The Monuments of Empire
Global Material Culture, 'Colonial' Spaces and Emotional Styles in French Senegambia
(c. 1630 – c. 1730)

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Introduction

Cap Gaspar (present-day Dakar, Senegal), 1635. It must have been a curious scene when two men – French Capuchins wearing large robes of brown woolen cloth – crawled through the small door of a house into a maze of narrow corridors and alleys finally entering a larger room. A man, who made the sign of the cross, raised his eyes to the sky and showed them two paintings of the king of France and the king of Spain, greeted them affectionately. He explained that these portraits represented 'prototypes' of Christians, who already dwelled in paradise. The monks, impressed by the simplicity of his explanation, offered to bring him more devotional objects when they returned.[1]

But what astonished them even more was the way this man, whom they described as an 'alcade' or a 'governor' of the town of Cap Gaspar, a settlement of around a hundred houses with at least a thousand inhabitants,[2] lived in a place that they did not consider to be a prestigious house. 'The façade of the house of this governor', the two Capuchins wrote to their superior in France, 'was not enriched by columns, capitals, friezes, architraves, pediments or a gate that could let a carriage pass'. Rather, it seemed to them to be the opposite: a modest, narrow, and low-ceilinged building that made their entry so ignoble and difficult.

Alexis de Saint-Lô and Bernardin de Renouard were travelers in a land of many uncertainties that seemed to them complex, multitudinous, and to some degree 'exotic'. Saint-Lô published an account of their journey in the region around Cap Verd, where the modern city of Dakar, today the capital of Senegal, is situated. The inhabitants of the lands were of diverse origin. While the majority of the population belonged to the Wolof people, the diversity of ethnic, social and political formations was evident to the European visitors. But the alcade the monks met at Cap Gaspar answered to the Damel of Cayor (a 'king' of the region of Cap Verd). Wolof was likely the first language of the alcade, who probably spoke a creolized version of

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Portuguese (*crioulo*), which the fathers would have had to use in conversation with him.[3]

Guillaume de l'Isle's 1730 map of the region distinguishes 17 different 'kingdoms' (*royaumes*) between the Senegal and Gambia Rivers, finely encircled by colored borders. It shows also ten 'lands' (*pays*) that overlap with the kingdoms and designate those areas which seemed not to have been ruled by a king (fig. 1).[4] These 'chiefs', as they are usually called in modern literature, resided in houses that were located at places mostly in the hinterland of the Senegambian region. Europeans had to travel long distances to reach these regions, usually accompanied by a local guide, like the two Capuchins, on foot or via the two large rivers, upstream by large canoes (*pirogues*), also provided exclusively by indigenous or 'Luso-African' boaters (*laptots* or *gourmets*).[5]

Several travel accounts provide us with descriptions of these 'capitals', and pay particular attention to details representing rank that are given to deduce any meaning for the political and social structure of the indigenous societies. The above cited description by the Capuchins provides us with two sides of this curiosity: First, the monks give an account of the architecture, how it looked to them, but also how the spatial character of its construction irritated them, and how it influenced their emotional state just before meeting the governor of the village. Secondly, they also mention what they actually expected to see, which was, in fact, a European style mansion, picking up the typical architectural features of a building representing its political and social importance.[6]

This account conveys an idea of what this article is about. Focusing on

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[3] PETER MARK, *'Portuguese' style and Luso-African identity. Precolonial Senegambia, sixteenth-nineteenth centuries* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 15; GEORGE E. BROOKS, *Eurafricans in Western Africa. Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003), 17-19; WILLIAM. A.A. WILSON, *The Crioulo of Guinée* (Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand Press, 1962); LUIGI. SCANTAMBURLO, *Gramática e dictionário da língua criol da Guiné-Bissau* (Bologna: Editrice Missionaria Italiana, 1981).

[4] GUILLAUME DE L'ISLE, *Carte de l'Afrique françoise ou du Senegal* (Amsterdam: Jean Covens/Corneille Mortier, 1730).

[5] On the role of the 'gourmets' or 'grumetes' (in Portuguese) as hired African mariners, navigators or compradors cf. BROOKS, *Eurafricans in Western Africa*, xxii, 17, 52-54; MARK, *'Portuguese' style and Luso-African identity*, 57, 88, 104-105; JOSÉ DA SILVA HORTA, "Evidence for a Luso-African Identity in «Portuguese» Accounts on «Guinea of Cape Verde» (Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries", *History in Africa* 27 (2000): 99-130; J.-L. AMSELLE, *Mestizo Logistics. Anthropology of Identity in Africa and Elsewhere* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), xi-xiii; and JEAN BOULÈGUE, *Les Luso-Africains, XVIe-XIVe siècle* (Paris: Université de Paris I, Centre de Recherches Africaines, 1989), 15.

[6] Peter Mark has described the architecture of the Senegambia region as the result of a Luso-African identity that emerged from a merging of Portuguese, West African and Cape Verdean Island cultures since the 16th century. The local architecture was later on termed by French authors, especially by the director of the French Senegal Company Michel Jajolet de la Courbe in 1685, as 'Portuguese'-style architecture (*maisons à la portugaise*) – an example of French epistemic construction of identity in West Africa. Cf. MARK, *'Portuguese' style and Luso-African identity*, 43-58; on La Courbe cf. BENJAMIN STEINER, *Colberts Afrika. Eine Wissens- und Begegnungsgeschichte in Afrika im Zeitalter Ludwigs XIV* (München: Oldenbourg/de Gruyter, 2014, 374-379, 395-403, 412; also further below in this article.

material culture in general, and on large buildings in particular, it starts with the premise that these 'big things' had a specific epistemic function in the contact zones of 'colonial' spaces.[7] Approaching these objects of inquiry, special attention is given to the 'emotional' or 'affective' connotations carried by the style of architecture and large buildings.[8] The French Atlantic[9] constitutes the larger context of this inquiry about the connected history in Senegambia – several other places are interlinked with what happened here, for example, in Canada, the Caribbean, France, but also the Indian Ocean, India, Madagascar and the Masacarenes –, but this article gives only an account of the Senegambia region.[10]

Material Cultures, Production of Spaces, and Emotional Styles

Historians of the early modern French colonial empire have paid little attention to architectural styles, practices of the material construction of large things, and the ways in which these things affected those who built them, saw them, and lived with them. But these topics deserve attention because they help to answer questions about practices of global exchange, not only of materials, but also of its epistemic dimension in the form of ideas and knowledge, and, finally, its emotional

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[7] The term 'colonial' is used in this article not in order to signify a power relation that unfolds immediately in the sense that the Europeans in Africa exercise some sort of political superiority over the indigenous rulers. In fact, quite the opposite is the case in the described situation above. Nonetheless, there is a 'colonial' situation at play that is characterized by a certain *epistemic* dominance that Europeans began to exercise in form of creating authoritative knowledge and information about Africa. I elaborated this aspect of an epistemic regime by the French administration in Africa in my book: STEINER, *Colberts Afrika*, here 27-37; cf. also BENJAMIN STEINER, "Normative Ordnungen im Konflikt? Die Genese von Staatlichkeit und Administration in Frankreich und Begegnung in Afrika während der Frühen Neuzeit", in *Die Vielfalt normativer Ordnungen. Konflikte und Dynamik in historischer und ethnologischer Perspektive*, ed. by ANDREAS FAHRMEIR und ANNETTE IMHAUSEN-WARNER (Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus, 2013), 309-341.

[8] In recent literature on the historically grounded research on emotions one distinguishes between 'affections' and 'emotions'. While the former refers only to the cognitive process of a psychological-social complex of emotions, the latter includes the possibility of responses to 'affects', too. Cf. MONIQUE SCHEER, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and is that what makes them have a history)? A Bourdieuian Approach to Understanding Emotion", *History and Theory* 51 (2012): 193-220, here 198, note 26; RUTH LEYS, "The Turn to Affect: A Critique", *Critical Inquiry* 37 (2011): 437-472.

