry', marked by the verbal particle *ka*. Literally it says 'have gotten angry'. A similar example occurred with *yt* 'out' in (6) above. Furthermore, we see the Papiamentu word *makut* 'bucket', and the use of *for* to form infinitival complements. The forms *om* and *te*, characteristic of Dutch non-finite complement clauses, do not occur, and neither does English *to*. An element such as *fu* in many creoles is attested to have this function (see Bakker 1987). In example (16) the use of a conjunction meaning 'for' can be observed marking infinitive and purposive sentences in the same way:

- (16) vordaarom mi a ka kom voor doop met Water (±1780)
 therefore 1SG PST PRF come FOR baptize with water
 'Therefore I have come to baptize with water.'

Another proverb illustrates the copular verb (*bin*), which has been studied in detail by Sabino (1988):

- (17) mie bin pover Kakelak, mie no hab Regt na Hunderkot
 1SG BE poor cockroach, 1SG NEG have right NA chicken.coop
 'I must suffer for my poverty.'

The area of copula constructions also relates to other parts of the grammar, such as topicalization (a topicalized constituent is introduced by a copula), tense (early Negerhollands had a past and a non-past form of the copula), and the issue of the distinction between verbs and adjectives. This distinction appears to be blurred in many creole languages which do not distinguish overtly between *Mary work* and *Mary tall*. The latter issue is all the more pertinent since in many West African languages which

may have played a role in the formation of creoles such as Negerhollands, verbs and adjectives belong to the same class. Negerhollands differs, however, from many of the Caribbean creoles (like Berbice Dutch Creole) in that it requires a copular verb ('to be') to introduce adjectives in predicative position:

- (18) a. Di gut mi frai (Negerhollands)
 DET thing BE nice
 'It is nice.'
- b. Idri gu ... bam. (Berbice Dutch Creole. Kouwenberg 1994:118)
 every thing ... nice
 'Everything ... is nice.'

As mentioned before, Negerhollands follows the 'creole' pattern for the ordering of constituents, viz. SVO (Subject-Verb-Object). Surface word order may differ as a result of several processes, of which predicate cleft (verb doubling) is one. Fronted elements in focus constructions are usually introduced by the copula *da* or *dat* in Negerhollands, and this seems to be obligatory when the verb is fronted.

- (19) da slaep mie ka slaep (1770)
 EMP sleep 1SG PRF sleep
 'I really have slept.' or 'It is sleeping that I did (sleep).'

Note that none of the variant forms of the copula, i.e. neither the 'present tense' form *bi(n)/mi* nor the 'infinitival' form *we:s*, can be used to introduce fronted elements, although using a copula-like form in such a position is not unusual among Caribbean creoles.

The optionality of plural marking is illustrated in the proverb in (20):

- (20) Twee slem no kan kook Boontje na een Pot
 Two smart NEG can cook bean NA one pot
 'No reason to get in each other's way.'

Important here is that two apparently plural nouns appear without overt plural marking, one preceded by a numeral and one used as a substance noun. It is possible to mark plurals in Negerhollands through the use of the third person plural pronoun *sender* (*sinu* in 20th century NH):

- (21) a. die kabaj sender 'the horses'
 b. mit die neeger sender 'with the Negroes'

However, the plural is used in much more limited contexts than in Dutch: mostly with animates, and not after an explicit quantifying expression such as a numeral. It is important to note that in many 18th-century texts Dutch morphological plurals occur as well.

The apparent resemblances with Dutch, which are emphasized by the spelling used in the proverbs, do not imply that Negerhollands is a sort of Dutch. Even a superficial glance brings to light a number of differences. What is needed is a systematic study of this 18th-century distant cousin of the Dutch dialects from Holland and Zeeland, with special attention being paid to the differences that we find between different kinds of Negerhollands and the embedding of the language in the context of a slave society (cf. van Rossem Forthcoming a).

5 The origin of Negerhollands

After this short presentation of the main peculiarities of Negerhollands, we now return to its origin, history and development. In section 1.2 we have already treated the formative period and the context of its emergence. Before we return to that context, the special multilingual setting of the slave society in a multilingual European settlement, we will discuss the influence of the different source languages and briefly consider the various features of Negerhollands in relation to possible scenarios for its emergence as a language.

5.1 West African influence

The extent of West African influence on Negerhollands still needs to be established, but it probably was not as large as on some of the other Caribbean creoles, particularly those of Surinam. We pointed out the presence of serial verbs and predicate cleft constructions in the creole, constructions which are often claimed to be characteristic of West Africa. It also remains hard to estimate the extent to which slaves were induced by the missionaries to 'de-africanize' their language (Stein forthcoming a).

5.2 The genesis of Negerhollands and second language acquisition

On the basis of what we know of the acquisition of Dutch as a second language by adults, we can explain a number of properties of Negerhollands and establish a plausible scenario for the genesis of the language.

Given the demographic facts, we can establish that the first language or mother tongue of the majority of the slaves in the probably decisive initial phase was 17th century Twi and possibly Portugese pidgin and Papiamentu. The possible 'target' languages were primarily 17th century spoken Zealandic and Hollandic, and also Danish, English, and French. The resulting creole language shows mainly Zealandic and Hollandic lexical and phonological influence.

The features of Negerhollands similar to those of Dutch as a second language are among others:

- (a) word order, in particular the rigid SVO order of Negerhollands and the absence of postpositions;
- (b) the choice and semantic features of the tense/mood/aspect particles and of auxiliary verbs;
- (c) the absence of Dutch *er* forms in Negerhollands.

To exemplify the last point: in Negerhollands there is no reflex of the Dutch R-pronouns:

- (22) a. *wagut ju wil du mit di*
 what 2SG want do with DET
 ‘What do you want to do with it?’
 cf. Du.: ‘wat wil je *ermee* doen?’
- b. *am no weet een gut fan di*
 he NEG know a thing of DET
 ‘He does not know a thing of it’
 cf. Du.: ‘hij weet *er* niets *van*’

One way of explaining this is by assuming that the *er*-pronouns, being phonologically weak, did not survive in the process of second language acquisition. On the other hand, the phonologically strong forms, the Dutch demonstrative R-pronoun *daar* and the interrogative R-pronoun *waar*, which are only used with non-human NPs, have also disappeared. This suggests that factors of morphological and positional markedness⁶ are involved as well. A tentative conclusion could be that the slaves only used those parts of Dutch that they understood, in building up their new language.

5.3 The Zealandic and Hollandic lexifier language

An important issue is the precise characterization of the target language varieties. From the seminal work of Hesseling (1905) it appears that Negerhollands must have had Zealandic Dutch as its greatest target language, although Hesseling takes recourse now and then also to related West Flemish dialects (see van Rossem Forthcoming a).

Just like Zealandic Negerhollands has /i/ for Du. *ij*, a diphthong (e.g. *ki(k)* ‘see, look’ <Du. *kijk(en)* ‘look’). The Middle Dutch /y/ of Zealandic, which never underwent diphthongization, is an unrounded /i/ in 20th-century Negerhollands, so that a Standard Dutch diphthong *ui* that derives from a Middle Dutch /y/ generally corresponds to a Negerhollands /i/, as in *brin* (<Du. *bruin* ‘brown’). Only where Zealandic, just like Middle Dutch, has a diphthong *ui* (the so-called *ui-2*), do we find a diphthong (or a monophthongized variant) in Negerhollands: e.g. *reil* ‘exchange, change’ (<Du. *ruil(en)* ‘exchange’), *loi* (<Du. *lui* ‘lazy’). Note that in 18th-century (and maybe early 19th-century) Negerhollands, Zealandic /y/ was still present as a variant. We may derive this from the graphemes <y> and <ye> in the Danish texts as well as from data in the Danish ABC booklets (Kingo 1770 and Wold 1770). Furthermore, note that Standard Dutch never diphthongized /y/ (or /i/) before /r/, so that a Negerhollands /i/ out of /y/ sometimes corresponds to an /y/ in Standard Dutch. Disregarding some other complicating factors such as the historical phonetics of *ui*, we could summarize the

6 See also example 5 where the term ‘marked’ is used in the same sense as ‘out of the ordinary’.

development of the high front vowels from Middle Dutch to Zealandic as in Figure 1 below:

ML.DU	[i:]		[y]		[ʌy]	
	Du	Ze	Du	Ze	Du	Ze
	[ɛi]	[i]	[ʌy]	[y]	[ʌy]	[ʌy]
	((i))		((y))			
NH.	[i]		[i]		[ɛi] [ɔi] [ɛ:]	

1. The development of the high front vowels from Middle Dutch to Negerhollands. The symbol [y] represents the IPA front round high vowel, and [ʌy] is a diphthong where the [y] is preceded by the centralized back vowel [ʌ], in Dutch orthography <ui>.

