Economic Networks and Landscapes of Production: Bois Cotlette, Dominica in the Early Nineteenth Century

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Abstract: Preliminary results restricted to the last quarter of the eighteenth century at Bois Cotlette, Dominica indicate a complex set of economic networks nested in landscapes of production. Oral histories, the written record and the archaeological record, at this point, are provisional at Best on Dominica. Patterns from these source point to a fluid trade in goods and sometimes people in the nineteenth century - a trade whose illicit nature continues today. Moving back into the eighteenth century, where the documentary record is fragmentary, the oral history has poor resolution, we are left with archaeology as one of the major tools to understanding poorly documented but somewhat normalized trade. Estates like Bois Cotlette, on the one hand could be interpreted as part of a frontier movement, pushing the extents of European modernity through regimes of control, and technologies of space. These frontier sites represent another story completely. The exploitation of the margins, not to consolidate control but to take advantage of the variegated social relations taking place on multiple levels of society.

Résumé: Les résultats préliminaires ont limité au dernier trimestre du XVIIIème siècle chez Bois Cotlette, Dominica indiquent un ensemble complexe de réseaux économiques nichés dans les paysages de la production. Les traditions orales, le disque écrit et le disque archéologique, en ce moment, sont temporaire au mieux sur le Dominica. Les modèles des ces point de source à un fluide commercent les marchandises et parfois les personnes au 19ème siècle - un commerce dont la nature illicite continue aujourd'hui. Se déplaçant de nouveau dans le XVIIIème siècle, où le disque documentaire est fragmentaire, la tradition orale a la résolution pauvre, nous sont parties avec l'archéologie en tant qu'un des outils principaux au commerce mal documenté mais légèrement normalisé de compréhension. Les domaines aiment Bois Cotlette, d'une part pourraient être interprétés en tant qu'élément d'un mouvement de frontière, poussant les ampleurs de la modernité européenne par des régimes de commande, et des technologies de l'espace. Ces emplacements de frontière représentent une autre histoire complètement. L'exploitation des marges, pour ne pas consolider la commande mais pour tirer profit des relations sociales variées ayant lieu aux niveaux multiples de la société.

Resumen: Los resultados preliminares restringidos al último trimestre del siglo XVIII en Bois Cotlette, Dominica indican un sistema complejo de redes económicas jerarquizadas en paisajes de la producción. Las historias orales, el expediente escrito y el expediente arqueológico, a este punto, son provisionales en el mejor de los casos en Dominica. Los patrones de estos punto de la fuente a un líquido negocian en mercancías y a veces gente en el siglo XIX - un comercio cuya naturaleza ilícita continúe hoy. Moviéndose nuevamente dentro del siglo XVIII, donde está fragmentario el expediente documental, la historia oral tiene resolución pobre, nosotros se va con arqueología como una de las herramientas principales al comercio mal documentado pero algo normalizado de la comprensión. Los estados tienen gusto de Bois Cotlette, por una parte se podrían interpretar como parte de un movimiento de la frontera, empujando los grados de la modernidad europea con regímenes del control, y las tecnologías del espacio. Estos sitios de la frontera representan otra historia totalmente. La explotación de los márgenes, no consolidar control sino aprovecharse de las relaciones sociales abigarradas que ocurren en niveles múltiples de sociedad.
Introduction

The vigilant rapaciousness of the French government; but it is asserted, that many of the inhabitants within the colony, who had formerly been subjects of France, scrupled not on the first intimation that hostilities had been commenced in Europe, in the year 1778, to invite an attack from Martinico (Edwards 1819: 435).

By 1713, the treaty of Utrecht ended the war of Spanish succession and had, in theory, formalized the imperial domains of northern European powers in the Americas particularly in the Caribbean. Simultaneously a series of legislative actions taken by the imperial seats attempted to control these boundaries through the establishment of trading regimes that privileged royal monopolies and national trading companies. Rather than a period of equilibrium in the Caribbean plantation colonies, the eighteenth century was marked by considerable internal regional trade in which the interstices of empire were sites of inter and intra-colonial economic interaction. In this paper I explore the incongruity of collective economic frontiers and emergent political boundaries. Specifically everyday internal and informal trade circumvented colonial frontiers that in turn shaped the material of everyday life and has implication for the way in which we as archaeologists are conceiving human interaction.