[9] The spatial concept of the French Atlantic is current among historians since the early 2000s, beginning with KENNETH BANKS, *Chasing Empire across the Sea. Communication and the State in the French Atlantic, 1713-1763* (Montreal/London/Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003); JAMES E. MCCLELLAN and FRANÇOIS REGOURD, *The Colonial Machine. French Science and Overseas Expansion in the Old Regime* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010); LOÏC CHARLES and PAUL CHENEY, "The Colonial Machine Dismantled: Knowledge and Empire in the French Atlantic", *Past & Present* 219 (2013): 127-163.

[10] To show the interconnections in the larger French Atlantic and Indian Ocean will be the task of a larger research project entitled 'Engineering Empire. Large Projects, Global Material Cultures and Local Identities in the French Colonial Realm, ca. 1600 – ca. 1800' currently under way at the Kulturwissenschaftliche Kolleg in Konstanz . For more information on this region and the activities of the French in the 17th and 18th centuries cf. PROSPER CULTRU, *Histoire du Sénégal du XVᵉ siècle à 1870* (Paris: Emile Larose, 1910); ANDRÉ DELCOURT, *La France et les établissements français au Sénégal, 1713-1769*, Mémoires de l'Institut français d'Afrique noire, 17 (Dakar: IFAN, 1952). More recently: STEINER

connotations that contributed to the production of colonial and imperial spaces. This inquiry strives to apply several theoretical notions of material culture, the social production of spaces and the historical studies of emotions to the entangled history of the French presence in Senegambia.

1) Material cultures include all those things that have been crafted, made, and engineered by human beings, mostly involving expertise, experience or abstract knowledge about techniques, consistence and the physical nature of objects. Historians have developed a multifaceted interest in material cultures since they gave insight into the role of actors, practices and the itineraries of knowledge, formerly underrated in the history of science and technology.[11] Also, material cultures could serve as a means for constructing so called 'connected histories' of early modern globalization.[12] They provide alternative source material in the sense of ethnographers who have shown that objects speak, too, and could give a voice to actors who have not produced written sources.[13] Finally, the study of material cultures unveils the constructive power of objects affecting the formation of territory and, in general, spaces.

2) The theory of social construction of spaces focuses on practices that contribute to spatial regimes of power and interaction.[14] Of course, the material construction of buildings constitutes a very important practice that must be described differently from those practices of representation such as the production

2014 and CHRISTINA BRAUNER: *Kompanien, Könige und caboceers: Interkulturelle Diplomatie an Gold- und Sklavenküste im 17 und 18* (Jahrhundert, Münster: Böhlau, 2015).

[11] PAMELA H. SMITH, "The History of Science as a Cultural History of the Material World", in *Cultural Histories of the Material World*, ed. by PETER MILLER (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 210-225; *Ways of Making and Knowing: The Material Culture of Empirical Knowledge*, ed. by PAMELA H. SMITH, AMY MEYERS and HAROLD J. COOK (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013); KIM SIEBENHÜNER, "Things that matter. Zur Geschichte der materiellen Kultur in der Frühneuzeitforschung", *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 42, 3 (2915): 373-409; *Materielle Kulturforschung – eine Zwischenbilanz*, ed. by ANNETTE CREMER and MARTIN MULSOW (Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau, 2016), in print.

[12] For the concept of 'connected histories' cf. SANJAY SUBRAHMANYAM, *Explorations in Connected History, vol. I: From the Tagus to the Ganges*; *vol: II: Mughals and Franks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); SERGE GRUZINSKI, *L'Aigle et le Dragon. Démesure européenne et mondialisation au XVIᵉ siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2012); the material dimension of early modern globalization is explored by TIMOTHY BROOK, *Vermeer's Hat. The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World* (London: Profile, 2009); JONATHAN SPENCE, *Return to Dragon Mountain: Memories of a Late Ming Man* (New York: Penguin, 2008); NEIL MACGREGOR, *A History of the World in 100 Objects* (London: Penguin, 2010).

[13] DANIEL MILLER, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987); HANS-PETER HAHN, *Materielle Kultur. Eine Einführung* (Berlin: Reimer, 2005); CHRISTOPHER TILLEY, *Handbook of Material Culture* (London: SAGE, 2006); KAREN HARVEY, *History and Material Culture. A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources* (London: Routledge, 2009).

[14] The seminal publication is HENRI LEFEBVRE, *La production de l'espace* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974); engl.: *The Production of Space*, trans. by DONALD NICHOLSON-SMITH (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 1991); in the wake of the so-called spatial turn: SUSANNE RAU, *Räume. Konzepte, Wahrnehmungen, Nutzungen* (Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus, 2013); ANGELO TORRE, *Luoghi. La produzione di località in età moderna e contemporanea* (Roma: Donzelli Editore, 2011); *Spatial Turn. Das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften*, ed. by JÖRG DÖRING and TRISTAN THIELMANN (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2008).

of spaces through discourses[15], texts[16], images[17], art[18], maps[19] and symbols[20]. Spaces could be engineered, too, in the sense of imprinting a political order onto the earth, as Chandra Mukerji showed in the case of the construction of the gardens of Versailles, and thus 'making it seem almost an extension of the natural order'. Some large material objects testify how political power was 'embedded in reconstituted social relations to «nature»' and constituted new spaces.[21]

3) The historical study of emotions has recently supported the claim that certain emotional practices contributed to the production of spaces. Within this praxeological framework, where concepts from practice theory, particularly those of Pierre Bourdieu, are applied in studies of emotions,[22] one is able to distinguish several spatial settings that serve as 'emotional refuges'[23], 'affective spaces',[24] 'spatially defined emotional styles'[25] or for 'emotional communities'[26] that could form within families, neighborhoods, academic institutions, monasteries, factories or princely courts, and, one might add, ships, fortresses, ports, and market places. Describing certain emotional styles within the colonial setting of materially constructed spaces allows scholars to address implicit notions of agency that help to overcome the situation of having to focus exclusively on those actors who were able to write.

Having established these methodological premises I would like to address the

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[15] EDWARD W. SOJA, *Postmodern Geographies. The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989).

[16] JÜRGEN JOACHIMSTHALER, "Kultur-Innenraum und Kultur-Innenzeit. Eine kurze Reise durch Regionen, Narrative, Behälter-Räume, Semiosphären und andere Konzepte", in *Raum – Region – Kultur. Literaturgeschichtsschreibung im Kontext aktueller Diskurse*, ed. by MARJAN CESCUTTI, JOHANN HOLZNER and ROGER VORDEREGGER (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner, 2013), 107-133.

[17] JACQUES RANCIÈRE, *Le destin des images* (Paris: La Fabrique, 2003); JACQUES RANCIÈRE, *Le partage du sensible* (Paris: La Fabrique, 2000).

[18] ANNE VOLVEY, "Entre l'art et la géographie, une question (d')esthétique [Between art and geography, an issue of aesthetics]", *Belgeo. Revue Belge de Géographie* 3 (2014), URL: https://belgeo.revues.org/13258.

[19] JOSEF W. KONVITZ, *Cartography in France, 1660-1848. Science, Engineering and Statecraft* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); ANNE GODLEWSKA, *Geography Unbound. French Geographic Science from Cassini to Humboldt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

[20] DENIS E. COSGROVE, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (London: Croom Helm, 1984).

[21] CHANDRA MUKERJI, *Territorial Ambitions and the Gardens of Versailles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1; for theoretical background of this social constructivism of material culture cf. EWALD WALSILJEWITSCH ILJENKOW, *Dialektik des Ideellen. Ausgewählte Aufsätze, zusammengestellt, übersetzt und eingeleitet von Gudrun Richter* (Hamburg: Lit, 1994); see also DAVID BAKHURST, *Consciousness and Revolution in Soviet Philosophy. From the Bolsheviks to Evald Ilyenkov* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[22] SCHEER, *Are Emotions a Kind of Practice*, 199-204.

