

## A CARIBBEAN ENLIGHTENMENT

Exploring the intersection of Enlightenment ideas and colonial realities among White, male colonists in the eighteenth-century French and British Caribbean, *A Caribbean Enlightenment* recovers a neglected aspect of the region's history. Physicians to planters, merchants to publishing entrepreneurs were as inspired by ideologies of utility and improvement as their metropolitan counterparts, and they adapted "enlightened" ideas and social practices to understand their place in the Atlantic World. Colonists collected botanical specimens for visiting naturalists and books for their personal libraries. They founded periodicals that created arenas for the discussion and debate of current problems. They picked up the pen to complain about their relationship with the home country. And they read to make sense of everything from parenting to personal salvation, to their new societies and the enslaved Africans on whom their prosperity depended. Ultimately, becoming "enlightened" was a colonial identity that rejected metropolitan stereotypes of Caribbean degeneracy while validating the power to enslave on a cultural basis.

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# A CARIBBEAN ENLIGHTENMENT

*Intellectual Life in the British and French  
Colonial Worlds, 1750–1792*

APRIL G. SHELFORD

*American University*



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For my teachers

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## *Note on the Text*

Unless explicitly indicated, translations from the French are my own. Orthography and punctuation of eighteenth-century texts in English have sometimes been lightly modernized for clarity.

## Abbreviations

AdlG	Archives départementales de la Gironde, Bordeaux, France
AdS	Archives of the Académie Royale des Sciences, Collège de France, Paris, France
ANOM	Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence, France
ARTFL	The ARTFL <i>Encyclopédie</i> , <a href="https://encyclopedia.uchicago.edu/">https://encyclopedia.uchicago.edu/</a>
BL	British Library, London, England
BNF	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France
BRIS	Papers of Robert Long, 6 volumes, Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives, Bristol, England
IoJ-Rob	Robinson papers, Institute of Jamaica, Kingston, Jamaica
JFSGR	Jamaican Family Search Genealogy Research Library, <a href="http://www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/">www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/</a>
MdSM, Description	<i>Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l'isle Saint-Domingue</i> (Philadelphia, 1797–98), 2 volumes
MdSM Chd'Ag	Papers of Moreau de Saint-Méry, Mémoires établis pour les Chambres d'agriculture et de commerce de la Guadeloupe, de la Martinique et de Saint-Domingue (1759/1788), ANOM, F <sup>3</sup> 126
MONSON	The manuscripts of Thomas Thistlewood, now at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT, USA
NLS	National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography online; <a href="http://www.oxforddnb.com">www.oxforddnb.com</a>
RS	Royal Society, London, England

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Sgard-Dict	<i>Dictionnaire des journaux 1600–1789</i> , ed. Jean Sgard, <a href="https://dictionnaire-journaux.gazettes18e.fr/journaux">https://dictionnaire-journaux.gazettes18e.fr/journaux</a>
UCL	Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery, University College of London, <a href="http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs">www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs</a>

***Periodicals of Saint-Domingue***

AA	<i>Affiches Américaines</i>
AdC	<i>Avis du Cap</i>
Avis	<i>Avis divers et Petites Affiches Américaines</i>
Gaz	<i>Gazette de S. Domingue</i>
IA	<i>Iris Américaine</i>
JdSD	<i>Journal de Saint-Domingue</i>