The Zealandic target language also explains the West Germanic /u/ in *ju* 'you sing.' and *nu* 'now' instead of the diphthong or /y/ of Standard Dutch *jou* and *nou*, *nu* resp., so that an English etymology for NH *ju* is unnecessary. Similarly, the West Germanic /u/ instead of regular Zealandic /y/ (or Negerhollands /i/) in words like *hus* 'house' and *muši* 'mouse' does not have to be ascribed to Danish since such irregular variant forms are also attested for Zealandic (cf. van Ginneken 1913).

Finally, the Zealandic target language also explains the occurrence of southern Dutch words such as *kot* 'cabin', *hofi* 'garden' and *rigibe:n* 'backbone' (all examples from de Josselin de Jong) or, in the 18th century, *kachel* 'foal' and *schuif* 'drawer' (cf. van Ginneken (1913), who, however, was wrong about the status of *neusdoek* 'handkerchief'). Furthermore, 18th-century *keer* 'like' may derive from Zealandic *keuren* 'like, please' rather than from Papiamentu *ke(r)*, *kie(r)* 'want, like, love' (cf. den Besten 1989).

Still we have to take into account Hollandic or Standard Dutch as an available target, perhaps in a later stage. The relevant words appear to have to do with town and harbour and with education and religion. De Josselin de Jong (1926) gives a number of words with initial /z/ and /v/ where we would have expected /s/ and /f/ due to Negerhollands devoicing rules, as in *se:* 'say' (<Du. *zeg(gen)*) and *for* 'for' (<Du. *voor*), namely: *ze:* 'sea' (<Du. *zee*), *zeil*, *zeilð* 'sail' (<Du. *zeil(en)*), *zil* 'soul' (<Du. *ziel*), *valis* 'valise, hand bag' (<Du. *valies*), *venstu*, *wensid* 'window' (<Du. *venster*). This is confirmed by data in the word list of Nelson (1936) and by the recorded use of the word *zɔndð* 'sin; what a shame' by Miss Alice, the last known speaker. The 18th-century religious

texts often have the regularly derived creolized form *sondo*, with a devoiced *s*. This may suggest that changes in voicing reflect changes in the target over time.⁷

Initial /z/ and /v/ are lacking, however, in the list of cardinal numerals in de Josselin de Jong (1926) and Nelson (1936). In the latter source there is an unexpected vowel in the words *fɛv* 'five' and *fɛvti:n* 'fifteen'. This corresponds with the use of *ei* in *veif*, etc. in Magens (1770) and *feif* in de Josselin de Jong (1926), which is in accordance with the diphthong.⁸

5.4 A Portuguese pidgin?

In many creoles, even ones lexically unrelated to either Spanish or Portuguese, we find lexical items of Portuguese origin. Examples are the well-known *pickaninny* (<Port. *pequeninho* 'very little') and *save* (<Port. *saber* 'know') in English creoles. One hypothesis to account for these has been the assumption that there was one Portuguese pidgin, spoken in the slave trade along the coast of West Africa, from which the Caribbean creoles were formed through the partial replacement of Portuguese by English, French, etc. vocabularies, respectively. This replacement would not have been complete, and hence the lexical traces from the Portuguese pidgin. In the proverbs we noticed a number of Ibero-Romance lexical items. This could be interpreted in the light of this Portuguese pidgin hypothesis. It is much more likely, however, that they derive from Papiamentu, as pointed out by Hesseling (1933). Planters who settled on the Virgin Islands brought over some, presumably Papiamentu-speaking, slaves with them from the island of Curaçao, and these may well have influenced the emerging creole.

5.5 The epithetic vowels: substrate or superstrate influence?

A special problem in connection with the Dutch target dialect (the superstrate or main lexifier language) and with possible African (the substrate language) influences is the question of the so-called epithetic vowels in Negerhollands. In some creole languages (e.g. in Surinam) full vowels appear with great regularity at the end of 'European' words, and a very regular consonant-vowel-consonant-vowel-pattern emerges (e.g. *buku* 'book'). This pattern could have a universal basis in laws of ease of pronunciation, but it is more likely that it is connected to African patterns.

7 Another explanation may be the fact that texts written by the Moravian missionaries reflect the Northern Standard German voiced [z], which at the beginning of the word is written <s>, whilst the character <z> is pronounced [ts]. It is more likely, however, that the missionaries' <s> was ambiguous between [s] and [z] as was still more or less the case in 18th century Dutch spelling. In Danish the [z] does not have a phonemic status. In any event, the occurrence of the <z> in any early Negerhollands text is rare, except in proper names.

8 The word *fikopdibɒl* 'five-headed devil' in De Josselin de Jong's glossary (1926) appears to give a more popular variant of the numeral, but considering tale 49 in De Josselin de Jong the translation 'fourheaded devil' is more probable. (Cf. *fi* 'four' in De Josselin de Jong (1926) and *fi* 'four' in Nelson (1936)).

Negerhollands also seems to have such epithetic vowels, although we must exclude petrified diminutives as in *hofi* 'garden' (<Du. *hof-je*, *hof-ie*) and *kalfi* 'calf' (<Du. *kalf-je*, *kalf-ie*), and original full vowels, as in *apðlsina* 'orange [lit.: apple china]'. What remains are words such as *hogo* 'eye' (<Du. *oog*), but it is a sporadically occurring phenomenon and mostly limited to nouns and an adjective or two.

Such a full final vowel also occurs where historically a Dutch schwa may be assumed, as in *he:lð*, *he:le:*, *hele* 'whole, whole (noun)' (<Du. *hele*), *here* 'Lord (God)' (<Du. *here*), *tobo*, *tubu* 'tub' (<Du. *tobbe*) and *(a)bini* 'in, into, inside' (<Du. *binnen*). If we take the so-called epithetic vowels in *krabu* 'crab, lobster', *rigi* 'back', *roto* 'rat' and *stêre:* 'star' to be original Dutch schwas, then we have the Zealandic forms *krabbe*, *rugge*, *rotte* and *sterre* with a Middle Dutch final vowel. The sporadic use of epithetic vowels in Negerhollands nouns seems to correspond in large measure to the use of a final schwa in their Zealandic counterparts.

The so-called epithetic vowels of Negerhollands thus appear to be mostly explainable as Dutch diminutive endings (*-ie*), original full vowels (from Dutch or from other target languages) or as colourings of Dutch or Zealandic final schwas. Whether all forms can be explained like this is a point for further research. A few cases are worth mentioning:

(a) the word *duku*, *dugu*, *duko* 'clothes, blankets, cloth' seems to contain a true epithetic vowel, as opposed to a fossilized diminutive or a historical word final vowel. Possibly we have a West African word of Dutch origin here (Norval Smith, personal communication).

(b) According to the early 19th-century Herrnhut grammar of Negerhollands cited by Hesseling (1905), the slaves are claimed to have said *grooto* 'big, large' instead of *groot*, and de Josselin de Jong (1926) gives *gro:to:* as a variant of *gro:t*. His texts give a different picture from the older grammar, however. So far we have only found the adjective *gro:t* and once the nominalization *gro:to:* 'big one' (<Du. *grote*) in *di twe: gro:to: sinu* 'the two big ones, the two oldest', with the plural marker *sinu*. Note that Oldendorp (1767-8) mentions in his dictionary *grooto* and *groot* as synonyms for 'big' but only the latter occurs as an adjective, for example in the entry 'greedy': *em ha goe groot hoogo* 'he is greedy, cannot get enough [lit.: he has very big eyes]'.
(c) *Voet* 'foot' is *fut* or *futu*, *futo*, and the final /u/ has not yet been accounted for.

6 The further development of the language

Perhaps the most interesting part of Creole languages is their genesis. Unfortunately, this often took place in the 17th century for the Atlantic Creoles, so there is no opportunity to consult recordings or informants, and the use of written material is limited to a small number of texts. Negerhollands is, thanks to the activities of 18th-century missionaries, an exception to this. The corpus the missionaries have left for us consists of a bulk of texts in which the oldest stage can be approached closer than is possible for



3. Portrait of Count von Zinzendorf

other Creole languages. The manuscripts are not always word by word translations of existing religious texts. Texts which are free compositions (in both the Danish and the Moravian tradition) show that the language is used in a quite natural way.

These early sources may be especially helpful in the demystification of the early stages of creolization. We think that the material, in the near future accessible by computer, is very interesting for creolists as well as for linguists with interest in other subjects, like historical linguistics, sociolinguistics and Dutch dialectology. Most of our manuscripts have a religious background and are mostly written or translated by missionaries, particularly the Moravians. From 1765 until 1834 books were printed in Negerhollands. The collection includes various kinds of religious texts, from hymnbooks to catechisms, but also linguistic works. The writers and publishers were usually missionaries originating from Denmark or Germany.

6.1 The Moravian mission in the Virgin Islands

The mission of the Moravian Brethren on the Virgin Islands started in 1732 and began to be successful in 1736. The Moravian Brethren originate from the Protestant movement of the Husites (followers of the reformer Jan Hus who was burnt at the Concilium in Konstanz in 1415). They were persecuted, but the movement never ceased completely. In 1722 a group of refugees came to Upper Lusatia, near the present-day borders of Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic, where they founded the town of Herrnhut. Count Zinzendorf, the owner of the land, offered them this opportunity; he then became the first leader of the young community. Herrnhut became and still is the center of the Moravian Brethren; they are therefore also called Herrnhuters or Herrnhuter (or Evangelische) Brüdergemeine (in Dutch Herrnhutters and Evangelische Broedergemeente).