[23] WILLIAM REDDY, The *Navigation of Feeling. A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 129.

[24] ANDREAS RECKWITZ, "Affective Spaces: A Praxeological Outlook", *Rethinking History. The Journal of Theory and Practice* 16, 2 (2012), 241-258.

[25] BENNO GAMMERL, "Emotional Styles – Concepts and Challenges", *Rethinking History. The Journal of Theory and Practice* 16, 2 (2012): 161-175.

[26] BARBARA ROSENWEIN, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); BARBARA ROSENWEIN, "Worrying about Emotions in History", *American Historical Review* 107 (2002): 821-845.

following questions: How does the global exchange of materiality and its emotional connotations contribute to the production of colonial and imperial spaces? Do indigenous appropriations of materiality play a part in forming specific local identities in these spaces? To what extent do large buildings constitute the spatial constellations of certain emotional styles? Is it possible to uphold the dichotomy of colonizers and colonized in spaces where emotional practices transform the intended purpose of colonial building projects? And is it possible to imagine something like imperial emotional communities?

Some hypotheses should be brought to the fore of this inquiry. In discussing material constructs and their contribution to the production of imperial spaces the term 'empire' should not only be understood as the product of an ideological strategy or tradition.[27] Recent publications have emphasized the importance of the history of empires for today's globalized world. These studies have asked whether we can learn through the study of empires if there are any alternatives to the nation-state for future political order without the inherent suppression and violence against people adverse to an idea of uniformity and hierarchy.[28] I propose to address this issue by stressing the question of how early modern empires were able to form a unified entity in order to compensate an immense political, social and cultural diversity and plurality. In the case of other early modern empires scholars have relied so far on models of 'layered sovereignty' or 'composite monarchies' to explain the 'elusive' nature of empires whose central governments had difficulties upholding a single, unified sovereignty over its territories.[29] But these models measure the administrative success of empire building against the modern standard of the

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[27] For a detailed account of theories and ideologies of empire cf. DAVID ARMITAGE, *Theories of Empire, 1450-1800* (Brookfield, VT 1998); ANTHONY PAGDEN, *Lords of all the World. Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500-c.1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

[28] JANE BURBANK and FREDERICK COOPER, *Empires in World History: Power and Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); for a critical perspective on the trend at the turn of the millennium cf. FREDERICK COOPER, "Empire Multiplied. A Review Essay", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46, 2 (2004): 247-272. I would like to point out that the concept developed by ANTONIO NEGRI and MICHAEL HARDT, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), is of particular interest for a material approach towards the history of early modern empire since their model of a postmodern empire neither postulates an administrative center nor boundaries nor certain peripheries without access to imperial power structures, but rather constitutes an entity characterized by a 'decentered and deterritorializing apparatus of rule' notion that pervades the entire global realm, only opposed by a 'multitude' capable of establishing a 'counter-empire' (xi-xvii). For a critical evaluation cf. HEINZ-DIETER KITTSTEINER: "Empire. Zu den revolutionären Phantasien von Antonio Negri und Michael Hardt", in *Imperialismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. by Richard Faber (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. 2005), 125-150.

[29] For the concept of 'layered sovereignty' cf. LAUREN BENTON, *A Search of Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400–1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); LAUREN BENTON and RICHARD J. ROSS, *Legal Pluralism and Empires, 1500-1850* (New York/London: New York University Press 2013); for the concept of 'composite monarchies' cf. JOHN H. ELLIOTT, "A Europe of Composite Monarchies", *Past and Present* 137, 1 (1992), 48-71; pointing out aspects of weak governance, imperial overstretch and long-distance rule in the early modern French empire: ERIC HINDERAKER, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); BANKS, *Chasing Empire across the Sea.*

national empires in the 19th and 20th centuries and tend to overlook the distinctness of early modern empires. These imperial systems could, however, accommodate with local conditions very well by integrating themselves into autonomous networks connecting different localities in the realm or developing techniques of composing different political, military, economic, religious and social structures under one administrative center.

Beyond that, empires were more than just administrative or juridical institutions, but were actually constructed – engineered, as I would like to say – in the sense that they constituted a material presence that could be seen, sensed and felt in every part of the so-called realm. What this material reality of empires looked like, how it transformed societies and 'landscapes of power', and how it was put into place and by whom has never really received in-depth investigation by scholars.[30] This contribution will examine this research gap, focusing on the material culture of empires and addressing issues of the technological, logistical, organizational and esthetical dimensions of empire building.[31]

Spaces are socially produced by practices involving different actors, material things, and emotions. And buildings resonate with emotional styles that can be appropriated by different groups in order to form identities. Thus, the monuments of empire show more than just a dominant style, but also create space for a multitude of subordinate styles that can be seen as contributing to the formation of local identities within a globally connected environment.

Building and Representing Colonial Spaces

Building large things in France under the rule of Louis XIV can be understood as a kind of state building in the literal sense. The project of building the gardens of Versailles was intended to engineer a space that represented the territory of France as the 'squared meadow', the 'pré carré', as Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban, the royal commissionaire of fortifications, termed it in a famous address to the king.[32] Building Versailles required the involvement of the army, which was the only institution that could provide experts in the construction of large earthworks and a workforce of disciplined men.[33]

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[30] In the past decade the archaeology of West Africa produced interesting results from survey of transformations in political and cultural landscapes and remains buildings: *Power and Landscape in Atlantic West Africa. Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. by J. CAMERON MONROE and AKINWUMI OGUNDIRAN (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), here 13-20.

[31] The concept that resembles this approach most closely, though not exclusively, is the Actor-Network-Theory as proposed by BRUNO LATOUR, *Reassembling the Social* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[32] DAVID BITTERLING, *L'invention du pré carré. Construction de l'espace français sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris: A. Michel, 2009).

[33] ANNE BLANCHARD, *Les ingénieurs du 'roy' de Louis XIV à Louis XVI. Étude du corps des fortifications* (Montpellier: Université Paul-Valéry, 1979); ANNE BLANCHARD, *Vauban* (Paris: Fayard, 1996); JEAN

The French building effort in Versailles was repeated successfully over long distances as well. Large-building projects like the Canal du Midi in Southern France could be accomplished only because of successful cooperation between the central administration and able men-on-the-spot, like Pierre-Paul Riquet, who presented his plan to Colbert in 1662. Through his expertise and his patronage of a large local network he had access to people, material resources and the necessary technical knowledge in order to build the canal within the projected costs and time frame.[34]

The colonial administration could learn from these successful undertakings. Knowledge and communication seemed to be crucial for the building of large things in the colonial realm. We can capture an impression of the logistics involved in colonial building projects when we look at a document in the Archives national d'outre-mer in Aix-en-Provence (CAOM) that lists the state of housing in Saint-Louis at the estuary of the Senegal River (fig. 2). The list mentions several buildings, a chapel, a garden, walls, all built with bricks and stones, and even describes the façade of a larger house with a kitchen: 'This is a simple kitchen and a granary of a 20 feet squared brick wall and covered with tiles and planks of fir tree. The wall that reaches from the kitchen to the fore extends over some 15 feet lengthwise and is 5 feet high made of brick and serves as a pen for sheep, goatlings and pigs.'[35]

The document was produced in 1664 on the occasion of the sale of the Compagnie du Senegal et du Cap Vert in Rouen to the newly founded Compagnie des Indes Occidentales.[36] The merchants of Rouen describe the state of the establishment soberly and in rather broad terms. But notes in the margins of this text – written for the directors of the new company – comment on the inventory of buildings and things much less favorable. The main building, for example, was supposed to have a large cellar that was as long as the building above it. The commentators, however, informed by 'commis et maistres de Barques',[37] which must

SEVERIN, *Vauban, ingénieur du roi* (Paris: Laffont, 1973); HÉLÈNE VÉRIN, *La gloire des ingénieurs: L'intelligence technique du XVIᵉ au XVIIIᵉ siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1993).

