Jesuit Missionaries and Enslavement at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century: An Assessment from the Loyola Plantation in French Guiana

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Abstract

We present an overview of the archaeological research carried out on a sugar plantation operated by the Jesuits in French Guiana. The Jesuits' production was exported to Europe to provide funds to develop their missions among Native people

living in French Guiana and Amazonia. We present a brief history of the plantation and discuss the place the missionaries occupied in the colonial venture and their role in the economy of the colony. Loyola was a large and successful plantation compared with other plantations in French Guiana, and its success rested on the exploitation of enslaved labor. Recent research on the area covered by the plantation storehouse, its chapel, and the forecourt in front has allowed us to reassess our initial interpretation of the chronology and development of the plantation. In doing so, we realized that the Jesuits rigorously conformed to the architectural principles of the Enlightenment to symbolize their prestige in the colony.

Keywords

French Guiana – enslavement – sugar production – Catholic missions – landscape archaeology – equatorial agricultural system – Jesuit plantation

Introduction

Our article is a partial account of the results of archaeological research carried out from 1994 to 2019 at a Jesuit-owned plantation in French Guiana, founded during the second half of the seventeenth century in the *commune* of Rémire, twelve kilometers (7.4 miles) south of Cayenne. From 1668 to 1769, the Jesuits played a decisive role in the economy of French Guiana, producing goods in an economic system relying on the exploitation of an enslaved population at Habitation Loyola. Although this plantation's initial production was sugar, coffee, and cocoa, as the market evolved, indigo and cotton were added. To supplement their revenue, members of the Society of Jesus trained enslaved artisans in their workshops to produce construction hardware, ceramics, and metal tools for agrarian work that they sold to local planters. The Loyola plantation covers about one thousand hectares, and its servile population reached five hundred people under the supervision of a handful of missionaries. The objective of our contribution is to demonstrate how, from a modest beginning, the Jesuits' habitation came to symbolize their prestige in the colony. The Jesuits subscribed to the architectural premises of the Enlightenment, by which power was symbolized through human transformation of the environment.¹ We have selected key features of the Habitation Loyola that show this worldview.

1 Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments* (Providence, RI: Berg Publishers, Explorations in Anthropology Series, 1994), 21–22; Jean-Claude Marsan,

French Guiana, situated between 2° and 6° latitude north, is a French overseas territory on the Atlantic coast bordered by Brazil to the south and east and Suriname to the west. Its territory is mostly covered by an equatorial forest with acidic soils that yield mediocre harvests. Farming the marshy lowlands to increase agricultural yield during the second half of the eighteenth century was made possible by the adoption of polder agriculture, a technique borrowed from the Dutch in Suriname.² Life for the colonists was further complicated by difficulties with maritime access; thus, French Guiana was disadvantaged compared with more accessible ports in the Caribbean, and this led to regular shortages of essential material imports from France.

Between 1604 and 1674, there were several attempts to colonize French Guiana by expeditions of varying sizes, ranging from twenty to several thousand people. Some ventures persisted for a few months and others lasted a few years.³ The Dutch occupation, from 1654 to 1663, saw the arrival in 1657 of a small Dutch Jewish population fleeing Brazil.⁴ As for the Jesuits, by the time they landed in Cayenne in 1664, they were long-time initiates to the cultural realms of France, Portugal and Spain, since, until their expulsion from Portugal in 1759 and from Spain in 1767, the Jesuits had been involved in the education of the elites of these countries.⁵ From their arrival in South America by the mid-sixteenth century, their influence encompassed a vast territory in which Catholic missions and reductions proliferated, constituting what was effectively a Jesuit-run state within the state.⁶

Montréal en évolution: Historique du développement de l'architecture et de l'environnement urbain montréalais, 3rd ed. (Montreal: Éditions du Méridien, 1994); Christopher C. Fennell, "Carved, Inscribed, and Resurgent: Cultural and Natural Terrains as Analytic Challenges," in *Revealing Landscapes*, ed. Christopher C. Fennell (n.p.: Society for Historical Archaeology, 2011), 1–11.

- 2 Jean Samuel Guisan, *Le Vaudois des terres noyées: Ingénieur à la Guiane française, 1777–1791* [The Vaudois of the drowned lands: Engineer in French Guiana, 1777–1791], Coll. Ethno-Poche, 54, ed. Yannick Le Roux, Olivier Pavillon, and Kristen Sarge (Lausanne: Éditions d'en bas: Éditions Ibis Rouge, 2012).
- 3 Pierre Thibaudault, *Échec de la démesure en Guyane, autour de l'expédition de Kourou* (Lezay: Imprimerie Pairault, 1995).
- 4 Yannick Le Roux, Réginald Auger, and Nathalie Cazelles, *Les Jésuites et l'esclavage: Loyola; L'habitation des jésuites de Rémire en Guyane française* (Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2009), 21–25; Marie Polderman, *La Guyane française, 1676–1763: Mise en place et évolution de la société coloniale, tensions et métissage* (Matoury: Éditions Ibis Rouge, 2004), 32–33.
- 5 Lucie Giard, ed., *Les Jésuites à la Renaissance: Système éducatif et production du savoir* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1995); Antonella Romano, "Les collèges jésuites dans le monde moderne (1540–1772)," *Communications* 72 (2002): 129–40.
- 6 Also known as the Mission Province, the dedicated territory encompassed parts of modern-day Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Bolivia. See Marcelo Alejandro Acosta,

North of the equator, their impact was felt particularly among the populations of the Amazon, where the Society of Jesus saw in the Native population potential converts to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Swiftly, the Jesuits imposed their domination over the spiritual life of the colony, and five years after their arrival, they had established plantations at Loyola, at Saint-Régis, and at nearby Maripa, on the Comté River, in order to generate revenues necessary for the development of their evangelization work.⁷

Placing the French Guiana Missionary Work in Hemispheric Perspective

The Jesuits established themselves in 1668, below the landscape depicted in 1730,⁸ and named their possession Habitation Loyola, in homage to the birthplace of the founder of their order. They bought a small parcel of land from a settler, which came with sugar production equipment and facilities, including a mill, and with enslaved labor.⁹ Archaeological test excavations conducted at their initial home confirmed the frugality of the early years; the artifacts suggest the Jesuits lived in near-autarky, with their enslaved producing the tools they needed.¹⁰ Poverty marked the initial years of their establishment. By 1672, they had managed to increase their property by buying new lands with a house, where they settled.¹¹ They occupied it in co-ownership with two settlers, and upon the death of one of them, his widow retained the usufruct of the house.