They started their worldwide missionary work in 1732 on the Danish Virgin Islands; this work covers a wide range of countries, from Greenland to South Africa, from Surinam to the Himalayas (see Beck 1981).

Several aspects of their missionary work have a great linguistic interest:

- (a) They taught the local new members of their community to read and to write (the latter not necessarily to all), so that they would be able to read the Bible, prayers and hymns, and to keep a diary, to communicate by letters with other Moravian communities, etc.;
- (b) They felt it to be their main task to translate the Bible and all kinds of hymns and prayers into the local language, even if this was not yet a written language;
- (c) To do this and to help subsequent missionaries to learn the local languages, they prepared dictionaries and grammars of these languages; in several cases those were the first descriptions of the languages ever made;
- (d) History and documentation of their work formed one of the important tasks. They not only kept regular diaries from the very beginning of their activities, they also preserved nearly all written documents they produced, however insignificant.

The result of all this is that we have a large documentation of the early times of the Moravian mission, descriptions of the local languages and documents about their use. We also have good and valuable information of daily life and problems. For Negerhollands (or *carriols*, *cariolisch*, *criolisch*, *creolisch*, as they called the language in the first decades of their activities on the Virgin Islands), all of this this means that we have a good documentation in and about that language (cf. Stein 1986b).

The documentation of Negerhollands starts with Friedrich Martin's (the leading missionary of the beginning mission) diary notice from 8 November 1736, i.e. only eight months after his arrival on the islands:

“Br. Cars[tens] war fleissig wolt das neije testament ins carriolse bringen: es ist aber sehr schwer: den sie besteht in all zu vieler Sprachen.”

(Brother Carstens⁹ was industrious, wants to translate the new testament into the creole; it is very difficult, however, since it consists of too many languages.)¹⁰
(See Stein 1982a)

This passage is intriguing for different reasons. First, of course, the mentioning of the creole (Negerhollands). This was the first time that the word *creole* is used anywhere for the language. Second, the suggestion is made that the creole was still very heterogeneous.

The first letters written by slaves date from the year 1737; they are still written in Dutch, but with more or less strong creole interference. At the beginning of the year 1739 (30 January to 15 February), Count Zinzendorf visited St. Thomas to see the missionaries and their work. On his departure he addressed a letter to the slave community. This letter was written in creole, the first text we have in Negerhollands. We may assume that Zinzendorf did not write the letter in Negerhollands himself; it probably was a white settler, Carstens, in whose house Zinzendorf was staying on St. Thomas, who translated the text into Negerhollands. On his way back, Zinzendorf took with him two letters addressed to the Danish king and the Danish queen. The first was written by some male and female slaves, the second by a slave woman in the name of the female slaves; it is written in the African language of that woman¹¹ and translated into Negerhollands. This was the first time that a creole language was used in diplomatic letters for political purposes. The three letters (including Zinzendorf's) were printed only three years later, in 1742 (Zinzendorf 1742).

9 Johann Lorenz Carstens was no member of the Moravian Brethren, but helped them in several ways. He was the owner of the plantation Muskietenbaai (Mosquito Bay). More about him can be read in Highfield & Barac (1987:285). It seems quite interesting that this man, who sometimes felt bothered by the Brethren's attempts to convert him, tried to translate the New Testament.

10 There are two possible interpretations for this note. In the first place the word *Sprachen* can be interpreted as 'dialects'. In this case the interpretation would be 'it consists of too many dialects [i.e. basilect, acrolect]. The other, more plausible interpretation, is 'languages'. Now the translation could be: 'it contains elements from several languages'.

11 As can be read, she was from Popo, which could have been Grand Popo or Little Popo, in the coastal area of today's Togo and Benin. The language of the letter has not been identified yet, but contains elements of the Phla dialect of Ewe (see section II, 1.1.3).

Zinzendorf had provided the example, and the slave community followed him: they began to write letters, first to their 'brethren and sisters' in Europe, later on also to the Amerindian community in Pennsylvania. In the Unitäts-Archiv at Herrnhut, around 150 such letters written between 1737 and 1768 have been conserved. A large part of this collection is written in Negerhollands, but in many of the early letters a variety of Dutch with lots of creole elements is used. An annotated edition of these unique documents is now being prepared by Peter Stein and Hartmut Beck. Some of them can be found in section II, 1.2 of the present volume. They may prove to be of great interest in research on the first stages of the emergence of Negerhollands. Stein (forthcoming b) notes for example that the particles *ka*: 'perfective aspect' and *le* 'progressive aspect' were lacking in the slave letters from between 1740 and 1750. This could point to a process of gradual creolization, corresponding to the hypothesis of Arends (1989) and Carden and Stewart (1988). However, it could also reflect the development of a written tradition for Negerhollands as a language separate from Dutch. The early authors in Negerhollands did not know how to interpret Negerhollands particles. Since 1754, handwritten liturgical texts (see e.g. Stein 1982b), sermons and other religious documents in Negerhollands have been preserved.

The history of printed Negerhollands starts in 1765 with a hymn-and-prayers booklet by the Moravian Brethren. The last Moravian work in the language, the *Evangelienharmonie*, was printed in 1833 in New York. The most important of the printed texts was the translation of the New Testament (1802). Besides the religious texts (catechisms, hymns, etc.), there are also a few *ABC Boekjes*. For a complete bibliography see section III and Stein (1986b).

Not all translated texts were also printed. Between 1779 and 1785 the translation of large liturgical texts was carried out by the German missionary Johann Böhner, mentioned at the beginning of this introduction. He translated for instance the Old Testament, a compilation of the Gospel (*Evangelienharmonie*)¹², and the theoretical foundation of the Moravian Brethren's community, Spangenberg's *Idea Fidei Fratrum*, only one year after its publication in Germany in 1779. In 1795 different manuscripts of the *Evangelienharmonie*¹³ and sermons, a catechism and an adaptation of the history of creation were produced, followed shortly after 1802 by a grammar of Negerhollands.

It is unknown who exactly translated the Negerhollands New Testament printed in 1802. This Testament and the 1833 edition of the *Evangelienharmonie* may have been based on a translation by Böhner. In so far as we have more than one manuscript and/or printed version of a specific text, it is necessary to make all the variants available because of their potential linguistic interest. Variation between different editions can tell us something about variation in the spoken language.

In 1767, 35 years after the beginning of the mission, Christian Georg Andreas Oldendorp was charged with writing a history of the mission on the Danish Virgin Islands. He spent about 18 months on the islands, which resulted, ten years later, in a

12 Böhner translated the *Evangelienharmonie* at least two times, probably in 1779 and in the early 1780s.

13 These manuscripts are not dated but look somewhat like the dated sermons with which they are kept in one folder (Archiv der Brüderunität NB VII R.3 6d 'Übersetzungen ins Creolische').

manuscript of more than 3000 pages. It was much more than a history of the mission; it was a compendium of all that was known about the Antillean slave societies, with special emphasis on the Moravian missionaries' activities and the Danish Virgin Islands. In 1777 a shortened version of still more than 1000 pages was published by Bossart (Oldendorp 1777, English translation by Highfield & Barac in 1987). A critical edition of the complete manuscripts is now in progress at the *Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde* at Dresden. The manuscript is also of great linguistic interest, because Oldendorp presents a 60-page critical description of Negerhollands ('criolisch') and its use by the missionaries. Regretfully, this part was shortened to 11 pages in the 1777 edition. Oldendorp also discusses the African languages he encountered on the Islands. Oldendorp's visit to the Virgin Islands furthermore resulted in a large manuscript for a dictionary (1770). His *Deutsch-criolisches Wörterbuch* is a German-Negerhollands dictionary with more than 3400 entries and many examples and critical comments. An edition of the dictionary is in preparation by Peter Stein, and the grammatical section of the mission history will be published by Stein and Eroms.

In the midst of the 19th century Negerhollands became increasingly replaced by English. This shift has also been documented in the Moravian materials: Heinrich Wied prepared a manuscript for a creole catechism and hymn book in 1842/43. When he became aware of the shift, he halted, and explained: "In den 40er Jahren des 19. Jahrh. verschwand auf den Westindischen Inseln die kreolische Sprache und wurde durch die englische verdrängt (In the 40s of the 19th century, the Creole language disappeared from the West Indian Islands, and became replaced by English)".¹⁴ Then he went on with English hymns in 1847.

6.2 The Lutheran (Danish) mission in the Virgin Islands

Already since the late 17th century, ministers of the Danish Lutheran State Church were active on the Virgin Islands, and although slaves were also baptized (at least since 1710, as attested in Lose 1891:1), the ministers primarily served Danish subjects like civil servants and soldiers, in the Danish language.