[34] CHANDRA MUKERJI, *Impossible Engineering: Technology and Territoriality on the Canal du Midi* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); CHANDRA MUKERJI, "Cartography, Entrepreneurialism, and Power in the Reign of Louis XIV: The Case of the Canal du Midi", in *Merchants and Marvels: Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by PAMELA H. SMITH and PAULA FINDLEN (New York: Routledge, 2002), 248-276.

[35] CAOM C⁶ 1: Etat de l'habitation du Sénégal, 1664, fol. 1r: 'C'est un simple cuisine et un grenier de 20. pieds en carré muraillee de brique et couverte de thuille planches de sapin. La muraille qui prend de la cuisine a la forge a environ 15 pieds de long et 5. pieds de hault faiste de brique, ce la sert de parc pour les moutons, cabris et cochons'.

[36] For the history of the French trading companies in Africa cf. ABDOULAYE LY, *La Compagnie du Sénégal (Enquetes et études)* (Paris: Présence africaine, 1958); in the Rouen Company cf. BENJAMIN STEINER, "La première Compagnie du Sénégal de Rouen de 1633. L'institutionnalisation du commerce africain privilégié sous l'administration de Richelieu", in *Le monde des companies: Structures et fonctionnement des grandes compagnies de commerce du premier XVIIᵉ siècle*, ed. by ERIC ROULET (Lille: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, forthcoming 2017).

[37] They seemed to have come back to France by ship to give this account in presence of a scribe of the directory of the Company: 'Les Directeurs de la Compagnie des Indes occidentales s'estant informé de quelques Commis et maistres de barques qui sont revenus du Senegal par le dernier

be the African employees of the company that served mostly as skippers for the boats that navigated the Senegal River, disagreed with this rather exaggerated account: 'The building is indeed 100 feet long and 20 feet in width, but that what they call a cellar is nothing more than a hole which one enters on ground level…'.[38]

Materiality seemed to matter in the eyes of the controllers as well. While the tiles for the roof of the main building were brought from France, the building itself was not worthy of that name ('ces bastiments ne respondent pas au nom qu'on les donne'). Everything was 'mediocre'; some walls were built from bricks, but the rest only from 'ugly wood taken from that land'.[39]

The appearance of these buildings must have been as unimpressive as the dwelling of the alcade met by the Capuchins at Cap Verd. But a few years later we might conjecture that the French establishment at Saint-Louis not only grew in extent, but some aesthetic features had also been added. In 1694 the director of the Senegal Company in the Senegal, Louis Moreau de Chambonneau, sketched some plans and prospects of the fortress (fig. 3-5). Two vistas represent a castle that still seems to consist only of several buildings, two houses, one chapel in the middle, and four towers, all encircled by a rampart of stones with several canons. While the materiality is not shown in the drawing, there are some interesting ornamental details (fig. 4): one sees fleurs-de-lys on all towers, except the northern tower that has a large flag on top; two crosses on each pediment of the chapel; a figurine on top of the main gate, next to a royal coat of arms, the signet of the Compagnie des Indes occidentales (two Africans with clubs holding a blazon with several fleurs-de-lys holding a crown), and another unidentified blazon, perhaps that of the current director, who happened to be of nobility.

Affective Buildings and Franco-African Identities

These accounts, visual and written, but which also include references to oral accounts, can be taken as an expression of a culture that was aware of the outer appearance of buildings, their construction materials, and how they must have affected the people that lived in them, visited them and felt their spatial presence. It seems more appropriate to speak of 'affective buildings' rather than 'emotional buildings' since it is the cognitive aspect of style that is most prominent in the sources. Departing from Benno Gammerl's notion of emotional style, which implies certain aspects of the emotional practice that Monique Scheer tries to capture with

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vaisseau, du contenu au Memoire donné par les Messieurs de la Compagnie du Cap Vert et Senegal, ont apris les choses qui en suivent qui les donnent pour response audit mémoire'.

[38] *Ibid.*: 'Que ledit bastiment et bien de 100 pieds de long et 20 pieds de large, mais que ce qu'ils appellent cave n'est qu'un trou dans lequel on entre par le planché…'.

[39] *Ibid.*: 'tout y estant les mediocre n'y ayant que les murailles qui sont de brique, le reste n'estant que de meschant bois pris au pays'.

the Bourdieuian conception of 'habitus',[40] I would like to argue that buildings not only represented certain architectural styles,[41] in the sense of layout, structure and ornament, but also of emotional styles in the sense of how people emotionally appropriated these spaces very differently in order to articulate or fashion their particular group or individual identity.

The fortress of Saint-Louis was erected with the intention both to secure the habitations of the French merchants and to represent the power of the king of France. Beginning with the foundation of a monopolized company for the African trade in 1664 the business of trade with the people of the Senegambia region was not supposed to be only in the hands of some merchants from Rouen, but to become a part of a much larger mercantile project. Louis XIV and his controller general of finances, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, especially wanted African trade to succeed in order to develop an Atlantic economic system that could provide France with a better access to the profits of trade in sugar and other commodities. Therefore, the fortress in Saint-Louis carried the symbols of French royal rule.

But the power of the king was obviously limited in Saint-Louis. The controllers of the Memoire in 1664 pointed out how desolate the state of affairs of French trade looked in Africa. They had, of course, an interest in declaring the property worth of the Rouen Company in particularly unfavorable terms. The newly founded company wanted to buy the whole lot for the least possible amount of money.[42] But the way they did it is certainly very telling in regards to the importance of material appearance. They actually implied that materials not sourced from France were less valuable: 'Concerning the buildings nearly nothing costs much, only some tiles, old wooden boards and other things of no value were sent here from France, the bricks were made on the local ground and thus the buildings with furniture and commodities, slaves and animals, which were mentioned above are not worth more than 20,000 Livres tournois.'[43] The Rouen merchants originally intended to charge 50,000 Livres for this position.

The worth of the whole settlement around the castle was qualified in the same manner. Indeed, the French included the houses of the African village in their inventory. The houses, built from wooden poles, surrounded and covered with reed, were not to be dispensed.[44] This impression of difference between the local buildings and those of the French fortress is confirmed by another visual depiction

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[40] GAMMERL *Emotional Styles – Concepts and Challenges*, 163; SCHEER, *Are Emotions a Kind of Practice*, 211f.

[41] For an elaboration on this architectural aspect in relation to the Portuguese Atlantic cf. MARK, *'Portuguese' style and Luso-African identity* , 9.

[42] They argued, in fact, to pay them only 96,000 Livres tournois, more than 20.000 less the mémoire originally calculated (CAOM C⁶ 1: *L'état de l'habitation*, 3v).

[43] *Ibid.*, 3v.

[44] *Ibid.*, 2r: 'Ce sont Cases de Negres sousenües de petits perches de la hauteur de 5 à 6 pieds, entouré de roseaux et couvertes de mesme. Ce qui de null despense'.

from 1705 (fig. 6):[45] here we can see the round houses of the local population, both free and slaves, the squared houses of the company's employees and the workshops of the carpenters near the fort. The layout suggests a rather loose and unplanned order of the settlement, locals and Europeans settling next to each other as they saw fit. It was only later in 1789 that a city plan conveys the grid pattern of planned settlement that divided the African residential area into a Northern (Christian) and a Southern (Muslim) quarter (fig. 7).[46]

But the intended representational and ordering function of the fortress did not always work as desired. From a report of the director Michel Jajolet de La Courbe it becomes clear that the confined space of the fortress was not so closed after all. In 1685 La Courbe arrived in Saint-Louis in order to relieve Louis Moreau de Chambonneau as director of the concession. His unfavorable report to the Company directors in Paris criticizes his predecessor in a way that sheds light both on the spatial setting of the habitation and the affective habitus of the French and African inhabitants.