In the passage above, Bryan Edwards, who initially penned these comments in the 1790’s at the height of English fears over the rapacious and possibly inevitable onslaught of revolutionary ideas and its ensuing disorder in the Caribbean, isolates the ‘French inhabitants’ of the island as introducing a security risk to the island. Such inhabitants owned and occupied estates like this one located on the south coast of Dominica, in the parish of Saint Mark’s near the village of Soufriere. Boise Cotlette, along with the properties, Petit Coulibri, Sabastapol, Morne Rouge, and Sourfriere, were all developed initially by French Emigres from Martinique in the early to mid eighteenth century.

As a way to supplement the proceeds from this imperial investment and as a way to aggravate French colonial interests, the British parliament included the Dominican ports of Portsmouth and Rosseau into the 1766 freeports act. Under this act, agricultural produce from Martinique and Guadeloupe was allowed to be imported into these two ports and then sold to Britain. Similarly, British manufactures such as textiles, glass, spirits, and ceramics would be sold to French merchants for use in Guadeloupe and Martinique. Documents seem to support the effect of this act on trade. In 1764 five percent of all ceramics and glassware imported to the British West Indies, went to dominica. By 1789, that doubled to ten percent.

There has been a considerable amount of discussion among historians about the nature and impact of inter and intra-colonial trade within the Caribbean during the eighteenth and nineteenth century (Brown 1926, 1928; Christelow 1941, 1942, 1946; McBride 2006; Nelson 1945; Perotin-Dumon 1999, 2001; Pérotin-Dumon 1991; Zahedieh 1986). Much of this literature has examined legal structures like the English navigation acts, the Spanish asiento, and the French exclusif which either prohibited trade with neighboring islands or restricted it to a few royally sanctioned monopolies. This approach, focussing on legislation and therefore necessarily top down in nature, privileges formal trade relations between and with colonial realms, and following contemporary practice, marks all trade which occurred outside these sanctions as contraband.
In 1766, The English Parliament passed the freeports act which made 4 ports in Jamaica open to trade with the spanish and 2 ports in dominica open to trade with the french. The goal of this act was to aggravate spanish and french colonial interests and increase the markets for british produced industrial wares like ceramics, glass, and textiles. Inhabitants at Bois Cotlette would have benefited from such trade. They relied on small boats to make it to the closest market in Rosseau, thus giving them access to the range of imported materials from Britain but also exposing them to commercial interests from martinique and guadeloupe. The intended material effects of the Free Ports act in the consumption practices of elites and non elites in the French Caribbean would have been to see a higher percentage of English Made trade wares. Similarly, we would also expect to see greater and greater routinization of ceramic material culture traded through english oriented commodity circuits.

In 2007 archaeologically testing of the site’s elite and non-elite contexts produced interesting results. The materials excavated from late eighteenth and early nineteenth century non-elite contexts at Bois Cotlette are suggestive of the failure of the Free Port act. Imported trade ceramics include british made creamwares an pearlwares of a fairly recognizable design and pattern. They also include, however, distinctly french ceramics including earthenwares made in the communes of Vallauris and Biot in southern france and a type of ceramic identified in Martinique as Faince brune ceramics. These are a suite of ceramics common on contemporary french Habitations in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. This presence of French ceramics in the archaeological assemblage suggests that in fact the free port act did not establish an exclusive market for British goods and instead people in Dominica continued to rely on trade with French islands for the everyday material needs.

**Background**

The archaeology of plantation settlements can be helpful in understanding the diverse strategies of colonial administrations in that it presents a unit of observation that evokes both global and local relationships of power and exchange (Handler and Lange 1978; Armstrong 1983; 1990; Howson 1995; Reeves 1998; Delle 1994, 1998; Higman 1998; Wilkie and Farnsworth 2001). Intra-site comparisons of domestic contexts associated with elites and slaves have been particularly useful in understanding the institution of slavery and mechanisms of identity formation. While some elements such as plantation layout tend to be circumscribed to particular plantations, the archaeological assemblages in houseyards, in plantation villages, and tenements and servants quarters in the city, tend to be constituted of a similar combination of goods made in Europe, North America, and locally (Kelly 2002, 2003; Kelly and Gibson 2005). Such goods can constitute idioms of material expression that were refashioned either through alteration or assemblage into ways unexpected by those who organized their production. Rather than assuming the middle passage as a rupture in systems of knowledge and ways of doing things, it here highlights that the eliding of cultural content is something that needs to be archaeologically demonstrated. These assemblages can also speak to the more local networks of reciprocity, exchange, and market activity that both enslaved laborers and planters partook (Hauser et al 2007).

