

**Inhabiting New France: Bodies, Environment and the Sacred,  
c.1632-c.1700**

**Robin Macdonald**

PhD

University of York

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## Abstract

The historiography of colonial and ‘religious’ encounters in New France has tended to focus on encounters between human beings, between ‘colonisers’ and ‘colonised’ or ‘natives’ and ‘newcomers’. This thesis will focus on encounters between people and environment. Drawing on recent anthropology, notably the work of Tim Ingold, it will argue that whilst bodies shaped environment, environment also could shape bodies – and their associated religious practices.

Through the examination of a broad variety of source materials – in particular, the *Jesuit Relations* – this thesis will explore the myriad ways in which the sacred was created and experienced between c.1632 and c.1700. Beginning with the ocean crossing to New France – an area largely unexplored in the historiographical literature – it will argue that right from the outset of a missionary’s journey, his or her practices were shaped by encounters with both humans and non-humans, by weather or the stormy Ocean Sea. Reciprocally, it will argue, missionary bodies and practices could shape these environments. Moving next to the mission terrain, it will analyse a variety spaces – both environmental and imaginary – tracing the slow build up of belief through habitual practices. Finally, it will chart the movement of missionaries and missionary correspondence from New France back to France. It was not only missionaries, it will argue, who could experience and shape the colony, but their correspondents and readers in France.

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## **Author's Declaration**

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or a diploma at any university, and is entirely my own work. Sections of Chapter 5 will be appearing as “Sensing Sacred Missives: Birch Bark Letters from Seventeenth-Century Missionaries in New France,” in *Sensing the Sacred: Religion and the Senses, 1300-1800*, ed. Robin Macdonald, Emilie K. M. Murphy, and Elizabeth L. Swann (under contract with Ashgate).

## Introduction

‘It is a fact’, wrote Jesuit Father Paul Le Jeune in the annual *Relation* of 1657-58, ‘that habit [*habitude*] causes the sense of touch to rebel against too great a softness, finding its pleasure in things harder and rougher.’ Drawing on his vast experience both on the New France mission and at his then post as the French Provincial Superior in Paris, he continued, ‘I have known fathers who could not take their sleep on a bed, because they had become accustomed to sleep like the Natives [*Sauvages*]. If they were given,’ he asserted, ‘on returning from their Missions, a pallet or mattress, they were obliged, until they had regained their former habits [*leur premiere habitude*], to pass a portion of the night upon the paved floor of the room, in order to sleep for a little while more at their ease.’<sup>1</sup> Le Jeune’s description of bodily adaptation to the ‘harder and rougher’ (*plus dures et plus aspres*) circumstances of the mission is typical of missionary accounts from New France. Included in a comparative account of the ‘manners and customs’ of ‘the French, or the Europeans’ and those of Indigenous peoples (in Le Jeune’s words, ‘*les sauvages*’), the missionary’s description of European bodies styled them as being less robust than their North American counterparts, who, he asserted, found ‘sleep sweeter upon the earth for a bed, than many do upon down.’<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *JR*, 44: 281. Where Thwaites has translated ‘*sauvages*’ as ‘savages’, I have used the term ‘natives’. As numerous scholars have pointed out, the seventeenth-century French term, ‘*sauvage*’ had connotations of wildness, rather than ‘barbarity’ (as implied by the English term ‘savage’). As such, Thwaites’s translations have been amended throughout this thesis. All uses of the word ‘savage’, have been replaced with ‘native’. On the complexities of translating this term, see Nancy Senior’s “Translator’s Preface” to her recent translation of Louis Nicolas’s *Natural History*, in *The Codex Canadensis and the Writings of Louis Nicolas: The Natural History of the New World/Histoire Naturelle des Indes Occidentales*, ed. François-Marc Gagnon, trans. Nancy Senior, and modernised by Réal Ouellet (Tulsa, OK; Montreal, QC: Gilcrease Museum; McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2011), 261-62.

<sup>2</sup> *JR*, 44: 281.



Published in 1659, the above account provides a useful starting point for a thesis that reflects upon the complex entanglements of bodies, environment, and religious practices. Le Jeune's words convey the ascetic ideals common to Jesuit writings of the period, but they also imply the malleability of bodies, which could be shaped by encounters with the environments they moved through.<sup>3</sup>

Histories of encounter in New France have tended to focus on encounters between people. Whilst older historiographical accounts of 'contact' portray the 'meeting' of European and Indigenous peoples as clashes of civilisation, historians have for some time now acknowledged the complexities of these encounters.<sup>4</sup> As Richard White famously argued in his 1991 study, *The Middle Ground*, encounters between Europeans and the Indigenous peoples of the *pays d'en haut* (the Great Lakes region of present-day North America) were processes of accommodation and mutual exchange.<sup>5</sup> Drawing on White's work and on the work of anthropologists, notably Bruce Trigger, historians of religion have also highlighted 'religious' syncretism and the 'blending' of European and Indigenous spiritual practices.<sup>6</sup> Analysing these encounters is not

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<sup>3</sup> On Jesuit asceticism, see Peter A. Goddard, "Canada in Seventeenth-Century Jesuit Thought: Backwater or Opportunity?" in *Decentring the Renaissance: Canada in Multidisciplinary Perspective*, ed. Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 189-90.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984).

<sup>5</sup> Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), ix-x. On White's continuing historiographical influence, see Catherine Desbarats, "Following *The Middle Ground*," *WMQ* 63, no.1 (2006): 81-96.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Erik R. Seaman, *The Huron-Wendat Feast of the Dead: Indian-European Encounters in Early North America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Allan Greer and Jodi Bilinkoff, eds., *Colonial Saints: Discovering the Holy in the Americas, 1500-1800* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Kenneth M. Morrison, *The Solidarity of Kin: Ethnohistory, Religious Studies, and the Algonkian-French Encounter* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002). Bruce Trigger's *The Children of Aataentsic* is an ethnographic and historical work that places native people at the centre of the study, rather than focusing solely on their relations with Europeans. For Trigger's reflections on his work and its reception since its publication in 1976, see his preface to the 1987 reprint, in Bruce G. Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660* (1976; repr. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), ix-xxi.

easy, since European conceptual categories do not adequately describe Indigenous world views.<sup>7</sup> The term ‘conversion’, as Allan Greer has shown, is insufficient to describe the complex processes of exchange which took place in early Canada. Connoting movement from one ‘religion’ to another, it implies that European and Indigenous ‘religions’ were distinct, clearly delineated conceptual categories.<sup>8</sup> As Denys Delâge has pointed out, the adoption of some Catholic practices by Iroquoian peoples did not require the wholesale rejection of their traditional practices and beliefs; rather, they simply augmented existing systems of belief.<sup>9</sup>

Whilst historians have examined the myriad encounters between people in New France – and the resulting syncretic systems of belief – there has been little analysis of encounters between bodies and environment.<sup>10</sup> Drawing on recent anthropological research, this thesis will argue that just as bodies – and bodily practices (cross-planting, for example) – could shape environment, so too could environment shape practices. As Tim Ingold argues, and as will be discussed in the second chapter of this thesis, ‘being alive’ or ‘inhabiting’ the world is a continual process of ‘correspondence’ or dialogue with the environment. Humans – as organisms – embody both nature *and* culture. Thus, they not only shape the environments that

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<sup>7</sup> See Karen Ordahl Kupperman, “Introduction: The Changing Definition of America,” in *America in European Consciousness*, ed. Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Allan Greer, “Conversion and Identity: Iroquois Christianity in Seventeenth-Century New France,” in *Conversion: Old Worlds and New*, ed. Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 177.

<sup>9</sup> Denys Delâge, “La religion dans l’alliance Franco-Amérindienne,” *Anthropologie et Sociétés* 15, no.1 (1991), 55-56.

<sup>10</sup> Historians have only recently begun to examine climatological factors in colonial encounters. See, for example, the *William and Mary Quarterly* Forum on Climate and Early American History, in particular: Sam White, “‘Shewing the Difference Betweene their Conjuraction, and Our Invocation on the Name of God for Rayne’: Weather, Prayer, and Magic in Early American Encounters,” *WMQ* 72, no.1 (2015): 33-56; Thomas Wickman, “‘Winters Embittered with Hardships’: Severe Cold, Wabanaki Power, and English Adjustments, 1690-1710,” *WMQ* 72, no.1 (2015): 57-98.

they move through, but are shaped by them.<sup>11</sup> Rather than focusing on conversion, which, as we saw above, can obscure Indigenous understandings of religious practices, this thesis will focus on practice itself.

Although the study of ‘Western’ religion has often emphasised ‘creed’ or written teachings, David Morgan argues that examining embodied practices can both widen a historian’s scope for analysis and broaden her conceptions of what religion ‘actually’ is.<sup>12</sup> The ‘slowly sedimentary practice of belief’, he asserts, is built up over a lifetime. When a person states that they believe, he continues:

we must listen for the silent speech beneath his words, the habits and felt-life of old practices. We must learn to hear his sighs, his gritted teeth, the murmur of his nostalgia, the distance gaze of eyes searching the memory of folded hands, sore knees, and the lingering memory of the Eucharistic liturgy. He says he believes, but what he really does is feel, smell, hear, and see.<sup>13</sup>

‘The deep shape of belief’, Morgan concludes, ‘...is the history and momentum of embodied practices that engage her person in a duty or practice or feeling enjoined by her deity.’<sup>14</sup>

Although I will employ the word ‘embodied’ throughout this thesis, I do not mean that experiences are *enclosed within* the body. Rather, as Maxine Sheets-Johnstone and Tim Ingold

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<sup>11</sup> Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (London: Routledge, 2000), 3; Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (London: Routledge, 2011), 95.

<sup>12</sup> See David Morgan, “Introduction: The Matter of Belief,” in *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief*, ed. David Morgan (London: Routledge, 2010), 1-3.

<sup>13</sup> Morgan, “Introduction,” 4-5.

<sup>14</sup> Morgan, “Introduction,” 5.

have argued, the body moves in ‘correspondence’ with its surroundings. ‘[W]e are our bodies’, Ingold argues, ‘But we are not wrapped up in them.’<sup>15</sup> As missionary bodies moved through the world, they were corresponding with it. From footprints to crosses carved on trees, they left material traces on the landscape. But, as the opening extract of this introduction demonstrates, the environment also made its mark on missionary bodies.

Ingold’s theory provides a useful methodological framework for this thesis, since the Jesuits – the principal protagonists of the study – were constantly travelling through new environments. Allan Greer’s study of Jesuit Father Pierre Chaumonot, ‘A Wandering Jesuit in Europe and America,’ for instance, highlights the ways in which Chaumonot, who was ‘constantly on the move’, reinvented his identity through travel.<sup>16</sup> Officially founded in 1540 when they received the approval of Pope Paul III, the Society of Jesus was formed in an era of Catholic renewal, and had a global agenda for conversion.<sup>17</sup> Jesuit missionaries were thus highly mobile

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<sup>15</sup> Ingold discusses Sheet-Johnstone’s work in Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2013), 94. See also Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, *The Primacy of Movement* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1999), 359.

<sup>16</sup> Allan Greer, “A Wandering Jesuit in Europe and America: Father Chaumonot Finds a Home,” in *Empires of God: Religious Encounters in the Early Modern Atlantic*, ed., Linda Gregerson and Susan Juster (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 107-108.

<sup>17</sup> On the founding of the Society of Jesus, see John W. O’Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 4. A number of historians of early Catholicism now advocate a ‘global’ approach to the history of early modern missions. See, for example, the work of Simon Ditchfield, most recently, “Catholic Reformation and Renewal,” in *The Illustrated History of the Reformation*, ed. Peter Marshall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): 152-85. See also, Ditchfield, “Carlo Borromeo in the Construction of Roman Catholicism as a World Religion,” *Studia Borromaeica* 25 (2011): 3-23; Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Ditchfield, “Of Dancing Cardinals and Mestizo Madonnas: Reconfiguring the History of Roman Catholicism in the Early Modern Period,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 8, no.3-4 (2004): 386-408; R. Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). For an illustration of the Society of Jesus’s global reach see the broad geographical range of essays in John O’Malley, S.J., Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris, and T. Frank Kennedy, S.J., eds., *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences and the Arts, 1540-1773*, 2 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999-2006). This ‘global’ approach is not without its critics, notably, Liam Matthew Brockey, who argues that invoking the Jesuits’ global reach adds little to scholars’ knowledge of individual missions. ‘Global’, he argues, implies ‘globalization’, a term which he regards as anachronistic when applied to the premodern. See Brockey, *The Visitor: André Palmeiro and the Jesuits in Asia* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), 428. Luke Clossey’s *Salvation and Globalization* is amongst those works singled out for criticism, see 490n35. See also, Brockey, review of *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions*, by Luke Clossey, *The Journal of Early Modern History*

individuals (though, of course, they were – in theory – constrained to travel only where they were sent).

The geographical focus of this thesis will be New France. New France, as Catherine Desbarats and Allan Greer have recently pointed out, was not a clearly fixed geographical area, but rather, ‘a vaguely delineated expression of limitless imperial ambitions’.<sup>18</sup> Still, today, historians employ the term to describe a variety of different areas, in its narrowest sense, to describe the area known in the seventeenth-century as ‘Canada’ (that is, the Saint Lawrence Valley area), or a much broader area of territories ‘claimed’ by France, including Louisiana, Acadia, Île Royale, and Canada.<sup>19</sup> In this thesis, the term New France will be used in its broadest sense, to describe both ‘Canada’ and wider French colonial North America. The focus of my thesis, however, will be less broad, concentrating on the Saint Lawrence Valley area, Quebec, and the *pays d’en haut* or ‘upper country’ (the area surrounding the Great Lakes region of present day North America).<sup>20</sup>

Documented French-led exploration of the Saint Lawrence River area began with Jacques Cartier’s first voyage in 1534, but the first permanent settlement was not established in the Saint

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82, no.3 (2010), 665-67. For Clossey’s response to Brockey’s criticisms in *The Visitor*, see Simon Ditchfield et al., review of *The Visitor: André Palmeiro and the Jesuits in Asia*, by Liam Matthew Brockey, *The Catholic Historical Review*, 101, no.3 (2015), in particular, 561-63. This thesis follows the example of Timothy G. Pearson, who, whilst recognising the importance of wider Catholic and trans-Atlantic conceptions of – for instance – the cult of saints, emphasises that local contexts were instrumental in the creation of ‘holiness’. See Timothy G. Pearson, *Becoming Holy in Early Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2014), especially, 7-10.

<sup>18</sup> Catherine Desbarats and Allan Greer, “Où est la Nouvelle-France?” *RHAF* 64, no.3-4 (2011), 31.

<sup>19</sup> Whilst American historians tend to favour the narrower definition, Québécois historians often employ the broader one. See Desbarats and Greer, “Où est la Nouvelle-France?” 31-36.

<sup>20</sup> On the *pays d’en haut*, see White, *The Middle Ground*. See also, Gilles Havard, *Empires et métissages: Indiens et Français dans le pays d’en haut, 1660-1715* (Sillery: Septentrion, 2003).

Lawrence Valley until the founding of Quebec in 1608.<sup>21</sup> Tragedy struck for the French in 1629, when the English, led by the Kirke Brothers, took Quebec. But following a period of upheaval it was returned to the French in 1632 by the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye. This thesis will take this date as its starting point.

The colony's French population remained relatively small throughout the period under investigation in this thesis.<sup>22</sup> Around 227 French people lived in the colony in 1633. This had grown to around 500 by 1640, 600 by 1645, and 2,000 in 1657.<sup>23</sup> The census of 1661 recorded 3,173 people but Marcel Trudel's revised estimate places the actual population at around 4,244.<sup>24</sup> After Louis XIV took direct control of the colony the population began to grow more rapidly and by 1680 there were around 10,000 colonists. By the end of the French Régime in 1763, the population was around 70,000.<sup>25</sup> Indigenous populations are more difficult to gauge, but after the arrival of Europeans in North America, these populations experienced serious decline.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> For a modern edition of the account of Jacques Cartier's first voyage, see Ramsay Cook, ed. *The Voyages of Jacques Cartier* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

<sup>22</sup> Migration to New France was almost exclusively French. See Greer, *The People of New France*, 18.

<sup>23</sup> These are Marcel Trudel's estimates. See Trudel, *HNF*, 3, t.1: 132; 154; 159; 247.

<sup>24</sup> Marcel Trudel, *La population du Canada en 1666: Recensement Reconstitué* (Sillery: Septentrion, 1995), 53.

<sup>25</sup> Danielle Gavreau, "Vingt ans d'études sur la population pendant le régime français: bilan et perspectives," in *Vingts ans après Habitants et marchands: Lectures de l'histoire des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles canadiens*, ed. Sylvie Dépatie, Catherine Desbarats, Danielle Gavreau, Mario Lalancette, and Thomas Wien (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 32.

<sup>26</sup> On the difficulties of estimating Indigenous populations, which are usually based on the study of epidemics, see Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 258n1. According to Richter, a relatively high recent estimate places the Indigenous population of eastern North America at 3,791,040 in 1492. Estimates from smaller regions, he argues, tend to be more accurate. For instance, Gary Warrick's recent estimates of the Wendat-Tionontate (Huron-Petun) population suggest that this group retained a relatively stable population of between 28,000 and 30,000 throughout the sixteenth century, but that the population declined severely during the epidemics of the 1630s, which left only around 23,000 Wendat-Tionontate in 1637. See Gary Warrick, *A Population History of the Huron-Petun, A.D. 500-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 225; 245.

When Paul Le Jeune arrived at Quebec in 1632, he described the ‘poor’ ‘*habitation*’ ‘all in ashes.’ He asserted that the English, who had taken Quebec from the French in 1629, ‘came to this country to plunder, not to build’ (‘*estoient venus en ce país pour piller, & non pour edifier*’).<sup>27</sup> A skilled rhetorician, Le Jeune would have chosen his words carefully. Here, the verb *édifier* has multiple meanings: to build, to restore order, and – most significantly, in the context of French missionary activity – to edify or lead to piety.<sup>28</sup> Colonisation and the construction of the ‘sacred’ were thus, in the missionary’s mind, inextricably linked.<sup>29</sup>

Drawing on the work of Mircea Eliade, scholars have often sought to identify what was ‘sacred’ and what was ‘profane’.<sup>30</sup> The early modern world was infused with the sacred, evidence of which could be seen in all of God’s creations. Scholars of early modern religion have often focussed on ways in which ‘sacred space’ was marked and delineated. Where, they have asked, were the boundaries of the sacred? Others have highlighted the fluidity of these boundaries and their permeability.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *JR*, 5: 39. For the original French, see 38. On the English occupation of Quebec, see Gilles Havard and Cécile Vidal, *Histoire de l’Amérique française*, édition revue (Paris: Flammarion, 2008), 88-89.

<sup>28</sup> *DAF* (1694), s.v. “édifier.”

<sup>29</sup> On links between colonisation and conversion, see Susan Juster and Linda Gregerson, “Introduction,” in *Empires of God: Religious Encounters in the Early Modern Atlantic*, ed. Susan Juster and Linda Gregerson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 1. See also Claude Prudhomme, *Missions chrétiennes et colonisation, XVIe – XXe siècles* (Paris: Cerf, 2004).

<sup>30</sup> See Will Coster and Andrew Spicer, eds., *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Sarah Hamilton and Andrew Spicer, eds., *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005). Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper and Row, 1961).

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Keith Luria, *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early Modern France* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 48.

Moving away from binary conceptions of space that distinguish between ‘sacred’ and ‘profane’, this thesis will not attempt to situate ‘the sacred’ in any particular geographical place. Rather, I will argue that the sacred was created and understood through complex entanglements of bodies and environments. Religious practices performed by bodies in ‘correspondence’ with environments – to borrow Ingold’s useful term – were crucial to this process. This is not to say that there were not places which were particularly potent in terms of holiness. As Will Coster and Andrew Spicer have argued, there were ‘gradations of holiness’, and places that were understood as being particularly potent when it came to spiritual affairs (e.g. an altar within a chapel).<sup>32</sup> The word ‘sacred’ had (and has) multiple meanings. It could mean ‘consecrated’, that is, made holy through a rite (this could apply to both persons and things; bishops were consecrated as were churches).<sup>33</sup> But it could also have a broader application. ‘[I]t is said of things’, read the entry for ‘sacred’ in the 1694 *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française*, ‘to which one owes a particular veneration. It is opposed to the profane.’ The entry continued with some illustrative examples of how the word could be used: ‘*Church ornaments are sacred, you must not touch them. the holy and sacred Council. sacred History. sacred books. Kings’ bodies are sacred.*’<sup>34</sup> In using the word ‘sacred’, this thesis embraces the term’s broader meaning, in order to draw in a wide variety of practice.

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<sup>32</sup> See Will Coster and Andrew Spicer, “Introduction: The Dimensions of Sacred Space in Reformation Europe,” ed. in Will Coster and Andrew Spicer *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 9.

<sup>33</sup> The term ‘*sacre*’ referred specifically to the consecration of kings and bishops. See *DAF* (1694), s.v. “*sacre*.”

<sup>34</sup> *DAF* (1694), s.v. “*sacré*.” My translation. ‘il se dit des choses ausquelles on doit une veneration particuliere. Il est opposé à la profane. *Les biens de l’Eglise sont sacrez, il n’y faut pas toucher. le saint & sacré Concile. l’Histoire sacrée. les Livres sacrez. la personne des Roys est sacrée.*’ On the king’s sacred body see, Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France*, trans. J. E. Anderson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973).



The term ‘environment’ will be used throughout this thesis to describe the world in which early modern people lived. It will signify not only built structures, but also the sky and the sea and the beings – human and *non-human* – that inhabited them. Since the world view of the Algonquian and Iroquoian peoples encountered by Europeans in North America included ‘other-than-human-persons’ (that is non-human beings imbued with spirit; some rocks or trees, for example) these must also be taken into account.<sup>35</sup> Looking to the specificity of the environments they moved through, then, can assist the historian in an analysis of the practices and identities that emerged from these journeys.