When La Courbe set foot on the île de Saint-Louis in the Senegal River he encountered a settler lifestyle, which he found 'ridiculous'. La Courbe first believed they were playing tennis, since they wore short trousers and shirts.[47] And after he had dinner with Chambonneau, he was guided through the settlement, of which he had a very low opinion: Everything seemed irregular, the officers performed their duties without coordinating with the others, and the fortress itself seemed to have been open to all sides, not protected against the outsiders. In fact, the living space within the fortress was not large enough to accommodate all the French settlers. They were forced, therefore, to live outside the walls in houses built of reed. The Africans could, he added, if they were malicious, attack the white inhabitants since these were scattered everywhere and had no guards posted.[48] Made aware of this Chambonneau replied that this was done on purpose. And La Courbe was struck even more when he found out that the settlers lived together with African women. He was informed that they were there merely to help with cooking, but he observed a hut that was occupied by prostitutes ('femmes de mauvaise vie'). All attempts to send them away and to restore order by separating the Africans from the French settlers failed because of the opposition from the settlers.[49]

The fortress was after all not exclusively a place for the French company. In

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[45] FRANÇOIS FROGER, *Plan du fort Saint-Louis, 1705* (Bibliothèque National de France - BNF Paris -, Départment Cartes et Plans, GE DD-2987, 8127 B), Gallica: http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb405927269.
[46] Plan de l'île de Saint-Louis, Karte der Umgebung von Dominique Harcourt LAMIRAL (BNF Paris, Rés. DT 549.8 L23, Gallica: http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148 /cb384954428).
[47] BNF, Ms. fr. 24221, 97: MICHEL JAJOLET DE LA COURBE, *Premier voyage du Sr. de La Courbe fait à la coste d'Affrique en 1685*, ed. by PROSPER CULTRU (Paris: Champion/Larose, 1913), 24.
[48] *Ibid.*, 25.
[49] *Ibid.*, 26.

fact, it became something of a gathering place for all the people living in the vicinity of Saint-Louis. In the years that followed the population of the settlement grew thanks to the many locals that moved there for trading or employment by the Company. Thus, the settlement became more and more heterogeneous and included, alongside French administrators, a diverse workforce. There were surgeons, bricklayers, blacksmiths, navigators, and other experts, of which only a minority was of French descent. Most of the navigators, translators, or carpenters were locals, like Jean Maguine, for example, who had been a *laptot* or *gourmet*, i.e. a coxswain of the local pirogues on the Senegal River.[50] They were contractually employed by the Company and were in their service for many years. Some of them worked for the different French companies that owned the trading concession for Senegal for many decades. Semba Bambara, for instance, was engaged as a *maître de langue* for 80 years and received a salary comparable to that of an African Christian carpenter.[51]

During the 18th century the workforce became even more dominated by Africans. This involved an increase in indigenous slaves as well as free workers.[52] The Company's expenditures for personnel decreased, perhaps not only a result of more slaves in the settlement, but also because they outsourced many tasks to local contractors. These contractors had to trade for the company in the hinterland of the Senegal River. Moló Bambara, for instance, was supposed to establish trade with the people living near the region of Galam, where the French had erected the fortress of Saint-Joseph in 1699.[53]

How did the local population relate emotionally to the building activity of the French in Saint-Louis? If we assume that emotional styles are spatially defined and manifest themselves in practices the appropriation of the fortress that constituted the main building on the island was pursued by both the French and the indigenous society. While the French tried to represent a certain esthetical style that stood for the glory of their monarchy, the locals countered that, by no means necessarily with intent, by integrating into the settlement's life on an individual as well as a group level. Even if some depictions tried to portray the fortress as dominant or powerful, the reports of critical observers contradicted the assumption that it manifested a dominant style respected by the local environment. The sketches by Chambonneau, for example, clearly exaggerated the height of some of the towers, when one compares them with the more exact and moderate depiction by Froger. The towers are much less imposing from a perspective seen from the sea than Chambonneau's

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[50] CAOM Col C⁶ 6: Estat des appointemens qui sont deüs aux employez de la Compagnie des Indes à la Concession du Sénégal par les Comptes arrestez par M. Brüe Directeur et Commandant general le 30. Avril 1720. dont les montant à été porté à leur credit par Mr. de Saint Robert dans leurs comptes nouveaux. Cf. STEINER, *Colberts Afrika*, 386 f.

[51] CAOM, Col C⁶ 10: [JACQUES PELAYS:] Liste generalle de l'estat present de Galam 1er novembre 1732.

[52] CULTRU, *Histoire du Sénégal*, 198; DELCOURT, *La France*, 128.

[53] STEINER, *Colberts Afrika*, 388.

artificial somewhat isometric view on the castle that shows the buildings in full.

The reaction to this 'weakness' of French style in the eyes of French and locals was twofold. First the French administration tried to invest more resources in the planning and ordering of the surrounding indigenous houses, in order to emphasize the difference between African and French architecture with the means of spatial visualization and dichotomies of materiality: wood vs. stone, French vs. indigenous, round shape vs. squared shape, ornaments vs. plainness. But were these differences durable? Were there not too many exchanges between locals and French that transcended the intended dichotomies? Indeed, the practices of producing space by constructing large building complexes and the practices of living in these places support the impression that the emotional styles apparent in these practices are more of a hybrid nature. Local and French material, expertise and usage was shared and merged into each other, forming something that was neither merely an expression of French colonial dominance, nor a total appropriation by the subordinate indigenous society. Rather it seems that plurality was a major characteristic of this place. The imperial material culture of the French, therefore, provided in an unintentional manner the ground for a Franco-African emotional community that cut across and bridged – for a time – the distinctions of race, gender and religion.

Conclusion

Returning to the scene of the Capuchin monks crawling into the governor's house in Cap Gaspar, we can observe that architectural style triggered affective reactions that contributed to the formation of certain emotional styles. Seeing the dwelling of a major local leader, the French visitors were struck that the house did not show the representative symbols they expected to see. Columns, friezes, in fact, any ornamental device was missing and that made them feel irritated and curious about the kind of power the person inhabiting this place had.

The director Chambonneau, on the other hand, tried to portray the opposite by drawing a large castle instead of the mediocre buildings of the fortress of Saint-Louis Island. He added the ornamental topoi very prominently and perhaps exaggerated the height of the towers and its bastions. The practice in this spatial setting, however, looked different. Indigenous agency was much more present than was intended by the French. It must be assumed that the material used was probably predominantly of local origin. The work force, including carpenters, bricklayers, free and enslaved workers, in their majority was not French, but African. And the French and local inhabitants of the island had to share space in – and outside – the fortress in the village and the adjacent environment.

French dominance, therefore, cannot be confirmed in regards to the described practices. What about the influences of global exchange of materiality and its emotional connotations that could have contributed to the production of this

colonial and imperial space? It should not be ignored that without the import of French expertise and material the buildings would not have looked like a European architecture. On the other hand, local influence manifested itself in the buildings, too. The castle of Saint-Louis somehow looked similar to indigenous architecture, especially if one compares later depictions of it to indigenous buildings (fig. 8).[54] The towers were substituted by a less ornamental, more compact structure that resembled the mudbrick buildings of the cities in the interior of West Africa.

The building complex of Saint-Louis certainly constituted an emotional style that was connected to this imperial space. But to reduce this style to a dichotomy of colonizers and colonizers would be too simple. The emotional style was linked to the everyday practices of both locals and French. Their activities were interlinked in this space that was appropriated by both sides in a manner that it is difficult to say who could claim single ownership of it. Perhaps it would be going too far to speak of an imperial emotional community in the case of Saint-Louis Island. But certainly this colonial space made it possible to bridge racial and social inequalities; locals could be slaves *and* free people engaging in economic and social practices, and French, too, were indentured servants, paying their debts in an environment they tried to adapt to by bonding with the local population.