Twenty five years of archaeological analysis of plantation sites in the Caribbean have pointed to the necessity of situating the plantation within the historical, political, and geographic context of the islands in which they operated. Indeed, in the organization of plantation labor different empires had different regimes through which they managed their enslaved populations.
We are therefore challenged to find ways which draw both similarities and differences among the island lives of the enslaved and freed peoples of the Caribbean. Locating reasonably compact regions in which competing empires including Britain and France had subjects establishing plantations at the same time becomes useful landscapes through which to determine the range of variation in the internal layout of plantations, the nature of economic interaction of the inhabitants of those plantations, and the degree to which spatial proximity brought about change over time.

With respect to formal archaeological investigations, there has been little research on the island of Dominica and no systematic survey of plantation sites. Like the rest of the Caribbean, much of the early use of archaeology for topics, other than resolution of problems relating to prehistory and the demise of indigenous populations, dealt with the documentation of the monuments, forts, and planter houses of the colonial era. While there is a broad range of archaeological studies in the Caribbean including fifteenth century Spanish settlements (Deagan 1993; Deagan and Cruxent 2002a and 2002b; Woodward 2006), sixteenth century entrepots (for latest references see Barka 1996; Hamilton 2005), and nineteenth century urban contexts (See Armstrong 2003), the majority of archaeological research in the Caribbean has focused on sites associated with plantation slavery.

The goal of this research was to identify, locate and document discrete archaeological components associated with the eighteenth century occupation of Dominica with special attention to plantation settlements. There are three reasons to focus on plantation settlements. First, Plantations—albeit quite localized—exceeded the confines of their bounded geography, in that they were connected to a variety of human, social and economic networks. These stretched their geography far beyond the local, making Plantations a powerful locus for the analysis of imperial dynamics. The plantation was more than an agricultural enterprise represented in the field or an industrial experiment represented in the sugar works. It was a community with social and geographic boundaries grounded on massive structural inequality. Second as a kind of settlement it embodies the two aspects of commodity chains most directly concerned with this study; i.e., the production of export oriented commodities through enslaved labor (sugar and coffee) and a community of potential consumers of locally and European produced commodities traded through local, regional, and global economic circuits. Third, plantation settlements provide a comparable set of data with regional trends in colonial archaeology with which ready comparative databases may be analyzed. As such, the survey will be designed with the idea of locating both on-site and off-site components of plantation settlements including the industrial works and slave villages.

To provide an empirical background to the proposed research, I undertook a pilot study at Estate Bois Cotlette in Southern Dominica. I had three major goals for this project including 1) to begin to explore plantation settlements on Dominica, 2) to gain a preliminary understanding of archaeological conditions and environmental constraints, and 3) to test different survey and excavations techniques to mediate some of the unique environmental conditions. Over fifteen estates presented themselves as possible subjects of inquiry. Given issues of expediency, access to associated documentation, and the preservation of extant features such as the slave village and the sugar processing complex, I chose to use Bois Cotlette as a test site. During this I was able to establish that the density of brush and forest cover requires a survey strategy that includes some sub surface testing. Second there appears to be a distinct transformation in material assemblages and landscapes associated with the formal colonization of the Island by Britain.
Finally, it appears, given the right social and environmental conditions that such transformations contributed to both surface and subsurface features.

Between 2007 and 2009 I conducted a survey of the property, archival research, and limited archaeological testing at Bois Cotlette (Figure 1). There were three research goals in mind:

1. Locate deposits of artifacts, archaeological features and remains of buildings on his property and identify those deposits which represent cultural behaviors related to everyday life at Boise Cotlette.
2. Reconstruct the way in which the estate changed over time specifically looking at the plantation landscape.
3. Determine the spatial layout of the enslaved laborer village and the method of construction for villages’ huts.

A multistage research strategy was employed: archival research at the Dominican National Archives and the Public Records Office at Kew Gardens, England, consultation with local informants and residents; and archaeological survey and testing.

Archival research relied on the systematic consultation of archives associated with Bois Cotlette housed at the Dominica National Archives. Two sources proved most useful for archaeological interpretation. The biannual slave registers from the first quarter of the nineteenth century provide information on the size of the community living on the estate as well as the kinds of agricultural tasks they were employed in. Travel accounts providing perspectives of visitors of the islands can be gleaned for pieces of evidence useful in understanding qualitative aspects of everyday life.