"Ad majorem Dei gloriam: Espace de Dieu et domaine des hommes; Analyse des missions jésuites du Paracuria (1610–1767) à partir de l'archéologie phénoménologique; Cas d'étude Nuestra Señora de Loreto (1 et 11) et San Ignacio Miní (1 et 11)" (unpublished diss., Université Laval, 2016).

- 7 The Jesuit-owned Saint-Régis plantation is located at least six leagues, or *circa* twenty-four km, from Loyola. Since transportation took place almost exclusively via waterways, such a distance represented a long day's journey and would have been subject to the tide cycles.
- 8 A 1730 illustration, showing the organization of the Habitation Loyola landscape, can be viewed in Yannick Le Roux et al., *Jésuites et l'esclavage*, 70, or at the Habitation Loyola website: "Historique," Site archéologique Loyola: l'habitation des jésuites de Rémire en Guyane," <https://habitationloyola.org/le-site/historique/> (accessed February 2, 2021). Source: Cartouche from Hébert's map of 1730, Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre, Vincennes.
- 9 1668. Letter from Jean Grillet, superior of the Cayenne mission, Yannick Le Roux et al., *Jésuites et l'esclavage*, 177.
- 10 Yannick Le Roux, Réginald Auger, and Catherine Losier, "L'habitation Loyola à Rémire, Guyane française, prospections thématiques, juillet–août 2006," Report submitted to Service régional d'Archéologie, DRAC-Guyane, Cayenne (2008).
- 11 1668. Letter from Jean Grillet, superior of the Cayenne mission, Yannick Le Roux et al., *Jésuites et l'esclavage*, 177.

The Jesuits therefore built a new home, which our calculations place approximately eighty meters (87.4 yards) below the master's house, as depicted in the 1730 illustration.¹²

The shrewdness of the Jesuits is manifested after the first quarter of the eighteenth century, as they had grown from their modest beginning into influential landowners. Habitation Loyola was an impressive architectural complex intended to express their power in the colony. The plantation house hosted retired members of their order and was visited by renowned scientific guests, who found at the habitation an oasis of rest. The products the Jesuits in French Guiana produced at their plantations and exported or sold locally were an essential source of income to support their plan for the founding of missions in the Amazon basin.

Habitation Loyola resembled neither the Jesuit reductions among the Guaraní nor the Jesuit missions in New France. Loyola was essentially an agricultural enterprise where the toil of an enslaved labor force was used for the benefit of Jesuits' evangelization among Native people. However, the missionaries' activities in the Guaraní country and in New France, while different in some respects, had this evangelizing project in common. The Jesuit-run *reducciones*,¹³ created by the turn of the seventeenth century south of the Tropic of Capricorn among the Guaraní, were intended to exempt the Tupi-Guaraní, through conversion to Catholicism, from forced labor for the Spanish, in gold panning, in the silver mines in Potosí, or on the agricultural plantations in an economic system referred to as *encomiendas*.¹⁴ Meanwhile, the Jesuits in New

12 In this paper we use the term "master's house," a translation from the French *maison de maîtres*, which is a term commonly used to refer to the main house or residence of a plantation owner. While we acknowledge that the term "master" "transmits the aspirations and values of the enslaving class without naming the practices they engaged," this term has been retained over the course of research at Habitation Loyola since the 1990s. See P. Gabrielle Foreman et al. "Writing about Slavery/ Teaching About Slavery: This Might Help," community-sourced document, <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1A4TEdDgYsIX-hlKzLodMIM71My3KTN0zxRv0IQTOQs/mobilebasic> (accessed January 14, 2021).

13 This name, by itself, reveals that those missions were conceived as places in which "savage" people were to be *reducti*, conducted towards human life, that is, transformed into Christian subjects who had to live according to rules of political society. See Girolamo Imbruglia, "A Peculiar Idea of Empire: Missions and Missionaries of the Society of Jesus in Early Modern History," in *Jesuit Accounts of the Colonial Americas*, ed. Marc-André Bernier, Clorinda Donato, and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (Toronto: University of Toronto Press & The Regents of the University of California, 2014), 21–49.

14 An *encomienda* was a Native labor system that was employed mainly by the Spanish crown in the colonization of the Americas. See Takao Abé, "The Missionary *Réductions* in New France: An Epistemological Problem with a Popular Historical Theory," *French Colonial History* 15 (2014): 111–33; Abé, *The Jesuit Mission to New France: A New Interpretation in the Light of the Earlier Jesuit Experience in Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

France aimed to make Christians out of the sedentary Iroquoian groups farming in the area before the arrival of the Jesuits.¹⁵

Why did the Jesuits refrain from establishing reductions in French Guiana? The reasons may be numerous. Conditions in French Guiana were probably very different from those in Guaraní country. *Encomiendas* never existed in French Guiana, and we presume that the small hunter-gatherer groups of the Amazon basin were not necessarily inclined to farming as a mode of subsistence in an equatorial forest that required the rotation of crops and, hence, precluded the creation of permanent settlements. Evangelization was possible through missions; however, the way of life at missions was not as constraining as that of a reduction.¹⁶ Missions allowed Native people to engage in their traditional annual cycle in pursuit of food, clothing, and shelter, and this mobility was certainly a trait that the Society of Jesus espoused from its founding.