This happened in a place that seems to be an example of a certain imperial nature that contributed in a complex way to the formation of specific local identities. In focusing on this dimension of empire it becomes apparent that there is more to imperial dominance and expansion than the problem of center and periphery, imperial overstretch or government over large distances. 'Empire', therefore, has to be seen as a sum of its local specificities. It represented, in regards to material objects and human actors, not so much authority and unity, but rather plurality and multitude.

Would it be better then to avoid speaking of a 'colonial' or an 'imperial' setting that characterized the French presence in Africa? Other scholars of African history have emphasized the 'creolizing' setting within an African society.[55] John K. Thornton, in particular, has emphasized the power of Africans in the making of the Atlantic world. As early as 1992 he wrote that 'the African role in the development of the Atlantic would not simply be a secondary one, on either side of the Atlantic.

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[54] SYLVAIN MEINRAD XAVIER DE GOLBÉRY, *Fragments d'un voyage en Afrique, fait pendant les années 1785, 1786 et 1787, dans les Contrées occidentales de ce Continent*, 1 (Paris: Treutzel et Würtz, 1802), 152.

[55] For the case of Angola (Kongo) cf. LINDA M. HEYWOOD and JOHN K. THORNTON, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); for the Cape Verdean Society: TOBY GREEN, "The Emergence of a Mixed Society in Cape Verde in the Seventeenth Century", in *Brokers of Change. Atlantic Commerce and Cultures in Precolonial Western Africa* (Proceedings of the British Academy, 178), ed. by TOBY GREEN (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 217-236; TOBY GREEN, "Building Creole Identity in the African Atlantic: Boundaries of Race and Religion in 17th-Century Cabo Verde", *History in Africa* 36 (2009), 103-125; and TOBY GREEN, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300-1589* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

In Africa', he continued, 'it was they [the Africans, BS] who would determine their commercial role [...]. Even when they played no particular role, they often could capitalize on the incompleteness of European domination.'[56] Toby Green on the other hand remains skeptical towards 'creolization' since these metaphors often carry an 'unspoken positive value judgment'.[57] While Green is following Stuart Hall's remark about the idea of 'creolization' as being inseparable from inequality and hierarchization,[58] he points out that the power of Creoles remained 'extremely localized'.[59] According to Green, therefore, the concept of a creolized setting neither implies a world of multiracial harmony, nor does it imply a certain development towards instability in locales that are predominantly inhabited by mixed societies. Instead he underscores the flexibility of creole agents of brokerage that contributed to the shaping of the Atlantic world in the precolonial period.[60]

The problem with fixating too much on placing the practices of material culture and of emotional styles in a creolized setting is that it undervalues the inherent power relations that are at play in the formation of specific local identities in the Senegambia region during the French presence in the late 17th century. After all, the French intended to rule as an imperial power in the region. One can certainly argue that they were comparably unsuccessful in establishing dominance over the African peoples in the area. In the middle of the 18th century they had to abandon all settlements in West Africa that were taken over by the British after the Seven Year's War in 1763 (Treaty of Paris). But the French returned only twenty years later and reestablished their colonial aspirations in the Senegal, which eventually led to the creation of the larger West African Empire, l'Afrique occidentale française (A.O.F.) in the 19th century. Therefore, it makes sense to speak of a 'colonial' setting even for the period of the French presence in Africa in the 17th century since it was then when the epistemic and material foundations of the empire were laid.

Africans, Luso-Africans, and Franco-Africans, nonetheless, were as important as the French in these early episodes of empire building in the Senegambia region. In fact, the empire was created here on the local periphery, combining material resources from Europe and Africa, Atlantic logistics and navigation, construction and planning expertise from indigenous workers, French engineers and representatives of the metropolitan administration, company employees of European, African and Euro-African descent, as well as French indentured servants and African slaves.

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[56] JOHN K. THORNTON, *Africa and the Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 42. Cf. also more recently JOHN K. THORNTON, *A Cultural History of the Atlantic World, 1250-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[57] GREEN, *The Emergence of Mixed Society*, 229.

[58] STUART HALL, "Créolité and the Process of Creolization", in *The Creolization Reader. Studies in Mixed Identities and Cultures*, ed. by ROBIN COHEN and PAOLA TONINATO (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 26-38, here 29.

[59] GREEN, *The Emergence of Mixed Society*, 233.

[60] *Ibid.*, 236.

The case of the building projects in the Senegal region is all but one example of local empire building that can be seen in different facets all over the French colonial realm from India to Canada. Agents, practices, material culture, and emotional styles were certainly very different elsewhere and they can only be described within a multifaceted and heterogeneous unity. Eventually, the local peculiarities in this multitudinous empire could not be defended against the epistemic and material power of European imperialism in the 19th and 20th centuries. But the remaining traces of the early modern monuments of empire are a reminder of the history that is shared by Africans and Europeans alike.

Images

Fig. 1: Guillaume de l'Isle: Carte de l'Afrique françoise ou du Senegal, Amsterdam: Jean Covens / Corneille Mortier, [1730].
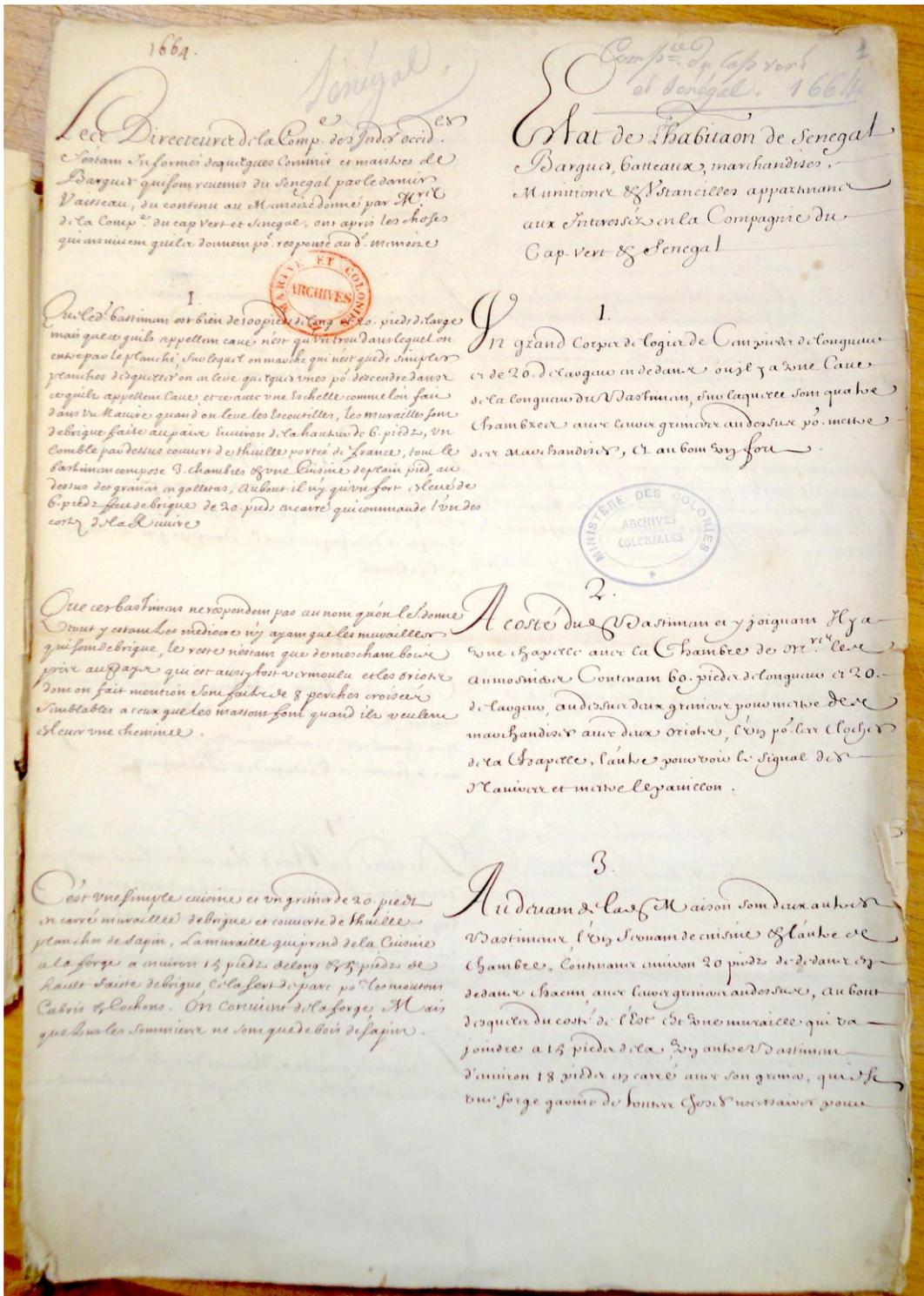
Fig. 2: Etat de l'habitation du Senegal (Archives nationales d'Outre mer, Aix-en-Provence, Colonies C⁶ 1, fol. 1r).