**Bois Cotlette**

There is a relative lack of documentary evidence for ownership of the land Bois Cotlette now rests on in the eighteenth century. Unlike the rest of the parishes for which the National Archives contains registers of Conveyances, Leases, Mortgages (1763-1843), the archives hold no such document for St Mark’s Parish. Evidence for the occupation of the land surrounding Bois Cotlette derives from three principle sources: Family History as recounted by Jean Baptiste Bellot, A map published by John Byres with an accompanying list of proprietors (1776), and the Register of Slave Returns (1817-1831).

The current owner of Bois Cotlette, Mister Michael Didier, the gentleman in the hat, is the descendant of the original proprietors, Jean Louise Bellot and Esther Motigny. Mister Didier invited me to excavate his estate in 2006 in the hope that I could establish a more complete history of his ancestors. It appears that the estate was initially designed to be a coffee estate housing an unknown number of laborers.

According to family history as dictated to me in 2007 the land surrounding Boise Cotlette was originally divided between several families. Morne Rouge was owned by Joseph Bellot, Louise de La Ferrier Constance (daughter of J. Dupigny) owned Soufriere, Adrian Constance owned Morne Patate, and Mr. and Mrs. J Dupigny owned Boise Cotlette. In 1776 Joseph Bellot was listed as proprietor and lease of the land which now is identified as Bois Cotlette, Morne Rouge, and Petite Coulibri (Byres 1777: 35) (Figure 2). The family history which draws on baptismal and marriage records of the parish of St Marks sites that Joseph Bellot was born in Marseille in 1713 and was the fourth child of Joseph Bellot and Marie de Rerigold de la haut. He married Louise de la Ferrier Constance, daughter of Madame J. Dupigny. His son by an earlier
marriage, Jean Louise Bellot, was Born in St Pierre in 1746 and in 1769 he married Esther Montigny. It is unknown how many of their children survived into adulthood, but four of them Joseph Benoit Bellot born in 1772, Fredrick Bellot born in 1775, Rossiette, and Emma, play large roles in establishing the at least one of the major Beke families of Dominica. In 1801 Rosiette Bellot married Jean Baptiste Dupigny, the brother of Louis de la Ferrier Constance and have several children including Alexander Dupigny, John Dupigny, Joseph Dupigny, D. Dupigny, and Emmelia Dupigny.

By the time that Dominica was firmly established as a colony of the British Empire following 1763, these e'migres had become so firmly established that the British upon conquest could not exile them. Rather, the British required that the families work the land as if they were owners but pay a substantial rent to the crown. After the arrival of the English the family also began to grow and process sugar cane and by 1799, according to documents submitted to the House of Parliament they had Madame Bellot (assumed to be Louise de la Ferrier Constance) owned 96 enslaved laborers and Jean Louise Bellot had 71 laborers working on the estate (Papers presented to the House of Commons on the 7th May 1804, respecting the ... : 36).

Some time in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, Bois Cotlette’s ownership passed to an Englishman named Charles Court. By 1817 the estate was under joint proprietorship with its manager, James Labadie, it was home to 81 enslaved laborers, and it was under coffee and sugar cultivation (Register of Slave Returns, St Marks Parish 1817). In 1820 a majority of the enslaved laborers were sold to an individual listed as General Murray and a much smaller number to Frederick Bellot (Register of Slave Returns, St Marks Parish 1820). By 1823, the estate was sold to Jean Baptiste Dupigny who maintained only 13 enslaved laborers (Register of Slave Returns, St Marks Parish 1823). In 1826 that number increased to 20. By 1826 the workforce had shrunk to 20 workers who produced 2,000 pounds of sugar, 140 gallons of rum, 254 gallons of molasses and 2565 pounds of coffee (Trouillot 1988: 36).

A coffee blight hit Dominica in the 1830s and 1840s and the estate struggled on with sugar alone until a different type of coffee was introduced (Watts 1988) and By the 1870s sugar production had largely been by limes. The ownership of Bois Colette seems to have continued in the Dupigny family and by the turn of the century, Vaquero reported that the Bellot family was in full control of Bois Cotlette. The old sugar boilers were adapted to boiling lime juice and a mechanized lime crusher replaced the old sugar crushing cattle mill.