Even if their objective remained the evangelization of Native populations in French Guiana, the Jesuits also acted as defenders of Native people.¹⁷ While they imposed upon them a spiritual life, the Jesuits avoided making radical changes to their everyday customs. Rather, they strove to maintain the production of handicrafts and even increased it to meet the financial needs of the missions.¹⁸ Their first missionary work in French Guiana started during the seventeenth century as intermittent visits to Native settlements. By the turn of the eighteenth century, the first missions were established at Karouabo in 1706 and at Kourou in 1713. The Kourou mission was strongly inspired in its structure by the Spanish reductions, but the converts were free to move beyond the confines of the mission. Through the creation of a school for Native students in Kourou in 1718, their religious teaching was rewarded with the acquisition of concessions, donations and legacies, which allowed them to acquire land necessary for their development, and agricultural plantations based on enslavement were construed as a means to finance the missions.¹⁹

15 Peter A. Goddard, "Converting the 'Sauvage': Jesuit and Montagnais in Seventeenth-Century New France," *The Catholic Historical Review* 84, no. 2, (1998): 219–39, here 226; Shenwen Li, *Stratégies missionnaires des jésuites français en Nouvelle-France et en Chine au XVII^e siècle* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2001), 88–89.

16 Citing the Enlightenment philosopher D'Alembert, Imbruglia suggested that in their missions, the Jesuits "bring happiness, it is said, to the peoples there who obey them and whom they have managed to subdue without the use of violence." See Imbruglia, *Peculiar Idea of Empire*, 22.

17 Polderman, *Guyane française 1676–1763*, 211–14.

18 Jean-Marcel Hurault, *Français et Indiens en Guyane, 1604–1972* (Cayenne: Guyane Presse Diffusion, 1989), 58.

19 Régis Verwimp, *Les Jésuites en Guyane française sous l'Ancien Régime (1498–1768)* (Matoury: Ibis Rouge, 2011), 237, 260.

The Chapel and Its Cemetery

Twenty-five years of research at Habitation Loyola have brought to light the Jesuit conception of their residential sector, which conveys the symmetry that is advocated for in the architectural principles of the Age of Enlightenment.²⁰ Transformation of the landscape was meant to give the property an elegance and prestige that reflected the socio-economic status of the Society of Jesus in the colony. However, it is important to keep in mind that the time capsule that we uncovered contains the remains as they appeared when the Society was expelled from French Guiana in the 1760s.²¹

In accordance with the obligations of their order, the Jesuits needed a place of worship for daily devotions. The chapel and its cemetery depicted in the 1730 illustration represent the inception of the Jesuit establishment, at the end of the seventeenth century, along with a smithy discovered underneath the storehouse of the habitation.²² The chapel had a modest appearance, to conform with the spirit of simplicity that characterized the baroque Jesuit chapels that we have visited throughout the Mission Province in South America (Figures 1 and 2, left side). As Weaver rightly points out elsewhere in this issue, “among the more obvious evangelical tools employed at San Joseph and San Xavier were the spatially dominant and impressive baroque hacienda chapels, the centerpieces of the enslaved communities’ religious life.”²³ At Habitation Loyola, the chapel’s facade was pierced by a simple door and surmounted by a bell, hanging from a wood frame. That element of the plantation soundscape represented a necessary tool of control; the bell in the community regulated the daily work, repose, and religious rites of the enslaved.²⁴ The space reserved for the worshippers was 100 m² (1076.39 sq ft) at most. Most of the floor covering was removed after the plantation was abandoned.²⁵ However, a sufficient

20 Marsan, *Montréal en évolution*.

21 It is important to remember that pilfering, salvaging, and decay through natural processes have also taken their toll on the archaeological remains.

22 In the account of the death of Rullier, we read that when he perished in the 1698 fire on a sugar cane field, he fell to the ground, with his head turned toward the chapel. *Registre paroissial de Rémire, 1698*. Archives d’Outremer, Aix-en-Provence, cited by Le Roux et al., *Jésuites et l’esclavage*, 212.

23 Brendan Weaver, “The Grace of God and Virtue of Obedience.”

24 Jean-François Plante, “Le paysage sonore de la Nouvelle-France,” *Ethnologies* 35, no. 1 (2002): 125–44; Jutta Toelle, “Todas las naciones han de oyrla: Bells in the Jesuit *reducciones* of Early Modern Paraguay,” *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 3, no. 3 (2016): 437–50, doi:10.1163/22141332-00303005.

25 Yannick Le Roux and Laurence Joignerez, “L’habitation Loyola à Rémire: Rapport archéologique 1995,” Report submitted to Service régional de l’Archéologie de la Guyane, Cayenne (1995).

FIGURE 1 Drone coverage of the excavated chapel forecourt by AEROPROD
INFOGRAPHIC BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS GUAY

number of features remain to make a reliable reconstruction of the floor built with tiles made at the pottery owned by the Jesuits. A brick alignment delimiting the choir probably marked the base of a wooden balustrade, and its floor was covered with larger tiles. The center of the choir shows a different brick layout that probably indicates the location of the altar. The preserved alignment of the chapel's east wall foundations suggests that the chapel was a frame structure built on a terrace purposefully leveled for its construction.

A forecourt enclosed by a wall and a gate restricted access to the sacred space. The forecourt of the chapel seems constructed in two phases, probably

FIGURE 2 Map of the residential area showing the chapel, cemetery, square yard, kitchen, hospital, shop, and master's house

INFOGRAPHIC BY RAPHAËLE LUSSIER-PIETTE

very close chronologically.²⁶ It appears that by 1730, the forecourt limits were demarcated to the west by the terrace of the *maison de maître*, or master's house, and to the north by stone masonry. The eastern boundary of the forecourt is a stone wall aligned in the extension of the chapel's east wall, while the front wall of the chapel delineates the forecourt to the south. The gate giving access to the forecourt is positioned to align with the door of the chapel. A long building abuts the forecourt on its east side; its erection, posterior to the forecourt, required the construction of a gutter to evacuate rainwater. Even though we do not have any evidence for this, considering that clayey soil must have been inconvenient to walk on during the rainy season, we assume that the forecourt was paved with flagstones beyond the restricted space we uncovered in front of the chapel (Figure 1).

The chapel would have been too small to welcome all of the worshippers who worked and lived on the plantation. Judging by its dimensions, it would have accommodated fewer than one hundred people for the offices, while the servile population far exceeded that number. We therefore assume that the chapel was designed to have sufficient capacity for the Jesuits,²⁷ and that the other service attendees would have had to gather in the forecourt of the chapel or nearby, within hearing distance of the preacher. By the 1730s, the chapel must have

26 Jean-François Guay, Réginald Auger, and Yannick Le Roux, "L'habitation Loyola: Secteur de la cour de la chapelle," Report submitted to Service régional de l'Archéologie de la Guyane, Cayenne (2019), 51–83.

