Jacques Arends, *Language and Slavery: A Social and Linguistic History of the Suriname Creoles*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2017. xxix + 463 pp. (Cloth US\$158.00)

Jacques Arends, who died in 2005 at age 53, left behind a large, partially finished manuscript that summarizes his life's work. Made up of unpublished papers, notes, and previously published pieces, this legacy was taken up by several of his creolist friends who filled in many of the gaps and brought the present volume to publication. Modestly, these generous friends/colleagues declined to have their names listed as editors.

Even before completing his 1989 dissertation, Arends was a staunch gradualist, arguing against the views of rapid creolization in Suriname espoused by scholars such as Norval Smith and myself. In a number of publications, the Amsterdam Creole Group, of which he was a member, produced new understandings, demonstrating, for example, that West African Gbe-language TMA systems undergird all of Suriname's creole languages. They also showed that once we turn away from debates about creolization as an abstract concept and begin to apply it to the empirical analysis of particular places and periods—in other words, once we *historicize* creolization—it remains a powerful analytical tool for understanding culture change in Afro-America. Arends's role in these debates was focused on the Suriname side of things and he was indefatigable in finding and publishing texts that testified to the development of the Suriname creoles through time. He insisted that the Suriname creoles began to develop earlier, and continued to develop later, than other scholars believed. Many of the ideas (and examples) in his posthumous book were prefigured in his long historical chapter in *Atlas of the Languages of Suriname* (2002).

Language and Slavery opens by arguing that the history of Sranan begins well before the 1651 colonization by the English and then moves on to consider the sociolinguistic influences on its long development. Early Sranan texts are presented for analysis, followed by rich examples of later texts in Sranan, Ndyuka, and Saamakatongo (songs, *odos*, Anancy stories, and other secular and religious texts). Overall, the book gathers together Arends's previous work and provides much for creolists and historians of Suriname to ponder.

The portion of the book devoted to Saamaka history, previously unpublished, demands a direct response since Arends writes that almost all linguists base their assumptions “either directly or indirectly, on the work of anthropologist and Saramaka history expert, Richard Price, ... [and] it is of some importance, therefore, to subject Price's claims about the formation of the Saramaka group to a serious examination, both with regard to the alleged *terminus a quo*

(1690) and the alleged *terminus ad quem* (1712)” (p. 89). The following 11 pages consist of a concerted effort to discredit my half-century of research on the subject.

To choose almost randomly from his claims, neither 1690 nor 1712 represents, either in reality or in my writings, the beginning and end of the population influx into what became the Saamaka people and their language. Indeed, in *First-Time*, which he cites, I make clear that the 1690 raid on the plantation of Imanuël Machado was carried out by a group of Saamakas who had escaped much earlier and were already living in the forest, far to the south. And in *Alabi's World*, which he also cites, I document how Saamakas were liberating and accepting significant numbers of new recruits well after the Peace Treaty of 1762. (Arends's sole source for the supposed 1712 end date is *The Guiana Maroons*, a book I completed in 1974, before I'd begun the intensive oral and archival history research reported in *First-Time* and *Alabi's World*.) Arends also cites a story that a visitor once collected from a certain “Papreki” that appears to contradict the versions I collected from Otyutyu (who later became *gaama*), not realizing that the man the visitor called “Papreki” was Peleki, an important participant in the oral history interviews reported in *First-Time*. (Arends also ignores the detailed discussion of Otyutyu's reliability about the Machado raid story, having to do with complex religious links, that I presented in that book.)

At the end of his rather aggressive critique of my work, Arends warns that “creolists should be extremely careful in adopting and interpreting historians' claims for linguistic purposes. It seems clear that the true story of the formation of Saramaccan ... will not be uncovered until creolists cease to put blind faith in secondary sources” (p. 99). But I would contend that armchair historical revisionism must not be allowed to trump years of archival and field research that is continually checked and revised, by myself and other scholars.

In 2003, I wrote a detailed response to Arends's original presentation of these ideas at a conference at the Netherlands Institute of Advanced Study; those remarks are now available at www.richandsally.net for scholars who wish to delve deeper into these particular historiographical issues.

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