The Site

Six loci were distinguished within the region were identified in the process of the walkover survey (Figure 3). Three of the loci were identified through the presence of standing structures: The Lecou (Locus 1), the eighteenth century sugar works (Locus 2-boiling house and windmill) and the nineteenth century boiling house and cattle mill (Locus 3). The three other loci were identified through heavy concentrations of artifact scatter and subsequent subsurface testing. Loci 4 and 5 appear to be the remains of laborer villages. Locus 6 appears to be a single residence smaller than the estate house.

Locus 1

Locus 1 is the LeCou composed of the estate house and its kitchen (Figure 12), the coffee racks, and the pulping mill. Since the coffee pulping mill was refurbished recently, it is difficult to assess its age. The entire Lecou including the coffee racks, the aqueduct, and the estate house are built on the same grid using a magnetic north reading (which deviates 29.3 degrees west from
true north). The Coffee store was where the dried coffee was stored and processed in preparation for shipping. Trays filled with coffee were stored in racks inside the store and were brought out to dry on the paved stone glacee. The coffee was cleaned and bagged inside this building.

The estate house is a one and one half story building. The building measures 11.64 meters on its side by 12.14 meters along the front face. Windows appear to be 0.96 meters wide. It is internally divided into six rooms with a foyer, two parlors, a dining room, a kitchen on the first floor. All the rooms used wooden plank floors except for the central hallway and kitchen which was paved with brick. The stairwell to the second story is in the Northwest side of the building in the kitchen area. Some time after 1917 the family added a bath to the eastern side of the building. In a photograph published in 1917 showing the Bellot family on a weekend retreat the East side of the house is shown with no platform or addition for a bath (Figure 4) (Vaquero 1917: 186). In the Background of the photo is the kitchen for the House that is till intact. It contains a pit for an open fire and a bread oven.

A line of faced stones was discovered underneath the floorboards of the Maison. These faced stones underlie the existing foundation and are at a 95 degree angle of the standing Maison (Figure 5). This indicates that the present structure was built on top of an earlier building with a stone foundation. While the layout and facade of the estate house were consistent with larger eighteenth-century Maison de Metre’s on French Martinique the measurements of the building seemed consistent the metric system, dating its construction to at least as early as 1809. To determine the age of the building further archaeological testing was conducted. One test pit was placed in the southern parlor and a 3x1 meter trench was placed in the southeast hallway (Figure 14).

A cross section of the trench provides a wonderful glimpse of the history of the building. The uppermost layer consisted of a dark clayey loam with organic debris. It was approximately five centimeters deep. It contained artifacts that were manufactured in the second half of the 19th century including brown bottle glass, window glass, wire nails, and ironstone pottery. Directly underneath this layer was a compact surface containing a gray ashy soil. Several items of interest were recovered from this layer including some pieces of pearlware, a kind of ceramic made in England that was made between the 1780’s and the 1830’s (Noel Hume 1969, Miller 1991, Sussman 2000b), wrought nails and some unidentifiable bottle glass. A few pieces of creamware, ceramics made in England between 1763 and 1810 (Noel Hume 1969, Miller 1991, Sussman 2000b), were also recovered from this level. Below this level was a rich cultural deposit containing pieces of pearlware, pipe stems, bottle glass, creamware and faience blanche. Faience Blue and White is a refined earthenware made in Blue on White between 1725 and 1765 (Giraurd 2008; Walthall 1991a; Waselkov and Walthall 2002). Within this layer was a lens of compact soil that was interpreted to be a floor associated with the foundation. Underlying this compact lens the strata contained only Faience ceramics and locally made ceramics.

Most likely the estate house visible today was built using the Trois measurement system sometime in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. This Building was built on top of an older building that is interpreted to have been built before English takeover of the island.

*Locus 2*

Locus 2 consisted of a windmill on the western side of the road south of the Maison and ruins of a building. The windmill is 4.1 meters in diameter. The ruins are across the road and downhill from the windmill. The rough outline of the ruins are consistent with a boiling house used to process sugar recorded on Martinique a Chateau du Buc and at extant ruins located at nearby Morne Patate. Cane juice from the windmill was channeled into the boiling house. No
runnel was visible in the masonry nor was there a pentil visible. It is possible that the windmill was never in operation or the windmill was resurfaced at a later point. The measurement system used to build the windmill and the outlines of the ruin are consistent with the Trois system used to build the Maison. It is therefore likely that the windmill and boiling house was built sometime in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

**Locus 3**

Locus 3 consists of a boiling house and a raised and rounded platform for a cattle mill. The boiling house is constructed out of cut stone and most likely employed a British Imperial Standard measurement system in its construction. Etched into the plaster of the boiling hose is an inscription with a date that is either 1810 or 1818. Both the measurement system and the layout of the house are consistent with boiling houses built in the first half of the nineteenth century.