27 Le Roux et al., *Jésuites et l'esclavage*, 207–11.

embodied a coherent orthogonal plan, with the master's house at the center, and the hospital/ kitchen and the storehouse to the right (Figure 2, right side).²⁸

The 1730 illustration depicts a Calvary cross erected on a gentle slope to the east of the chapel in a space identified as the cemetery. Our 1997 archaeological tests in the presumed cemetery had brought to light what seemed to be burial pits, identifiable by changes in the color and texture of the sediments. The shapes and dimensions of the sediment discolorations suggested that we had recorded a burial ground.²⁹ Three subsequent interventions provided convincing evidence of a cemetery.³⁰ In 2014, we focused on the delimitation of the cemetery; the dig identified its southern limit as an alignment of posts set at 1.20 m (3.9 ft) intervals, which was a fence delimiting the cemetery. The chapel demarcated the western limit of the burial ground, and a fence of stone separated the cemetery from the garden terraces to the west behind the chapel. The north boundary remained unidentified, since a later building truncated the cemetery. The absence of burial pits, in addition to the site topography, in the eastern part of the cemetery suggests another limit. Despite the roughness

28 The Jesuits' plan for Habitation Loyola reflects baroque ideas, including the placement of symbolic structures at highly visible locations: "A product of the Italian Renaissance, Baroque ideas were first employed in Rome during the 16th century and rapidly spread to other parts of Europe. They emphasized geometric form, symmetry and proportion as well as the need for spatial integration and openness." See Henry M. Miller, "Baroque Cities in the Wilderness: Archaeology and Urban Development in the Colonial Chesapeake," *Historical Archaeology* 22, no. 2 (1988): 57–73, here 66.

29 Yannick Le Roux, Claude Lorren, and Éric Broine, "Loyola rapport d'intervention archéologique de 1996," Report submitted to Service régional de l'Archéologie de la Guyane, Cayenne (1996).

30 Antoine Loyer Rousselle, Zocha Houle-Wierzbicki, Yannick Le Roux, and Réginald Auger, "Loyola 2012, rapport de fouille programmée: Secteurs du magasin et du cimetière," Report submitted to Service régional de l'Archéologie de la Guyane, Cayenne (2013); Houle-Wierzbicki and Le Roux, "Loyola 2013, rapport de fouille programmée, secteur du cimetière et le projet de sa mise en valeur (1ère partie)," Report submitted to Service régional de l'Archéologie de la Guyane, Cayenne (2014); Houle-Wierzbicki and Le Roux, "Loyola 2014, rapport de fouille programmée: secteur du cimetière et le projet de sa mise en valeur (2e partie)," Report submitted to Service régional de l'Archéologie de la Guyane, Cayenne (2015). Organic decomposition is rapid and constitutes a major problem for the conservation of human bones. Following this observation, we developed an analytical methodology allowing us to trace the physical and chemical traces of the decomposition of the human bodies. We have focused our attention on chemical elements associated with the deterioration of components of the human body buried in the ground. Preliminary results of soil sample analyses show that we have in the identified burial pits elements such phosphorus (proteins, fats, DNA, RNA, bone), potassium (body liquid), sulfur (proteins), sodium (fluids and tissues), chlorine (fluids and tissues), fluorine (bone and teeth), and nitrogen (fluids and tissues, proteins, fats, DNA, RNA).

of the data concerning the extent of the Loyola burial ground, we hypothesized that it covered an area approximately 450 m² (538.19 sq yd) in size.

Although the absence of organic remains limited our reading of the cemetery data, a careful recording of the stratigraphy made up for that shortcoming. We recorded burial pits, which overlapped at some places, suggesting a reuse of the space—an effective strategy, as human remains last only a few years under the combined effects of acidity and biological activity in the soil. Thus, it was easier to inhumate the deceased in loose sediments than to expand the sacred ground. The inhumation pits followed a general north-south orientation. Although adult and infant graves were of different sizes, their distribution into the cemetery did not show any patterning. Both types had similar offerings, some had small objects that may correspond to religious ornaments, such as glass beads (blue, black, and white), which may have been rosary beads. A silver ring was recovered from an adult burial near the chapel, and another pit, near the southern limit of the cemetery, yielded a small copper Christ, likely an element of a crucifix. Finally, the discovery of small iron nails in another grave suggested the existence of a rectangular wooden coffin. In summary, our search covered a small percentage of the cemetery surface, and we identified more than thirty graves. The random distribution of the burial pits and the poor state of preservation of the parish records made the estimation of the number of people buried in the cemetery even more difficult, but we estimate the total to be seven hundred to eight hundred inhumations.³¹

The Master's House

The master's house, which was the main residence for the Jesuits on the property, probably dates from the 1720s, as evidenced by the material culture recovered.³² Along with its associated buildings, the house occupies a central position on the landscape, to symbolize the economic success of the Jesuits. The house, the kitchen/ hospital, and the chapel together create a U-shaped plan, framing a square courtyard where a garden (*à la française*) is reminiscent of the setting of the Jesuits' property in Cayenne. From its position, the

31 This number must be used with caution; it is based on data we have on the population who lived at Loyola and on data from the Rémire parish register available for nearly fifty years.