The main body of sources consulted in this thesis is the *Jesuit Relations*. Printed in Paris by Sebastien Cramoisy (and later, his successor, Sebastien Marbre-Cramoisy), the *Relations* were published annually between 1632 and 1673 and chart the events of the New France mission.<sup>36</sup> As historical sources, the *Jesuit Relations* are not unproblematic. Although a *Relation* might bear the signature of the superior of the New France mission – ostensibly its ‘author’ – the superior would often compose it by compiling manuscript letters sent to him by missionaries ‘on the ground’. Once the text had been sent to France, the *procureur* of the French mission in New France might also have had an input, and so might the printer, Cramoisy.<sup>37</sup> Before publication, then, a given *Relation* would have been edited several times. Despite this, relatively little attention has been paid to the ways in which this process would have shaped the final text.

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<sup>35</sup> Anthropologist A. Irving Hallowell coined the term ‘other-than-human-persons’ a 1960 article. See Hallowell, “Ojibwa Ontology, Behaviour, and Worldview,” in *Culture in History: Essays in Honour of Paul Radin*, ed. Stanley Diamond (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960): 19-52.

<sup>36</sup> On the *Relations*, see Lawrence C. Wroth. “The Jesuit Relations from New France.” *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 30 (1936): 110-49.

<sup>37</sup> Catherine Desbarats, “1616-1673: Les Jésuites, *Relations des Jésuites*,” in *Monuments intellectuels de la Nouvelle-France et du Québec ancien: Aux origines d’une tradition culturelle*, dir. Claude Corbo (Montréal: Les Presses de l’Université de Montréal, 2014), 52.

What is more, as Bronwen Catherine McShea argues, historians have analysed Jesuit policies and attitudes to Indigenous populations in New France as separate from what she describes as ‘the complex French, largely Parisian world that was the primary ground of the missionaries’ human experience.’<sup>38</sup> Most of the Jesuit missionaries in New France were from the Jesuit province of France, and the *Relations*, McShea argues, were consciously directed toward a French – and broadly Parisian – audience.<sup>39</sup> They were not ‘merely’ mission reports, but reflected and promoted the imperial aims of the French crown.<sup>40</sup> In order to fully appreciate the *Relations*’ complex meanings in a trans-Atlantic context, then, the metropole must also be taken into account.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, since a large number of the documents relating to the New France mission have been edited, most historians rely on modern editions for their research. This has had a significant impact on the scope and range of materials discussed in scholarly works. The two principal source collections relating to the Society of Jesus in New France are Reuben Gold Thwaites’s seventy-three-volume *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* (published 1896-1901) and Jesuit Lucien Campeau’s nine-volume *Monumenta Novæ Franciæ* (published 1967-2003).<sup>42</sup> This thesis relies predominantly on Thwaites’s edition, which includes the annual *Relations* alongside other related documents, notably letters from individual missionaries. Unlike

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<sup>38</sup> Bronwen Catherine McShea, “Cultivating Empire Through Print: The Jesuit Strategy for New France and the Parisian *Relations* of 1632 to 1673,” (PhD diss., Yale University, 2011), 8.

<sup>39</sup> McShea, “Cultivating Empire Through Print,” 8-9.

<sup>40</sup> McShea, “Cultivating Empire Through Print,” 23.

<sup>41</sup> McShea, “Cultivating Empire Through Print,” 9.

<sup>42</sup> Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791: The Original French, Latin, and Italian Texts, with English Translations and Notes; Illustrated by Portraits, Maps, and Facsimiles*, 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1896-1901); Lucien Campeau, ed., *Monumenta Novæ Franciæ*, 9 vols. (Rome; Montréal: Institutum Romanum Societatis Iesu; Éditions Bellarmin, 1967-2003).

Campeau's *Monumenta*, which only includes documents up to the year 1661, Thwaites's edition covers the full period under discussion in this thesis. Additionally, each document appears in its original language with an accompanying English translation (I have used these translations for the majority of my quotations from the annual *Relations*). Since there are some inaccuracies in Thwaites's translations, however, the edition must be used with care.<sup>43</sup> As such, I have at times chosen to use Campeau's *Monumenta*, in order to provide my own translations.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, since the *Monumenta* contain a more comprehensive selection of documents than Thwaites's *Relations* (in particular, Latin documents held at the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu* in Rome), I have also drawn upon this collection in order to broaden the scope of my analysis.<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, since many scholars rely predominantly on printed edited collections, the materiality of original documents and manuscripts is often passed over in historical analyses. Yet, as I argue in Chapter 5 of this thesis, the material form of documents affected the ways in which they were read and experienced. Birch bark letters, for instance, were simultaneously 'relations' and curious objects, which could be investigated using the senses. The physical form of these sources, however, has shaped the ways in which they have been regarded by scholars. The two extant missionary birch bark letters analysed in Chapter 5 were, I argue, omitted from edited source collections (including Thwaites's *Relations*), since they were viewed as objects rather than texts. Consequently, they have received little historical analysis. Although I have

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<sup>43</sup> Bronwen McShea has demonstrated how small inaccuracies in translations can change meaning. See, for example, McShea, "Cultivating Empire Through Print," 97; 97n9; 104-105.

<sup>44</sup> Campeau's accompanying notes have also proved invaluable.

<sup>45</sup> For a comparison of these two source collections, see Luca Codignola and Matteo Sanfilippo, "Archivistes, historiens et archives romaines," in *L'Amérique du nord française dans les archives religieuses de Rome, 1600-1922: Guide de recherche*, dir. Pierre Hurtubise, Luca Codignola et Fernand Harvey (Sainte-Foy, QC: Éditions de l'IQRC, Presses de l'Université Laval, 1999), 38.

chosen to use Thwaites's edition throughout most of this thesis – in particular, when citing the annual New France *Relations* – this is not, therefore, without regard to the complexities of the collection, its omissions, and the corpus of sources relating to the New France mission.

Although the annual *Relations* provide the thesis's principal chronological focus, I will draw on evidence ranging up until the year 1700. The thesis will not only examine the *Jesuit Relations*, but also sources written by other contemporary missionaries in New France.<sup>46</sup> Of particular interest is the correspondence of Marie de l'Incarnation (1599-1672), the first superior of the Ursuline convent at Quebec.<sup>47</sup> These letters are useful, not only because of their liveliness and detail, but because they span roughly the same period as the *Relations*, discussing many of the same people and events.<sup>48</sup> Marie, like many other missionaries from the period was inspired in her apostolic vocation by the *Relations*, a fact that she mentions in her writings, and which

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<sup>46</sup> This thesis will not discuss Franciscan Recollects or Capuchin missionaries. From 1632 until 1657 (when the Sulpicians arrived in Montreal), the Jesuits were the only male missionaries in the Saint Lawrence Valley. The Recollects had been the first missionaries in the area (Samuel de Champlain had invited them to join his expedition to Canada in 1615), and they collaborated briefly with the Jesuits from 1625 until 1629. However, they went back to France after the English took Quebec in 1629 and would not return to the area known as Canada until 1670. See Luca Codignola, "Few, Uncooperative, and Ill Informed? The Roman Catholic Clergy in French and British North America, 1610-1658," in *Decentring the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective, 1500-1700*, ed. Carolyn Podruchny and Germaine Warkentin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 176; Dominique Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire: Les missions françaises au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 42. In contrast, Jesuit missionaries in Acadia shared the terrain with Recollects (1630-45), Capuchins (1632-58) and a lone *cordelier*, but owing to a lack of extant documentation, these orders have received little attention from historians. See Codignola, "Few, Uncooperatives and Ill Informed?" 176. For a notable exception, see Caroline Galland, *Pour la gloire de Dieu et du Roi: Les récollets en Nouvelle-France au XVIIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Cerf, 2012).

<sup>47</sup> This was the *Relation* of 1671-72. For a description of the three editions of this *Relation*, see James C. McCoy, *Jesuit Relations of Canada, 1632-1672: A Bibliography* (Paris: Arthur Rau, 1937), 304-310. The most comprehensive French edition of Marie de l'Incarnation's letters is Dom Guy Oury, ed., *Marie de l'Incarnation, Ursuline (1599-1672): Correspondence* (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1971). Hereafter MI, *Corr.* For a modern English edition, see Mary Dunn, ed. and trans., *From Mother to Son: The Selected Letters of Marie de l'Incarnation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). Whilst Oury's edition contains Marie's letters to a number of correspondents including family, fellow nuns, her former superior, and spiritual advisor, Dunn's edition includes only letters sent to her son, Dom Claude Martin.

<sup>48</sup> Marie's letters from New France span roughly the same period as the *Relations*, since she arrived in the colony in 1639 and died in 1672 (as noted above, the last published *Relation* was printed in 1673).

highlights the importance of intertextualities in missionary discourses.<sup>49</sup> Whilst this thesis will not explicitly concern itself with gender, the perspectives of Marie de l'Incarnation and her fellow nuns (in particular, Cécile de Sainte-Croix), provide alternative perspectives to those of their more-mobile male counterparts.<sup>50</sup> As cloistered religious, the women demonstrate a particular interest in space; their letters concerning the ocean crossing, for instance, discuss the space of the sailing vessel and how it differed or was rendered similar – through religious rites and devotions – to the cloister.

As a result of their availability in edited collections, missionary sources from New France are well-known to scholars, but this thesis presents a re-reading of these texts. This thesis places itself in opposition to the view espoused by Stephen Greenblatt that European sources can only tell us about Europeans.<sup>51</sup> Although historians must be careful not to read these sources at 'face value', reading them 'against the grain' (i.e. reading meaning that was not intended by the author of a source), can broaden the scope of historical analysis. In my re-reading of mission accounts, I not only employ anthropological and archaeological evidence, but will also read for bodily experience, re-reading the accounts in order to situate their missionary authors in their environments. How, for instance, did missionaries' surroundings and journeys shape the

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<sup>49</sup> On the influence of the *Relations* on Marie's apostolic vocation, see Marie de l'Incarnation to Dom Raymond de Saint Bernard, Tours, April 1635, MI, *Corr.*, Letter XII, 27. Marie wrote, 'nous avons veu la Relation, qui bien moins de me décourager, m'a r'alumé le désir et le courage.'

<sup>50</sup> For an analysis of the woman religious of New France with a particular focus on gender, see Dominique Deslandres, "In the Shadow of the Cloister: Representations of Female Holiness in New France," in *Colonial Saints: Discovering the Holy in the Americas, 1500-1800*, ed. Allan Greer and Jodi Bilinkoff (New York: Routledge, 2003): 129-152; Leslie Choquette, "'Ces Amazones du Grand Dieu': Women and Mission in Seventeenth-Century Canada," *French Historical Studies* 17, no. 3 (1992): 627-55.

<sup>51</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 7.

composition of their accounts? And how did the bodies of letter-bearers further add to their meanings?

Whilst my principal source base will be missionary accounts and letters, I will also draw complementary evidence from early modern French literature and spiritual writings and treatises. In this respect, this thesis responds to Dominique Deslandres's call for an 'ethnohistory' of missionaries.<sup>52</sup> Since the authors of the *Relations* were writing for a predominantly French audience in France, their writings must be understood within the framework of early modern French literary culture. Furthermore, as Chapter 5 of this thesis will indicate, a particularly pious reader of the *Relations* might supplement her reading by sourcing information (perhaps other relations) of events on other Jesuit missions.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, reading bodily engagement with sources – and understanding their materiality – can assist historians in examining the ways in which these texts could have been read.

Whilst this thesis is 'about' New France, then, it is also about the ways that the mission was understood – and, in some cases experienced – from 'Old' France. How did people in Europe experience and contribute to the sacred of the mission terrain? In what ways was this shaped by

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<sup>52</sup> Dominique Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire: Les missions françaises au XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 14; Dominique Deslandres, "À quand une ethnohistoire des missionnaires?" *Études d'histoire religieuse* 61 (1995): 115-24; Dominique Deslandres, "Qu'est-ce qui faisait courir Marie Guyart? Essai d'ethnohistoire d'une mystique d'après sa correspondance," *Laval théologique et philosophique* 53, no.2 (1997): 285-300.

<sup>53</sup> As Allan Greer and Kenneth Mills have argued, historians rarely adopt a comparative approach to early modern missions, preferring to remain within the boundaries of national histories. See Greer and Mills, "A Catholic Atlantic," in *The Atlantic in Global History, 1500-2000*, ed. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra and Erik R. Seeman (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2007), 3. Intertextual links between missionary accounts have rarely been examined. This is one of the principal aims of a recent edited collection, which aims to explore connections between 'Jesuit Relations' and the Enlightenment. See *Jesuit Accounts of the Colonial Americas: Intercultural Transfers, Intellectual Disputes, and Textualities*, ed. Marc-André Bernier, Clorinda Donato, and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, in association with the UCLA Center for Seventeenth-Century Studies and the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 2014).

sacred objects and curiosities received from the colony? And how, conversely, might people in France *shape* the landscape of the mission?

Journeys between France and New France, too, will be an important theme. This thesis takes a ‘circular’ approach to the study of missions in the colony. As a recent article by Karin Vélez, Luke Clossey, and Sebastian Prange has argued, the movement of ‘religious ideas’ is difficult to chart.<sup>54</sup> Rather than looking at the movement of ideas, however, this thesis will look at the movement of practice. The thesis is organised into five thematic chapters. Each chapter examines a particular ‘stage’ of an imagined missionary journey to New France and back again.

The first chapter will examine movement from France to New France across the vast Atlantic Ocean. Despite the burgeoning field of Atlantic History, little attention has been paid to the ocean as a space of devotional practice. This thesis will argue that while religious practices moved across the ocean in ships, they did not move unchanged, but were shaped by environment and the experiences of the voyage.

The second chapter of this thesis will examine the ways in which bodies could shape environment and vice versa. Through a focus on missionary clothing I will argue that, whilst missionaries sought to protect their bodies from environment (through the retention of missionary garb), their cumbersome clothing often caused them difficulties when travelling with Indigenous groups. Since their identities became enmeshed with their ‘black robes’, these clothes became vehicles through which missionary authority could be challenged.

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<sup>54</sup> Karin Vélez, Luke Clossey, and Sebastian R. Prange, “Religious Ideas in Motion,” in *A Companion to World History*, ed. Douglas Northrop (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 352.

The third chapter will focus on temporary sacred possessions in both urban areas and in the forests of Canada. Though historians have tended to focus on ceremonial possessions, such as cross planting, it will be argued that practices were established in ‘correspondence’ with environments and over time. This was how the ‘slow sedimentary practice of belief’ was built up.

The fourth chapter will move to an examination of imagined sacred spaces. Drawing on Erik R Seeman’s work on ‘deathways’, I will argue that Wendat conceptions of the afterlife, which were rooted in their environment, shaped the ways in which they thought about Heaven. Furthermore, though some historians – notably Dominique Deslandres – have argued that Indigenous practices had almost no effect on missionary beliefs,<sup>55</sup> this chapter will argue against this theory. I will by no means suggest that missionaries contemplated ‘conversion’ to the faith of the ‘Other’. But through an analysis of missionary mentalities – of their dreams and of their visions – I will argue that the environment of New France shaped missionary imaginations.

The fifth and final chapter will deal with New France as an ‘imaginary’ space made tangible in France through missionary correspondence and *Relations*. I will argue that the materiality of letters – and the bodies of their bearers – could shape the ways in which readers understood the colony. Taken together, then, these chapters provide an analysis of the ways in which entanglements of bodies and environment produced the ‘sacred’ in its many and myriad forms.

Finally, to end this introduction, I would like to briefly discuss the terminology employed in this thesis. When discussing Indigenous individuals and groups, I have – as far as possible – used

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<sup>55</sup> Dominique Deslandres, “Entre persuasion et adhésion: La mission française au XVIIe siècle,” *Théologiques* 13, no.1 (2005), 95.



endonyms rather than the terms employed in seventeenth-century missionary documents. Thus, instead of ‘Huron’ I use ‘Wendat’; for ‘Iroquois’, I use ‘Haudenosaunee’; for ‘Montagnais’, I use ‘Innu’. I acknowledge that this is not a perfect system (since present-day naming practices do not always reflect seventeenth-century realities), and in cases where an individual’s identity is ambiguous, I retain the terminology used in the original source. When quoting from primary sources, I use the terms employed by authors in order to avoid obscuring possible meanings. For place names, I have retained the names used by French missionaries and settlers. Chapter 4 is an exception, since the events in question take place in predominantly Indigenous settings (and Indigenous ‘ancestral landscapes’), a point integral to the chapter’s overall argument. In this chapter, I have thus chosen to use place names employed by residents of the areas under discussion (i.e. ‘Wendake’ has been used to discuss the Wendat homeland, rather than *pays des Hurons* or Huronia). Language will thus be used flexibly and, when additional information is required for clarity, this will be provided in a footnote or in parentheses.

## Chapter 1

### “A floating piece of space”?: Sacred vessels and crossings to New France

#### Introduction

In the Book of Genesis, the ocean appears as the instrument of God’s divine justice; Noah’s Ark, the vessel that carried human and animal life to safety in the wake of the Flood.<sup>1</sup> In the years of European exploration and expansion following the Reformations, ships – and their crews – once again came to be viewed as vessels for the preservation of both life and faith. In his maritime handbook, *Hydrographie contentant la theorie et la pratique de toutes les parties de la navigation* (first published in 1643), former naval chaplain Jesuit Father Georges Fournier praised the role of mariners in the conversion of unbelievers in the New World. ‘Nowadays’, Fournier wrote:

he [God] again makes use of mariners to carry the Faith to the corners of the earth [*‘aux extremittez du monde’*], & the Church, perishing in several places in Europe, preserves itself in ships, and crossing the seas has conquered new worlds, where it has brought jewels which are infinitely more precious than the gold and the pearls which our ships have brought back.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For an examination of the sea in biblical imagery, see Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea: The Discovery of the Seaside in the Western World: 1750-1840*, trans. Jocelyn Phelps (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Georges Fournier, *Hydrographie contenant la theorie et la pratique de toutes les parties de la navigation: Seconde Edition: Reueuë, corrigée & augmentée par l’Auteur auant son deceds: Plus, la Nauigation du Roy d’Escosse Iaques Cinquieme du Nom, autour de son Royaume & Isles Hebrides & Orcades, sous la conduite d’Alexandre Lyndsay excellent Pilote Escossois* (Paris, 1667). All translations from this work are my own. ‘De nos jours il s’est encore seruy des gens de mer pour porter la Foy aux extremittez du monde, & l’Eglise perissant en plusieurs endroits de l’Europe, s’est conseruee dans les vaisseaux, et traversant les mers a conquis des mondes nouveaux, où elle a porté des joyaux incomparablement plus precieux que l’or et les perles que nos vaisseaux en ont rapporté.’

Just as Christ's first disciples were fishermen, so now would mariners carry the Catholic faith to far-off lands; Catholicism was not only 'preserved', but could actively 'conquer' New Worlds.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, Fournier argued, although colonial expansion had garnered great riches for European colonisers, the religion that they had 'gifted' (as symbolised by the 'jewels' in the above extract) to the Indigenous populations of the Americas was of far greater value (though given the atrocities carried out by European colonisers, it is unlikely that many Indigenous people would have agreed with this statement).<sup>4</sup> Ships, the Jesuit implied, were sacred vessels that carried Catholicism – and, of course, missionaries – to the New World.

In the last decade or so, there has been an upsurge of interest in what historians have termed, 'Atlantic History'.<sup>5</sup> Influenced by Fernand Braudel's seminal work, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, and by historians of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century slave trade, this historiographical approach analyses connections and exchanges between the different geographical areas and peoples of the 'Atlantic World' (that is, broadly speaking, the four continents enclosing the ocean). 'Thinking Atlanticity', to borrow Karen Ordahl Kupperman's term, involves a process of 'decentring' historical analyses from European capital cities to colonial 'margins' where, Kupperman asserts, 'exchange actually took place'.<sup>6</sup> However, as

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<sup>3</sup> For Christ's meeting with his first disciples, see Matthew 4:18-22.

<sup>4</sup> On the links between colonisation and overseas missions, see Claude Prudhomme, *Missions chrétiennes et colonisation, XVIe – XXe siècles* (Paris: Cerf, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra and Erik R. Seeman, eds., *The Atlantic in Global History, 1500-2000* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007); Alison Games and Adam Rothman, eds., *Major Problems in Atlantic History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008); Jack P. Greene and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Nicholas Canny and Philip Morgan, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Atlantic World, 1450-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Atlantic in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Atlantic in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), see especially chapter 1, "Thinking Atlanticity," 2. For a transatlantic European/Canadian perspective, see Carolyn Podruchny and Germaine Warkentin eds., *Decentring the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary*

Allan Greer and Kenneth Mills argue, while ‘Atlantic History’ has been relatively successful in its examination of transatlantic economies, cultural and religious historians remain attached to national and linguistic boundaries.<sup>7</sup> A comparative analysis of Christianities in diverse colonial settings (such as New France and New Spain, for instance) can highlight similarities as well as differences.<sup>8</sup> But as Karin Vélez, Sebastian R. Prange, and Luke Clossey note in a recent essay, the historical movement of ideas is far more difficult to trace than that of people and commodities, though all are ‘entangled’. Ideas did not move unproblematically from European ‘core’ to colonial ‘periphery’, but rather in what they describe as ‘multiple ouroboric circuits that are continuously rearticulated and reshaped’.<sup>9</sup> Atlantic history, then, is beginning to take account of the diverse ways in which early modern people communicated across the Atlantic world.

Despite this growing historiographical interest in Atlantic connections, very little attention has been paid to the material and spiritual significance of ocean landscapes for the movement and development of religious practices and beliefs; ‘Atlantic History’ rarely deals with the ocean itself.<sup>10</sup> Although seventeenth-century sources relating to New France contain copious

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*Perspective, 1500-1700* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Siân Reynolds, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

<sup>7</sup> Allan Greer and Kenneth Mills, “A Catholic Atlantic,” in *The Atlantic in Global History, 1500-2000*, ed. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra and Erik R. Seeman (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Greer and Mills, “A Catholic Atlantic,” 3.