**Loci 4 and 5**

Two areas appear to be the ruins of villagers where laborers on the estate were living. One of these deposits is located north west of the Maison (Locus 4). This locus contained five house areas (Identified by the archaeologist as A through E). Terraces are carved out of the hillside and stone was piled up to act as a retaining wall. There was also a ‘U’ shaped loose stone feature on the upslope of each of the terraces. These features are consistent with features recorded by Armstrong on St John (2003) which served the purpose of a cooking area. Within each of the house areas were a series of platforms (Figure 6).

A photograph taken in 1917 showing the laborer house was taken of one of the structures in house area C (Vaquero 1917: 186). This photograph is helpful in reconstructing the laborer houses of the period. Laborers built their houses one terraces carved out of the hill side. They would pile loose stone and create a foundation for a wattle and daub cottage. Each terrace contained more than one stone platform. The laborers wedged posts into the loose stones to anchor them down. There are four posts to support the four walls and two central posts designed to hold up the roof. The platforms are built in a dimension of roughly 5.1 meters by 2.8 meters.

The family would then weave a combination of green branches and vines around the posts. A daub consisting of mud, soil and dung would then be plastered onto the woven walls. The daub would also be used as chinking in any gaps in the construction. To create the floor, laborers would then pack a gray ashy soil (pyroclastic flow) into the loose stone. This mixture would be wetted and smoothed and allowed to dry until it became a hardened surface. The residents of the village would thatch their roofs.

Archaeological survey of locus 4 was geared to determine the age and layout of this village. There were five terraces or house areas labelled A-E. Within each area there were several platforms. Using stone platforms as an indicator of past cottages, I estimate that there were 10 cottages at any one moment time in the village indicating a population of 50 to 60 inhabitants. Two test units were placed in each House Area and were excavated in 10 centimeter levels. Deposits were relatively shallow going no further than 30 centimeters.

Materials recovered from this area contained imported ceramic sherds (n=125), local ceramics (n=7), animal bones, glass, nails, and unidentifiable metal objects. Ceramics included pearlware, creamware and faience. The majority of the ceramics were pearlware. Using the mean ceramic dating formula established by Stanley South, I computed the mean age of ceramics recovered from this area. Based on 125 sherd the date was 1791 with a 15 year margin of error. Seventy five percent of the ceramics recovered from this locus were holloware. This was probably the location for the village throughout the estates history. It does appear that occupation intensified after the turn of the nineteenth century.
Locus five is adjacent to locus 4 slightly due west of the estate house. Locus 4 contains the ruins of the stables, an unidentifiable house and loose stone piles that could very well be the foundations of cottages of enslaved laborers. Archaeological testing of this areas produced a similar range of artifacts with a slightly earlier date. The MCD was 1778.63 with a ten year range. One possible explanation for the arrangement of locus 4 and 5 is that at one point it constituted a much larger village (ca. 1770s-1820s). After the sale of the laborers to General Murray in the 1820’s, the village was consolidated to the areas around House Areas A and E. This would explain the kinds of materials recovered from each of the house areas and the reuse of the locus 5 into a kitchen garden area.

**Material Analysis of Trade and Networks**

In 2007 archaeologically testing of the site’s elite and non-elite contexts produced interesting results. The materials excavated from late eighteenth and early nineteenth century non-elite contexts at Bois Cotlette are suggestive of continued trade with Martinique after the hand over to the British Empire. Imported trade ceramics include British made creamwares and pearlwares of a fairly recognizable design and pattern. They also include, however, distinctly French ceramics including earthenwares made in the communes of Vallauris and Biot in southern France and a type of ceramic identified in Martinique as Faience blue and white ceramics (Figure 8) (Hauser and Kelly 2007). These are a suite of ceramics common on contemporary French Habitations in the eighteenth and nineteenth century (Kelly 2002 2003; Kelly and Gibson 2007; Kelly et al. 2009). This presence of French ceramics in the archaeological assemblage suggests that in fact the free port act did not establish an exclusive market for British goods and instead people in Dominica continued to rely on trade with French islands for the everyday material needs.