32 The tin-glazed ceramics show a homogeneous assemblage dating from the first half of the eighteenth century. Réginald Auger and Yannick Le Roux, "Étude archéologique de l'habitation de Loyola à Rémire en Guyane française," *Archéologiques* 15 (2001): 55–68; Caroline Girard, "Aperçu de la vie dans le cadre de la maison de maître de l'habitation Loyola en Guyane française (1668–1769)" (MA thesis, Université Laval, 2008).

house offers a viewpoint to the sea, and its exposure to trade winds would have brought much-appreciated cool air and a welcomed ventilation against mosquitoes. It is oriented so that most of the plantation would have been in the sightline of the occupants. The workshops and the outbuildings, the sugar refinery and the windmill, a large part of the cultivated fields, and the enslaved quarter are all visible from that vantage point. The only drawback of this prime location is not having a water supply nearby; therefore, the Jesuits built an aqueduct to bring water from a spring located in the hill above their house.³³

The house is built on a leveled platform shored up by a dry stone wall consisting of large blocks; it measures 24 m (78.74 ft) by 10 m (32.80 ft) and has an attic.³⁴ Entry to the house was through a central front door, and two other doors to the sides of the front veranda led to as many corner rooms.³⁵ Six windows illuminated three large rooms at the core of the house. Traces of the tiled floor display various patterns made with locally produced tiles showing alternating shades of red and pink. Smaller tiles were checkered, while bricks were used to cover the floor of what has been interpreted as the base of the staircase leading to the attic. Four skylights on the north side of the roof lit the attic, likely used for storage of moisture-sensitive commodities. The organization of the ground floor space is imperfectly understood. We presume that the central part comprised only a single room, referred to in the historical accounts as *la salle* (the room). The two wings at each end of the house enclosed two rooms accessible from the front and back verandas. The clayey layer we removed during excavation of the house floor seemingly resulted from the use of wattle and daub (*gauleté et bousillé*) between the posts of that framed house. Architecturally, the master's house is classical, barely distinguishable from other domestic colonial constructions of its time, with simple volumes and no ornamentation.³⁶ Trimmed trees (probably lemon trees)³⁷ were planted in front of the

33 Yannick Le Roux and Réginald Auger, "Fouilles archéologiques à la source de l'habitation de Loyola," Report submitted to Service régional d'Archéologie de la Guyane, Cayenne (2002).

34 Auger and Le Roux, "Étude archéologique," 55–69; Réginald Auger, "Fouille de la maison de maître de l'habitation Loyola à Rémire," Report submitted to Service régional d'Archéologie de la Guyane, Cayenne (2000).

35 Descriptions of the house's architectural features are based on the illustration (see footnote 8) of the Loyola habitation from 1730 (Vincennes SHAT) and the results of our archaeological research.

36 Christophe Charlery, "Maisons de maître et habitations coloniales dans les anciens territoires français de l'Amérique tropicale," *In situ* 5 (2004), <http://insitu.revues.org/2362> (accessed January 14, 2021).

37 Lemon trees were reputed to have the property of purifying the air.

terrace, and drying racks (*boucans*)³⁸ were placed on the glacis in front of the house.

The house was a private space between a controlled, square courtyard, reserved for the Jesuits, and the front of the house, used for a variety of purposes by all involved in the daily chores at the habitation.³⁹ Adjacent to their house, the back courtyard was an ornamental garden, testifying to the importance that the Jesuits attached to the Enlightenment philosophy, which extolled human control over nature. On the terraces above the courtyard, they planted a vineyard to express the Christianity of their domain. Taming the wilderness, a metaphor often used by the Jesuits to describe their evangelical work,⁴⁰ was a powerful way for the Jesuits to materialize their *raison d'être* as a religious order, as well as their rapport with the local elite. Thus, it was common to use similar formal, French-style quadripartite gardens to reinforce both their sacred and their secular powers, a practice observed in multiple Jesuit contexts, including at the Paraguayan reductions,⁴¹ *collèges* in France, and residences in China.⁴² The culture of medicinal plants⁴³ also allowed the missionaries to participate in natural history networks⁴⁴ that linked Jesuits from overseas missions and in Rome to botanists, pharmacists, and the European nobility.⁴⁵ Overall, given its size and contrasting nature, in the middle of sugar cane fields, the house occupied by the Jesuits must have felt pleasant to the visitor. With comfortable dimensions and flanked by the aristocratic attribute of a dovecote, the

38 *Boucans* is a Tupi word used to designate wooden grills used for drying and smoking meat. By extension, this word designates light structures in general, including trestles probably intended for drying sugar or other food.

39 Réginald Auger, Yannick Le Roux, and Raphaëlle Lussier-Piette, "L'habitation Loyola: Secteur ouest de la terrasse de la maison de maître," Report submitted to Service régional d'Archéologie de la Guyane, Cayenne (2018).

40 Meridith Beck Sayre, "Cultivating Soils and Souls: The Jesuit Garden in the Americas" (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2007), 34–36.

41 Acosta, "Ad maiorem Dei gloriam," 364–428.

42 Lianming Wang, "From La Flèche to Beijing: The Transcultural Moment of Jesuit Garden Spaces," in *EurAsian Matters: China, Europe, and the Transcultural Object, 1600–1800*, ed. Anna Grasskamp and Monica Juneja (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2018), 120–21.

43 Jean-Baptiste Fusée Aublet, *Histoire des plantes de la Guiane française rangées suivant la méthode sexuelle, avec plusieurs mémoires sur différens objets intéressans, relatifs à la culture & au commerce de la Guiane Française, & une notice des plantes de l'Isle-de-France*, 4 vols. (London and Paris: P. F. Didot jeune, Libraire de la Faculté de Médecine, 1775).

44 Michael T. Bravo, "Mission Gardens: Natural History and Global Expansion," in *Colonial Botany: Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World*, ed. Londa Schiebinger and Claudia Swan (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 50.

45 Samir Boumediene, *La colonisation du savoir: Une histoire des plantes médicinales du "Nouveau Monde" (1492–1750)* (Vaulx-en-Velin: Éditions des Mondes à Faire, 2016), 139–40.

“master’s” house embodied not only the signs of the church’s presence, but also the manifestation of a temporal, political power.

Plantation Storehouse

The storehouse had a specific function: it served for the storage of edible products, expensive imported goods that needed to be protected, and the tools necessary for the operation of a plantation. The storehouse measured 17.10 m (56.10 ft) by 7.15 m (23.45 ft) and should not be confused with the initial storehouse depicted in the 1730 illustration (see *Magazins* in the 1730 illustration), which measured approximately 6.00 m (19.68 ft) by 7.17 m (23.52 ft), making it similar in size to the kitchen, located a few meters away.⁴⁶ Evidence of that former storehouse is still visible east of wall 1M700 (Figure 3). Some of its features included a brick floor and a cross wall (1M600), which were incorporated when the storehouse was enlarged to its current dimensions after 1730. The exterior walls of the ground floor are built with local stone and assembled with a clay mortar. The ground floor was laid with bricks. Immediately north of the storehouse, we identified a brick-paved walkway that would have facilitated access and acted as a loading dock. We presume that the second floor was timber-framed, with wattle and daub walls. Since the storehouse was adjacent to the smithy, precautions were taken to protect the storehouse against fire. We recovered many roofing tiles, but because their number is insufficient to have covered the entire roof, we suspect that additional ones have been salvaged. Under the expansion (Figure 3), we discovered traces of the first smithy, including a stone alignment (1M900) set at a slightly different angle from the current storehouse. Traces of the former smithy include a dark soil in which we found ashes, large pieces of charcoal, and various scraps of iron and copper.