Fig. 3: Louis Moreau de Chambonneau: Vue du Fort Royal du Coste de Barbarie, 1694, Rear View (Archives nationales d'Outre mer, Aix-en-Provence, Dépot des fortifications des colonies, 19DFC 9C).
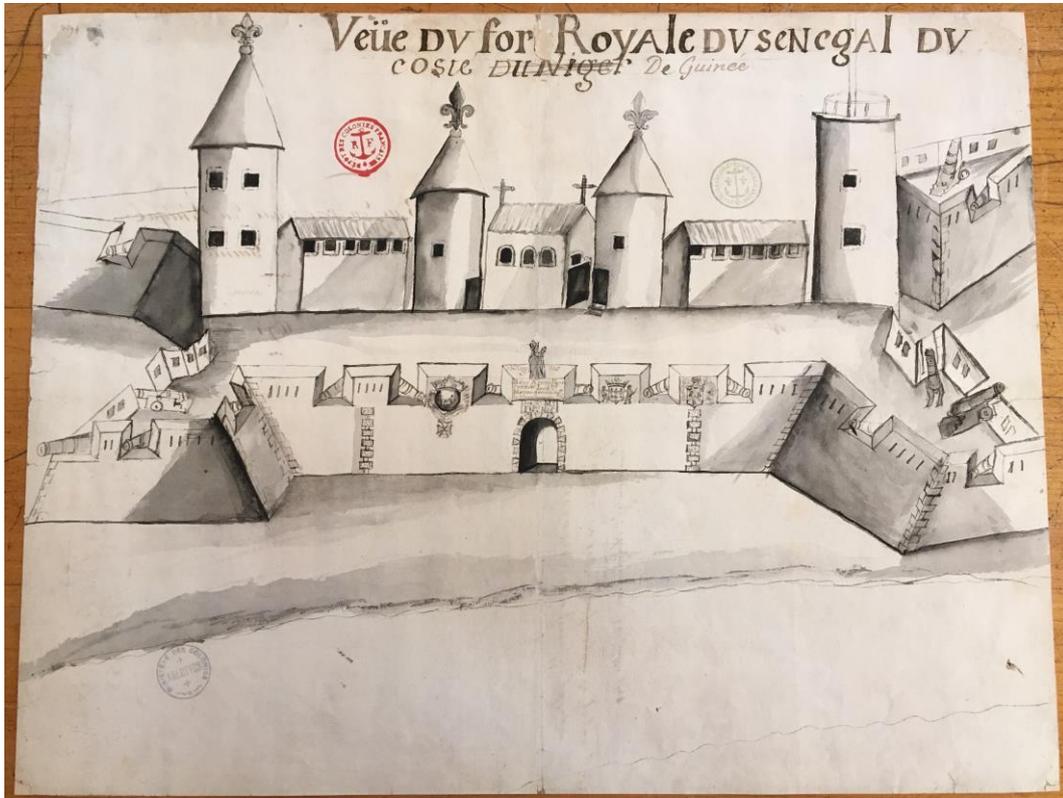
Fig. 4: Louis Moreau de Chambonneau: Vue du Fort Royal du Coste de Barbarie, 1694, Front View (Archives nationales d'Outre mer, Aix-en-Provence, Dépot des fortifications des colonies, 19DFC 9C).

Fig. 4a: Louis Moreau de Chambonneau: Vue du Fort Royal du Coste de Barbarie, 1694, Detail of the Front View (Archives nationales d'Outre mer, Aix-en-Provence, Dépot des fortifications des colonies, 19DFC 9C). The inscription above the porticus reads: „Hanc Arcem Facere Curavit Ludovicus Moreau dominus Chambonneau".
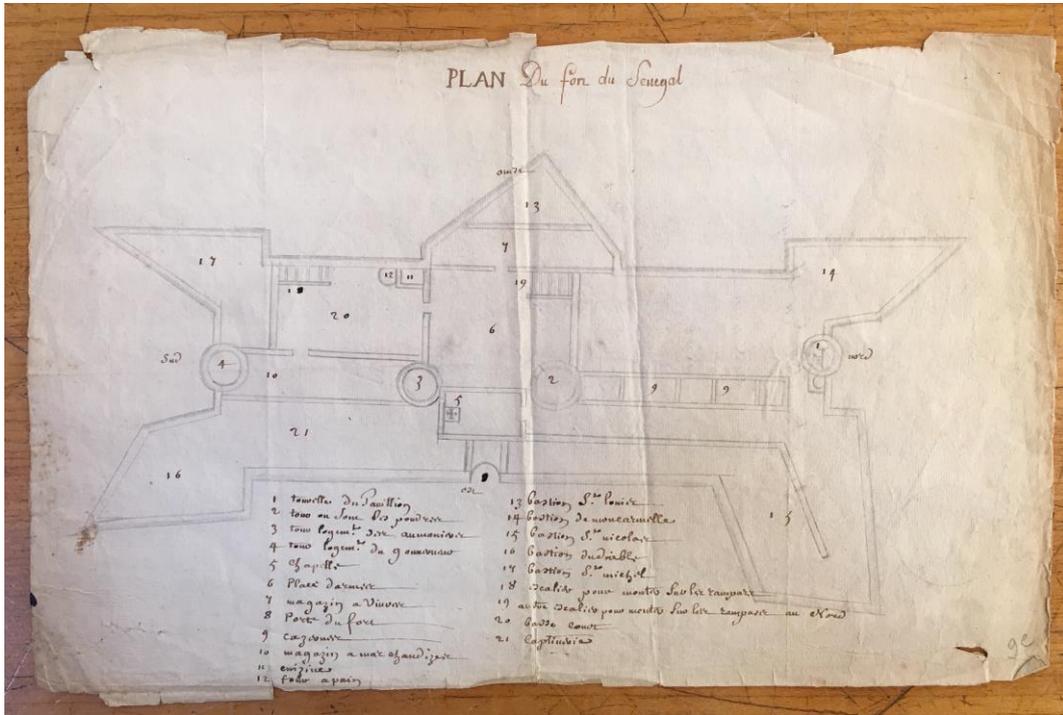
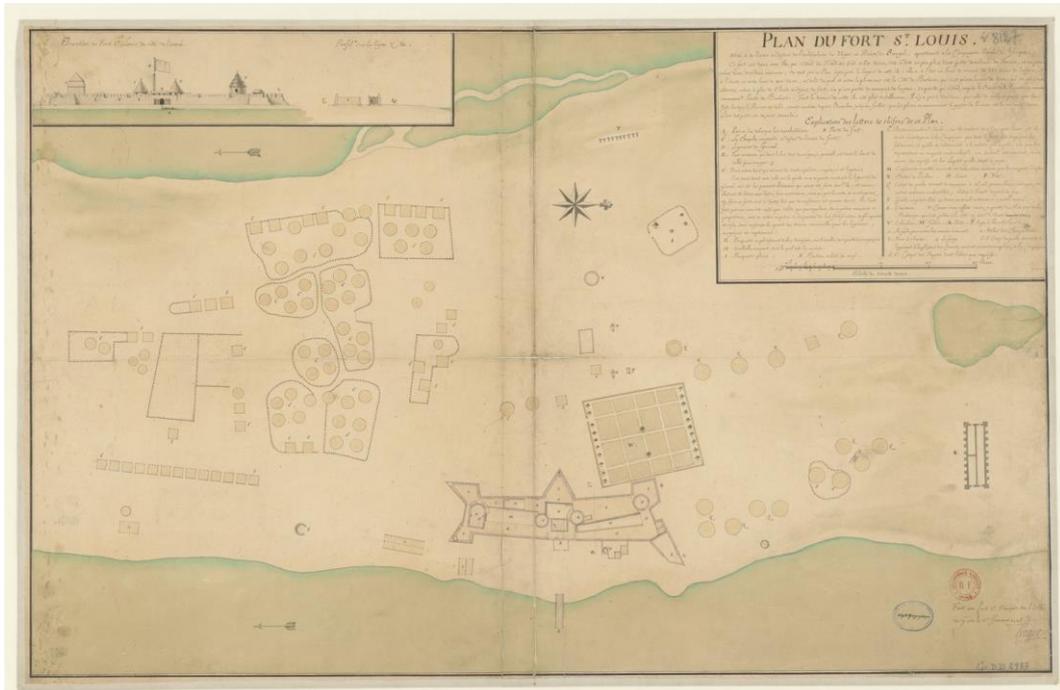Fig. 5: Louis Moreau de Chambonneau: Plan du Fort du Senegal, [1694].