Interestingly enough, this pattern holds up with the utilitarian and industrially produced earthenwares. For the past several years I have been working with Kenneth Kelly to create a chronology and compositionally describe ceramics in the Eastern Caribbean. In this project we collected ceramics from a variety of sites including potteries, habitations, and urban contexts. We established five recipes for historic ceramics in the eastern Caribbean. One of the recipes most likely derive from Guadeloupe and two derive from Martinique. It appears that the inhabitants ceramic assemblage at Bois cotlette came from everywhere but Dominica. While some of the ceramics tested from Bois Cotlette cannot be ascribed to a particular ceramic recipe, it appears that some of them have recipes similar to those that I believe were made in either Martinique or Guadeloupe.

Ceramics recovered from Dominica, specifically the industrial wares recovered from Landoff, Capucin, Woodford Hill, and Toucari, are similar in chemical composition to ceramics recovered from the kiln sites of Grande Baie, Le Saintes (Guadeloupe), Trois Rivières, Basse Terre (Guadeloupe), Grande Anse, Basse Terre (Guadeloupe), and Trois Ilets (Martinique) (group 3). With the exception of the Trois Ilets material, all the ceramics are likely to be manufactured in Guadeloupe. A second recipe appears to have been used for industrial ceramics revered from Woodford Hill, Landoff and Everton.

The data also suggest that a significant amount of domestic wheel thrown ceramics recovered from Grand Baie (Martinique), Chateau du Buc (Martinique) and Landoff emerge from the same ceramic recipe. It should be noted however, that domestic wheel thrown ceramics recovered from Woodford Hill, Ilet Chancel (Martinique), and Creve Cœur (Martinique) emerge
from a second recipe (group 2), and that domestic wheel thrown ceramics from Bois Cotlette, Tartane, and BB02 (St Lucia) emerge from a third recipe (group 4) (Kelly and Hauser this Volume).

Finally all the coil made ceramics recovered from Bois Cotlette appear to have a very similar chemical characteristic to ceramics recovered from BB02 (St Lucia), and Pointe Petite Poterie (Martinique) (group 6). Similar coil-made ceramics recovered from Indian River (Dominica), and Woodford Hill (Dominica), have similar chemical characteristics to the industrial pottery from Basse Terre (Guadeloupe). These data suggest that Dominica most likely did not produce much in the way of its own ceramics and imported all three types in the course of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

**Conclusion**

Preliminary results restricted to the last quarter of the eighteenth century at Bois Cotlette, Dominica indicate a complex set of economic networks nested in landscapes of production. Oral histories, the written record and the archaeological record, at this point, are provisional at best on Dominica. We can with confidence state that the estate was occupied as early as the 1750s. While there is no evidence to contradict its establishment in the 1720’s, the family history makes it more likely that the family moved to Dominica in the 1740’s after the birth of Jean Louise Bellot.

It appears that there were two sugar complexes associated with the estate. The first one is south east of the estate house and employed a windmill to crush the sugar cane which was the channelled across to the boiling house for processing. The second boiling house was also used for sugar but later converted for the processing of lime. These changes pointed to a large shift in the landscape- from coffee and sugar cultivation to cocoa and lime cultivation. In each case the buildings could be retrofitted to meet the needs of the others- Sugar to Lime, Coffee to Cocoa.

Finally, the laborer cottages were built out of wattle and daub on top of loose stone platforms. There were most likely 12 to 15 cottages on the estate oriented along the slope of Morn Patate. This village seems to have consolidated over time into the area identified as locus 4. At its height the village was home to at least 96 people who worked on the estate. The villagers had economic networks with laborers in other parts of Soufriere and beyond. Archaeological evidence points to this.

Material patterns to a fluid trade in goods and sometimes people in the nineteenth century- a trade whose illicit nature continues today. Moving back into the eighteenth century, where the documentary record is fragmentary, the oral history has poor resolution, we are left with archaeology as one of the major tools to understanding poorly documented but somewhat normalized trade. Estates like Bois Cotlette, on the one hand could be interpreted as part of a frontier movement, pushing the extents of European modernity through regimes of control, and technologies of space. These frontier sites represent another story completely. The exploitation of the margins, not to consolidate control but to take advantage of the variegated social relations taking place on multiple levels of society.
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Waselkov, Gregory A. and John A. Walthall

Figure 1 - Eastern Caribbean in the Eighteenth Century
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