The storehouse was well suited to its warehousing functions, with its interior brick floor to keep merchandise dry. The archaeological assemblage recovered on its floor is a representative sample of the material culture used on an eighteenth-century plantation, including a range of tools made by the Loyola

46 Antoine Loyer Rousselle, “Le magasin de l’habitation Loyola: Approche archéologique sur les identités et les interactions culturelles au XVIII^e siècle en Guyane française” (MA thesis, Université Laval, 2018); Loyer Rousselle and Réginald Auger, “Identity and Cultural Interaction in French Guiana during the Eighteenth Century: The Case of the Storehouse at Habitation Loyola,” in *Archaeological Perspectives on the French in the New World*, ed. Elizabeth M. Scott (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2017), 185–217.

FIGURE 3 Plan of the plantation storehouse showing the remains of the old blacksmith's shop underneath

INFOGRAPHIC BY ANTOINE LOYER ROUSSELLE

blacksmiths,⁴⁷ as well as imported goods. Excavations of the storehouse's floor and a ditch against its south wall yielded a collection representing 2,661 objects. Although 1,229 artifacts could be directly associated with the storehouse's wooden structure (pitons, hinges, hooks, a padlock, roof tiles, and many nails), a significant proportion are interpreted as coming from the storage of bulk merchandise. Agricultural and woodworking tools are also represented.

Our data from the storehouse area suggest that it was built and transformed in three phases. Since blacksmithing was at the heart of any rural society during that period, it is likely that the smithy discovered underneath the storehouse extension was contemporaneous with the initial chapel (1672 to around 1715–20). The second phase (1715–20 to the late 1730s), which corresponds to the storehouse shown in the 1730 illustration, shows the Jesuit domain in its splendor. The last phase would date from the last thirty years of the habitation, when the storehouse was enlarged to its current dimensions and the old

47 Alain Chouinard, "L'habitation Loyola en Guyane: Archéologie de la forge et étude archéométallurgique des objets en fer" (MA thesis, Université Laval, 1999). When the storehouse was enlarged, the former blacksmith shop adjacent to the storehouse was moved a few meters down the slope.

smithy to the west of the storehouse (not illustrated) moved a few meters to the west.

The storehouse and the chapel seem to be the earliest remains in the residential area, as both are set at an angle slightly off the orthogonal plan used for the eighteenth-century re-organization of the plantation buildings. When the storehouse was enlarged to its current size, it was designed to be similar in size to the kitchen/ hospital building nearby, but not in the exact same orientation, since it was erected on the foundations of the old storehouse contemporaneous with the seventeenth-century chapel. By way of comparative data, the king stores built in the port of Cayenne during the eighteenth century, also had a second floor made of timber and a cobbled ground floor resting on masonry foundations raised above the outside circulation areas to protect the floor from torrential rains during the rainy season.⁴⁸ The storehouse is part of the larger ensemble that constitutes the residential sector of the Loyola plantation during the eighteenth century; its size and location on the plantation reflect, through its architecture, the prestige of the Jesuits and their desire to establish themselves in a lasting way in the colony. The landscape of Habitation Loyola was “above all [...] a setting and celebration of authority—secular, spiritual and cultural.”⁴⁹

The Enslaved People's Quarter

The small property bought by the Jesuit in 1668 already had enslaved laborers living on it.⁵⁰ In 1703, the civil authorities requested that all religious orders in the colonies combined have no more than a hundred slaves in their service.⁵¹ Notwithstanding this request, at the time of the Jesuits' expulsion in 1764, the Jesuit inventories of their enslaved population revealed that it totaled more than a thousand, including 417 people at Loyola alone.⁵²

48 Fabrice Casagrande, “4 rue du Port, les anciennes douanes,” Institut National de Recherche Archéologiques Préventives (INRAP). Rapport de fouille non-publié soumis au Service Régional d'Archéologie (Cayenne: DRAC-Guyane, 2012).

49 Sylvia Doughty Fries, *The Urban Idea in Colonial America* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1977), 117. Henry Miller also highlights the role of baroque layouts as an embodiment of social structure, introducing an architectural language for public symbolism. See Miller, “Baroque Cities,” 68.

50 Le Roux et al., *Jésuites et l'esclavage*, 50.

51 Le Roux et al., *Jésuites et l'esclavage*, 59.

52 Archives des Jésuites de France Vanves, Fonds Quincerot, Inventaires de Loyola et de Mont-Louis, 7–26, septembre 1764. Cited in Le Roux et al., *Jésuites et l'esclavage*, 117.

Since at least the 1720s, the enslaved people's huts were grouped together on a plot of land located in the low-lying section of the plantation referred to as *la savane* (the savanna).⁵³ Dessingy's map, produced at the abandonment of the Loyola plantation (1766–71), is the only planimetric view we have of the enslaved people's quarter.⁵⁴ On it, one sees huts arranged in a checkerboard pattern inside a fence or, perhaps, a palisade, forming a compound. The Loyola enslaved quarter is peculiar; most plans showing enslaved quarters from the West Indies show the huts aligned on both sides of a central alley called a *rue caz nèg* (street of slave housing) placed on the same axis as the master's house. Such an organization of space made it easier for the masters to oversee the servile population, who were prevented from grouping their dwellings into hamlets. At Mont-Louis, a plantation adjacent to Loyola, the enslaved quarter has this usual appearance. At Saint-Régis, the layout resembles that at Loyola. It seems that the laborer village construction plan at Loyola conformed to the constraints of the terrain, and when such departures from the grid or *rue caz nèg* pattern have been seen in the Caribbean these have been interpreted as a means for the enslaved community to play a greater role in defining their own house and yard spaces.⁵⁵