In 1756 a proper Danish Lutheran mission was established for the Virgin Islands, since in the previous year the three islands St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix had been bought from the Danish West-Indian-Guinean Company by King Frederik V and become a Danish state colony. The mission was founded with the objective of converting the slaves. From then on, as it had done in Greenland and like the Herrnhuter mission used to do, the Danish Lutheran mission set itself the task to convert the local population of the colony through the medium of the local language, here Negerhollands. In the preface to Magens' New Testament (1781), the General Church Inspection College writes:

14 However, the actual shift took much longer; for further reading see among others Degn (1974) and Lawaetz (1980).

Die Missioneers ha leer die Creol Tael tit aster tit, en ha begin nu for onderwies na die volgens die Order van Collegium. Dat ha hab deese gesegend Werking, dat die Negers die tevoorn ha how die Leering voor een hard Woord, door die Swaerigheid van die vreemd Tael, na die sellie ha mut ontfang Onderwiesing, ha vind sooveel meer Smaek na die nu, als sellie ha kan vat en verstaen die voorgehopen Leer meer ligt en meer gaw in sender eigen Muder Tael.

'The missionaries learned the Creole language time after time, and have now begun to teach in it, according to the directive of the Collegium. That has had this blessed effect that the Negroes, who previously found the doctrine tough, because of the difficulty of the strange language in which they had to receive education, have found it so much more agreeable now, as they could grasp and understand the presented doctrine more easily and quickly in their own mother tongue.'

It was furthermore considered desirable that the slaves learn to read, but not necessarily to write (Koch 1905:147). Few of the representatives of the Lutheran Church in the Virgin Islands knew or learned Negerhollands, however.

The relation between the Danish mission and the homeland was a different one than that between the Moravians and Germany. There was a chronic lack of funds and housing in the Danish mission, and it was more dependent on the goodwill of the state. The state, however, mainly looked to its commercial interests and did not cooperate much. All in all, as appears from Lose (1891) and Koch (1905), the success of the Danish mission depended less on its adaptability and determination as an organization, than on the character and spirit of its individual agents. The Danish mission was mainly active in the towns, and those who served the plantation population had to travel on foot for miles and therefore had often only access to their parish for one hour a week. The Danish mission ended in 1799. After that year, no new Danish mission ministers were sent to the Virgin Islands anymore, and the black missionary community was incorporated into the general Danish Lutheran parish on the Virgin Islands. Even though the Danish mission was less effective than the Moravian one, their production of documents in Negerhollands was almost as high.

The first ten Danish missionaries landed in July 1757 on St. Croix. Most of them died soon, but one who survived was Johan Christopher Kingo, who would be missionary and later minister for more than 25 years. According to Lose (1891), Kingo is said to have compiled a dictionary soon after arrival. Perhaps the anonymous Danish-Negerhollands *Vestindisk Glossarium*, counting 338 entries, is meant by this work (see van der Voort forthcoming). Kingo is also supposed to have translated Luther's Catechism in 1764, and the Gospel according to Matthew in 1765. Of these works, only the catechism may have been printed as Anonymous (1770). In 1770 Kingo did publish a language primer-cum-catechism.

A second group of Danish missionaries had arrived in April 1766, including Erich Röring Wold. Wold nearly starved to death on St. Jan, and he was taken into the house of *Stadthauptmand/Stadhoofdman* 'city prefect' Jochum Melchior Magens as a tutor of his children. Magens was a St. Thomas-born Danish citizen, scholar in philology

and Lutheran layman. He had already written the aforementioned Negerhollands Grammar (published in 1770, to be edited by Stein & Eroms) and had translated the New Testament before 1770, on which he worked with Wold and which circulated among the Danish missionaries (Lose 1891:23). Together with Wold he also worked on (supposedly) Kingo's catechism and on the translation of hymns which appeared in 1770. When Wold left, Magens refused to cooperate with the church any longer, but kept working on a translation of the Old Testament. In 1777 he was asked by the General Church Inspection College to make a revised edition of the New Testament. Instead he prepared a new translation of it, assisted by missionary Niels Olufsen Alling, who worked on St. Thomas. Alling had already translated 100 hymns, and in 1779 the hymns and the New Testament were in the hands of the College. With the help of Alling, who had returned to Denmark by then for health reasons, the New Testament was rapidly prepared for publication in 1781. The College also received the Old Testament manuscript that year, which, however, like the hymns, was never heard of again. Some works are mentioned in the introduction to the New Testament, to wit a dictionary, a primer-cum-catechism and songbook from 1770, and fragments of the Old Testament. It is certain that not all of them have ever been found.

Later, other missionaries and clergy arrived in the Virgin Islands, and they produced a religious Creole reader (Lund 1798), a Bible for children (Oxholm 1822), Creole hymnals (Brandt 1799, Anonymous 1823, 1827, 1834) and a reader-cum-catechism (Prætorius 1827, 1834). It is likely that other manuscripts were also produced by others. For example, missionary August Krejdahl, who was a childhood friend of the linguist Rasmus Rask, had become a very proficient speaker of Negerhollands. Lose (1891:26) mentions the fact that he had also prepared an improved version of 'the hymnal'. From documents in the Copenhagen State Archive it appears that another translation of the Old Testament was made by the missionary A.W. Volkersen. It is still unclear which works are re-editions or revisions of earlier ones, on which manuscripts they are based, and who the ultimate authors of these manuscripts were. The present whereabouts of several of these works is not known. Careful searching in archives and libraries in Denmark, and possibly Bible Society archives elsewhere, is needed.

Thus, we also have a New Testament of Magens and other Danish Lutheran texts from the 18th and 19th century. For linguists and creolists, the competition between the Moravians and the Danish missionaries represents a very lucky circumstance. The existence of two different main sources reinforces the value of the 18th century texts, and at the same time it provides an interesting basis for comparison.

6.3 Interpreting the 18th-century materials

Before we dismiss the variety of Negerhollands the manuscripts contain as artificial, it should be noted that the German Bible translators were very critical about the use of the 'right' language variety. This can be surmised from various letters written around 1770 in the Danish Antilles by German missionaries (amongst them C.G.A. Oldendorp), kept in Herrnhut. For example, the language used in the hymnbook of 1765 is called 'far too Dutch-like' by Oldendorp. Another point against the texts not

being representative is the fact that the quite independent German and Danish sources generally confirm each other.

A first set of problems in interpreting these materials is philological: establishing dates, authorship, intertextual relations, deciphering the often complicated handwriting in poorly preserved manuscripts. Many comments on this can be found in the entries in the bibliography.

Then we face variation in the texts. This could be due to a number of things, among which:

- (a) Audience design: was the material meant for a predominantly white urban population, or for the plantation slaves?
- (b) Linguistic competence and procedure: how well did the translator know Negerhollands, and which variety? How were native speakers involved in the translation process?
- (c) Translation practice and style: it is clear that sometimes not even an attempt was made to approach the spoken language, e.g. when the Latin accusative *Jesum* appears in the texts. Did the missionaries attempt to create a separate liturgical register, fit for the conveyance of religious feelings and ideas?

Quantitative techniques derived from sociolinguistics and variation theory can help us study the types of variation (particularly morpho-syntactic) present in the texts, and to see whether it is possible to isolate the 'deep' creole features of the 18th century Negerhollands materials. Many of the documents, particularly from the Danish tradition, may tend to reflect a 'high' variety of the creole, contrary to Hesseling's (1905) interpretation, whereas the slaves may have spoken a 'low' or 'deep' variety. More on this variation in point 7 below.

6.4 Sociolinguistic development of the Virgin Islands society and the fate of Negerhollands

Not enough is known about the linguistic development of the Virgin Islands yet, which was quite complex. What follows is a rough sketch (Fig. 2).

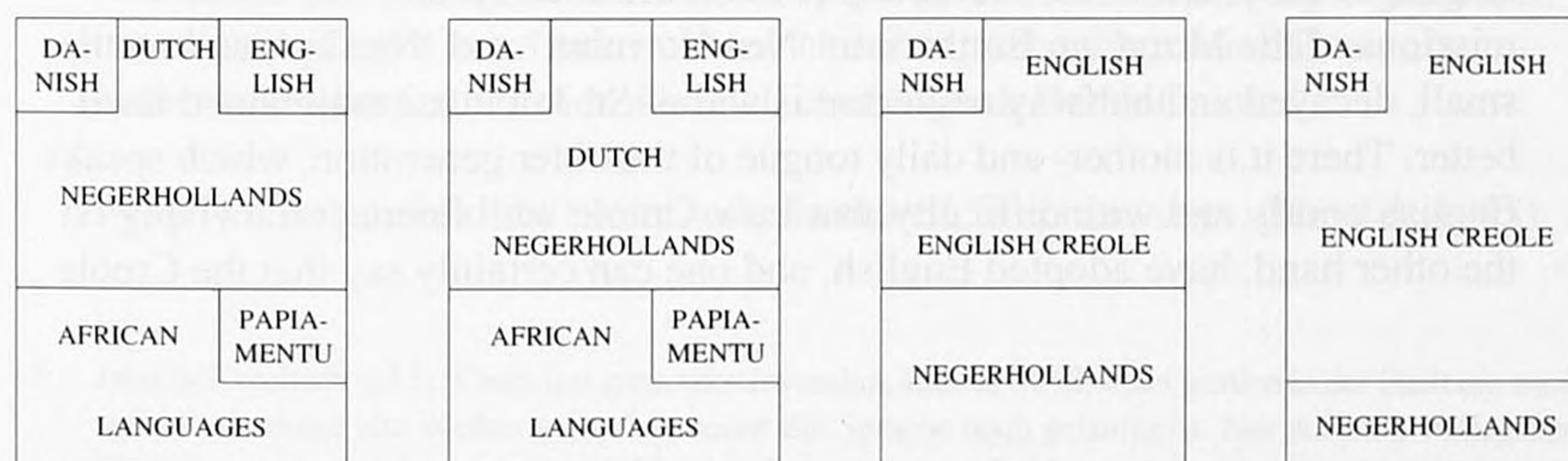


Figure 2: The sociolinguistic situation in St. Thomas in four stages of the development of Negerhollands.