<sup>9</sup> Karin Vélez, Sebastian R. Prange, and Luke Clossey, “Religious Ideas in Motion,” in *A Companion to World History*, ed. Douglas Northrop (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 352.

<sup>10</sup> There are one or two exceptions, notably Kupperman’s Braudelian, *The Atlantic in World History*. One of the first scholarly examinations of emigrants’ ‘experiences’ aboard sailing vessels is Mikael Dumont, “L’Atlantique des émigrants français (XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles): Expériences de la traversée,” in *La migration européenne aux Amériques: Pour un dialogue entre histoire et littérature*, ed. Didier Poton, Micéala Symington and Laurent Vidal, 59-83. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012. For further detail, see also Dumont’s MA thesis. Mickael Dumont, “L’Atlantique des émigrants français (XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles): Expériences de la traversée.” Master’s thesis, Université de La Rochelle, 2011. For a discussion of Jesuit missionaries’ experiences in seventeenth-century Spanish fleets, see Delphine Tempère, “Marins et missionnaires face aux dangers des navigations océaniques au XVIIe siècle: Catastrophes, recours matériels et méditations spirituelles,” *e-Spania*:

descriptions of the ocean crossing, the role of the ocean – and of ships – in early modern narratives of conversion has rarely been discussed by historians. Dominique Deslandres’ expansive study of French missions in both France and North America, for instance, makes only a cursory mention of the ocean crossing.<sup>11</sup> One of the possible methodological reasons for this neglect is that early modern Europeans did not view the Atlantic Ocean as a clearly delineated geographical area.<sup>12</sup> The term ‘Atlantic’ did not appear in the dictionary of the *Académie Française* until 1835. ‘Sea or Atlantic Ocean,’ the entry reads, ‘The large Ocean, which is between the old and the new world’.<sup>13</sup> This notion of between-ness has endured in scholarship; the ocean – and the ships used to cross it – have often been portrayed as liminal spaces between two more-‘fixed’ places.<sup>14</sup> Foucault, for instance, describes ships as ‘heterotopias’. ‘The vessel is a floating piece of space,’ he asserts, ‘a place without a place’.<sup>15</sup> As Mikael Dumont has argued, ‘moments of transition’ aboard sailing vessels have been ignored by historians; they are often viewed as periods of waiting.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, as anthropologist Barbara Bender argues, places of movement and transition are invested with multiple meanings, albeit meanings which are in

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<sup>11</sup> ‘Nous voici maintenant en Amerique [We are now in America]...’ begins Deslandres’ first chapter on missions in North America. See Dominique Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire: Les missions françaises au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 201.

<sup>12</sup> Kupperman, *The Atlantic in World History*, 3

<sup>13</sup> *DAF* (1835), s.v. “atlantique.” ‘Mer ou Océane Atlantique, Le grand Océan, qui est entre l’ancien et le nouveau monde’

<sup>14</sup> This is exemplified by the title of Gilles Proulx’s monograph, *Between France and New France: Life Aboard the Tall Sailing Ships* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1984).

<sup>15</sup> Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” trans. by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no.1 (1986), 27. Although the ideas in this paper were presented as a lecture given in 1967, the article was not published until 1984. For the original French version of this article, see Michel Foucault, “Des espaces autres,” *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité* 5 (1984): 46-49.

<sup>16</sup> Dumont, “L’Atlantique des émigrants français (XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles),” 78. Dumont writes, ‘L’analyse des moments de transition – souvent associés à l’attente – est souvent laissé pour compte par les historiens lorsqu’il s’agit d’étudier les mouvements migratoires.’

constant flux.<sup>17</sup> From a ship's material structure, to the being and bearing of its passengers, the clothes they wear, and the languages they speak, cultural and religious values can be identified. Ships move and are altered – sometimes irreparably – by the landscapes they travel through, but so too are the cultures and beliefs of the people inside them.<sup>18</sup> Faith and religious practices were not – as Fournier suggested – simply 'preserved', unchanged in ships, but were instead challenged by environment, both maritime and 'built'. Religious practices, therefore, had to be adapted to suit the needs of missionaries, sailors, and passengers.

When the ocean does appear in historical studies, it tends to be portrayed as a contested space of imperial sovereignty. Alan James's monograph, *The Navy and Government in Early Modern France*, for instance, focusses on the role of the French navy as a central force in the development and extension of royal absolutism.<sup>19</sup> One notable (but relatively short) exception is W. Jeffrey Bolster's article, 'Putting the Ocean in Atlantic History'.<sup>20</sup> Although many historians have discussed the movement of commodities – such as fish – Bolster argues, we must incorporate maritime ecology or the 'living sea' into histories of the Atlantic World.<sup>21</sup> How, for instance, did changes in ocean ecosystems shape the lives of those who relied on them for trade and sustenance?<sup>22</sup> Bolster's approach can also be fruitfully applied to the history of

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<sup>17</sup> Barbara Bender, "Introduction," in *Contested Landscapes: Movement, Exile and Place*, ed. Barbara Bender and Margot Winer (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 3.

<sup>18</sup> Bender, "Introduction," 15.

<sup>19</sup> Alan James, *The Navy and Government in Early Modern France: 1572-1661* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004).

<sup>20</sup> W. Jeffrey Bolster, "Putting the Ocean in Atlantic History: Maritime Communities and Marine Ecology in the Northwest Atlantic, 1500-1800," *AHR* 113, no.1 (2008): 19-47. For a recent article on the transatlantic movement of living specimens, see Christopher Parsons and Kathleen Murphy, "Ecosystems Under Sail: Specimen Transport in the Eighteenth-Century French and British Atlantics," *Early American Studies* 10, no.3 (2012): 503-39.

<sup>21</sup> Bolster, "Putting the Ocean in Atlantic History," 21.

<sup>22</sup> Bolster, "Putting the Ocean in Atlantic History," 30. Another recent example of this approach is Mark Kurlansky's, *Cod: A Biography of the Fish That Changed the World* (London: Cape, 1998).

religion. Indeed, the link between natural history and salvation is a topic recently explored by Simon Ditchfield.<sup>23</sup> The Jesuits' 'sensitivity' to local environments and their associated customs, Ditchfield reminds us, was rooted in their use of the *Spiritual Exercises*, which had to be adapted to suit regional variations.<sup>24</sup> An examination of the Atlantic crossing (during which ships and their passengers moved through a variety of climates), can therefore provide the historian with a means of analysing missionary adaptation to different settings. It also provides a useful foil for the dominant historiographical narratives of heroic missionary sacrifice. In what ways, for instance, did ocean landscapes (and cramped conditions aboard sailing vessels) *disrupt* devotional practices?

This chapter will argue that Catholic rites were adapted for and shaped by travel aboard ocean vessels on the crossing to New France. Paying particular attention to the vessel's structure and organisation, it will provide a re-reading of traditional mission narratives that emphasise heroic piety. Drawing on a variety of these narratives (letters and accounts written by missionaries), maritime handbooks (notably, George Fournier's *Hydrographie*), and administrative documents (in particular baptismal records and probate inventories), it will argue that, far from being 'preserved' intact inside ships, post-Tridentine Catholicism was adapted for and shaped by travel aboard sailing vessels on the journey to New France. Conversely, these spaces were also shaped by missionary travel. In the case of the ocean landscape, this was purely rhetorical, but ship interiors were materially adapted (if only temporarily) to accommodate religious rites. The first section of this chapter will analyse rhetorical constructions of the ocean. This will be followed by an examination of religious practices as recorded in missionary accounts, paying

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<sup>23</sup> Simon Ditchfield, "What Did Natural History Have To Do With Salvation? José de Acosta SJ (1540-1600) in the Americas," in *God's Bounty? The Churches and the Natural World*, SCH 46 (2010): 144-68.

<sup>24</sup> Ditchfield, "What Did Natural History Have To Do With Salvation?" 165-66.

particular attention to women religious. Accustomed to lives of enclosure – and thus perhaps more attuned to spatial boundaries – these women have left us with some particularly interesting insights about the spaces they travelled through. The final section will discuss the necessarily fragmented information concerning the practices and beliefs of passengers. Thus, it will be argued, even before arrival in the colony missionaries’ practices were tested and *shaped* by environment. But these practices – in ‘correspondence’ with their surroundings – also shaped the environment of the vessel.

### **Topographical justifications for missionary travel**

The ocean landscape was rhetorically important in the narratives of early French Jesuits. First published in 1643, *Hydrographie contentant la théorie et la pratique de toutes les parties de la navigation*, a maritime handbook written by Jesuit Father Georges Fournier (1595-1652) provides useful insights into seventeenth-century theological justifications for ocean travel.<sup>25</sup> Fournier, who served for a time as chaplain of the French royal navy, was also a scholar and mathematician, who had published a commentary on Euclid and a work of geography, *Geographica orbis notita per littora maris et ripas fluviorum* (1640), which described the earth’s maritime coasts.<sup>26</sup> *Hydrographie* is 643 pages long and is divided into twenty ‘books’. It examines a vast range of topics concerning the theory and practice of maritime affairs, to name a few: naval architecture; harbours and their construction; the good management of crews; naval history; navigation (latitude, longitude, map-reading, and instruments); and – most importantly

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<sup>25</sup> Georges Fournier, *Hydrographie contenant la theorie et la pratique de toutes les parties de la navigation* (Paris, 1643). For Fournier’s biographical details, see Charles Chaubaud-Arnault, “Un aumônier de la flotte sous le règne de Louis XIII: Le Père Fournier,” *Université Catholique (Lyon)* 11 (1892), especially 375-76.

<sup>26</sup> Chaubaud-Arnault, “Un aumônier de la flotte sous le règne de Louis XIII,” 375.



this chapter – devotion and piety. As a naval chaplain and Jesuit, this last subject was partly based on Fournier’s own experiences (he had served in the fleet commanded by Henri d’Escoubleau de Sourdis, Archbishop of Bordeaux, during the Franco-Spanish War).<sup>27</sup> Fournier would also have spoken to Jesuit missionary colleagues who had travelled to Canada, the ‘*Indes Occidentales*’ (West Indies), and the ‘*Indes Orientales*’ (East Indies). From 1641 onwards, he was based at the Jesuit college of La Flèche, where he would no doubt have come in to contact with outgoing and returning missionaries. It is reasonable to assume that he would have also read and heard about the Canadian missions in letters, circulars, and of course in the *Jesuit Relations*. Fournier’s work was not only of interest to missionaries, but also to naval officers and scholars. Samuel Pepys could not resist buying the book.<sup>28</sup> This work was popular enough for a second edition (‘re-edited, corrected and improved by the author before his death’), which was issued in 1667. At 706 pages, this edition was even longer than the first and included a six-page ‘bonus’ account of the navigation of Scotland, the Hebrides and the Orkneys by James V of Scotland.<sup>29</sup> It is from this ‘improved’ edition that I will draw my examples.

Intended for both experts and lay readers (who were uninitiated in the ways of the ocean), one of Fournier’s aims was to reassure his readers that ocean travel was perfectly safe, if not for the body, then at least for the soul. ‘One is not closer to Heaven on one element than on another’,

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<sup>27</sup> Chabaud-Arnault, “Un aumônier de la flotte sous le règne de Louis XIII,” 380-81.

<sup>28</sup> Pepys mentions buying the work in his diary entry for Friday 10 January 1667/68: ‘Thence in Sir W. Penn’s coach alone (he going with Sir D. Gawden) to my new bookseller, Martin’s; and there did meet with Fournier, the Frenchman, that hath wrote of the Sea=Navigation, and I could not but buy him...’ See Robert Latham and William Matthews, eds., *The Complete Diary of Samuel Pepys: A New and Complete Transcription*, Vol. 9 (1668-9) (London: Harper Collins, 2003), 17-18.

<sup>29</sup> Georges Fournier, *Hydrographie contenant la théorie et la pratique de la navigation: Seconde Edition: Reueuë, corrigée et augmentée par l’Auteur auant son deceds: Plus, la Naviagation du Roy d’Escosse Iacques Cinquiesme de son nom autour de son Royaume, & Isles Hebrides & Orcades, sous la conduite d’Alexandre Lyndsay excellent Pilote Escossais* (Paris, 1667).

he told readers, ‘The sea and the earth are one globe’.<sup>30</sup> Already in the sixteenth century, Castilian Jesuit José de Acosta’s *Natural and Moral History of the Indies* (1590) had used topography to justify missionary endeavour. ‘[W]e have established’, wrote Acosta, ‘that here in the Southern Hemisphere we have heavens and they overspread us just as those of Europe and Asia and Africa do.’ Acosta admitted to ‘taking advantage of this circumstance’, when his compatriots accused him and his fellow missionaries of being unpatriotic and forgetting their homeland. Acosta’s answer, he wrote, was ‘that heaven is as close to us in Peru as in Spain, for as Saint Jerome says so well when writing to Paulinus, the gate of heaven is as close to Brittany as to Jerusalem.’<sup>31</sup> In an age when long-distance travel was becoming easier, both biblical and scientific evidence were marshalled to justify overseas missionary expansion.

Yet Fournier’s work did not only seek to justify sea travel; it actively promoted it. The first chapter of *Hydrographie*’s twentieth book (*De la Deuotion des Gens de Mer*) emphasised the privileged place of the sea – and of those who worked on it – in the Bible. Jesus had always shown a great affection for seafarers (*‘les gens de mer’*), Fournier wrote. ‘We do not read [in the Bible]’, he continued,

that Jesus-Christ took his rest on the earth, even though [it was] solid and unmoving, but rather in a bark, & the pleasure he found in conversing with poor sailors, allowed him to rest, even in the worst storms.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 673. ‘Vous n’etes pas plus proche du Ciel sur vn element que sur l’autre. La mer & la terre ne font qu’un globe.’ The term ‘terraqueous globe’ had been coined in 1629 to describe this phenomenon. See David Wootton, *The Invention of Science: A New History of the Scientific Revolution* (London: Allen Lane, 2015), 125. I would like to thank David Wootton for his helpful comments when I presented an earlier draft of this chapter at a research seminar in York.

<sup>31</sup> José de Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, ed. Jane E. Mangan, with an Introduction and Commentary by Walter D. Mignolo, trans. by Frances López-Morillas (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 26.

<sup>32</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 671. ‘Nous ne lisons point que Iesus-Christ aye prit de repos sur terre, quoy que ferme et immobile, mais bien dans vne barque, & et le plaisir qu’il tenoit dans l’entretien des pauvres Matelots, luy faisoit trouuoit son repos.’

Peace, Fournier implied, could thus be found amongst the worst storms; wisdom in unexpected places. ‘I will always remember’, he wrote, ‘the riposte which one day an old sailor made to me’. Fournier, then a young man, had asked the older sailor how he ‘dared’ to go to sea when so many people died there. ‘[The sailor] replied very judiciously’, he recounted, ‘that *he* was even more astonished that *I* dared to go to sleep at night, when so many more people died in their beds than at sea’.<sup>33</sup> Fournier’s anecdote not only mocked the ignorance of his younger, inexperienced self, it also prompted the reader to question their own (mis)conceptions. In fact, the Jesuit argued, a person was more likely to live piously on the ocean than on the land. Two reasons were given for this: first, that the confines of a ship offered less opportunity for sin than the towns and cities of Europe (‘in the month or two that a Sailor has been on land, he will have committed more sins than in two years on the sea’);<sup>34</sup> and, second, that a person’s fear of dying on the ocean (should) render him more mindful of his eternal salvation.<sup>35</sup> ‘*Tout le monde est Saint*’, Fournier argued, ‘*qu’on n’est pas sain, ou qu’on craint de ne l’estre pas long-temps*’ (‘Everyone is a Saint, when one is not safe, or when one fears that one will not be [safe] for long’).<sup>36</sup> The Jesuit’s use of rhetorical language reinforces the meaning of the text. In French, the words ‘*saint*’ (saint’) and ‘*sain*’ (‘healthy’ or ‘safe’, as I have translated it here) are homonyms. Fournier thus implies an inextricable link between good behaviour (or ‘saintliness’) and danger. Furthermore,

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<sup>33</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 672. My emphasis. ‘me souuiendra tousiours de la repartie qui m’auoit fit vn iour un vieux Matelot, auquel comme ie témoignoïs estant encore ieune, que i’estonnoïs comme il osoit monter sur Mer y en ayant tant qui y meurent: il respondit fort iudicieusement qu’il s’estonnoit bien dauantage que i’osoit me coucher, veu qu’il y en auoit beaucoup plus qui mouroient dans leur lict que sur Mer’.

<sup>34</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 677. ‘en vn mois ou deux qu’vn Matelot a esté sur terre, il aura commis plus de pechez qu’en deux années sur la Mer.’

<sup>35</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 676.

<sup>36</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 676.

assonance created by the repetition of [ɛ̃] in ‘*Saint*’ [/sɛ̃/], ‘*sain*’ [/sɛ̃/], and ‘*craint*’ [/krɛ̃/] (‘fear’), emphasises the role of fear as a motivating factor for good behaviour. Fournier backed this up with a biblical metaphor: ‘There are fish’, he stated, ‘which never allow themselves to be caught more easily than in the storms of the Ocean’. Likewise, he continued, ‘there are souls that God does not seem to be able to harvest, if he does not lift whatever tempest makes them frightened of losing their lives.’<sup>37</sup> This reference to Mark 1:17 (“‘Come follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people””) further underlines the notion that conversion (the movement from one faith to another and the rejuvenation of wavering faith) required not only a missionary’s strength but also the grace of God. In typical Jesuit fashion, Fournier also ‘accounted’ for the souls of the dead, devoting the entirety of chapter eight to his theory that more people who died on the ocean achieved salvation than those who died on land. ‘[W]e can conclude’, he ended this chapter,

...that it is probable that of the same number of Catholic Christians who die on the Sea and on land, more are saved on sea than on land.<sup>38</sup>

Assessing missionary achievement in terms of the numbers of souls gained for heaven (rather than the creation of pious Catholics in the temporal world) was commonplace in the Jesuit missions of North America. According to Allan Greer, this provides a useful reminder that Jesuits were not simply ‘agents of European cultural assimilation’. Missionaries’ views on the

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<sup>37</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 678. ‘Il y a des poissons qui iamais ne se laissent mieux prendre que dans les orages de l’Ocean, & il y a des ames que Dieu semble ne pouuoir mieux prendre, s’il ne sousleue quelque tempeste qui leur donne apprehension de perdre la vie.’

<sup>38</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 678. ‘on peut conclure (laissons toutefois le tout aux secrets & adorables Iugemens de Dieu) qu’il est probable que de pareil nombre de Chrétiens Catholiques qui meurent sur Mer & sur terre, il y en a plus grand nombre de saueez sur mer que sur terre.’

‘success’ of a mission, Greer argues, were thus very different from those of colonial authorities.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, as Fournier’s account demonstrates, ‘accounting’ for the souls of the dead could take place anywhere (even in the interior missions of Europe). Environment (in this case, the ocean) had a clear bearing on whether or not a person would achieve salvation. Sinning on the ocean, in spite of the abovementioned deterrents, was therefore a great risk to an individual’s salvation. Environment could thus affect one’s eternal life and behaviour had to be adjusted accordingly.

Given the environmental dangers of the ocean, personal (spiritual) preparation was necessary if an individual wished to travel across it without endangering her soul. Although Fournier argued that the earth was no closer to heaven than the ocean, the latter’s watery depths were closer to hell than most of the earth. Pirates who died on the ocean, he asserted, ‘descend living into hell’.<sup>40</sup> He continued:

exposing oneself, & the uncertainty of one’s eternal salvation, to the storms of such an unrelenting element [the ocean], & taking oneself into the eye of storms, as an enemy of God, who alone commands the fury of the winds, is an extreme and inexcusable folly...<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 7.

<sup>40</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 680. ‘descendent ordinairement viuans dans l’enfer.’

<sup>41</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 679. ‘Car s’exposer avec des troubles d’esprit, & vne incertitude de son salut eternel, aux tempestes d’un element si impitoyable, & se porter volontairement au milieu des orages, comme ennemy de Dieu, qui seul commande la furie des vents, c’est vne folie extreme et sans excuse...’

‘Put your conscience in order before departure,’ Fournier therefore advised, ‘to conserve peace inside yourself, while the winds make war with you outside’.<sup>42</sup> Inner peace was possible, but it required considerable effort.

In addition to individual preparation, collective preparation was also necessary. As Fournier argued, a ship should be blessed before departure. Even ‘the pagans’ of Antiquity, he wrote, who were ‘guided only by natural light’ (as opposed to divine light), were careful to observe this custom. For instance, before King Xerxes I of Persia led his army across the Hellespont (now the Dardanelles, a straight in northern Turkey) to invade Greece, he held a golden cup in his hand and made a sacrifice to the sun before throwing the cup into the water.<sup>43</sup> Traces of these pre-Christian practices were evident in the ocean crossings of early modern colonisers. The ships of Samuel de Champlain’s 1633 fleet, to give but one example, raised their anchors to begin the journey from Dieppe to Quebec only ‘after having prayed to God to guide us [safely] to port.’<sup>44</sup> During the crossing itself, Jesuit Fathers Jean de Brébeuf and Ennemond Massé blessed the fleet’s admiral vessel, the *Saint Pierre*, as this had not been done before departure.<sup>45</sup> Jean-Baptiste de la Croix de Saint-Vallier’s *Rituel du diocese de Quebec* (1703) included the blessing intended for use on a ship or a boat. The prayer asked that God bless the ship as he had guided Noah’s Ark and, as well as the prescribed oration, the priest was directed to douse

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<sup>42</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 681. ‘Mettez ordre auant que de partir, à vostre conscience pour conseruer la paix au dedans de vous-mesme, cependant que les vents vous font la guerre dehors’.