The 1737 and 1764 censuses⁵⁶ are precious documents for understanding the material life of the invisible residents of a plantation, namely, the enslaved. The 1737 census reveals that the Jesuits possessed six cannons, a number of swords, and 186 canoes. Their livestock holdings were also impressive, with seventy-five horses, 111 cattle, fifty-nine sheep and goats, and nine pigs, plus, presumably, doves in the aforementioned dovecote. In total, 343 people were under orders of Commander Philype Choisela (dates unknown).⁵⁷ Another census, dated 1764 and transcribed by Le Roux,⁵⁸ indicates that when the

53 The word *savane* in French Guiana refers to a mixed woodland-grassland ecosystem, usually located in the coastal plain. Either because of an absence of forest or because the trees are sufficiently spaced out, the *savane* supports the growth of a particular, low vegetation.

54 "Dans la savane, sont bâties quarante-cinq cases à nègres dans lesquelles demeurent et résident les nègres et les négresses." Le Roux et al., *Jésuites et l'esclavage*, 200–4.

55 While there are many *caz nèg* and grid plans for Caribbean laborer villages, many examples conform to the landscape, as well. These include the later village at Seville Plantation in Jamaica, and Marshall's Pen. Cf. Douglas V. Armstrong and Kenneth Kelly, "Identifying the Origins of African-Jamaican Society: Evidence from Settlement Pattern Shifts in a Jamaican Slave Village, Seville Estate, St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica," *Ethnohistory* 47, no. 2 (2000): 369–97; James A. Delle, *The Colonial Caribbean: Landscapes of Power in Jamaica's Plantation System*, Case Studies in Early Societies (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 165–75.

56 Archives nationales, section Outremer (CAOM), C14, R. 16 F. 417, 1737.

57 Le Roux et al., *Jésuites et l'esclavage*, 134.

58 Le Roux et al., *Jésuites et l'esclavage*, 117–26.

Loyola plantation was abandoned, the Jesuits held 305 people in bondage. Although the majority of the enslaved population was assigned to sugar production, some of the enslaved took care of the canoes, and others were carpenters, blacksmiths, hunters, masons, or potters. There were also enslaved domestic servants, cooks, maids, laundresses, and seamstresses. Enslaved people also worked on the farm, as herders to care for the livestock, and in the gardens. Some were also tasked with carrying milk to Cayenne.

Following the start of our research program in 1994, we initially unveiled poorly preserved vestiges in the enslaved quarter.⁵⁹ A layer of anthropogenic, black material revealed fugacious traces of building material, suggesting that the huts were constructed mostly of wood. More recently, in preparation for the construction of a parking lot to be used by visitors to the site, a limited archaeological inventory was carried out to determine the precise extent of the enslaved quarter.⁶⁰ Those tests revealed evidence of occupation—circular holes forming alignments in the ferrallitic substrate were interpreted as postholes. The stripped surface being too limited, Hildebrand could not discern with certainty either an overall construction plan or the precise limits of any huts.⁶¹ The material culture recovered included hardware elements and blue-green glass dating from the late eighteenth century. Glazed ceramics from Saintonge and Vallauris (both in France) date to that same period. As is common throughout the plantation, we have a quantity of ceramics manufactured locally for the transformation of sugar and for culinary use. For the end of the nineteenth century, we have ceramics not only from Vallauris, but also from the Bordeaux region, as well as some fragments of glass bottles, all characteristic of post-slavery assemblages.⁶² In summary, this latest archaeological intervention—involving the discovery of what appear to be posthole alignments and various elements of European and Native material culture, as well as locally made ceramics produced by the enslaved—led to the authentication of the enslaved quarter.

Unfortunately, this is all that archaeology has revealed about life in the enslaved quarter of Loyola. In spite of the large number of enslaved, neither their life in this marginal place, nor their material culture have ever caught the attention of researchers until now. Sure, we know of the existence of the

59 The site was classified as a heritage property in 1993, but not before major damage had been caused as part of the preparations for a housing development.

60 Matthieu Hildebrand, "DOM, Guyane, Rémire-Montjoly: Parking du sentier de Loyola," Report submitted to Service régional d'Archéologie de la Guyane, Cayenne (Cayenne: INRAP, 2016), 73.

61 Hildebrand, *DOM, Guyane, Rémire-Montjoly*, 37.

62 A single ceramic sherd represents the Native population of French Guiana.

Black Code as enacted in 1685,⁶³ which describes the obligations of the masters toward their enslaved population; however, there is a flagrant lack of interest in the lifestyle, customs, and religious beliefs of the enslaved in the written records. Given the scarcity of written documents, archaeological research into the lives of those confined to the enslaved quarter deserves more attention, and effort should be invested to better understand what the written documents can reveal about enslaved life on the plantation. The enslaved quarter has been protected under heritage legislation since 1993, and the 2016 archaeological inventory served to identify the area that, by law, should not be impacted by the proposed construction of a parking lot for visitors to the plantation.

As always, the social micro-history of the enslaved population faces a lack of sources.⁶⁴ The little we know can be summed up as follows: after the departure of the Jesuits from French Guiana, part of the enslaved community from Loyola were acquired by Claude Macaye, who assigned them to work on the development of the lowlands of what became the Vidal plantation. Other enslaved persons would logically have been transferred to the new Beauregard plantation, founded by the Prépaud brothers near Loyola. To reach greater precision on the whereabouts of the Loyola enslaved, we would have to go through the enslaved lists from these two plantations in order to recover any names. However, the lists for Vidal are yet to be found. As for Beauregard, we have a list of the enslaved from 1791, which dates more than twenty years after the expulsion of the Jesuits. Another difficulty is that enslaved people were named at their baptism, which makes identification very difficult because similar first names and surnames are found from one plantation to another. We have a few rare nicknames or surnames of African origin, which alone could allow one to identify lineages, provided that the enslaved people were not given a new name after being baptized.