The central fact is that Negerhollands only really flourished between 1730 and 1830. In 1833 the last text was printed in Negerhollands by the Moravian Brethren, and in 1834 the last printed texts in Negerhollands appeared in the Danish tradition.

In 1848 slavery was abolished on the Virgin Islands, and this constituted, perhaps, the final death-blow to Negerhollands. From 1840 onwards Negerhollands was replaced more and more by English among the slaves, particularly when after emancipation the ex-slaves went to the towns. Because Negerhollands was a plantation language and only weakly represented in the towns, the language decayed. A telling testimony is the 1842-1847 manuscript by the German missionary Wied cited above: the first part is in Negerhollands, the second in English ('Because no one uses Negerhollands anymore'). In 1839 the Moravians started to use English in their sermons and soon gave up Negerhollands in religious services. The Danes were first officially allowed to use English in religious services in 1844.

A Danish letter from the West-Indian Government dated 1816, written in St. Croix and requesting more hymnals and prayer books from Denmark, stresses that they should be in Negerhollands, even though that language is rapidly going out of use. The reason given is that Negerhollands-speaking slaves are more obedient and more attached to their owners. Furthermore, keeping Negerhollands alive will keep out ideas circulating in English tracts and newspapers about 'man's original equality, about the nullity of the colour difference, about the loathsomeness of slavery, etc.' (Bentzon & Stabell 1816).

In 1869 the American scholar Addison Van Name wrote about the extinction of Negerhollands. According to him, the Moravian missionaries had been preaching in Negerhollands until recently, and later on 'broken English' (Van Name 1869:160) was used more and more.

In 1881 the Danish doctor Erik Pontoppidan published proverbs, a piece from the Bible and a short conversation. According to the latter, Negerhollands was still spoken on St. John and in the more remote corners of St. Thomas. He writes:

Now Creole has almost totally disappeared on St. Croix, also in St. Thomas in town only sporadically elderly women are found who still are familiar with the language. Only in the more remote places on the countryside, like in the missions of the Moravian Brethren in 'Neu Herrnhut' and 'Niesky', and on the small, decayed and halfway neglected island of St. Jan it has maintained itself better. There it is mother- and daily tongue of the older generation, which speaks English poorly and with difficulty, but Low-Creole with fluency; the young on the other hand, have adopted English, and one can certainly say that the Creole

language will very soon be a dead language; in one generation one will hardly find anyone who can still speak it. (Pontoppidan 1881:131, our translation).¹⁵

In 1904 St. Thomas' Moravian Bishop E.C. Greider wrote to Hesseling that the younger generation speaks a strongly anglicized creole, but the text sent along contains many Negerhollands elements. Hesseling cites the following from Greider's letter of 31 January 1904:

The language in its purity is now spoken by a very few old people, principally those living in the country districts. The younger generation speak a mixed dialect that is called Creole, but it contains very many English words...Our people [Hesseling adds: so the more civilized Blacks who do not live on the almost deserted country side] speak a comparatively pure English and there is no patois like in the French or Dutch islands. In fact, if any one wished to study the language as it now is spoken, it would be best to do it immediately. (Hesseling 1905:33-34, our translation).

As mentioned before, in 1917 the United States acquired the Virgin Islands from Denmark, yet on the Danish-Dutch Archaeological Expedition to the Antilles of 1922/23, the Dutch anthropologist/linguist/archeologist J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong was able to collect fairy tales and fables in NH, which were published in 1926. Many of those stories feature the famous African-Caribbean practical joker and hero spider Anansi. The narrators and informants were all born between 1841 and 1863, and thus at least 60 years old at that time, which was a reason for de Josselin de Jong to speak of 'presently rapidly dying Negerhollands'.

Yet the death of a language can take a very long time. In 1936 the anglicist and philologist F.G. Nelson still encountered speakers of Negerhollands, and made field notes, some of which are first published in the present book. Negerhollands continued to have a handful of speakers until the late 1970s. In 1987 the (as far as is known) last speaker, Mrs. Alice Stevens, passed away. In an interview in St. Thomas' *The Daily News* of Monday 15 July 1985 she said:

"I never let anybody know that I could speak it," Alice Stephens says. "I decided I wasn't teaching it to no one - not my children, nor my husband. Even my teachers an schoolmates didn't know I could speak Dutch Creole."

- Why? Because she didn't want to be bothered, Stephens says. (Hewlett 1985).

15 Jetzt ist Kreolisch auf St. Croix fast ganz verschwunden, auch in St. Thomas werden in der Stadt nur noch sporadisch einige alte Weiber gefunden, denen die Sprache noch geläufig ist. Nur auf mehr entlegenen Plätzen auf dem Lande, wie in den Missionen der mährischen Brüder zu "Neu-Herrnhut" und "Niesky", und auf der kleinen, verkommenen und halb verwilderten Insel St. Jan hat sie sich besser erhalten. Sie ist da Mutter- und Umgangssprache der älteren Generation, welche schlecht und mit Schwierigkeit Englisch, aber Platt-Kreolisch mit Geläufigkeit spricht; die Jüngeren dagegen haben Englisch adoptirt, und man kann sicher sagen, dass die Kreolensprache sehr bald eine todte Sprache sein wird; in einem Menschenalter wird man schwerlich noch Jemand finden, der es sprechen kann. (Pontoppidan 1881:131).

7 Variation in Negerhollands texts

Part of the problem in dealing with historical materials is to determine exactly what type of speech is reflected by them. This problem is even greater in creole societies, where often dramatic linguistic differences occur within one speech community. The texts and word lists of 20th-century Negerhollands appear to represent one language type: the language of descendants of the old plantations slaves. In the 18th century both slaves and white creoles (the term 'creole' was used for all people born in the isles) spoke Negerhollands.

7.1 The diachronic dimension

Looking at all the available texts, there is first of all a diachronic dimension. The language has undergone a number of changes in the more than two centuries of its recorded existence. These changes can be of different types:

- (a) grammatical expansion, in a gradual process of creolization;
- (b) a gradual drift away from varieties close to the Dutch superstrate to true slave speech, more heavily influenced by non-Dutch patterns;
- (c) increasing exposure to English lexicon and grammar;
- (d) natural changes, similar to those occurring in any language;
- (e) processes of language decay and language death, in the long period during which Negerhollands was used less and less;
- (f) decreolization, i.e. shift away from the forms of the emerging creole under the influence of the (Dutch) standard in the early period.

We are just beginning to unravel these alternatives.

7.2 The stylistic dimension

An important factor to take into account also is stylistic variation. We know the 20th-century material represents a certain 'register' (i.e. stylistic variety of a language) of spoken Negerhollands, whereas with the 18th-century material it is sometimes unclear whether the occurrence of certain linguistic phenomena was only limited to a specific register of written Negerhollands. We know that different registers existed. We can be certain, for example, that the liturgic style encountered in the Bible translations was not the daily spoken language of the majority.