<sup>43</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 682.

<sup>44</sup> *Mercure François* (Paris), 1633, 804. ‘nous leuasmes les ancras apres auoir prié Dieu de nous conduire à bon port’.

<sup>45</sup> *Mercure François* (Paris), 1633, 804. According to historian David Hackett Fischer, Father Bathélemy Jacquinot, the Jesuit provincial superior of France, blessed the fleet before it left Dieppe. See Fischer, *Champlain’s Dream: The European Founding of North America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008), 446.

different parts of the ship with holy water.<sup>46</sup> As we shall see, however, these preparations could not guard against the physical dangers of ocean travel.

### **Constructions of missionary authority**

No amount of preparation could truly ready a missionary for the experience of the ocean crossing. Often forgotten in historical analyses of missionary travel is that most missionaries did not begin their trips when the New France fleet set sail. In addition to travel within France itself, missionaries often spent a considerable amount of time in port towns awaiting departure. Whilst awaiting a rowing boat to take her out to sea to board the *Saint Joseph* (which was anchored at sea just outside Dieppe), Marie de l'Incarnation admitted impatience. 'You can judge', she wrote to the superior of the Ursulines at Tours, 'if [these] moments do not seem too long for a soul which desires and is impatient to give her life for her beloved [God]'.<sup>47</sup> 'O my dear Mother,' she continued,

how strong the master of our hearts [God] is; if you knew what he is doing in our Canadian troupe [i.e. amongst the nuns], you would bless his kindness [*Bonté*] a thousand times: everything is on fire [*tout est en feu*] and yet it seems like this fire is reduced to cinders and in humility so [much so that] we see ourselves in the abyss of divine misericorde.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Jean-Baptiste de la Croix de Saint-Vallier, *Rituel du diocese de Quebec, publié par l'ordre de Monseigneur l'évêque de Quebec* (Paris, 1703), 505-506.

<sup>47</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Mother Françoise de Saint Bernard, Dieppe, 18 April 1639, MI, *Corr.*, Letter XXXVIII, 84. All translations from Marie's letters are my own. 'Vous pouvez jugez si les moments ne semblent trop longs à une ame qui est dans le desir & dans l'impatience de donner sa vie pour son bien-aimé.'

<sup>48</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Mother Françoise de Saint Bernard, Dieppe, 18 April 1639, 84. 'O ma chere Mère, que le maître de nos coeurs est puissant; si vous sçaviez ce qu'il opère en notre troupe Canadoise, vous en béniriez mille fois sa Bonté: tout est en feu, et pourtant il semble que ce feu se réduise en cendre et en humilité tant l'on se voit bas dans l'abyrne de divines miséricordes.'

Marie's statement, '*if you knew* what he is doing', implied that the superior did not have first-hand knowledge of the missionaries' experience. Already – and even before leaving the port – Marie stressed the privileged position of the nuns. Although the latter had not yet been on the ocean, they could 'see' themselves 'in the abyss of divine misericord' (a statement that implied not only mystical 'nothingness', but the depths of the ocean sea). She continued, 'All of our belongings have been embarked; we have been lent others whilst awaiting the hour of our happy departure.'<sup>49</sup> Making do (likely with borrowed clothes and items for personal grooming) was thus something that missionaries became accustomed to even before boarding the ships that would take them to New France. Their 'habits' had begun to be adapted, even before they set sail, and the rubbing of their borrowed clothing against their skin would have been a constant reminder of their evolving circumstances.<sup>50</sup>

The nuns would spend more than two weeks in the convent at Dieppe, and this would allow them to contemplate the voyage ahead. Indeed, although Marie's letter was written on 18 April, the ship did not sail until 3 May.<sup>51</sup> Already on the 15, Marie had penned a letter to one of her brothers in which she had expressed impatience at having to wait so long to set sail. 'O how it pains me that I have not yet sacrificed my life! ...it seems to me that in the midst of dangers I would be safer and more peaceful on the sea than on the land.'<sup>52</sup> She implored him, 'Help me

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<sup>49</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Mother Françoise de Saint Bernard, Dieppe, 18 April 1639, 84. 'Toutes nos hardes sont embarquées; on nous en prete d'autres en attendant l'heure heureuse de notre départ.'

<sup>50</sup> Links between habitual practices and clothing will be examined in greater detail in the second chapter of this thesis.

<sup>51</sup> See, Marie de l'Incarnation to one of her brothers, Dieppe, 15 April 1639, MI, *Corr.*, Letter XXXVI, 82n2.

<sup>52</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to one of her brothers, Dieppe, 15 April 1639, 81. 'O qu'il me tarde que je n'ay déjà fait le sacrifice de ma vie! dans le désir que j'en ay, il me semble qu'au milieu des dangers je seray plus seure et plus tranquille sur la mer que sur la terre.'



to bless his loving Providence into the arms of which I abandon myself to live or to die, either on the sea or in the fort of Barbary [Canada], everything’, she continued, ‘is the same to me in his [God’s] loving will.’<sup>53</sup> Marie – unlike Fournier – did not stress the positive attributes of the ocean in comparison with the land. Rather, she desired to leave France so that she could abandon herself to divine providence. It was, she implied, of no consequence whether she died on the sea or on dry land in Canada, so long as it was in accordance with the will of God. The nun’s proximity to the ocean – which facilitated her contemplation of her own fate – also rendered her something of an authority. She was as close to the dangers of the ocean as it was possible to be without actually setting sail.

In their correspondence, missionaries used their bodily experiences of the ocean to highlight their privileged positions as authorities on ocean travel. From 1630 until his departure for New France in 1632, Jesuit Father Paul Le Jeune had been superior of the Jesuit college at Dieppe. As Jacques Gomboust’s seventeenth-century plan of the town illustrates, Le Jeune would have been able to see the ocean from the residence’s sea-facing windows (For Gomboust’s plan see Fig. 1; for the location of the Jesuit residence see Fig. 2).<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Marie de l’Incarnation to one of her brothers, Dieppe, 15 April 1639, 81. ‘Aidez-moy à bénir son aimable Providence entre les bras de laquelle je m’abandonne pour vivre ou mourir, soit sur la mer, soit dans le fort de la Barbarie, car tout m’est égal dans son adorable volonté.’

<sup>54</sup> For a short biography of Paul Le Jeune see, *MNF*, II, 837-8.

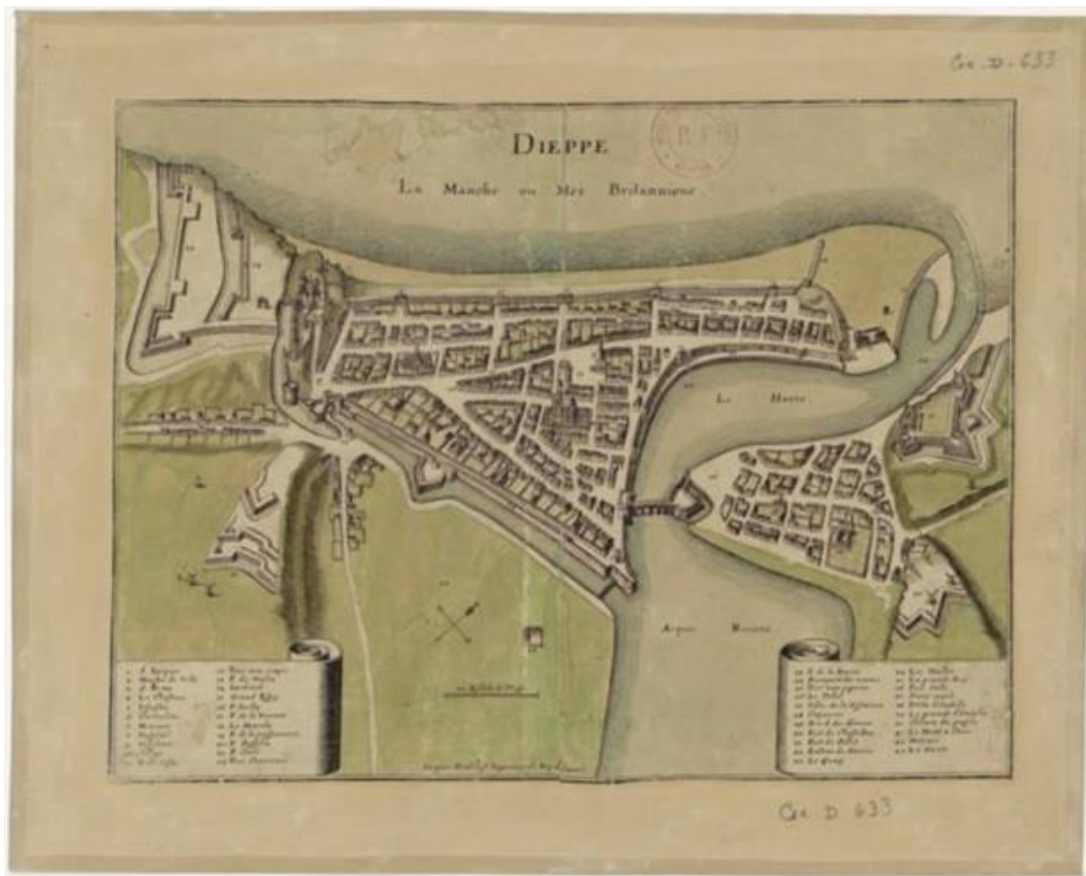


Fig. 1: Jacques Gomboust, *Dieppe, La Manche ou Mer Britannique* (mid-1600s)  
 Source: Gallica: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8439541b>



Fig. 2: Detail of Gomboust's *Dieppe, La Manche ou La Mer Britannique*. The location of the Jesuit residence is marked by the number 5.  
 Source: Gallica <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8439541b>.

'I had', wrote Le Jeune in his *Brief Relation* of 1632, 'sometimes seen the angry sea from the windows of our little house in Dieppe; but', he continued, 'watching the fury of the Ocean from the shore is quite different from tossing upon its waves.'<sup>55</sup> In these missionaries' accounts, sight and hearing – traditionally viewed as the 'higher senses' – were subordinated to touch or 'haptic' bodily experience. The body, the accounts implied, was overwhelmed by its environment and was no longer able to discern it using the 'higher' senses. Despite the use of the *Spiritual*

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<sup>55</sup> *JR*, 5: 13.

*Exercises* in preparation for missionary endeavor, then, the imagination was no substitute for experience (and this was a view echoed throughout the *Relations*).<sup>56</sup>

Nuns, too, described the unexpected hardships of the ocean, which tested their bodies' endurance. 'It has often crossed my mind', wrote mother Cécile de Sainte-Croix to the superior of the convent at Dieppe (after her arrival in Quebec), 'that experiencing the hardships of the sea is a very different thing from *only hearing* about them.'<sup>57</sup> Sea-sickness, caused by the motion of a water-going vessel, was – by definition – something that most early modern Europeans (with the exception of those living in coastal or island communities) would have had little experience of. Even the resolve of the most devout was tested by this obstacle. Cécile wrote – with more than a hint of irreverence – that during a bout of particularly bad sea-sickness, Marie-Madeleine de la Peltrie, the Ursulines' principal benefactress, 'no longer dreamt of Canada, which she normally calls her beloved country, but of having a little calm [weather]'.<sup>58</sup> Despite the nun's admission of the missionaries' struggles, the statement nonetheless implied their authority. They had experienced hardships that the majority of their readers had only *seen* from their windows or *heard* about in letters or from visitors. Gabriel Sagard, a Recollect missionary who travelled to New France in 1623, also expressed surprise at the extreme suffering caused by sea-sickness. In *Le grand voyage au pays des Hurons* (1632), the missionary wrote that his companion, Father Nicolas Viel, suffered from 'a very disagreeable attack of sea-sickness,

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<sup>56</sup> 'To paint to you the hardships of the way,' Paul Le Jeune wrote in his famous account of the winter he spent with a group of Innu (Montagnais) people, 'I have neither pen nor brush that could do it: they must be experienced in order to be appreciated, and this dish must be tried to know how it tastes.' *JR*, 7: 37.

<sup>57</sup> Cécile de Sainte-Croix to the superior of the Ursulines at Dieppe, Quebec, 2 September 1639, MI, *Corr.*, Appendix II, 951-52. My emphasis. All translations from this letter are my own. 'Il m'a, dis je, souvent passé par l'esprit que c'est autre chose d'expérimenter les incommoditez de la mer que d'en ouïr parler seulement.'

<sup>58</sup> Cécile de Sainte-Croix to the Superior of the Ursulines at Dieppe, 2 September 1639, 952. 'ne songeoit plus au Canadas [sic] qu'elle nomme, pour l'ordinaire, son cher païs, mais à avoir un peu de calme'

disturbing him greatly and forcing him to ‘pay a tribute to the sea’.<sup>59</sup> This playful euphemism for the act of vomiting also plays on the tradition – dating back to antiquity and mentioned in Fournier’s *Hydrographie* – of making a sacrifice for safe passage across the ocean.<sup>60</sup> Bodily suffering, a staple of most hagiographic accounts, is here portrayed as the missionary’s sacrifice. For his part, Sagard recounted, he had ‘never imagined sea sickness to be so troublesome and disagreeable as I experienced it,’ he continued:

for it seemed to me that I had *never had such bodily suffering* in my whole life as during the voyage of three months and six days, which it took us, because of contrary winds, to cross that great and terrible ocean and reach Quebec, the residence of our Fathers.<sup>61</sup>

When suffering was this extreme, the missionary implied, no amount of preparation was sufficient. Once attained, however, bodily experiences could be exploited to assert spiritual authority.

### **Recreating the Monastery?<sup>62</sup>**

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<sup>59</sup> Gabriel Sagard, *Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons*, ed. George M. Wrong, trans. H.H. Langton (Toronto: The Chaplain Society, 1939), 19.

<sup>60</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 682.

<sup>61</sup> Sagard, *Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons*, ed. Wrong, 20.

<sup>62</sup> Marie de l’Incarnation to Mother Françoise de Saint Bernard, At sea [*En mer*], 20 May 1639, MI, *Corr.*, Letter XXXIX, 86. ‘Nous sommes à cette heure dans une aussi bonne disposition que si nous étions dans notre Monastère’

In April 1639, the *Saint-Joseph*, one of the three ships that made up the New France fleet, set sail from the French port of Dieppe.<sup>63</sup> The ship had an unusual cargo. Along with the usual officials, a few settlers, and supplies for the colony (which still relied on provisions from France), travelled a large party of missionaries: Father Barthélemy Vimont, a Jesuit missionary (who would become superior of the New France mission upon his arrival at Quebec), three Ursuline nuns (led by Marie de l'Incarnation), three Augustinian Hospitalières (led by Marie de Saint-Ignace) and their servant Catherine Chevalier, Marie-Madeleine Chauvigny de la Peltrie (the Ursuline's principal benefactor) and her young follower Charlotte Barré.<sup>64</sup> There were three other missionaries in the fleet: Father Joseph-Antoine Poncet, Father Joseph-Marie Chaumonot and lay brother, Claude Jager (the Jesuit missionaries had divided themselves amongst the vessels in order to ensure the spiritual well-being of each crew).<sup>65</sup> After a stormy and eventful crossing – the ship almost hit an iceberg and most of the religious were at one point or another overcome by seasickness – the fleet arrived at Tadoussac on 20 July 1639. The ship chartered by Madame de la Peltrie was the lightest of the fleet and arrived first, sending news of the missionaries' arrival to the Jesuit superior at Quebec.<sup>66</sup> Once all three ships had arrived, the missionaries were re-united aboard the *Saint-Jacques*, which was to carry them upriver to Quebec.<sup>67</sup> Unfortunately, a headwind prevented the vessel from sailing and the party was forced

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<sup>63</sup> The *Saint-Joseph* was 'l'Amiral', or lead vessel. The other two ships were the *Saint-Jacques* and a third, lighter vessel commissioned by Marie-Madeleine Chauvigny de la Peltrie, the Ursulines principal benefactor.

<sup>64</sup> The other Ursulines were Marie de Saint-Joseph and Cécile de Saint-Croix; the Hospitalières, Anne de Saint-Bernard and Marie de Saint-Bonaventure. Marcel Trudel has identified 67 of the perhaps 100 settlers (including officials and missionaries, but not including seasonal visitors or sailors) who arrived with the fleet. See Marcel Trudel, *Catalogue des immigrants, 1632-1662* (Montreal: Éditions Hurtubise, 1983), 82.

<sup>65</sup> *Vie*, 400.

<sup>66</sup> The name of this ship is unknown. Although Madame de la Peltrie had personally chartered this vessel, the nuns travelled in the Admiral vessel, which was considered to be the safest. See *Vie*, 394.

<sup>67</sup> See *Vie*, 394; Cécile de Sainte-Croix to the Superior of the Ursulines at Dieppe, Quebec, 2 September 1639, 954.

to continue their journey in a small, uncomfortable bark, which exposed them to the wind and the rain.<sup>68</sup> The missionaries' subsequent 'glorious' arrival at Quebec is described in Father Paul Le Jeune's 1639 *Relation*. The bark, Le Jeune remarked with an air of wonder, carried 'a College of Jesuits, an establishment of Hospital Nuns, and a Convent of Ursulines'.<sup>69</sup> At the end of the previous year, there had been 28 Jesuit missionaries in the colony; the number of religious had thus increased by almost half.<sup>70</sup> 'As this holy band left the ship', the incumbent superior asserted, 'they fell on their knees, thanked the God of Heaven and kissed the soil of their beloved country – for thus they called these regions.' 'All gazed in silence on this spectacle', he continued, 'From a floating prison were seen issuing these virgins consecrated to God, as fresh and as rosy as when they had departed from their homes. All [the] ocean with its waves and tempests, had not injured their health in the slightest degree.'<sup>71</sup>

Le Jeune's narrative of the missionaries' arrival in the colony is iconic in the history of New France; its key protagonists are often counted amongst the 'fathers' and 'mothers' of the colony. Nations, as Edward Said asserts, 'are narrations'.<sup>72</sup> But a spatial re-reading of these narratives can bring to the fore meanings which were perhaps unintended by their authors. How might we read *experiences* in these accounts (as opposed to their edificatory lessons)? The nuns describe a voyage of hardship and perseverance, but how were their practices affected by this? The voyage described in Le Jeune's *Relation* is particularly significant as it is described in several sources and by several different individuals, in particular, in the writings of the women religious

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<sup>68</sup> Cécile de Sainte-Croix to the Superior of the Ursulines at Dieppe, Quebec, 2 September, 955.

<sup>69</sup> *JR*, 16: 19.

<sup>70</sup> See "Catalogue de la Nouvelle-France à la fin de 1638," *MNF*, 4, Doc.53, 181.

<sup>71</sup> *JR*, 16: 19.

<sup>72</sup> Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), xiii.

who made the crossing.<sup>73</sup> Ursuline Cécile de Sainte-Croix's account, for instance, provides a remarkably frank – and largely overlooked – description of the voyage, which is far less rhetorically conscious than the letters of Marie de l'Incarnation or Le Jeune's above-quoted *Relation*.<sup>74</sup> Addressed to the superior of the Ursuline convent at Dieppe, Cécile's letter is the most detailed extant account of the crossing.<sup>75</sup> Unlike Le Jeune's account of the missionaries' arrival at Québec (in which the nuns emerged from their 'floating prison' 'as fresh and as rosy as when they had left their convents'), Cécile's letter provides a more-accurate description of the nuns' physical states, which pays particular attention to her own grubby and sodden clothing. As we shall see, however, the nun's letter is also shaped by missionary rhetoric, though different in tone from that of the printed *Relations*. The variety of sources relating to the 1639 crossing, therefore, allows for a detailed analysis of the ways in which different individuals were shaped by their experiences.

Women religious' descriptions of the 1639 voyage are particularly useful for the analysis of what I will call 'travelling spaces', that is, places that move (ships, carriages, etc.). In 1563, the Council of Trent had confirmed Pope Boniface VIII's decree, *Periculoso*, which emphasised the necessity of strict enclosure for women religious.<sup>76</sup> However, as Barbara Diefendorf reminds us, convent walls were more 'porous' than was allowed in the historiographical accounts of the

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<sup>73</sup> See Cécile de Sainte-Croix to the Ursuline superior at Dieppe, Quebec, 2 September 1639; *Vie*, 392-99; *AHDQ*, 13-20.

<sup>74</sup> This is the only known letter written by the nun. On Claude Martin's editing of his mother's *Vie*, see Natalie Zemon Davis, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 129-31.

<sup>75</sup> The original letter is held at the Archives départementales de Seine-Maritime (ADSM), Série D, 403.

<sup>76</sup> See Laurence Lux-Sterritt and Carmen Mangion, "Introduction," in *Gender, Catholicism and Spirituality: Women and the Roman Catholic Church in Britain and Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 4.



1970s and 1980s, which stressed the restrictive nature and isolation of convent life.<sup>77</sup> Lay servants, for example, were permitted (unofficial) entry and noble benefactors often treated convents as private retreats.<sup>78</sup> That said, a nun could only leave her cloister with the permission of her bishop. She also had to have good reason for doing so; to found a new convent, for instance.<sup>79</sup> Given these circumstances, it is perhaps unsurprising that letters and accounts by and about female missionaries pay a great deal of attention to space. They not only describe their ‘travelling spaces’, but also the ways in which these spaces were used and adapted for worship. As we saw in Acosta’s *Natural and Moral History*, missionaries often framed spaces in such a way as to justify their presence in overseas missions. Due to the restrictions placed on women missionaries’ mobility, they were forced to justify not only their presence on mission terrains, but also the journeys they took in the world (and *outside* the convent) in order to get there.