The second half of the eighteenth century was marked by the interest of the colonial administrators to develop a new agriculture in French Guiana.⁶⁵ Attempts were thus made to develop the cultivation of cassava and extensive animal husbandry; however, success was limited due to the land infertility. Using agricultural practices similar to those established by the Indigenous population, the forest was cut and burned at the end of the dry season, then planted when the rains returned for two or three years of harvests. After this period, the soils were usually depleted, and weeds and pests had invaded the

63 Jean-François Niort, "L'esclave dans le Code Noir de 1685," in *Esclaves: Une humanité en sursis*, ed. Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2012), 221–39.

64 Yannick Le Roux (personal communication, November 2020).

65 Le Roux et al., *Jésuites et l'esclavage*, 26, 83.

crops. The only solution then was to clear new land. From 1763, the Loyola plantation experienced its darkest years. The first act of its decline was certainly the lodging of the soldiers-grenadiers of the Regiment of Saintonge, who were transported to French Guiana to ensure the safety and the supervision of the Kourou agricultural expedition. Due to the lack of barracks, the master's house was requisitioned to house a detachment and its officers. The looting of the reserves and the deterioration of the buildings started the decay of the Habitation Loyola, which would not cease until its complete ruin.

Discussion and Conclusion

The initial objectives of our research program at Loyola were to systematically document the nature of the various features of a “forgotten” sugar plantation hidden under an equatorial secondary forest. As work progressed on that buried memory, we began to realize the potential our data had for understanding a chapter of the colonial experience and, eventually, for drawing lessons from this unique plantation, which is marked by the interactions between religion, agricultural production, and enslavement.

We must admit that, from the start, it seemed paradoxical that the Jesuit missionaries used enslaved labor to generate funds to support missions among the Indigenous peoples so that, through conversion to Christianity, Native people would be free from the horrors of destitution and enslavement.⁶⁶ The often-anachronistic contemporary reading of history gives the impression that the Jesuits were out of place in the whole scheme of slavery.

Most contemporary historians agree that the church was part of the colonial and slaveholder projects; they recognize likewise that the church was in conflict with the colonial project. In the Caribbean, the Jesuits are often portrayed as missionaries to the enslaved on secular plantations and it has been largely ignored that they owned slaves themselves. Thus,

Beginning in the middle of the seventeenth century, the Church turned to the enslaved population as the most promising pool of converts and

66 In 1550–51, scholars and theologians met in Valladolid, Spain, to debate the moral rights of Indigenous peoples in the Americas. This event, known as the “Valladolid debate,” considered contrasting opinions about the conversion of American Indians to Catholicism and their integration into Spanish colonial societies. See Bonar Ludwig Hernandez, “The Las Casas-Sepúlveda Controversy: 1550–1551,” *Ex Post Facto* 10 (2015): 95–104, https://history.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/images/2001_Bonar%20Ludwig%20Hernandez.pdf (accessed January 30, 2021).

eventually came to finance some of its missions to the French Antilles through slave labor. In the socially stratified societies of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the church hierarchy saw no inconsistency in the promotion of slavery. In fact, until the late eighteenth century, few Europeans (or Africans, for that matter) opposed the institution of slavery [...]. Slavery was justified as a means by which Africans and Amerindians would be brought into the fold. For Catholic clergy, the primary concern was that slaves be allowed to live their lives consistent with Catholic teaching, not that they escape their condition as chattel.⁶⁷

Unlike the *encomienda* economic system favored by the Spanish and Portuguese colonists in South America, the Jesuits' objective regarding Native people was evangelization. For a hundred years, the Jesuits were scattered over a few plantations and missions and, as members of the colonial elite, they enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle, as evidenced by the abundance of material culture found at their habitation. The Jesuits were an exception in a colony marked by multiple economic downturns; they knew how to carry out their evangelization project while being astute managers of the material world.

Recent work on the chapel, the cemetery, the master's house, and the storehouse of habitation Loyola has shed light on the evolution of the site and encouraged us to look at our data in ways that go beyond the interpretation of archaeological vestiges and material culture. Specifically, we probe how the Jesuit enterprise adjusted to the eighteenth-century worldview and how their habitation is an expression of their time. Although it adhered to eighteenth-century architectural principles, which advocate symmetry and order, what is odd in their residential ensemble is that the chapel location, in relation to the rest of the features that make up the habitation, deviates from the expected orthogonal plans. Despite the prime role the chapel played in the daily life of the missionaries and the habitants, it is located in a depression dominated by the courtyard, the master's house, the kitchen/hospital, and the terraces. We suggest that this indicates that the chapel and its adjoining cemetery were built prior to the time the Jesuits decided to lend grandeur and power to their property during the first quarter of the eighteenth century. We have argued that at the end of the seventeenth century, the chapel, the cemetery, and likely its associated store and smithy were positioned on the hill above the Jesuits' initial seventeenth-century residence. Our hypothesis would explain why the chapel and its forecourt are on lower ground relative to the rest of the

67 Sue Peabody, "A Dangerous Zeal": Catholic Missions to Slaves in the French Antilles, 1635–1800," *French Historical Studies* 25, no. 1 (2002): 53–90.

residential area and wedged between a large industrial building (see footnote 8) and the raised courtyard behind the house. Subsequently, with the growth of the Jesuits' assets between 1700 and 1730, the house, kitchen/ hospital, garden, terraces, and storehouse would have been integrated into a coherent architectural complex designed to symbolize power and prestige.

Our interpretation of the Jesuit worldview is based on the principles of organizational theories, which identify four phases in the life of an organization.⁶⁸ The first phase concerns the foundation, that is to say the intention and the conception of the project, in this case the founding thought of Jesuit missions among Native people. The second phase is the realization of the intention, in this case the acquisition of plantations as sources of funding the development of missions. The third phase is akin to bureaucratization, in this case the negotiations with the authorities to be allowed to own more land and enslaved laborers than was usually permitted. The fourth phase has to do with the expression of success. At Loyola, the Jesuits incarnated their success in an architectural development comparable to the way power was expressed in Europe at that time.

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68 Jacques Mathieu, "Jean Talon bâtisseur de pays," in *L'Intendance aux sources de l'administration locale*, ed. Les Amis de Jean Talon (Langres: Éditions Dominique Guéniot, 2010), 103–13.