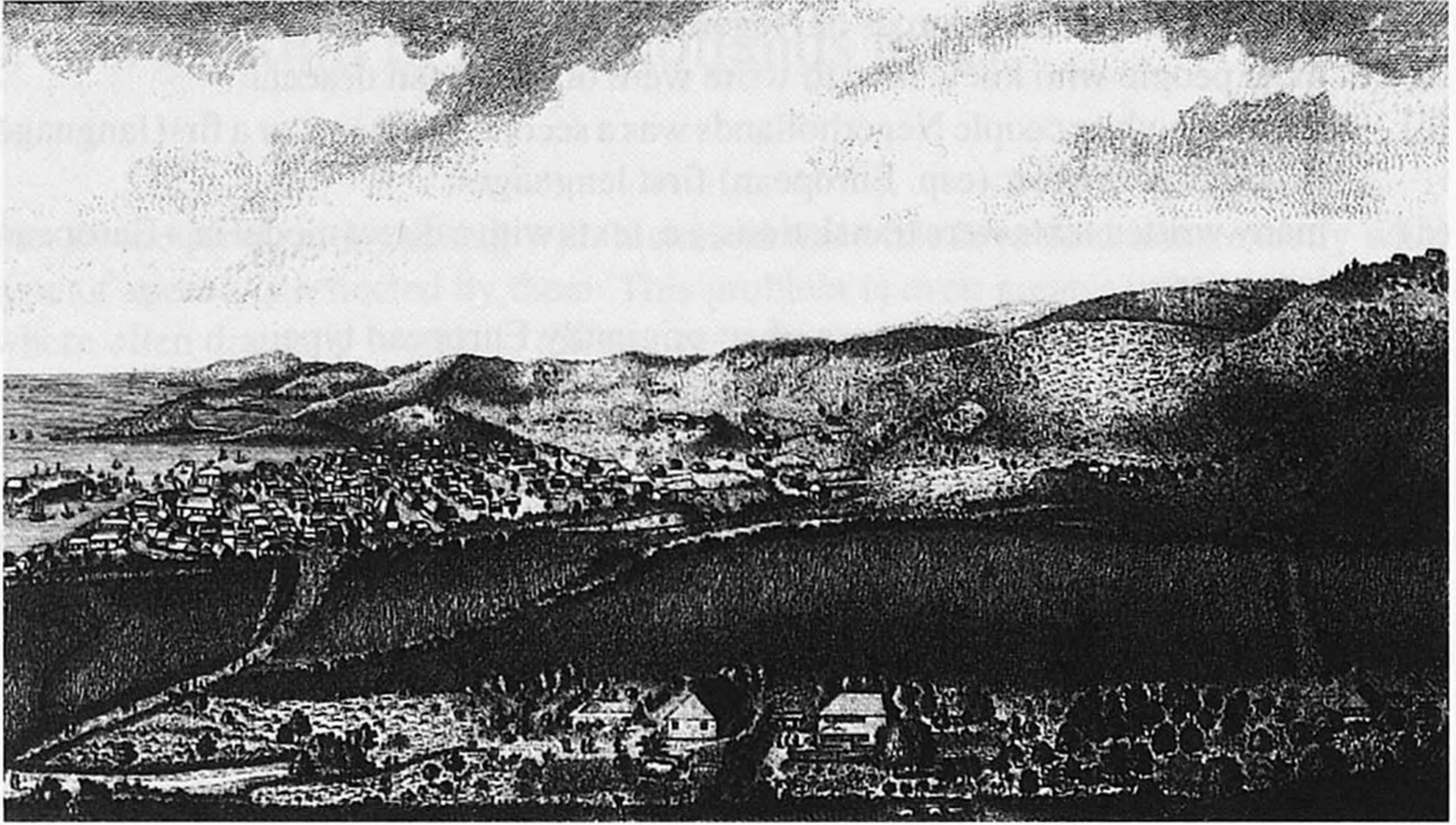
In many cases, our material reflects a superstrate-influenced variety of Negerhollands. The following factors contributed to this:

- (a) our most important sources of Negerhollands are written documents;
- (b) most people who knew how to write were of European descent;
- (c) for many white people Negerhollands was a second language, or a first language in addition to other (esp. European) first languages;
- (d) many written texts were translations, i.e. texts with a direct model in a European language;
- (e) many of the texts we have are of an originally European type;
- (f) Negerhollands as a written language derived its standard orthography from Dutch, which is its superstrate language. This is not a guarantee for Dutch influence, but it certainly gives the material a Dutch impression;
- (g) the first language the slaves had learned to write was Dutch, which then served as a model.

This points to the possibility that the linguistic data from the earlier phases of Negerhollands were in the main based on a superstrate example (see also 7.1.f and 7.4). In the present anthology, several different textual types are represented: letters, Bible texts, hymns, songs, monologue, dialogue, spoken narrative and more.

With respect to the latter point (7.2.f), Oldendorp (original ms. p. 774, also quoted in Stein 1990:194-5) bases his decision for an etymological orthography (which was the usual case) instead of a phonetic one, on the following:

because there are a lot of Dutch words present in the Creole which are completely mutilated and would not look alike anymore if one were to write them differently; primarily however because the blacks who are learning to read, learn it the Dutch way; who one does not confuse then — and correctly so — through another way of writing, especially through other vowels, and does not make reading, for which they have little time anyway, even more difficult for them, and embarasses them when they see Dutch words in a Creole writing which are immediately known to them according to Dutch orthography but completely foreign [to them, H.d.B.] in a modified appearance. Furthermore, this orthography has been used and introduced already a long time ago in the Creole hymn-book and other small printed pieces, and the blacks who can read are used to it and convey it to others according to the same [orthography, or, booklets, H.d.B.]. It is necessary that in the spelling of this language, as with all [orthographies, H.d.B.], something certain and constant be laid down as its basis, and that one always use the same vowels in particular. And because of the



4. Friedensthal on St. Croix

reasons adduced Dutch orthography is best suited for that.¹⁶ [faulty style unchanged, eds.]

In our material, the basilectal varieties of Negerhollands are certainly underrepresented. Its bias towards the acrolect (the variety closest to the European superstrate model) makes it difficult to obtain a picture of the exact positions of Negerhollands in the diachronic (7.1) and social (7.4) dimensions of its variation.

7.3 The geographical dimension

Another area where very little is known so far is differences between Negerhollands of the three islands (St. John, St. Croix, and St. Thomas) and between e.g. the town

16 weil im criolischen eine Menge holländischer Wörter sich befindet, welche ganz verunstaltet werden und sich nicht mehr ähnlich sehen würden, wenn man sie anders schriebe; hauptsächlich aber deswegen, weil die Schwarzen, welche lesen lernen, es holländisch lernen; die man also billig durch eine andere Schreibart, sonderlich durch andere selbstlautende Buchstaben, nicht irre, und ihnen das Lesen, wozu sie ohnedas wenig Zeit haben, nicht noch schwerer macht, und sie in Verwirrung setzt, wenn sie in einer criolischen Schrift holländische Wörter sehen, die ihnen nach der holländischen Orthographie gleich bekant, aber in einer veränderten Gestalt ganz fremd sind. Es ist auch diese Orthographie schon längst in dem criolischen Gesangbüchlein und anderen kleinen gedruckten Stücken gebraucht und eingeführt worden; und die Schwarzen, welche lesen können, sind daran gewöhnt, und bringen es andern nach derselben [denselben] bey. Es ist nothwendig, daß bey der Schreibung dieser Sprache, so wie bey allen, etwas gewisses und unveränderliches zum Grunde gelegt werde, und daß man sonderlich immer einerley Vocalen gebrauche. Und dazu schickt sich aus den angeführten Gründen die holländische Rechtschreibung am besten. [...] (Oldendorp, Rohmanuskript p. 774)

and the plantations in the countryside. More is known about differences in the importance of English: for example, St. Croix is the island where Negerhollands gave way to English (creole) earliest (Hesseling 1905). Auerbach paid some attention to this (see section 2) and confirms Oldendorp's observations in his *Missionsgeschichte*. The latter describes the language situation as follows (in Highfield & Barac's translation of Oldendorp 1777:263 = 1987:154) to which we have added portions from the manuscript of Oldendorp's publication:

English, German, Danish, Dutch, French, Spanish, and Creole are spoken in these islands. **English** and **High German** are the **languages** with which one can get by everywhere. **Creole** is spoken by the Negroes, as well as by everyone who has to communicate with them. [in the manuscript furthermore: they however do not all like to speak it with Whites, because it is the Negro language at the same time.] Therefore, the majority of the white inhabitants of the islands, particularly those who were born there, understand this language. (...) The number of languages is the cause of many people mixing one with the others, as well as for speaking many languages, though none well nor with purity. A knowledge of the English language is especially necessary in the towns. Since the white children are taken care of by Negro women and grow up among the Negro children, they learn first of all Creole, the Negro language. Sometimes they learn no other language properly. However, this language is spoken with more refinement by the white Creoles than by the Negroes. [Manuscript: and have their own expression- and speaking styles.] The English, on the other hand, do not learn Creole for the most part, and their slaves have to adjust to them in this matter. There are, therefore, large areas on **St. Croix** where the Negroes speak nothing but English.

7.4 The social dimension

Apparently, there was a great deal of variation in 18th-century Negerhollands even on St. Thomas; the newly emerged language had not yet crystallized. Still we find, starting in 1739, the first (dictated) letters in creole, but also in an African language. Anyhow, next to the creole of the slaves a type of 'high creole', spoken among the whites, emerged. Is the difference between the high creole and the slave language comparable with the difference between *bakra tongo* and *nengre tongo* in Surinam? The following preliminary discussion is mainly based on comments in the grammars.