Missionary letters, then, had a very specific rhetorical purpose: to defend missionaries’ movement through the lived world. ‘During our voyage,’ Marie de l’Incarnation asserted, Monsieur de Bernières (the future procurator of the Quebec Ursulines),

upheld our Rules, so that in the carriage and in the hotels [*hôtelleries*] we lived as though we were in our Monastery, and it seems to me that we have only just departed from Tours since time has passed peacefully and regularly.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Barbara Diefendorf, “Rethinking the Catholic Reformation: The Role of Women,” in *Women, Religion and the Atlantic World*, ed. Daniella J. Kostroun and Lisa Vollendorf (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in association with the UCLA Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies and the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 2009), 31.

<sup>78</sup> Diefendorf, “Rethinking the Catholic Reformation,” 33-34.

<sup>79</sup> Lux-Sterritt and Mangion, “Introduction: Gender, Catholicism and Women’s Spirituality,” 4.

<sup>80</sup> Marie de l’Incarnation to Mother Françoise de Saint Bernard, Paris, 26 February 1639, MI, *Corr.*, Letter XXXIV, 75. ‘durant notre voyage, il faisoit nos Règles avec nous, en sorte que nous étions dans le carosse et dans les hôtelleries comme dans notre Monastère et il me semble que je ne fait que de partir de Tours, tant le temps s’est écoulé doucement et régulièrement.’

The women, Marie implied, did not need convent walls to live piously, only rules. The passing of time was also marked by the hours of the nuns' devotions, the regularity of which ensured that the women remained focused on their vocation and did not deviate from their conventual routine.<sup>81</sup> However, as Tracy Neal Leavelle reminds us, missionaries believed that the whole world had been touched by God.<sup>82</sup> It is within this context that we should analyse Marie's statement. 'A religious who does her duty everywhere', the nun asserted, 'is well everywhere, because the object of her devotions is everywhere'.<sup>83</sup>

Despite these theological justifications for religious mobility, nuns were keen to point out that they were not undergoing any undue hardships that might prove damaging to their vocations. Indeed, one of the principal objections raised against Catherine de Saint-Augustin's request to journey to New France in 1648 was that it might endanger her vocation (the young woman had not yet taken her final vows).<sup>84</sup> The hardships and dangers of such a journey were thus of great concern to ecclesiastical authorities and the families of some women religious also showed unease. Catherine de Saint-Augustin's father, for instance, opposed her desire to travel to Canada and began legal proceedings to prevent it (although he ultimately had a change of

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<sup>81</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Françoise de Saint Bernard, Paris, 26 February 1639, 75. 'durant nostre voyage, il faisoit nos Règles avec nous, en sorte que nous étions dans le carosse et dans les hôtelleries comme dans nostre Monastère, et il me semble que je ne fais que de partir de Tours tant le temps s'est écoulé doucement et régulièrement'

<sup>82</sup> Tracy Neal Leavelle, "Geographies of Encounter: Religion and Contested Spaces in Colonial North America," *American Quarterly* 56, no.4 (2004), 920.

<sup>83</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Françoise de Saint Bernard, At sea, 20 May 1639, MI, *Corr.*, Letter XXXIX, 87. 'Une Religieuse qui fait par tout son devoir est bien part tout, puisque l'objet de ses affections et en tout lieu.'

<sup>84</sup> Paul Ragueneau, *La vie de la Mere Catherine de Saint Avgvstin religieuse Hospitaliere de la Misericorde de Quebec en la Nouvelle-France* (Paris, 1671), 42. My translation. 'Les difficultez qu'on y trouvoit, étoit, que la fille n'ayant pas encore fait ses Voeux, si elle venoit à se dégoûter sur les chemins, on risquoit sa vocation'.

heart).<sup>85</sup> To combat these objections, women missionaries were keen to point out that they were treated well on their journeys. In a letter to one of her brothers from the port of Dieppe, Marie de l'Incarnation explained that the nuns would travel aboard the Admiral vessel, which, owing to its size, was the safest in the fleet. The captain, Jacob Bontemps, had also promised his room to the sisters.<sup>86</sup> It was, Marie gushed, 'beautiful and spacious', and the nuns would be 'separated from the noise of the vessel'.<sup>87</sup> Marie's brother could thus take comfort from the fact that the women were being treated kindly and would be 'separated', not just from the 'noise' of the vessel – a term which here implies the 'rabble' that might produce this disturbance, rather than distracting sounds themselves – but the (predominantly male) passengers and crew. As in the convent, women were to be protected from harmful influences. 'We are currently in as good spirits as we would be in our Monastery,' Marie de l'Incarnation reassured Mother Françoise de Saint Bernard, the superior of the Ursulines at Tours, during the two-month-long crossing.<sup>88</sup>

Furthermore, women religious lived aboard sailing vessels as though they were enclosed convents. Each missionary played a different role in re-creating daily monastic routines. The hours of the day were clearly marked and regulated by Father Barthélemy Vimont, who acted as the nuns' spiritual advisor. Vimont had, in Cécile de Sainte-Croix's words, '*donné un règlement*' (literally, 'given a rule') for daily tasks. The Holy Offices were said in public twice a day, and each superior (Mother Marie de l'Incarnation for the Ursulines and Mother Marie de

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<sup>85</sup> Ragueneau, *La vie de la Mere Catherine de Saint Avgvstin*, 40-41.

<sup>86</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to one of her brothers, Dieppe, 15 April 1639, MI, *Corr.*, Letter XXXVI, 82.

<sup>87</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to one of her brothers, Dieppe, 15 April 1639, 82. 'le Capitaine nous abandonne sa chambre qui est belle et spacieuse, et où nous serons séparées du bruit du vaisseau.'

<sup>88</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Françoise de Saint Bernard, At sea, 20 May 1639, 86. 'Nous sommes à cette heure dans une aussi bonne disposition que si nous étions dans notre Monastère.'

Sainte-Ignace for the Hospitalières) would take her turn at leading them.<sup>89</sup> It was also the superior's job to ensure that Vimont's rules were followed (*'estoit à elle à faire garder le règlement'*). As in the convent, all of the nuns would take a turn (*'chacun à son tour'*) at reading or reciting prayers while the religious took their meals.<sup>90</sup> This practice was common in France and would continue in the religious institutions of New France.<sup>91</sup> Each missionary, then, had a clearly defined task. Deviation from the prescribed routine was to be avoided. Father Vimont, Cécile de Sainte-Croix wrote, 'did not pass up the opportunity each day to explain the subject of our prayers'. He told them that 'one of the reasons why religious do not profit from their prayers is that their [the prayer's] subject changes too often.' Cécile continued, 'all the time that we were on the sea he changed them only very rarely.'<sup>92</sup> This is no surprise; Jesuit education stressed the importance of learning through repetitive actions. In Jesuit colleges, books studied by the 'lowest' classes (i.e. boys of secondary school age)<sup>93</sup> during the first semester would be studied again in the second semester. According to the *Ratio studiorum* (the Jesuit 'handbook' for education), this 'review' would ensure that knowledge was remembered: 'what is more frequently repeated', the author stated, 'will be more deeply retained'.<sup>94</sup> Mother Cécile seems to have been comforted by the order that that schedule provided amongst so many uncertainties.

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<sup>89</sup> Each superior was in charge of this task for a week at a time. See Cécile de Sainte-Croix to the superior of the Ursulines at Dieppe, Quebec, 2 September 1639, MI, *Corr.*, Appendix II, 954.

<sup>90</sup> Cécile de Sainte-Croix to the superior of the Ursulines at Dieppe, 2 September 1639, MI, *Corr.*, Appendice II, 954.

<sup>91</sup> See Jérôme Lalemant, *Constitutions et Règlements des premières Ursulines de Québec* (1647), ed. Soeur Gabrielle Lapointe (Québec, 1974), 168.

<sup>92</sup> Cécile de Sainte-Croix to the superior of the Ursulines at Dieppe, 2 September 1639, 954. 'Il nous disoit qu'une des choses pour quoy les religieux ne profitent point en l'oreson est qui changent trop souvent leur matières, et, en effet, tout le temps que nous avons esté sur la mer il ne nous l'a changée que fort rarement'

<sup>93</sup> John W. Padberg, S.J., "The Development of the *Ratio Studiorum*," in *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum: 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Perspectives*, ed., Vincent J. Duminuco, S.J. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 82.

<sup>94</sup> Claude Pavur, S.J., trans. and ed., *The Ratio Studiorum: The Official Plan for Jesuit Education* (Saint Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2005), 114. See paragraph 253, "The Usefulness of Review."

Of Father Vimont she wrote, ‘I think we would be dead without him’.<sup>95</sup> Even outside their enclosed convent, the nuns continued to follow their Rule and it was this routine that allowed them to re-imagine and to inhabit the vessel as a convent.

But the nuns were also challenged by the new environments they passed through. After a voyage of more than two months, Cécile and her companions finally landed at the port of Tadoussac on 20 July 1639.<sup>96</sup> Here they boarded a smaller vessel, which would take them upriver to Quebec.

The nun’s letter gives a detailed description of the missionaries’ living arrangements:

we were so closely lodged [*si estroitement logez*] that when we were all sitting round the chest [*coffre*] that served everyday for saying the 4 masses – we had this happiness – and for eating the meals that we took with the 4 Fathers, namely the Reverend Father Vimont, Father Gondouin, Father Poncet, Father Chaumonnot, and the good brother Claude, when we were, I say, all in a row [*toutes rengées*], she who was at one end could not pass without making the others get up, because we barely each had our own place, again very narrow [*en cor bien estroicte*]; and to sleep, it was necessary to place boards on the chest and throw our mattresses on top of it.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Cécile de Sainte-Croix to the Superior of the Ursulines at Dieppe, 2 September 1639, 954. ‘Je pense que nous fusions morte sans luy; je n’ay jamais veu un homme semblable’.

<sup>96</sup> Mother Cécile de Sainte-Croix to the Superior of the Ursulines at Dieppe, 2 September 1639, 954.

<sup>97</sup> Cécile de Sainte-Croix to the Superior of the Ursulines at Dieppe, 2 September 1639, 954. ‘nous estions si estroitement logez que quand nous estions toutes assises autour du coffre qui servoit à dire tous les jours 4 messes – nous avions ce bonheur – et à prendre les repas que nous prenions avec les 4 Père, sçavoir est le révérend Père Vimont, le Père Gondouin, le Père Poncet, le Père Chaumonnot et le bon frère Claude, quand nous estions, dis-je, toutes rengées, celle d’un bout ne pouvoient passer sans faire lever lès autres, car on n’avoit justement que sa place, en cor bien estroicte; et pour coucher, il estoit besoing d’ajuster des planches sur le coffre et jetter nos matelas dessus.’

This cramped space would not only have affected the nun, but also her relationships and interactions with others. Philosopher Edward S. Casey's description of the agency of place provides a useful summary:

The power a place, such as a mere room, possesses determines not only *where* I am in the limited sense of cartographic location, but *how* I am together with others (i.e. how I commingle and communicate with them).<sup>98</sup>

Mother Cécile's place (the ship) not only determined where she was (that is, the Saint Lawrence River), but also how she 'commingled' and 'communicated' with her fellow passengers. Yet this was also determined by the ecclesiastical hierarchy and personalities of the other passengers. The nun's evocative description of her sisters sitting 'all in a row' (*toute rengée*) suggests not only their physical positions in relation to one another (i.e. in a row), but also a semblance of order in an otherwise chaotic and disorienting environment (the river). Although, as Cécile stated, the nuns, 'barely each had our own place', they nonetheless 'had' their 'own place', both materially and spiritually. Whilst on the one hand, Cécile's statement suggests a lack of personal, physical *space*, it also implies a *place* within her group of travellers (and, by extension, the ecclesiastical hierarchy). Furthermore, the narrowness of the space allotted to each individual (they were 'closely lodged' - '*estroitement logez*' and their places were 'again very narrow' - '*en cor bien estroicte*') implies the inflexibility of these positions. Cécile does not mention her sisters by name (presumably her correspondent was familiar with her companions) but she nonetheless lists the Jesuit missionaries with whom they were travelling. The letter's ordering of the Jesuits highlights their positions in the ecclesiastical hierarchy of

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<sup>98</sup> Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1993), 23.

their group; Father Vimont who would take over as Jesuit mission superior upon his arrival at Quebec, is named first, whilst ‘[G]ood Brother Claude’, who is not an ordained priest and thus responsible for temporal rather than spiritual affairs is mentioned last. The other Jesuits are listed according to experience on the mission terrain, with the most experienced named first. The nun and her missionary colleagues’ positions on paper in her account thus mirrored her perception of their positions in the world and the relative stability of this order amidst the uncertainty of the mission.

Despite the religious’s best efforts to maintain the rigour of conventual life, therefore, adaptation was also necessary. In Cécile’s account, a chest (*‘coffre’*) takes on numerous (additional) functions; the object’s use – and, thus, the ways in which the religious interact with it – is shaped by the lack of space. On top of its intended function (storage), the chest acts variously as an altar (for the celebration of mass), a table (for the taking of meals), and as a base for a somewhat uncomfortable bed. The object’s use, then, was shaped by the time of day (or night) and the hours of devotion marked its sacred uses for religious rites. The sacred and profane cannot be easily separated. Cécile’s description of this chest, however, is steeped in the religious symbolism of the early Church; the nun shaped her material circumstances for her own rhetorical purposes. In his *Liber officialis*, Amalius of Metz (c.775-c.850) portrayed the rite of the Eucharist as a re-enactment of Christ’s crucifixion. The altar, he argued, simultaneously represented the table of the Last Supper, the Cross, and Christ’s tomb.<sup>99</sup> ‘The cross’, he wrote in relation to the Eucharistic sacrament, ‘which is formed over the chalice with a morsel of the host, makes known to us before [our] eyes, that very body which for us was crucified.’<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Catherine Saucier, “Sacrament and Sacrifice: Conflating Corpus Christi and Martyrdom in Medieval Liège,” *Speculum* 87, no. 3 (2012), 692.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted in Saucier, “Sacrament and Sacrifice,” 692.

Through the rite of mass, then, Christ was made present aboard the vessel – which might now be viewed as a sacred vessel. Furthermore, Cécile’s description of the chest as a table for unconsecrated fare can be seen to draw clear parallels with the Last Supper. As historian Ollivier Hubert notes, the celebration of rites can bring the past to the present.<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, Cécile cast the missionaries in the roles of the Apostles, whom (in Matthew 28:19) Jesus commanded to ‘go out and make disciples of the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’. Although the nun was writing to the superior of the convent at Dieppe, she would have expected this letter – or at least the news therein – to have circulated to a wider audience (these ‘circulars’ will be discussed in Chapter 5). Her surroundings were thus rhetorically shaped – in ways that would have been readily understood by her fellow religious – to convey the sanctity of her surroundings.

A ship’s interior was also subject to change that could disrupt the devotional practices that took place therein. ‘If there was any chest ill secured’, Recollect missionary Father Gabriel Sagard wrote in his *Grand voyage au pays des Hurons* (1632), ‘one heard it rolling about, and sometimes a soup-pot was upset.’<sup>102</sup> The missionary not only evoked the shifting spatial make-up of the ship’s interior – and thus its devotional spaces – but also its auditory landscape. The crashing of badly stowed chests and the clanging of overturned pots – coupled with a vessel’s constant creaking and the noise of the surrounding ocean – would likely have proved distracting, not only to the private devotions of missionaries, but to those passengers attending public prayers. Even nuns travelling in the captain’s cabin would have heard these noises. Sailors, who would have been accustomed to a vessel’s creaking and groaning, would presumably have been

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<sup>101</sup> Ollivier Hubert, *Sur la terre comme au ciel: La gestion des rites par l’Église catholique du Québec (fin XVIIe – mi-XIXe siècle)* (Sanite-Foy, QC: Presses de l’Université Laval, 2000), 222.

<sup>102</sup> Sagard, *Long Journey into the Country of the Hurons*, ed. Wrong, 25.



less concerned by them, unless, that is, the sounds were unusual or dangerous. Yet, it was not only the furniture that was jostled around inside a ship's interior. People too, would have struggled at times to prevent themselves from being thrown around by the pitching and tossing of the ship. 'During heavy storms,' Cécile de Sainte-Croix wrote, 'I did not sleep; I preferred to stay, day and night leaning against something, because there was no [other] way of keeping upright.' Otherwise, she explained, 'I would have needed a vast amount of sheets to keep me in bed.'<sup>103</sup> Though Cécile's superior at Dieppe had been unwilling to allow her a wooden board beneath her mattress (an act of bodily mortification intended to make sleep uncomfortable), the only way to sleep on the ocean was on planks of wood (it was impossible to use a pallet).<sup>104</sup> As we shall see, despite – and because of – the unpredictability of ocean travel, it provided even greater opportunities for piety than were available within conventual walls.

### **'Travelling narratives': Writing at sea**

Accounts of the voyage to New France were written at numerous points in the journey, from the beginning of the voyage, as missionaries waited to board the ship in the port of Dieppe, but also during the crossing itself – Marie de l'Incarnation, for instance, penned a short letter poignantly written 'on the sea' ('*sur mer*')<sup>105</sup> – and, more voluminously, after the crossing. We might view the letter written during the crossing as a 'travelling narrative' (an account written in transit) that moved *with* the missionary and mirrored her progress – and setbacks – in text. Thinking

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<sup>103</sup> Cécile de Sainte-Croix to the superior of the Ursulines at Dieppe, 2 September 1639, 952. 'pendant les grandes tempests, je ne couchois point; j'aimois mieux demeurer jour et nuict appuyée contre quelque chose, car il n'i avoit point moien de tenir las teste de bout. Aussi, qu'il m'eust fallu une grande quantité de linge pour demeurer au lict. Vous aviez de la peine à me permettre une planche soub le matelas; tant sur mer comme ici, on ne couche point autrement.'

<sup>104</sup> Cécile de Sainte-Croix to the superior of the Ursulines at Dieppe, 2 September 1639, 952.

<sup>105</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Françoise de S. Bernard, At sea, 20 May 1639, 86-87.

about the materiality of these texts, and the conditions in which they were written, allows the historian to assess how landscapes, quite literally, *shaped* texts.

Marie de l'Incarnation's letter from the sea, for instance, provides useful insights into how the unpredictability of ocean travel affected devotional practices. Most extant accounts of the transatlantic crossing were written upon safe arrival in the colony in order to reassure anxious friends, relatives, and fellow religious back home. Marie's letter, however, was written *en route* to New France and could not, therefore, confirm safe arrival in the colony. Nonetheless, she noted, she received a great deal of consolation in letting the superior know that she would not hear from the nuns until their arrival in Quebec. '[W]e have tried everyday', Marie wrote, 'to prepare ourselves for death as much because of the enemies [Spanish and 'Domkerquois', i.e. privateers from Dunkirk] as from the torments of the sea which have been very great'.<sup>106</sup> This is reminiscent of Fournier's advice on preparing the soul through confession ('Put your conscience in order before leaving,' he advised 'to preserve the peace inside you, even when the winds make war outside').<sup>107</sup> Capture by hostile enemies was a very real threat for travellers, both male and female. Travelling under the banner of colonial trading (and sometimes, military) vessels, it was not unusual for missionaries to become embroiled in political conflicts. The *Account of the Journey of Five Capuchin Nuns* (1722) tells the story of five Spanish religious, who set out from Madrid in 1710 to found a convent in Lima, Peru. Shortly after leaving the port of Cadiz, however, the nuns were taken prisoner by Dutch corsairs, who had captured their ship.<sup>108</sup> They were eventually released to a convent in Lisbon, Portugal (from whence they began

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<sup>106</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Françoise de Saint Bernard, At sea, 20 May 1639, 86. 'nous avons tâché tous les jours de nous disposer à mourir tant à cause des ennemis que des tourmentes de la mer qui ont été très-grands'

<sup>107</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 681. 'Mettez order auant de partir à vostre conscience, pour conseruer la paix au dedans de vous-mesme, cependant que les vents vous font la guerre dehors.'

<sup>108</sup> *Journey of Five Capuchin Nuns*, ed. and trans. Sarah E. Owens (Toronto: Iter Inc, 2009). For the Spanish nuns' capture by the Dutch and subsequent release in Portugal, see 95-106.

their journey afresh) but their forced return to Europe demonstrates the often unintentionally indirect nature of transatlantic travel. Although they had set off in January 1710, the nuns did not arrive at their destination until February 1713.<sup>109</sup> No French nuns were captured *en route* to New France, although several Jesuits found themselves back in Europe after the vessels they were travelling on were captured by the enemy.<sup>110</sup>

The very act of writing from the sea – or, in Marie’s case, ‘on the sea’ (*sur mer*) – was spiritually significant. Biblical representations of the sea (particularly in the book of Genesis), portray it as a ‘great abyss’, whose mysteries are unknowable.<sup>111</sup> This view remained pervasive in the seventeenth century; the sea appeared not only as a metaphor for something vast and incomprehensible (jurisprudence, for instance!),<sup>112</sup> but also for the mysteries of the faith. Furetière’s *Dictionnaire Universel* (1690) included the following entry under ‘sea’ (*mer*): ‘Who wishes to mine the depths of the mysteries of the Faith? It is a sea where the spirit loses itself. Our life is a stormy sea, unceasingly agitated by the passions.’<sup>113</sup> Women, who according to Galenic humoral theory were cold and wet (i.e., melancholic and governed by the passions), were regarded as inconstant and irrational.<sup>114</sup> Marie’s letter can be read as a counter-attack to this charge. Despite the terrible weather, she wrote, ‘Our hearts nevertheless have not been at

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<sup>109</sup> *Journey of Five Capuchin Nuns*, 69 and 175.

<sup>110</sup> See, for example, *JR*, 40: 81.

<sup>111</sup> Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea*, 1-2.

<sup>112</sup> *DAF* (1694), s.v. “mer.” The entry states, ‘On dit fig. de certaines sciences d’une tres-grande estenduë... la jurisprudence est une mer sans fonds et sans rives’ (‘We say, figuratively of certain sciences with very broad applications... jurisprudence is a bottomless sea without shores’).