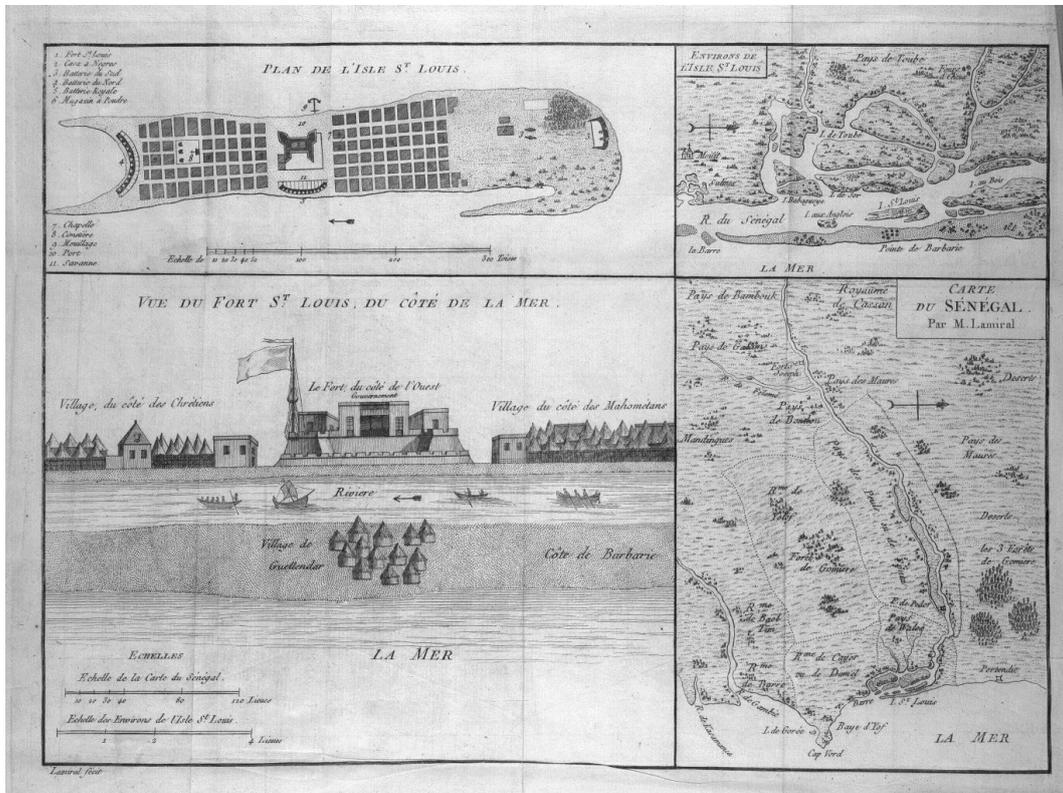Fig. 6: François Froger: Plan du fort Saint-Louis, 1705 (BNF Paris, Départment Cartes et plans, GE DD-2987 (8127 B), Gallica: http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb405927269).

Fig. 7: Plan de l'île de Saint-Louis, Map of the surrounding region by Dominique Harcourt Lamiral (BNF Paris, Rés. DT 549.8 L23, Gallica: http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148 /cb384954428).
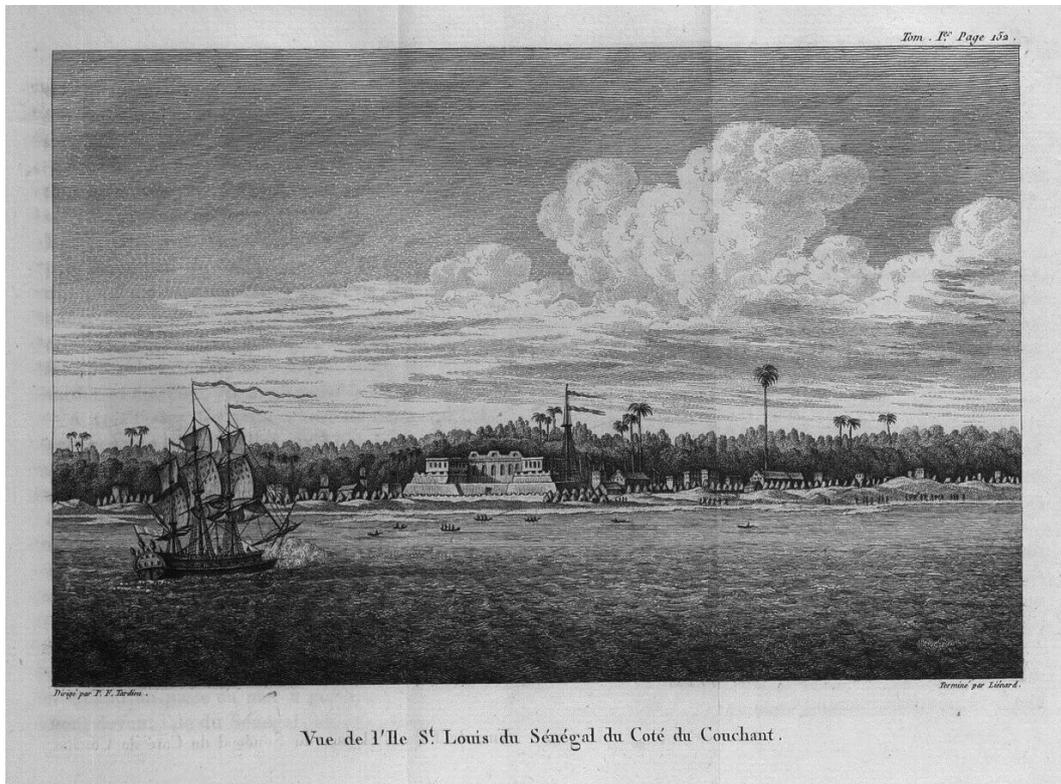
Vue de l'Ile St. Louis du Sénégal du Coté du Couchant.

Fig. 8: Sylvain Meinrad Xavier de Golbéry: Fragments d'un voyage en Afrique, fait pendant les années 1785, 1786 et 1787, in: Contrées occidentales de ce Continent, t. 1, Paris: Treutzel et Würtz, 1802, 152.