To begin with, it transpires from remarks of Magens (1770) that there was a large difference in pronunciation between slave and white creoles. Thus, the slaves were said to leave out the *Litteras Gutturales*, presumably first of all the /r/ at the end of the syllable, and they were said to simplify consonant clusters. Furthermore, it is quite possible that the Zealandic Dutch [y] of 18th-century Negerhollands, which is represented as <y> or <ye> in the Danish texts, e.g. Magens 1770 grammar, belonged to a high register, while the field slaves already used the unrounded variant [i] that can be found in the 20th-century texts. The existence of such a variant is evidenced by stray cases of [i] instead of [y] in the 18th century. Thus, disregarding cases where one can explain such an [i] away as a Dutch dialectal variant of an [y] based upon an earlier

West-Germanic diphthong [iu], we can find in Magens (1770) i.a. *Natier* 'nature' (p. 43), *natierlik* 'natural' (p. 46), *Diffie* 'dove' (p. 13, 35, 67, 68), *Bik, bik* 'belly' (p. 35), *Parik* 'wig' (p. 62), *(na) bittie* 'outside' (p. 25, 70). These correspond to the Standard Dutch forms *natuur*, *natuurlijk*, *duifje* 'little dove', *buik*, *pruik*, and *buiten*, respectively.

As regards morphology, the material we have is characterized by variability as well. Often one finds equivalent analytic and synthetic constructions, e.g. in plural formation, used at random, sometimes even in the very same sentence: *die kind sender* versus *die kinders* 'the children'. Recall that documents often reflect white speech. It is worth noting that Magens (1770) explicitly ascribes the use of two Dutch endings to the whites: Diminutives were apparently expressed by whites and slaves with the adjective *klein* 'little', e.g. *Die klein Kabaj* 'the little horse'. The ending *-tje* could be used as well, but mostly by the whites, e.g. *Mie Montje* 'my little mouth' (Magens 1770:11). See also *kleentje* 'child', a nominalizing diminutive of *kleen/klein*.

In addition, both slaves and whites formed the degrees of comparison apparently without Dutch endings. An example:

- (23) Klein 'small'
 Meer klein 'smaller'
 Meest klein 'smallest'
 Alteveel klein 'the very smallest (cf. Du. *allerkleinst*)'

Only in *guut - Beeter - Best* 'good - better - best' and *veel - Meer - Meest* 'much/many - more - most' have the Dutch forms been maintained. In some words the superlative could be expressed by the ending *-ste*, e.g. *Die moojste* 'the handsomest', but that was mostly done by the whites (Magens 1770:11-12).

Magens (1770) furthermore suggests that the passive in Negerhollands was used only rarely. Passives marking an action in progress were avoided. Nonetheless, a passive could occur, and then mostly in white speech. The passive auxiliary verbs were *wort* and *bin*. The latter is a present tense form. In the other tenses the infinitive *wees* was used in its place in combination with a tense particle (Magens 1770:19-22).

The exact nature of the *bin/wees* passive is not clear to us yet. Oldendorp (and to a certain extent Magens) treats it as a mere equivalent of the *wort* passive. Moreover, in view of the translations provided by Magens (1770) and certain grammatical properties of the *bin* passives that will be treated below, *bin* may very well (also) be the marker of a resultant passive.

From the examples in Magens (1770), it is clear that the passive, when used at all (and one must wonder to what extent this was simply to translate a Dutch passive), was expressed by a passive auxiliary verb and a Dutch past participle:

- (24) a. *Mie bin vervolgt.*
 'I am persecuted' (process.or.state)
 b. *Mie wort vervolgt.*
 'I am persecuted'

This is explicitly confirmed by an earlier remark in Magens on p. 16 to the effect that the auxiliary verb *wort*, which is particularly used by the whites, was connected with a passive participle. Example:

- (25) Christus ha wort gebooren of die Maegt Maria
 'Christus was born from/by the Virgin Mary'.

Striking is here the combination of Dutch morphosyntax with the creole tense particle *ha* 'past'. Magens' remarks are confirmed by the extensive grammatical description of Negerhollands in the Oldendorp manuscript (Stein & Eroms forthcoming). Here, several pages are devoted to the passive, and it appears that a wide range of combinations of participles, auxiliaries and particles was possible. Oldendorp also confirms what Magens says about the restricted use of passives in Negerhollands.

Still there was a passive in the general creole of both whites and slaves, albeit only in the perfective form. On p. 16 of Magens it is noted that the perfective aspect marker *ka* regularly occurs in the creole instead of the passive auxiliary verb *bin*. In that case the verb stands *i Præsenti Indicativi*, in the uninflected stem form. Magens translates *ka* with 'is' in this case.

From the examples it is clear that we could have both passives expressing a completed continuing action and passives expressing a state:

- (26) a. Die Man ka trou¹⁷
 'the man is married'
- b. Die Hus ka bou
 'the house has been built'

Magens does not mention, incidentally, that in the combination *bin* + adjective as well, *bin* could be replaced by *ka*, as appears from a grammatical remark in Oldendorp (1777), cited by Hesseling (1905:107). An example would be *mi ka moe* instead of *mi ben moe*. Hesseling interprets this *ka* as the description of a state resulting from an action in the past. See also (6) and (15) above. Thus, it is not impossible that all *ka*-passives must be interpreted as resultant passives (Bruyn and Veenstra, 1993). Another verb that is apparently used as a passive marker with the same meaning as the one with *wort*, but with a different meaning as the one with *ka*, is *kom* 'come' (<Du. *kom*), which was noticed by Oldendorp in the manuscript version of his book (Stein & Eroms forthcoming). It could be used both as a 'state' passive and as a 'process/action' passive. Oldendorp provides a contrast with the *ka*- and *wort*-passives:

- (27) die goed kom bederf die goed ka bederf
 'it is going to be rotten' 'it is rotten'

17 See Stein's edition of the Oldendorp dictionary (Stein forthcoming a): n. 0559 "Man met Wief, die sender ka trouw", 'man and woman, who are married'.

- (28) mi kom geliefd mi woor/ben geliefd
 'I am going to be loved' 'I am loved'

He stressed the fact that the passive is unusual in Negerhollands except in liturgic writings. In daily use, and especially in the slave variant, the passive can be done without, and an expression in the form of an active construction is preferred. Oldendorp also mentions in his manuscript different possibilities for conjunctive constructions in which *moe(t)* 'must' (<Du. *moet*), and consequently the word *da* 'that, if', may play a role:

- (29) O da mi moe wees/woor/kom geliefd!
 'O that I would be loved! (meaning: I wish I would be loved)'
- (30) a. mi wensch, voor woor/wees/kom pardonneerd
 b. da mi ben/woor/kom pardonneerd
 c. dat mi moe woor/wees/kom pardonneerd
 'I wish I will be excused'

Bare conjunctive constructions, or those with *ka*, often require the use of *as* 'if':

- (31) as sender sal wees geliefd
 'if they would be loved'

as sender sal ka woor geliefd
 'if they would have been loved'

em sal ka woor/ka wees/ka kom pardonneerd as em sal ka bed voor die
 'he would have been excused if he would have asked for it'

Oldendorp says that 'such' passives (possibly referring to all complex passive constructions) are to be avoided when one intends to speak Creole. Also, one cannot form participles as one pleases, as they are *uncriolisch* (Ge.: 'uncreole') and are only understood by those who also speak Dutch or German. Instead of *gedann*, one should say *ka doe* 'done'; *gesprooken*, *ka praat* 'spoken'; *gewaeld*, *ka vool* 'filled' etc. This is a clear indication of the fact that those Dutch-derived participle verb forms we do encounter in the texts are not the result of a productive rule in Negerhollands. They were adopted from Dutch into Negerhollands in that form. They may have been part of a 'mixed' native variety of the creole, as spoken by whites.

Finally, something has to be said about the use of personal pronouns in the 18th century. Magens (1770:12-13) provides two forms for the plural in the nominative:

- (32) 1st PL Ons Wellie
 2nd PL Jender Jellie
 3rd PL Sender Sellie

The same holds for the vocative, which is equal to the 2nd person plural. In the other cases the first form is always used: *Ons, Jender, Sender*. The handwritten grammar of the Herrnhut missionaries assigns the use of the *-lie* forms, and then only for reference to persons, to one single dialect of Negerhollands without indicating which dialect it is (Ms. 1802:10, 20; Hesseling 1905:97-98). In Oldendorp's grammar manuscript (Stein & Eroms forthcoming), probably the model of the 1802 grammar, the same is said, and the alternative forms *jelli* and *sellie* are traced back to Low German (although both forms are solidly Dutch in origin).

Since the limitation in the use of the *-lie* forms betrays a Dutch perspective of form (*-lie* < Du. *lieden* 'people', as in Du. *jullie* 'you.PL' and (nonstandard) *wullie* 'we' and *hullie, zullie* 'they'), it is not impossible that these exceptional forms were used particularly by whites. A possible indication for this is constituted by the following pair of examples that Magens (1770) provides in his chapter on declinations (Magens 1770:9-10):

- (33) Jender Blanco 'you.PL, whites'
 Jellie Neeger 'you.PL, negroes'

According to Hesseling the *-lie* forms occur especially in the texts from the Danish sources (see below). We are dealing here with texts for people in town, sometimes produced by white speakers of the creole such as Magens himself. This is another indirect indication that the *-lie* forms may have been used mostly by the whites. In Böhner's translations (\pm 1780) *sellie* occurs twice, but both times it is corrected and changed into *sender*. Notice also that in the 20th-century texts we do not have the *lie*-forms.