<sup>113</sup> Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire Universel* (1690), s.v. “mer.” ‘Qui veut fonder la profondeur des mysteres de la Foy? C’est une *mer* ou l’esprit se perd. Nôtre vie est une *mer* orageuse, sans cesse agitée par les passions.’

<sup>114</sup> On early modern ‘leaky women’, see Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), especially chapter 1, “Leaky Vessels: The Incontinent Women of City Comedy,” 23-63.

all troubled [*troublez*] by the trouble [*trouble*] of the Elements'.<sup>115</sup> Here, the repetition of 'trouble' links emotions ('Our hearts') to the weather/elements (that is, the sea and the wind). Marie's denial that the nuns' hearts had been 'troubled', then, implied that they were not subject to the passions so frequently associated with *les personnes de leur sexe*. Unlike the weather, Marie implied, she and her companions were neither rash, nor changeable. Despite the ecclesiastical authorities' initial unwillingness to allow them to go to Canada, they were resolved to carry out their spiritual duty, converting and educating '*les filles sauvages*' ('native girls'). Indeed, in an earlier letter to her spiritual director (who had initially forbade Marie to go to the colony), the nun stated that the dangers of the trip made it all the more appealing. What could be better, she argued, than throwing oneself into the arms of divine providence? Why delay?<sup>116</sup> Dominique Deslandres has described Marie's mysticism as 'exemplary'; 'God was wholeness', she argues, 'the missionary was emptiness'.<sup>117</sup> This is clearly evoked in Marie's early letters to her spiritual advisor:

My soul, seeing itself immersed in the immense grandeur and infinity of God's majesty, cried out, "O breadth, o length, o depth, o infinite height, immense, incomprehensible, ineffable, adorable!"<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Mother Françoise de Saint Bernard, At sea, 20 May 1639, 86. 'Nos coeurs néanmoins n'ont point été troublez par le trouble des Elemens'

<sup>116</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Dom Raymond de Saint Bernard, Tours, 19 April 1635, MI, *Corr.*, Letter XIV, 33. 'pourquoy donc différer plus long-temps de nous perdre entre les bras de la divine Providence?'

<sup>117</sup> Dominique Deslandres, "In the Shadow of the Cloister: Representations of Female Holiness in New France," in *Colonial Saints: Discovering the Holy in the Americas, 1500-1800*, ed. Allan Greer and Jodi Bilinkoff (New York: Routledge, 2003), 139.

<sup>118</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Dom Raymond de Saint Bernard, n.d, but Oury speculates 1626, MI, *Corr.*, Letter I, 1. 'Mon âme se voyant comme absorbée dans la grande immense et infinie de la majesté de Dieu s'écrioit "O largeur, ô longueur, ô profondeur, ô hauteur infinie, immense, incompréhensible, ineffable, adorable!"'

Furthermore, she employed the metaphor of the sea to express these mystical ideas. Her soul, she wrote, was ‘lost in this Sea of love, where being shattered [*anéantie*] it becomes everything’.<sup>119</sup> This sentiment was not only expressed by female religious. Father Claude Ménart articulated similar thoughts in his 1640 *Relation*. ‘Ah!’ the missionary exclaimed, ‘how good it is to throw oneself into the arms of his sweet providence and receive with love the blows that his hand gives us.’<sup>120</sup> But the uncertainty of the missionaries’ temporal fate is underlined at the end of Marie de l’Incarnation’s letter from the ocean, where she penned a poignant – and somewhat dramatic – ‘Adieu, adieu, adieu’.<sup>121</sup> The dangers of the New France mission were thus embodied by Marie’s letter, which – like its author – might never have arrived at its destination. Indeed, as we shall see in the final chapter of this thesis, environment could also shape correspondence (and its readers’ perceptions of it).

### **Disaster and dirt: Coping strategies**

Despite some authors’ heroic evocations of missionary courage in the face of death, others provide less-idealistic accounts. Cécile de Sainte-Croix, for instance, admitted losing her nerve (and thus being distracted from the contemplation of her sins, which was essential for any Christian to ‘die well’) when it seemed certain that the ship would hit an iceberg. The nun feared that all aboard would perish. All she could think of, she wrote, was dying in the sea.<sup>122</sup> In this

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<sup>119</sup> Marie de l’Incarnation to Dom Raymond de Saint Bernard, Tours, n.d., MI, *Corr.*, Letter XXV, 59. ‘elle se sent seulement perdue dans cette Mer d’amour, où elle devient tout, et où étant anéantie, elle devient tout’.

<sup>120</sup> *MNF*, 4, 560. ‘Ah! qu’il fait bon se jeter entre les bras de sa divine providence et recevoir avec amour les coups que sa main nous donne.’

<sup>121</sup> Marie de l’Incarnation to Mother Françoise de Saint Bernard, At sea, 20 May 1639, 87.

<sup>122</sup> Mother Cécile de Sainte-Croix to the Superior of the Ursulines at Dieppe, 2 September 1639, 953. ‘la seule crainte de mourir dans la mer me saisit’.

account the sea was portrayed, not as divine oblivion, but as an object of terror. Cécile's panic was prompted not only by her surroundings, but also her fellow passengers (and, in particular, Father Vimont's grim pronouncement, 'We are dead'). Indeed, it was not until the Father left to hear the sailors' confessions that the nun returned to her senses.<sup>123</sup>

Yet despite weather conditions outwith the missionaries' control, they retained behavioural agency. Marie of the Incarnation wrote that during a storm that almost sunk the nun's ship, Madame de la Peltrie (the Ursuline's lay benefactress) 'was clinging to me as though glued to my side, in order that we might die together'.<sup>124</sup> While the first statement implied Madame de la Peltrie's panic, the second tempered it. It was not through fear, the author implied, that the woman clung to the nun, rather through a desire to face death bravely with her companion. Marie thus downplayed the extremity of this dire situation. 'I arranged my clothes in such a way that when the fracas began,' she wrote, 'I would only be seen in a state of decency'.<sup>125</sup> Marie's appearance was dishevelled and her clothing was out of place, but – more importantly – she re-arranged it, taking control over small aspects of a situation in which she had very little. (Unlike the complete abandonment in her spiritual life, Marie seems unwilling to fully abandon herself in the temporal). Although ostensibly this rhetorical strategy denies that the missionaries' situation was out of control, it nonetheless allows the reader to glimpse the 'authentic' story of their sufferings. This is similar to the rhetorical strategy used by Claude in other parts of Marie's *Vie*. As Jodi Bilinkoff has shown, Claude Martin's 'additions' (commentaries on the text apparently written by Marie), frequently use the rhetorical device of *occupatio*. For instance,

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<sup>123</sup> Mother Cécile de Sainte-Croix to the Superior of the Ursulines at Dieppe, 2 September 1639, 953.

<sup>124</sup> *Vie*, 393. 'Madame nôtre Fondatrice se tenoit comme collée à moy, afin que nous puissions mourir ensemble.'

<sup>125</sup> *Vie*, 393-94. 'Je disposois mes habits en sorte que quand le fracas se feroit, je ne pûsse être veuë qu'avec decense.'

Marie's virtues are 'punctuated' – to borrow Bilinkoff's term – with statements that deny that Claude will mention a particular virtue, after which he mentions it anyway (e.g.: 'I will pass over in silence her extreme penitences and mortifications... I will likewise not speak with any precision about her communications and intimate communications with the divine Majesty... I decline to speak in any detail of her freely given graces...'). Thus, Claude is able to tell the reader more than he claims to.<sup>126</sup> Similarly, Marie's text allows the reader a glimpse of the inappropriate (e.g. the dishevelled nun), before restoring order to the scene.

But the women's situation was to become even more challenging. When the party finally transferred into a small bark to carry them the remaining distance to Quebec (the wind being contrary, the *Saint Jacques* was unable to go any further upriver), the nuns found themselves sharing an even smaller space. In a particularly evocative passage of her letter, Cécile wrote:

there was no other covered place than a little room which was full of cod almost to the ceiling, so much so that we could only remain there lying one on top of the other, stacked like bread in an oven.<sup>127</sup>

Certainly, the intimacy of 'lying one on top of the other' would not have been permitted in a convent in France. Presumably, the exceptional circumstances aboard the bark rendered this acceptable. Furthermore, the summer heat combined with the smell of cod meant that very few of the passengers could remain for long under cover and were instead forced to huddle outside

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<sup>126</sup> Jodi Bilinkoff, *Related Lives: Confessors and their Female Penitents, 1450-1750* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 63. The examples used are Bilinkoff's. For an examination of Claude's editorial process in comparative perspective see *Related Lives*, chapter 3, "Whose Life is it Anyway?" 46-75.

<sup>127</sup> Cécile de Sainte-Coix to the Superior of the Ursulines at Dieppe, Quebec, 2 September 1639, 955. 'Il n'i avoint point d'autre lieu à ce mestre à couvert qu'une petite chambre qui estoit plaine de molue quassi jusques au haut, sy bien que nous n'i pouvons tenir que couchées les unes sur les autres, tassez comme du pain au four.'

in the rain. Without comparison, Mother Cécile remarked, there ‘was less discomfort [*moins de mortification*]’ in remaining [outside] in the rain than suffering the inconveniences of the storeroom’. Those who came outside, she adds, ‘smelled so strongly [of cod] that we could hardly stand them’.<sup>128</sup> In this context, the term ‘*mortification*’ refers to the mortification or punishment of both body and soul. The physical hardships of a religious journey or pilgrimage were often described in these terms and were thus framed as spiritual trials, rather than worldly unpleasantness. But Cécile’s account provided a detailed description of her soiled clothing. She recounted that her habit (*cotte*) became so wet from the rain that it remained so for several days after their arrival. It ‘was no small mortification’, she wrote, ‘to see myself so mucky in front of so many good people’.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, several sources attest to the seriously ill health of several of the nuns after they had arrived. In a letter from Sillery that September, Barthélemy Vimont wrote to Mother Elisabeth de Saint-François to inform her that while both Mother de Sainte-Marie and Sister de Saint-Nicolas had arrived at Quebec in good health, the former had fallen ill several days after their arrival. He asserted that she ‘is not yet completely better and it will be a long time before she can ease the burden of your good sisters. As for the rest’, he added, ‘she is exactly as you describe, of a very good disposition and very virtuous, as is Sister de Saint-Nicolas, who has *something more in that she is strong and robust*’.<sup>130</sup> Good health was therefore a clear advantage for missionaries. Also writing from Sillery (and just one day after Vimont), Father Paul Le Jeune stressed the importance of strong constitutions for nuns travelling

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<sup>128</sup> Cécile de Sainte-Coix to the Superior of the Ursulines at Dieppe, Quebec, 2 September 1639, 955. ‘sentoient si fort qu’on avoit peine à les supporter.’

<sup>129</sup> Cécile de Sainte-Coix to the Superior of the Ursulines at Dieppe, Quebec, 2 September 1639, 955. ‘...qui ne m’ettoit une petite mortification de me voirs [*sic*] ainsy crottée devant tant d’honnestes personnes’

<sup>130</sup> Barthelemi Vimont to Elisabeth de Saint-François, Sillery, 1 September 1640, *MNF*, 4, Doc. 157, 509. My translation and emphasis. ‘n’est pas encore bien guérie et de longtemps ne pourra soulager vos bonne sœurs. Du reste, elle est telle que vous la dépeignez, d’une très bonne humeur et très vertueuse, comme est aussi la sœur de Saint-Nicolas, qui a cela par-dessus qu’elle est forte et robuste’.



to New France. ‘Good health’, he asserted, ‘is very necessary here’.<sup>131</sup> While it is true that women were accorded an important status as missionaries (and spoken of with great respect by their male counterparts), there was a limit to just how accurately their journeys were to be described to the general public. Although it was acceptable to recount that a female missionary had been seasick, it was unacceptable to describe her dishevelled appearance – not to mention her thoroughly grotty clothing – in the printed *Relations* (though such descriptions appear in personal correspondence). Accurate descriptions of women’s bodies and clothing would have undermined their positions as caregivers and as guardians of the Indigenous children who they sought to educate. Descriptions of the Indigenous boarders at the Ursuline convent at Quebec, for instance, usually focused on their uncleanness and subsequent cleansing and ‘Frenchification’ by the nuns.<sup>132</sup>

Furthermore, missionary authors were keen to stress that the nuns conducted themselves in a manner befitting their vocation as chaste brides of Christ. Father Claude Ménart wrote that when he took a brief trip ashore near Cape Breton, where the ship dropped anchor for the first time since leaving Dieppe, the nuns remained aboard the vessel. ‘Our nuns [*nos filles*] were not brave enough to follow me, or rather, it was easier to carry me in a small boat than all four of them.’<sup>133</sup> Though Ménart permitted himself a break from the confines of the ship (*‘un peu de divertissement’*), the nuns remained on board. They also stayed *together* (‘all four of them’).

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<sup>131</sup> Paul Le Jeune to Elisabeth de Saint-François, Sillery, 2 September 1640, *MNF*, 4, Doc. 159, 518. My translation. ‘Une bonne santé est icy bien nécessaire’

<sup>132</sup> See, for example, Marie de l’Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, 26 August 1644, MI, *Corr.*, Letter LXXX, 220.

<sup>133</sup> Father Ménart’s letter to the superior of the Ursulines at Paris appears in the chronicles of the Paris Ursulines. See Marie de Pommereuse, *Les Chroniques de l’Ordre des Ursulines: Recueillies pour l’usage des Religieuses du mesme Ordre* (Paris, 1673), 387. All translations from this account are my own. ‘Nos Filles n’avoient pas eu assez de courage pour me suivre, ou plutôt j’étois plus portatif en un petit bateau d’elle toutes quatre.’

Separation – particularly of one sister – from the rest of the group might have led to accusations of (sexual) impropriety. For instance, when Marguerite Bourgeois, the foundress of the Congrégation de Nôtre Dame, crossed the ocean in 1653, she ‘suffered cruel humiliations’ at the hands of her fellow passengers. As her eighteenth-century biographer tells us, the lay sister was criticised for travelling alone with a military man, Monsieur de Maisonneuve (one of the founders of Montreal). ‘Sister Bourgeois,’ he wrote, ‘to hear them speak, was a concubine under the mask of a *dévot*’.<sup>134</sup> The nuns travelling with Ménart would thus have been fully aware of the consequences of separation from the group. Furthermore, when Father Ménart gathered flowers for the nuns he framed it as a pious act, the purpose of which was, ‘to make them admire God’s bounty, which is so tender towards the peoples who have never loved him’.<sup>135</sup> Interaction with the world outside the convent, therefore, always had a carefully scripted purpose in missionary texts.

Despite the ‘success’ of the nuns’ journey, however, many missionaries remained skeptical about the religious mobility of women missionaries. At the end of his 1640 *Relation*, for instance, Paul Le Jeune penned a warning to women hoping to come to the colony out of what he regarded as a misplaced sense of adventure. ‘As a conclusion to this Chapter,’ he wrote, ‘I will say these few words to a vast number of Nuns, who burn with a desire to follow those who have crossed over.’ The colony’s women religious, he continued, ‘cannot penetrate into the more distant and more populous Nations; those who have come here are sufficient for the

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<sup>134</sup> Michel-François Ransonet, *La vie de la soeur Marguerite Bourgeois, institutrice, fondatrice et première supérieure d’une communauté de filles séculières, établie en Canada sous le nom de la congrégation de Nôtre-Dame* (Avignon, 1728), 43-44. My translation. ‘la Soeur Bourgeois, à les entendre, étoit une concubine sous le masque d’une dévote’.

<sup>135</sup> Pommereuse, *Les Chroniques de l’Ordre des Ursulines*, 386-87. ‘Ie leur fis un amas de toutes les fleurs & beauté du païs pour leur faire admirer la bonté de Dieu, qui est si tendre envers des peuples qui ne l’ont jamais aimé.’

occupations they can have in a country which has accomplished only its birth.’<sup>136</sup> A certain level of (carefully-managed) religious mobility had been permitted, Le Jeune conceded, but it was to go no further. The dangerous environment of New France, he implied, limited the scope of the nuns’ activities.

### **Lay experiences of the ocean**

But looking beyond missionary practices, how did lay people, in particular sailors and passengers, experience the crossing? Did they also experience the ocean as a ‘sacred’ environment? Although lay passengers and crew considerably outnumbered missionaries aboard vessels travelling to New France, there is little direct extant testimony written by lay persons who were not part of the colonial elite. What little evidence does exist tends to pay scant attention to religious practices aboard sailing vessels. For instance, when Asseline de Ronval (a young traveler sometimes described as New France’s ‘first tourist’) described his 1662 trip to the colony, he made only a brief mention of the crossing from Dieppe.<sup>137</sup> When he returned to France in October that year, he travelled aboard the *Saint Pierre*, a vessel that also carried François de Laval, Bishop of Petraea (*Monseigneur leuesque de petré*). But Asseline made no mention of any religious devotions aboard the ship.<sup>138</sup> This is surprising given the bishop’s presence. In order to re-imagine the ways in which devotional practices might have been

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<sup>136</sup> JR, 18: 77.

<sup>137</sup> Asseline de Ronval, *Journal én abregé Des uoyages de monsieur Asseline de Ronual tant par terre que par mér avec plusieurs Remarques, circonstances et auantures très Curieuses* (c.1695), 6-7. The original manuscript is held at the Library and Archives Canada (Ottawa), CA ANC MG18-J2. The 36 pages relating to Canada are available online via the Library and Archives Canada online exhibition, “New France, New Horizons,” at: [http://www.champlain2004.org/html/02/0217\\_full\\_1\\_e.html](http://www.champlain2004.org/html/02/0217_full_1_e.html). For a discussion of Asseline de Ronval’s manuscript and the author’s possible identity see, Armand Yon, “Notre premier touriste en Nouvelle-France: Asseline de Ronval [1662]”, *Cahiers des Dix*, 39 (1974): 147-70.

<sup>138</sup> Ronval, *Journal én abregé Des uoyages de monsieur Asseline de Ronual*, 33.

experienced by low status laypeople, therefore, we must draw together numerous references from a variety of scattered sources. Unsurprisingly, missionary sources provide the most detailed evidence. But given that missionaries did not travel aboard all sailing vessels travelling to the colony, their accounts cannot be read as representative. Their very presence aboard sailing vessels ensured more comprehensive religious devotions than most sailors were accustomed to. As Fournier tells us, most sailors spent the better part of their lives at sea, without any pastoral guidance, since the sacraments could only be given by a priest.<sup>139</sup> Re-reading missionary sources ‘against the grain’, through reading environment, then, can also enable historians to discuss, albeit rather tentatively, the reception of religious practices aboard sailing vessels.

Aside from the private devotions carried out by missionaries, public devotions (in which both passengers and crew participated) took place on Sundays and feast days. Father Claude Ménart, who travelled to New France in 1640, gave a detailed account of these practices to his brothers in New France, and this account appeared in the 1640 *Relation*.<sup>140</sup> Like Marie de l’Incarnation and her companions, Ménart travelled on the Admiral vessel of the New France fleet, which in 1640, was the *Espérance*. Like the 1639 fleet, the 1640 fleet comprised three vessels.<sup>141</sup> With Ménart, were four nuns: two Ursulines (Anne de Sainte-Claire and Marguerite de Sainte-Athanase) and two Hospitalières (Jeanne de Sainte-Marie and Catherine de Saint-Nicholas). Three additional Jesuits travelled aboard the other ships of the fleet.<sup>142</sup> ‘I have never seen such piety on the land than on the sea’, Ménart wrote in his account to the mission superior at Quebec. ‘The dignitaries of our fleet,’ he continued, ‘the passengers, and the sailors attended the divine

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<sup>139</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 677.

<sup>140</sup> For Ménart’s account, see *MNF*, 4, 558-563.

<sup>141</sup> Trudel, *Catalogue des immigrants*, 92.

<sup>142</sup> *MNF*, 4, 559.

service which was sung often'. He also recounted that they took communion and attended prayers and public readings.<sup>143</sup> But this piety, Ménart asserted, was particularly evident on the feast of Corpus Christi, when, 'we prepared a magnificent Altar in our admiral's room.'<sup>144</sup> As we know from *Hydrographie*, Fournier was convinced that the best way to maintain piety aboard a sailing vessel was through the good example of the captain. 'He must not have in his room', the former chaplain asserted, 'any dirty pictures', but should instead content himself with a crucifix, and portraits of the Holy Virgin, the patron saint of the vessel, the King, the Admiral or squadron leader ('*Chef d'Escade*').<sup>145</sup> The fact that Fournier felt the need to point this out, of course, suggests that very few captains adhered to these stipulations. Fournier also tells us that among well-regulated fleets – and he included the New France fleet in this category – catechisms were said daily, the lives of saints were read, and – weather permitting – mass was said.<sup>146</sup> Good weather was necessary, not only because large masses were often said upon the main deck of a vessel, but because – even when said indoors (in the captain's cabin, for instance), they could be disrupted by the pitching of the vessel, which might overturn the necessary liturgical objects, spilling the blood of Christ onto the deck. This was not a new problem; for centuries, priests had worried over the correct disposal of leftover communion bread and wine and what to do if these were accidentally dropped or spilled.<sup>147</sup> These 'embarrassments of matter' – to borrow Stephen Greenblatt's phrase – were seized upon by Protestant reformers, who mocked Catholics for

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<sup>143</sup> *MNF*, 4, 561. My emphasis. 'Je n'ay point veu de devotion sur la terre que sur la mer. Les principaux de nostre flotte, les passagers et les matelots assistoient au divin service que nous chantions fort souvent.'

<sup>144</sup> *MNF*, 4, 562-63. 'Le jour du Saint Sacrement on prépara un Autel magnifique dans la chambre de nostre admiral.'

<sup>145</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 684. 'Il n'aura en sa chambre aucuns pourtraits sale'

<sup>146</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 696.

