Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Architecture and Urbanism in the French Atlantic Empire: State, Church, and Society, 1604–1830*. Kingston, Ont: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018. x + 619 pp. (Cloth US\$ 75.00)

Architecture and Urbanism in the French Atlantic Empire is an ambitious assessment of the architectural legacy of an empire “poorly organized, hopelessly unrealistic, plagued by mad utopian schemes, underfunded, and underpinned by a brutal and volatile institution of agricultural slave labour that proved to be one of the main sources of its undoing” (p. 4). Ranging from West Africa to French Canada and down through the Louisiana Territory and the Caribbean to French Guiana, the book's geographic scope is vast. Yet Gauvin Bailey constrains the scope in two important ways: by including only those places under direct French rule before 1830 and by privileging the view from the archive over that from the field. The temporal boundary excludes a great deal of French-built colonial architecture in the Atlantic world, including, for example, anything in Louisiana or French Canada after 1763. And the absence of fieldwork frees him from the complicated analysis of buildings in place. Even so, at nearly 500 pages and including 273 images mostly in color, the tome is rich in content and an invaluable contribution to the study of early French colonialism.

A specialist in Southern Baroque art at Queen's University, Bailey grounds the volume in an impressive collection of drawings of buildings, gardens, and cities carefully excavated from archives and repositories around France and in former colonies. Produced largely as finished drawings by architects, the plans and elevations far outnumber photographs of surviving buildings, which he reports are largely lost.

Between two introductory chapters and a brief epilogue, the book unfolds in three sections dedicated to builders, cities and gardens, and architecture, for a total of 17 chapters. The first section on builders covers the full spectrum with chapters on Amerindians, African slaves, and free people of color, followed by two chapters on civilian architects and builders and an extensive discussion of the Royal Engineer Architects. But in segregating these chapters, the structure deprives readers of opportunities to better understand how these various people's roles intersected in a single landscape. The fiction of the singular architect or maker also means that these chapters attend little to processes of production. The fact of slavery is clearly recognized, but the texture of its brutality in landscapes of building production is not. How buildings might have been conceived and drawn in France and then realized in the colonies is also a story largely untold.

The middle chapters on urban planning and garden design, the book's most important contributions, are chapters where scholars and other interested

readers will want to linger. Here the drawings play most effectively to Bailey's method. He offers a compelling story of how cities work to highlight centralized authority, especially through the situation of a Place Royale in design after design. Of particular interest is the lengthy discussion of the garden cities of the Guianas, especially of Longchamp (now Georgetown) which was intended to be an exemplar of "French scientific design combining social engineering with grandeur" (p. 231). The French held it for only five years (1779–84), so the plan was never enacted. Cayenne occupied a strategic location for trade to Suriname, the Antilles, and the Amazon, and as a result it was reimagined a number of times, always well fortified and often on a hexagonal plan.

The final chapters on architecture—two on secular architecture, two on churches, and a final one on vernacular architecture—have the most photographs of surviving buildings, but because Bailey did not conduct fieldwork, these chapters lack thick description and historically situated analysis. For example, he frames his discussion of the French gallery, in his commentary on what he believes is the most important structural innovation of the French Atlantic Empire, around the search for an originating precedent, a methodology long abandoned by scholars of the architecture of the early modern Atlantic. And because the book is not organized by place, readers less familiar with these geographies will find themselves lost in an array of place names, flipping between text, photographs which are often not on the same page as the text, and the maps at the front of the volume.

Despite these criticisms, Bailey's contributions remain significant. The book is a goldmine of newly published drawings, and the chapters on cities and gardens especially will frame the discussion of French colonialism for some time. One can only hope that it will inspire continued work on the rich and vastly understudied world of the built environment of the early modern Atlantic.

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