Unfortunately, we know hardly anything about linguistic variation within the two separate main groups themselves. Within the white group, variation may have been present between further subgroups, based on position in society, profession, and so on. For example, government officials were recruited especially from Danish families, and the majority of the planters were of Dutch descent. Not much is mentioned about this in the contemporary research literature, but it merits further investigation as white varieties are abundantly documented. In his research, Hesseling (1905) observed differences between the Danish and German missionaries. Some layers of society may not have used any creole at all. There are documents in European languages, to be sure, throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

Within the slave community, the variation may have been even greater. Oldendorp mentions this in connection with the different linguistic backgrounds of the slaves (many different West African languages) and with the differences between newcomers (Bussals), slaves from other Caribbean islands, and native Virgin Islands slaves. Apart from the as yet unpublished body of Negerhollands letters written around 1750 by literate slaves (some are included in sections II, 1.1 and 2.1), there is hardly any linguistic documentation on which research into this matter could be based.

Important contemporary observers of the sociolinguistic context of late 18th-century Negerhollands were the white missionaries. In section 2 we saw Auerbach's comments, and throughout his grammatical study, Magens also took notice

of the social dimension of linguistic variation in the Negerhollands-speaking population. The most explicit reports come from Oldendorp, in the original manuscript of the Mission History. About the pronunciation of the slaves, he says (Oldendorp, ms. p. 808, also quoted in Stein 1990:195):

It is as if this language had been deliberately invented to make speaking with the whites really easy for the newly arriving Guinean blacks, and to make them fit for that in a short time. They also pick it up very quickly, and they have a great ability for learning languages anyway. Yet there are many who came from Guinea when they were already very old, who never learn it well. Such people say that they do not have two tongues; they do learn some Creole, mix some Guinean through it, or pronounce the Creole according to their Guinean accent. (...) Many speak pure Creole, however immensely fast, and according to their heavy Guinean pronunciation. Most words they keep half in their mouths or they utter them so unclearly that one does not know what it should mean. It is for this reason that someone who can speak creole well does not for that reason really understand each black: that lengthy practice is required for that and yet sometimes the help of an interpreter is called for who has to explain the creole intermingled with Guinean.¹⁸

In general, Oldendorp seems to be conscious of the fact that he (like the missionaries) speaks and writes an idealized variety of Negerhollands, or at least one that closely approaches Dutch with respect to the representation of its pronunciation.

7.5 The focussing of the language

While Negerhollands was probably highly variable in the 18th century, it gradually was used less and less by the upper and middle classes, and ultimately stabilized as the slave language recorded in the 20th century. A working hypothesis that so far has been profitable is that 'high' or 'acrolectal' variants have disappeared, and that 'low' or 'basilectal' variants have survived.

A comparison of the 18th-century sources and the 20th-century materials suggests, to begin with:

18 Es ist als wäre diese Sprache mit Fleiß erfunden worden, den ankommenden guineischen Schwarzen das Reden mit den Blanken recht leicht, und sie in kurzer Zeit dazu geschickt zu machen. Sie fassen sie auch sehr geschwind, und haben überhaupt eine große Fähigkeit, Sprachen zu lernen. Indesse giebt es doch manche, die schon sehr alt aus Guinea gekommen sind, welche sie niemals recht lernen. Solche sagen, daß sie nicht zwei Zungen haben, lernen wol etwas criolisch, mengen aber guineisch hinein, oder sprechen das criolische nach ihrer guineischen Mundart aus. [...] Manche reden rein criolisch, aber ungemein geschwind, und nach ihrer schweren guineischen Aussprache. Die meisten Wörter behalten sie halb im Munde, oder bringen sie so undeutlich heraus, daß man nicht weiß, was es sagen soll. Es ist hieraus, daß jemand, der gut criolisch kann, deßwegen nicht einen jeden Schwarzen recht versteht: daß dazu eine lange Übung gehört, und dennoch bisweilen ein Dolmetscher zu Hülfe gerufen werden muß, der das mit guineischem vermischte criolisch erkläre.

- (a) the deletion of /r/ and consonant cluster reduction is also fully documented in de Josselin de Jong's (1926) texts, as well as in Nelson (1936);
- (b) apart from *me:*, 'meer', *me:stə* 'most', *be:tə(r)* etc. 'better', *bes* 'best', and also a *-ste*-form: *gro:stə* 'greatest' next to anglicized: *hogis* 'highest', *di langis* 'longest (adv.)' no other morphological comparatives and superlatives occur in de Josselin de Jong's (1926) texts. This question merits further research;
- (c) there are no morphological diminutives any more, except for fixed, petrified, diminutive forms (*hofi* 'garden', *kalfi* 'calf');
- (d) there is no longer a passive with *wort*, only with *ka*;
- (e) of the *-lie*-forms only *sel* appears in de Josselin de Jong's (1926) texts, and this is clearly an unusual form in these materials.

However, it is still a daunting task to make sense of the variation in the earlier materials; the nature of the difficulties will become clear when we consider the missionary activities and writings more closely.

One example of research recently undertaken in this domain has been the investigation of reflexive pronouns in 18th-century Negerhollands. This research was the first quantitative study on the 18th-century manuscript material. In van der Voort and Muysken (to appear) we looked for variation in reflexive usage. Until recently, it has been defended that, following its tendency as a creole to non-ambiguity, Negerhollands made a more consistent distinction between reflexive and non-reflexive use of pronouns (through the use of an exclusively reflexive pronoun *sie* and/or a reflexive disambiguating marker *sel/v*) than its potential non-creole superstrate models like Dutch, German and Danish. Part of the establishment of such consistency appeared to be due rather to the one-sidedness of the source material (mostly Danish Lutheran) that was available before the edition project started, than to the tendency to strict transparency in Negerhollands. We now have access to several different versions of texts derived from the New Testament, the Old Testament and others by the Moravian Brethren. It appears that there is considerable variation. One of the conclusions supported by the variance in the reflexives when compared to yet other sources of Negerhollands is that Negerhollands as a whole in time became more and more exclusively creole-like. Also, the Moravian documents are more basilectal than the Danish texts, as far as reflexives are concerned.

Another example of research of a similar nature concerns plural marking in the Slave Letters (Stein forthcoming b, Stein & Beck forthcoming).

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8 The study of Negerhollands

In some sense the study of Negerhollands starts in the 18th century, with the publication of Magens (1770), the first grammar written of any creole language, and perhaps the most important work about Negerhollands. In the same period C.G.A. Oldendorp, a German, printed a grammatical sketch of the language in his voluminous book 'History of the Moravian Brethren in the Virgin Islands' from 1777, which could have been written beforehand. Just after 1802 another grammar was written by the Moravian missionaries, but this one has never been published.

In the 19th century, various scholars devoted some attention to the language: the Danish linguist R.K. Rask contrasted Greenland Inuit, a morphologically very complex language, with the morphologically extremely simple Negerhollands (\pm 1810). He argued against J.C. Adelung's claim (1809) to the effect that Negerhollands was nothing but corrupted Dutch. The American librarian and scholar Van Name compared Negerhollands with Papiamentu, Trinidad French Creole, and Sranan (1869-70) and noted many common features. Next is the study mainly based on written texts by the Danish doctor E. Pontoppidan in 1881. In 1905 the Dutch Hellenist and creolist *avant la lettre* D.C. Hesseling wrote his monumental *Het Negerhollands*, which is a comprehensive historical study. In this work material from the Herrnhut archive is used next to Danish printed material, which Hesseling prefers for its greater naturalness. The Austrian Romance scholar Hugo Schuchardt corresponded with a remote relative of the aforementioned J.M. Magens, namely A. Magens, who wrote to him in Negerhollands in 1883 and supplied a number of proverbs. Schuchardt (1914) was thus able to comment on Pontoppidan (1881) and Hesseling (1905).

In 1926 de Josselin de Jong published the stories in Negerhollands collected in 1922/3, and more than a decade later in 1936 F.G. Nelson collected words and short texts on St. Thomas, which remained unpublished but appear here in print for the first time, revised in 1993/4 by Nelson himself.

During the last two decades, the linguists A.V. Adams Graves, R. Sabino and G.A. Sprauve have published their research on the spoken language of the last native speakers. Graves worked with about five informants. In the period 1980-1987 many recordings were made by Sprauve and by Sabino of the last fluent speaker of Negerhollands, Mrs Alice Stevens.

Since the beginning of the 1980s, P. Stein has been publishing articles on the material he discovered in 1982 in the Unitäts Archiv in Herrnhut. In about the same period, i.e. 1983-1987, T. Stolz published on Negerhollands, mainly on the basis of the de Josselin de Jong materials. Finally, since the mid-1980s H. den Besten, P. Muysken, C. van Rossem and H. van der Voort have been working on Negerhollands and the Negerhollands materials. A first product of their Negerhollands database project (in cooperation with P. Stein) appears in the present book.

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