<sup>147</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, "The Mousetrap," *Practicing New Historicism*, ed. Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 141.

believing that God was present in the material host, and thus implying that un-believers and even animals (a mouse that nibbled on a leftover crumb, for instance) could ingest the body of Christ.<sup>148</sup> Post-Tridentine treatises, such as *Hydrographie*, remained concerned with these questions of theology. According to Fournier, the custom was usually to celebrate mass on land when the vessel was ‘*en rade*’ (anchored at sea in the ‘natural’ port, and awaiting departure). Some theologians, he wrote, had argued that mass should not be said on the ocean, because of the danger that the chalice might be overturned. To avoid this, Fournier continued, a chalice was invented, from which ‘the cup was suspended in the same manner as the compass’ (presumably, using a gimbal).<sup>149</sup> ‘I remember’, he wrote,

that on one of our [the Society of Jesus’s] voyages to Canada, one of our priests having had some of these chalices made, found them greatly inconvenient, and did not wait, having arrived [in Canada] to send them back to France, and have them melted into ordinary ones.<sup>150</sup>

‘It is madness’, Fournier continued, ‘to think that when a vessel rolls, & is agitated by stormy weather, a Chalice of any kind will remain on the Altar, considering that men can barely stand without falling’.<sup>151</sup> In practice, however, New France missionaries do not seem to have been very concerned about this. During his 1640 voyage to New France, for instance, Father Ménart could not be deterred from celebrating mass. According to Mother Anne de Sainte-Claire, an

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<sup>148</sup> Greenblatt, “The Mousetrap,” see especially, 141-51.

<sup>149</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 108. I have not been able to locate any surviving examples of these objects.

<sup>150</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 108. ‘Il me souvient qu’en d’vn de nos voyages de Canadas, quelques-vns des nostres ayant fait faire de tels Calices, en receurent de grandes incommodités, & ne manquant estant arriuez, de les renvoyer en France, & les faire fondre à l’ordinaire’.

<sup>151</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 108. ‘c’est folie de croire que lors qu’un vaisseau roule, & est agité de gros temps, vn Calice qu’elle qu’il soit, puisse tenir sur l’Autel, veu qu’à peine les hommes peuvent se tenir sans tomber.’

Ursuline nun travelling to the colony, the missionary and his companions did not miss mass once. Father Ménart, she asserted, ‘celebrated it [the mass] in very rough and unpleasant weather [*‘en des temps fort rudes et fascheux’*].<sup>152</sup> Furthermore, in 1676, after having crossed the ocean to New France, Jesuit Father Jean Enjalron wrote that, after being entreated to say a high mass on the day of the Pentecost, he continued to say mass daily on the deck, ‘although’, he asserted, ‘I felt very unsteady while doing so; but another of our fathers held the chalice, and the others directed the singing of various hymns’.<sup>153</sup> Although mass could be celebrated on the ocean, then, there were certain environmental constraints and slight adaptations were necessary (another priest held the chalice for Enjalron, for instance). For his part, Enjalron insisted that his forbearance, ‘maintained devotion among people who, as a rule, have not much of it’.<sup>154</sup> Sailors, were not renowned for their piety, though it is fair to say that Jesuit missionaries set the bar relatively high.

Whilst many missionaries were highly skeptical about sailors’ piety, it is nonetheless clear that both sailors and passengers took part in the devotional activities on board ships. In some cases, they appear both as instigators of devotional acts and as active participants. Enjalron, for instance, tells us that he was ‘urged’ to say a high mass, though by whom he does not say.<sup>155</sup> Similarly, Father Ménart’s 1640 account described an elaborate procession organised for the feast of Corpus Christi. ‘The whole crew’, he wrote, ‘put up an altar of repose at the front of the

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<sup>152</sup> Mother Anne de Sainte-Claire to an Ursuline at the convent of Faubourg Saint Jacques, in Paris, 2 September 1640, MI, *Corr.*, Appendice VI, 968. My translation.

<sup>153</sup> *JR*, 60: 113.

<sup>154</sup> *JR*, 60: 113.

<sup>155</sup> *JR*, 60: 113.

vessel.’<sup>156</sup> ‘Our Lord,’ the missionary continued, ‘wanting to be adored on this moving element [‘*cet element mobile*’], gave us such calm waters, that we thought we were drifting on a pond’.<sup>157</sup> Thus, while the missionary recognised that worship on a ‘moving element’ (water) could be troublesome, he nonetheless demonstrated that it was possible, through God’s grace. After Ménart’s altar had been set up, he wrote, there was ‘a very solemn procession, which everyone attended’. He continued:

piety and devotion caused the procession to move in good order all around the vessel. Our Brother Dominique Scot dressed in a surplice carried the cross, on either side of him walked two children carrying blazing torches in their hands; the nuns followed carrying their white candles and [with] angelic modesty; after the priest who carried the Holy Sacrament walked the admiral of the fleet and then all the crew [and passengers].<sup>158</sup>

This procession was accompanied by cannon fire, a signal that continued to be used in New France to mark significant religious events.<sup>159</sup> There were only seven people, Ménart recounted, who did not take communion. The missionary explained this away; these individuals, he asserted, had taken communion recently.<sup>160</sup> That Ménart was able to identify who had taken the sacrament – and, more importantly, who had not – suggests that aboard the *Espérance*, religious

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<sup>156</sup> *MNF*, 4, 562. ‘Tout l’équipage dressa un reposoir sur l’avant du vaisseau.’

<sup>157</sup> *MNF*, 4, 562. ‘Nostre Seigneur, voulant estre adoré sur cet element mobile, nous donna un calme si doux, que nous pensions voguer su un estang.’

<sup>158</sup> *MNF*, 4, 562. ‘Nous fisme une procession vraiment solemnelle puisque tout le monde y assista et que la piété et la dévotion la faisoient marcher en bel ordre toute à l’entour du vaisseau. Nostre Frère Dominique Scot revestu d’un surplis portoit la croix, aux deux costés de laquelle marchoisent deux enfans portans un flambeau ardent en la main; suivoient les religieuses avec leurs cierges blancs et marchoient l’amiral de flotte et ensuite tout l’équipage.’

<sup>159</sup> See, for example, *JJ*, 17-18; 20-22; 38.

<sup>160</sup> *MNF*, 4, 562. ‘Il y a n’eut que sept personnes qui n’approchassent de la sainte table, et encore s’étoient-ils repus un peu auparavant de cette viande sacrée.’



devotions could not be avoided without raising questions; absences had to be justified (if not aboard sailing vessels then, at the very least, in the printed *Relations*).

Yet not all passengers were as co-operative as missionaries would have liked. In 1665, the Carignan-Salières regiment crossed the ocean to New France, with numerous Huguenots in its ranks. At least one of these heretics was detected on the ocean crossing. ‘Another heretic,’ the *Annales de l’Hôtel-Dieu de Québec* tells us, ‘whose instruction had begun aboard the ship, committed an error for which he was condemned to *la cale*,’ that is, to be attached to a rope and thrown into the sea from the large yard.<sup>161</sup> Although the man was told that he would be spared this punishment if he converted, the *Annales* records, ‘He replied that this motive for conversion was too lowly and too self-interested, [and] that he wanted to receive this punishment because he deserved it, after which he would think about what God had inspired him [to do] in the matter of his religion’.<sup>162</sup> The man was punished and, sometime after, he asked to be fully instructed in the Catholic Faith and abjured his heresy. Whatever the man’s motivation for his initial refusal to convert, when he did abjure his faith, he did it on his own terms. Thus, while cramped conditions aboard sailing vessels could lead to the discovery of heretics, maintenance of religious conformity was neither certain, nor easy.

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<sup>161</sup> *AHDQ*, 148. All translations from the *Annales* are my own. ‘Un autre heretique, que l’on avoit commencé d’instruire dans le navire, fit une faute pour laquelle on le condamna a la cale’. For some misdemeanours, such as carelessly spilling wine or throwing food overboard, a sailor might be condemned to be dunked as many as three times. See Louis-Michel-Félix de la Porte-Belval La Porte’s *État général de la Marine avec les ordonnances et réglemens qui s’y observent* (1642), in *Correspondance de Henri d’Escoubleau de Sourdis, Archevêque de Bordeaux, Chef des Conseils du Roi en l’armée navale, Commandeur du Saint-Esprit, Primat d’Aquitaine, etc.: Augmentée des ordres, instructions et lettres de Louis XIII et du Cardinal Richelieu à M. de Sourdis concernant les opérations des flottes Françaises de 1636 à 1642, et accompagnée d’un texte historique, de notes et d’une introduction sur l’état de la marine en France sous le Ministère du Cardinal Richelieu*, ed. Eugène Sue, 3 vols., vol. 3 (Paris: L’Imprimerie de Crapelet, 1839), 313-56 (especially, 338-46).

<sup>162</sup> *AHDQ*, 148-49. ‘Il répondit que ce motif de conversion étoit trop bas et trop intéressé, qu’il vouloit recevoir ce châtiment puisqu’il avoit méritoit, apres quoy il aviseroit a ce que Dieu luy inspiroit touchant sa religion.’

Even under ‘normal’ circumstances (when the weather was calm and there was no overt confessional conflict) devotional activities aboard sailing ships could be disrupted. In his 1632, *Brief Relation*, Father Paul Le Jeune gave a short account of his crossing to New France. ‘On the day of the Pentecost,’ he wrote,

I was ready to start preaching, which I usually did on Sundays and Feast days [when], one of our sailors began to shout: “Cod; cod!” He had thrown in his [fishing] line and had caught a large one. We had already been on the [fish] banks for several days, but had taken nothing. It was a pleasure to see such a large harvest and so much blood spilled on the deck of our ship. This refreshment was much needed after such long storms.<sup>163</sup>

Although Le Jeune presents the slaughter of cod as a holy sacrifice, it is nonetheless clear that when supplies were needed – and available – devotion had to take a back seat. Indeed, that the missionary does not object to the interruption (and likely cancelation) of prayers, implies his own recognition of the need for supplies. Additionally, this silence might also be read as an indication that missionaries did not have as much influence in the fleet as the printed *Relations* implied. Even if Le Jeune had wanted to prevent the interruption of prayers, it seems unlikely that a suggestion of this nature would have been popular.

Yet environmental phenomena, such as Le Jeune’s miraculous cod, were not merely distractions. Rather, like the flowers Father Ménart had gathered for the nuns aboard the *Espérance*, they appeared in seventeenth-century accounts as living manifestations of God’s

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<sup>163</sup> *MNF*, 4, 300. ‘Le jour de la Pentecoste, comme j’estois prest de prescher, ce que je faisais ordinairement les dimanches et bonnes festes, un de nos matelots se mit à crier: “Molue; molue!” Il avoit jetté sa lignee & en tiroit une grande. Il avoit dèsjà quelque jours que nous estions sur le banc, mais on n’avoit quasi rien pris. C’estoit un plaisir de voir une si grande tuerie et tant de sang répandu sur le tillac de nostre navire. Ce rafraîchissement nous vint for à propos, après de si longues bourrasques.’

bounty. This was not only the case for missionary accounts, but also in maritime treatises penned by laymen. For instance in his *Traitté de la marine et du devoir d'un bon marinier*, Samuel de Champlain presented natural phenomena as God-given navigational aids.<sup>164</sup> Since the absence of accurate enough time pieces prevented the measurement of longitude, early modern navigators were unable to precisely chart the progress of their journeys. The glossary of the 1681 *Ordonnance de la marine*, for example, defines the term '*Estime*' ('reckoning'), as 'the judgement made by a pilot of the path he *thinks* he has taken, and of the place where he *thinks* he is'.<sup>165</sup> Reckoning, the calculation of location by determining the distance travelled from an already determined geographical position, was thus subject to error. But Champlain was relatively unconcerned about the lack of scientific methods for obtaining longitude. '[N]o one' he asserted in his *Traitté de la marine*, 'should torment himself in this life on that account, since it would be in vain'. He continued '...there have been plenty of arguments and treatises without any solid and fixed results.'<sup>166</sup> 'God', he asserted, 'has given us another means of instruction whereby seamen can correct their reckoning.'<sup>167</sup> When approaching the '*grand ban*' (the 'Great Bank', an underwater plateau renowned as a plentiful fishing ground),

Flocks of certain birds are seen, called *murres*, and this gives the pilot warning that he is not far from the steep edge of the bank which forms its side.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Champlain's baptismal record has not been located and it is unknown whether he was a Catholic or a Huguenot. See David Hackett Fischer, *Champlain's Dream*, 4; 20-21.

<sup>165</sup> *Ordonnance de Louis XIV de France et de Navarre: Donnée à Fontainebleau au mois d'Aoust 1681: Touchant la Marine* (Paris, 1681). See "Explication des termes de la marine," n.p., which follows the table of contents at the end of the book. My emphasis and translation. '*Estime*, est le jugement que fait un Pilote, du chemin qu'il croit avoir fait, et du lieu où il croit être.'

<sup>166</sup> H.P. Biggar, ed., *The Works of Samuel de Champlain* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1936), 6: 298.

<sup>167</sup> Biggar, ed., *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, 6: 98-299.

<sup>168</sup> Biggar, ed., *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, 6: 303.

Following this warning, soundings (the measurement of depth using a sounding line) could be taken to gauge the depth of the ocean. Nature ('God's bounty') and technology thus combined to ensure a ship's safe passage. Other methods of identifying a ship's whereabouts included, 'soundings, coasts, land, birds, masses of sea-weed... fishes, changes of weather or climate, and many other indications known to navigators'.<sup>169</sup> Old navigators, Champlain continued,

by long practice... recognize the bottom where soundings are taken, whether it is rock, fine sand, or mud, clay, shells, or barley-corn shell, flakes of rock, small gravel, and other names to distinguish bottoms.<sup>170</sup>

Thus 'touching by extension' (i.e. using an object to 'sense' another object) was only possible through 'long practice' and it was usually older seamen who had mastered this skill. Again, bodily experience contributes to wisdom and authority. Indeed, Champlain argued, a seaman 'must be quite untrained' in order to let a ship run ashore. This, he concluded, 'is seen in the providence of God, and the teaching He gives to seamen in order that they may be safe, and be relieved of dependence on dead reckonings.'<sup>171</sup> The 'living ocean', to borrow Bolster's term, was thus portrayed as part of God's divine plan for colonisation.

It would, therefore, be a mistake to underestimate the importance of religious practices to the ship's crew. While traditional historiography holds that sailors – among other lower status and

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<sup>169</sup> Biggar, ed., *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, 6: 312.

<sup>170</sup> Biggar, ed., *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, 6: 309-10.

<sup>171</sup> Biggar, ed., *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, 6: 310-11.

‘travelling’ or itinerant workers, notably soldiers, peddlers, and domestic servants – had little interest in religion, we should be wary of making such broad generalisations.<sup>172</sup> Parish registers and probate inventories can provide useful insights into the practices and beliefs of individuals who might otherwise be absent from the historical record. For instance, the possessions recorded in a probate inventory for four sailors who died on the Saint Lawrence River in 1646, suggest that these workers’ relationships with the sacred were more complex than historians have previously claimed.<sup>173</sup> On 6 November 1646, a brigantine (a small, square-rigged, two-mast vessel) was shipwrecked while carrying provisions from Quebec to Trois Rivières.<sup>174</sup> Quebec was the port from which provisions and merchandise arriving from France were transported to other areas of the colony, so this would have been a fairly routine trip.<sup>175</sup> Even after arrival in New France, waterways remained crucial for travel, commerce, and communication. Nine men died in this shipwreck: five sailors, two soldiers, and one apothecary bound for the Jesuit Huron mission. News of this event did not reach Quebec until 21 November, when Father Barthélemy Vimont recounted the incident in the *Journal des Jésuites*.<sup>176</sup> On 5 December, the possessions of four of the sailors were auctioned. This was the usual practice when a sailor died during a voyage; possessions would be sold and the money made would be sent to his family back

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<sup>172</sup> According to Jean Delumeau, ‘Professional dimorphism...seems to have been common under the *Ancien Régime*, when certain of the professions apparently felt little attraction for religion’. See Delumeau, *Catholicism Between Luther and Voltaire: A New View of the Counter-Reformation*, trans. by Jeremy Moasier with an introduction by John Bossy (London: Burns & Oates, 1977), 151.

<sup>173</sup> “Inventaire des effets appartenant aux deffunts Jean Fleury, Jacques Figet, Jean Fouchereau, et Guillaume Lasue,” 26 November 1646, BAnQ Québec, Fonds cours supérieure, District judiciaire de Québec, Greffe de notaire (CN301), S9, Greffe de Henri Bancheron.

<sup>174</sup> *JJ*, 71-72.

<sup>175</sup> The Jesuits stockpiled their supplies in the Quebec residence for this reason, and this proved disastrous when it burned down in 1640. Le Jeune described this fire as a ‘nauffrage de feu’, literally, a ‘shipwreck of a fire’. See *MNF*, 4, 647-48.

<sup>176</sup> *JJ*, 71-72. For a transcription of the incident as reported in the parish register of Notre-Dame de Quebec, see *JJ*, 72n.

home.<sup>177</sup> Amongst the items sold for the family of Jacques Figet, a sailor from Dieppe, was, ‘An old book entitled Introduction to the devout life’.<sup>178</sup> First published in 1609 and aimed at a lay audience, François de Sale’s *Introduction à la vie dévote* enjoyed instant popularity; a second, reviewed and corrected edition had appeared by the end of the year. More than forty editions had been published in French by 1620 and by 1656 the work had been translated into seventeen different languages.<sup>179</sup> The principal aim of this text was to show that even those who had not chosen a religious vocation could lead pious lives. ‘It is a mistake, even a heresy,’ de Sales asserted in his introduction to the work, ‘to want to banish the devout life from a company of soldiers, from artisans’ shop, from the courts of princes, from the homes of married couples.’<sup>180</sup> In short, he argued, a devout life could be achieved anywhere and by people from all walks of life, even sailors travelling the Ocean Sea.

The presence of one such text might be viewed as an anomaly, but Figet’s copy of *Introduction à la vie dévote* was not the only pious work found among the sailors’ possessions: Jean Fouchereau also owned a religious text. The record of sale for this book leaves its title tantalisingly incomplete: ‘book entitled abridged life [of ...]’ (*liure intitulé labregé de la vie*).<sup>181</sup> But the probate inventory of four of the men who died (these men shared a room in the

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<sup>177</sup> On the selling of dead sailors’ possessions, see Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 197-98.

<sup>178</sup> “Vente des biens meubles de feu Jacques Figet, matelot...” 5 December 1646, BAnQ Québec, Collection Pièces judiciaires et notariales, TL5, D15. ‘Vng vieux liure Intitulé Introduction a la vie devotte adjudgé a Monsieur Nicollet pour ... 0.6.0’

<sup>179</sup> Henri-Jean Martin, *Livre, pouvoirs et société à Paris au XVIIe siècle (1598-1701), préface de Roger Chartier*, 3<sup>e</sup> édition, 2 vols., vol 1., (Genève : Droz, 1999), 146.

<sup>180</sup> François de Sales, *Introduction à la vie dévote* (Paris, 1641), 11. ‘C’est vn erreur, ains vne heresie, de vouloir banner la vie devote de la compagnie des soldats, de la boutique des artisans, de la cour des princes, du mesnage des gens mariez.’

<sup>181</sup> “Vente des biens meubles de feu Jean Fouchereau, matelot...” 5 December 1646, BAnQ Québec, Pièces judiciaires et notariales , TL5, D16, ‘liure intitule labregé de la vie’.

house of a man named La Forge), reveals its full title: ‘A little book called the abridged Eternal Life (*Un petit liure Intitulé l’abregé de la Vie Eternelle*’).<sup>182</sup> That the book is described as ‘little’ implies its portability, an item that could be carried on one’s person would not have taken up much room in a sailor’s chest. This accords with historian Philippe Martin’s definition of devotional texts (*livres de piété*) as books which were small in size, written in the vernacular, and intended for use by the faithful.<sup>183</sup> Of the four sailors listed on this probate inventory, Jean Fouchereau owned the fewest and most basic possessions, some of which were described as old or damaged, or showed signs of repair. For instance, a short sleeved shirt is described as *‘mechante’* (worthless or damaged).<sup>184</sup> That a devotional text is amongst these relatively meagre possessions indicates its importance. To give a comparative example: Amongst the numerous possessions of Fouchereau’s roommate, Guillaume Lasur, there were no pious objects. Of particular note, however, are two white shirts (he thus had several changes of clothes), a silver goblet, letters from his wife and friends, and a list (in Lasur’s hand) of monies owed to him by various parties. Indeed, some of the items owned by these men were similar to items owned by more affluent colonists, though many were categorised as old.<sup>185</sup> At least three of these men

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<sup>182</sup> “Inventaire des effets appartenant aux deffunts Jean Fleury, Jacques Figet, Jean Fouchereau, et Guillaume Lasue.”

<sup>183</sup> Philippe Martin, “Des livres de piété pour le Canada,” *Études d’histoire religieuse* 76 (2010), 6. Although the men shared a room, each man’s possessions were stored in his own chest. The inventory notes that each man’s chest was identified with the help of one M. Pierre Letaillandier who informed the notary which chest belonged to whom.

<sup>184</sup> There are only six entries (including the devotional text) listed on Fouchereau’s inventory. The other five are as follows:

‘Vn chapeau gris avec le Cordon neuf  
 Ung vieux haudechasse gris  
 Ung pourpoint violet  
 Une meschante chemisette rouge  
 Deux razors avec la pierre’

<sup>185</sup> Pat Tomczyszyn, “Sifting Through the Papers of the Past: Using Archival Documents for Costume Research in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Quebec,” *Material History Review/Revue d’histoire de la culture matérielle* 55 (2002), 8.

seem to have been literate. Yet although they owned devotional works, it is difficult to assess how ‘pious’ they actually were. Although Figet’s copy of De Sales’ text is described as ‘old’ – perhaps indicating wear and tear – it is impossible to know whether he had read the book or what he thought of it. Furthermore, the fourth roommate, Jean Fleury, did not own any pious texts, but he did possess a set of black rosary beads.<sup>186</sup> This evidence is difficult to evaluate, but however we interpret these objects, their presence among the possessions of the dead sailors indicates that sailors’ relationships with the divine were far more complex than their detractors, such as Father Enjalon, suggested.

Furthermore, although lay experiences of religious practices on the ocean are rarely recorded in their own words, it is possible to glean some information from parish records. Aside from daily devotions and feast day celebrations, there were other exceptional events which required pastoral intervention. On 6 July 1666, for instance, Jesuit missionary Father Jacques Marquette baptised (‘*ondoyé*’) Jean Noland, a baby born on the ocean crossing (‘*dans le vaisseau sur mer venant en ce païs*’) to Catherine Houard and her husband, Pierre Noland. A record of this baptism appears in the Quebec parish register. The child, we are told, was baptised again one year later on 10 July 1667, when he was given the full baptismal ceremony, by Henri de Bernieres, the first parish priest of Quebec.<sup>187</sup> The child’s initial ‘*ondoiment*’ by Marquette was thus a precaution to ensure that the child would not go to purgatory if the ship was wrecked or if he became sick in the remaining stages of the journey. Indeed, the term ‘*ondoyer*’ signifies a baptism conducted in haste, without the usual ceremonies, if a child is in danger.<sup>188</sup> The *Journal*

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<sup>186</sup> “Inventaire des effets appartenant aux deffunts Jean Fleury, Jacques Figet, Jean Fouchereau, et Guillaume Lasue”

<sup>187</sup> AJC, BO-85-4 11bis, ‘P. Jacques Marquette – ondoie un enfant durant sa traversée au Canada’, notes taken from the ‘Deuxième registre de la paroisse de Québec’ by Father Adrien Pouliot in 1971. The entry appears on page 89 of the original register.

<sup>188</sup> *DAF* (1694), s.v. “ondoyer.”



*des Jésuites* notes that Marquette arrived on the seventeenth vessel on 20 September 1666; the child must therefore have been born in the very early stages of the crossing.<sup>189</sup> Perhaps the parents had boarded such a late vessel because they had been trying to avoid the dangers and discomforts (most especially for Catherine) of giving birth aboard a sailing vessel. It is also possible that the child was not given the full baptismal ceremony because the parents wanted to choose Godparents who were already living in the colony. Whatever the case, Marquette's presence allowed the establishment of the child's spiritual safety. Though the full baptismal rite was not carried out – and the baptism was likely a makeshift affair – it would likely have been a comfort to the child's parents. This was not an isolated incident. In his 1643 edition of *Hydrographie*, Fournier recorded that, 'It was only two years ago that a woman gave birth during the voyage to Canada, and that one of ours [i.e. a Jesuit] conferred in the vessel, all the necessary sacraments.'<sup>190</sup>

Furthermore, there is a reasonable amount of evidence to suggest that even in cases of missionary absence, acts of piety were carried out aboard sailing vessels. From the small sample of available evidence consulted for this chapter, it appears that these acts of piety were carried out in moments of extreme danger or emotion. In the Sieur de Dièreville's account of his crossing to Acadia in 1699, the author recounted, in playful rhyming verse, the passengers' sense of relief upon viewing the colony's coastline:

... soon we saw a distant shore,  
The Untamed Hillsides of New France;

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<sup>189</sup> *JJ*, 350.

<sup>190</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie* (Paris, 1643), 142. This incident is also recorded on page 109 of the revised edition of 1667. However, since it is first discussed in the 1643 text, it seems reasonable to assume that the birth took place in 1640 or 1641. 'Il n'y a que deux ans qu'une femme accoucha dans le voyage de Canadas, & que l'un des nostres conféra dans le vaisseau, tout les Sacrements qu'un Prestre peut conferer.'

The *Te Deum* was sung at once  
 In token of our thankfulness.  
 By this new spectacle dispelled  
 Was melancholy, and although  
 The Sailors' song was not melodious,  
 Never with greater rapture have I heard  
 Illustrious Rochois or the fair Moreau.<sup>191</sup>

Mathilde Rochois and Louison Moreau were celebrated singers in late-seventeenth-century France.<sup>192</sup> Dièreville's juxtaposition of the sailors' discordant voices with those of 'Illustrious Rochois' and 'fair Moreau' produces a comic effect. But this apparently spontaneous act of piety was nonetheless carried out. The ritual was important, even if it did not have the spiritual weight of a *Te Deum* sung in the cathedral of Paris or Quebec. Acts of spontaneous devotion also appear in moments of need. In 1717 when French army officer Dumont de Montigny found himself aboard the *Cheval Marin* in the midst of a storm, he thought all was lost. '[W]e confessed our sins out loud,' he tells us, 'for we had no chaplain'. It was rare, the author noted here in parenthesis, to have one in merchant vessels, unless it was a ship of the Company of the Indies.<sup>193</sup> Although this event happened in the early eighteenth century, it seems unlikely that such a practice emerged spontaneously and without precedent. Indeed, as Fournier tells us, lack of a chaplain sometimes prompted sailors to carry out their own rites. 'O how good it is', he opined, '[to] see poor Sailors preparing for a battle, or in the middle of a storm, having no Priest,

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<sup>191</sup> Sieur de Dièreville, *Relation of the Voyage to Port Royal in Acadia*, ed. and trans, John Clarence Webster (Toronto: The Publications of the Champlain Society, 1933), 71-72. For the original French, see Sieur de Dièreville, *Relation du voyage du Port Royal de l'Acadie, ou de la Nouvelle France...* (Rouen, 1708), 48. '...nous vîmes bien-tôt sur un bord écarté/Les sauvages Côteaux de la Nouvelle France/Le *Te Deum* à l'instant fut chanté,/ Pour en marquer nôtre réjouissance./C'étoit un spectacle nouveau/Qui dissipoit nôtre tristesse; Quoique des Matelots le chant ne fut pas beau./Je n'entendis jamais avec plus d'allegresse,/N'y l'Illustre Rochois, ny la belle Moreau.'

<sup>192</sup> See Dièreville, *Relation of the Voyage to Port Royal in Acadia*, 72, n1 and n2.

<sup>193</sup> Jean-François-Benjamin Dumont de Montigny, *The Memoir of Lieutenant Dumont, 1715-1747: A Sojourner in the French Atlantic*, ed. Gordon M. Sayre and Carla Zecher, trans. Gordon M. Sayre (Williamsburg, VA: Omohundro Institute of American History and Culture/University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 88-89.

asking forgiveness from one another.’<sup>194</sup> Furthermore, when a sailor died on the ocean, he was wrapped ‘decently’ [*enseuely décemment*], perhaps in some linen, and prayers were said before the body was thrown into the sea (with a cannonball attached to the feet).<sup>195</sup> Adaptation of practice was therefore necessary.

### **Indigenous perspectives on European ships**

There are, however, important narratives not yet considered in this chapter. When Europeans arrived in North America, Indigenous people composed narratives about their arrivals. Some Indigenous individuals would also have experienced the trip to North America (as a return journey, rather than a voyage of ‘discovery’), notably the Indigenous individuals who were kidnapped or forcibly taken to Europe for the entertainment of Europeans in the Old World. Some went voluntarily or at least with the consent of their peoples.<sup>196</sup> Unfortunately, however, the experiences of these individuals were rarely recorded. There are – to the best of my knowledge – no extant accounts, written by Indigenous people from northeastern North America, that record their experiences in Europe or aboard the vessels they travelled in. But a chapter on the significance of the Atlantic Ocean in mission narratives would be incomplete without an examination of the impact that these journeys had on Indigenous populations. As Daniel Richer argues, shifting historical perspectives in order to view the past from the east,

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<sup>194</sup> Fournier, *Hydrographie*, 677. ‘O qu’il fait bon voir de pauures Matelots se preparant à vn combat, ou au milieu d’vne tempeste, n’ayant point de Pretre, demander pardon les vns aux autres.’

<sup>195</sup> Forunier, *Hydrographie*, 675.

<sup>196</sup> A notable example is the Montagnais (Innu) teenager, Pierre Pastedechouan, who was taken to France by Recollect missionaries and educated in the Franciscan convent at La Baume. For a detailed study of Pastedechouan, see Emma Anderson, *The Betrayal of Faith: The Tragic Journey of a Colonial Native Convert* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

foregrounds Indigenous people while Europeans ‘enter from distant shores.’<sup>197</sup> Indigenous responses to European ‘conquest’ thus become the focus of analysis. How, for instance, did ships figure in the imaginations of Indigenous individuals? Given the notable lack of Indigenous testimony I will give only one example here.

In his 1633 *Relation*, Paul Le Jeune described an account of the arrival of a French ship told by the grandmother of Pierre-Anthoine Pastedechouan, an Innu convert. Pastedechouan, the missionary recounted,

told us that his grandmother used to take great pleasure in relating to him the astonishment of the Natives, when they saw for the first time a French ship arrive upon their shores.<sup>198</sup>

As the *Relation* which sets the tone for future *Relations*, it is significant that Le Jeune’s 1633 account should include what he purports to be the perspective of an Innu woman; Indigenous accounts appear alongside European founding myths. As Richter stresses, however, this is a European retelling of a purportedly Indigenous account. We can therefore only ‘imagine’ what Pastedechouan’s grandmother actually thought.<sup>199</sup> But closer examination of this retelling can provide a useful foil for European heroic narratives of colonisation. I am by no means suggesting that this extract should be read as the direct testimony of an Indigenous speaker. Indeed, there are many such passages in missionary accounts and they are usually intended to show the

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<sup>197</sup> Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 8.

<sup>198</sup> *JR*, 5: 119.

<sup>199</sup> Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country*, 8.

‘superiority’ of the French and the ‘inferiority’ and gullibility of the continent’s Indigenous inhabitants. For instance, in Le Jeune’s retelling of the above account the missionary stated that:

They [the Innus] thought it [the ship] was a moving island; they did not know what to say of the great sails which made it go; their astonishment was redoubled at seeing the number of men on deck.<sup>200</sup>

The naivety suggested by words like ‘thought’, ‘did not know what to say’, and ‘astonishment’, is portrayed as a direct result of European technological ‘superiority’. The European ship had ‘great sails that made it go’, and carried a large ‘number of men’. This ‘wonder’ is further emphasised by the Innu’s response to the ‘gifts’ presented by the crew. Le Jeune continued:

They [the Innus] were given a barrel of bread or biscuit. Having brought it on shore they examined it; and, finding no taste in it, threw it into the water...the messengers reported to their master that these men were prodigious and horrible; that they were dressed in iron, ate bones, and drank blood. They had seen them covered with their cuirasses, eating biscuits, and drinking wine. Our Navages said the Frenchmen drank blood and ate wood, this naming the wine and biscuits.<sup>201</sup>

The Innu’s ‘ignorance’ is here told as an ‘amusing’ anecdote, but it also implies a rejection of the French and their ways. There was ‘no taste’ in the biscuit, so it was thrown into the water. The armour worn by the French was impressive, but it was also ‘horrible’. ‘Now as they [the Innu] were unable to understand to what nation our people belonged,’ Le Jeune continued,

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<sup>200</sup> *JR*, 5: 119.

<sup>201</sup> *JR*, 5: 119-21.

they gave them the name which has since always clung to the French, *ouemichtigouchiou*; that is to say, a man who works in wood, or who is in a canoe or vessel of wood. They saw our ships, which were made of wood, their little canoes being made only of bark.<sup>202</sup>

The juxtaposition of large wooden ships with the Innu's 'little canoes' again implies the 'superiority' of the French, who had been inextricably linked to their sailing vessels. Yet whilst they were able to navigate the ocean, their ways were undesirable. Indeed, if they could make the crossing to North America, one Indigenous man implied, they should be more than capable of making their way back to France again. 'Embark in the Ships,' he said, angrily to a French man, 'since you are a Frenchman, cross the Sea and go to your own land.'<sup>203</sup> While missionary accounts stressed the role of ships as preservers of the Catholic faith and as the vessels of colonisation, it is clear that they had very different meanings for the Indigenous people who saw them arriving on their shores. In the wake of the serious epidemics that decimated Indigenous populations, any initial 'wonder' must have quickly turned to fear and disgust.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, despite the burgeoning field of 'Atlantic History', the role of the Atlantic Ocean has largely been overlooked in the history of New France. The ocean landscape and the vessels that navigated it were rhetorically important in seventeenth-century accounts. But missionaries also played significant material roles in shaping devotional practices. The cramped conditions aboard sailing vessels could be constraining – particularly for women religious – but this is not

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<sup>202</sup> *JR*, 5: 119-21.

<sup>203</sup> *JR*, 21: 77. I have modernised Thwaites's translation here.

to say that passengers were unable to demonstrate physical and spiritual agency. Furthermore, although relatively little is known about lay experiences of religious practices on the ocean, it would be a mistake to underestimate the roles that religion played. Whilst at times devotional acts appeared to be improvised, this did not make them any less important. Through ships, Catholicism was – as Fournier asserted – ‘preserved’, but it was also challenged, adapted, and re-invented.

As we shall see in the following chapters, missionaries’ experiences aboard sailing vessels would prepare them for the challenges they faced in adapting Catholic practices for the conversion of Indigenous people in New France.

## Chapter 2

### Habits in New France: Bodies, Clothing, and Conflict

#### Introduction

We *inhabit* our environment: we are part of it; and through this practice of habitation it becomes part of us too.’

Tim Ingold.<sup>1</sup>

On August 20 1632 – a little over six weeks after his arduous ocean crossing to New France – Jesuit missionary Father Paul Le Jeune almost drowned in the Saint Lawrence River. On the day of the incident, the missionary had travelled with two Frenchmen in a ‘*cauot [canot] de Sauvage*’ to visit – likely to confess – a sick man aboard the sailing vessel on which he had arrived, a vessel which was anchored on the river at Quebec.<sup>2</sup> When it was time to return to the shore, however, the missionary and his companions ran into difficulty. One of the men attempted to detach the canoe from the sailing vessel, but was washed into the water by the violent tide. This caused the canoe to overturn and all three passengers were thrown into the water. They were, in the missionary’s words, ‘carried away by the fury of the waves to the middle of the great saint Lawrence river.’<sup>3</sup> The men caught hold of the canoe, but Le Jeune was unable to keep his head above the water. He tried to swim, but was unable to get far. ‘I never knew this exercise very well,’ he wrote by way of explanation, ‘and it was over 24 years since I had tried it’. After swimming about sixteen feet, he was overcome and his cumbersome garments dragged him

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<sup>1</sup> Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 95.

<sup>2</sup> *JR*, 5: 67.

<sup>3</sup> *JR*, 5: 67-69.



under. '[M]y cassock [*sotane*]', he recounted, 'winding around my head and arms, I felt I was going to the bottom'. At this moment, he committed himself to God, 'believing it better to let his will be done, I accepted death cheerfully.' Nor was he afraid, he wrote, for he was 'resigned to die in the water from the first day I had put my foot on the vessel [to Canada],' and 'had strengthened this resolution a great deal in the tempests which we had upon the ocean.'<sup>4</sup> The missionary's experiences on the journey (some of which were examined in the previous chapter of this thesis) had prepared him for the trials of New France.

When Le Jeune's rescuers (a boat from the shore and 'two natives in their canoe') arrived, the missionary was 'already half drowned'. 'Nothing was seen of me', he wrote, 'but a little end of my cassock [*'vn petit bout de ma sotane [sic]'*].'<sup>5</sup> Given the garment's not insignificant role in the missionary's predicament, it is somewhat ironic that it was also the means by which Le Jeune's location was determined, and by which his rescuers hauled him out of the water.<sup>6</sup> Writing of the incident, the missionary blamed neither his lack of skill in a canoe, nor the weather, nor his inability to swim, nor even his cumbersome garments, but the fact that the Jesuits had never received a wooden boat that they had been promised. Since the man who promised it had decided to keep it, the missionaries were compelled to travel in 'those bark canoes, which are very frail'. If only they had received this boat, Le Jeune groused, the incident 'would not have happened.'<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *JR*, 5: 69.

<sup>5</sup> *JR*, 5: 69.

<sup>6</sup> *JR*, 5: 69.

<sup>7</sup> During the English occupation of Quebec, two Englishmen had drowned in bark canoes, prompting Captain Ker to have a small wooden boat made. It was this boat that Jesuit Anne de Nouë had been promised. See *JR*, 5: 71.

European craft are here presented as superior modes of transportation that would prevent missionaries from having to adapt to their novel surroundings.<sup>8</sup>

This seemingly insignificant occurrence can tell historians a great deal about the ways in which missionaries adapted (or not) to the environment of New France. Generally speaking, Jesuit missionaries showed great reluctance to learn physically demanding skills (such as how to safely handle a birch bark canoe). But it is Le Jeune's *clothing* that I would like to take as a starting point for my analysis in this chapter.

As the above incident demonstrates, a cassock was not the most sensible choice of clothing for a canoe trip. Indeed, much un-adapted European clothing was ill suited to travel in New France. If not the principle *cause* of canoe accidents, such clothing could prove lethal if a canoe capsized.<sup>9</sup> When Wendat convert Pierre Ateiachias's canoe was overturned by 'a gust of wind' in 1639, his cumbersome European clothing prevented him from swimming to the shore and he drowned. Conversely, Pierre's companion, 'a young Algonquin', 'saved himself by swimming, readily throwing off his robe, which he wore loosely, in the manner of the Navages'.<sup>10</sup> Type of clothing was important, then, but so too was the 'manner' in which it was worn (as we shall see in what follows, clothing was often adapted to suit new environments). But Le Jeune's *Relation*

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<sup>8</sup> Cfr. Joyce E. Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science in the Anglo-American World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003). Though scholars often argue that European 'science' and technology were responsible for the European 'conquest' of the 'New World', Chaplin argues that bodies were at the centre of English colonial beliefs of 'superiority' over Indigenous peoples, since technological ability was *dependent* on bodily strength and skill. See especially, 1; 15; 322.

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted here that deaths by drowning were frequent occurrences in New France. Between 1625 and 1799, Quebec parish burial acts (*actes de sépulture*) recorded 1,302 deaths by drowning. When compared with the number of recorded deaths from infectious diseases (277), the number is significant. Yves Landry et Rénald Lessard, "Les causes de décès au XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles d'après les registres paroissiaux québécois," *RHAF* 48, no.4 (1995): 513-14.

<sup>10</sup> *JR*, 16: 177. See Takao Abé, *The Jesuit Mission to New France: A New Interpretation in the Light of the Earlier Jesuit Experience in Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 153.

explicitly attributes Pierre's death to his European garb: 'our poor Neophyte', he wrote, 'being clothed in the French way, could not withstand the tempest, so he was drowned in the great river, which served as a sepulchre for his body.'<sup>11</sup>

Le Jeune's near-death experience also allows us to speculate as to the thoughts of the two Indigenous men who assisted in his rescue. What might they have thought about the flailing missionary, pulled under the water by the weight of his highly-impractical clothes? Answering this question is no simple matter. The Indigenous cultures of North America were predominantly oral and have left no written documents from this period. But reading missionary documents against the grain (i.e. reading meaning that was unintended by their missionary authors) can go some way towards providing insights into the ways in which missionaries (and their teachings) may have been perceived by the people they encountered. This chapter, then, has two principle aims: first, to examine the reasons why missionaries adapted (or not) to the environments they moved through; and second, to suggest some of the ways that Indigenous individuals might have viewed missionary bodies and practices. Missionaries, it will be argued, retained their European garb in order to emphasise their difference from the 'uncivilised' (and 'unclothed') people they sought to convert. As powerful symbols of Jesuit identity (and unwillingness to adapt), these garments – the 'black robes' they were named for – came under attack, and took on new meanings.

### **Why clothing?**

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<sup>11</sup> *JR*, 16: 177-79.

Since the early medieval period (and arguably before), holy men and women have worn specific forms of clothing to symbolise their devotion to God.<sup>12</sup> The habits (*habitus monasticus*) of religious orders are associated with – and inseparable from – the quotidian practices (‘habits’) laid out in their rules.<sup>13</sup> As Daniel Defert argues, ‘*L’habit à la connotation originelle d’habitus, laquelle suppose un travail sur le corps*’ (‘Habit has the original connotation of habitus, which implies work on the body’).<sup>14</sup> Defert’s definition of *habit-habitus* is broad, encompassing everything from bodily practices (facial expressions, behaviours) to bodily adornment (tattoos, piercings), and clothing.<sup>15</sup> But how might this have functioned in a colonial context? As Diana DiPaolo Loren argues, *doxa* (that is, the social limitations on behaviour as defined by social context and theorised by Pierre Bourdieu), influenced colonial bodies.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, since clothing could be taken on and off (by oneself and by others), identities were fluid. As Sophie White has noted for French colonial Louisiana, instances of ‘cross-cultural dressing’ (that is, the adoption of clothing typically associated with another cultural group) imply the fluidity of early concepts of ‘race’; an Illinois woman, for instance, might become ‘French’ by adopting French clothing.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> For an examination of late-medieval religious clothing practices, see Cordelia Warr, *Dressing for Heaven: Religious Clothing in Italy, 1215-1545* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Defert, “Un genre ethnographique profane au XVIe: Les livres d’habits (essai d’ethno-iconographie),” in *Histoires de l’anthropologie: XVIe-XIXe siècles*, 25-53, ed. Britta Rupp-Eisenreich (Paris: Klincksieck, 1984), 28.

<sup>14</sup> Defert, “Un genre anthropologique profane au XVIe,” 27.

<sup>15</sup> Defert, “Un genre anthropologique profane au XVIe,” 27.

<sup>16</sup> Diana DiPaolo Loren, “Social Skins: Othodoxies and Practices of Dressing in the Early Colonial Lower Mississippi Valley,” *Journal of Social Archaeology* 1, no.2 (2001), 173. On Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus’, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

<sup>17</sup> Sophie White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians: Material Culture and Race in Colonial Louisiana* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 1-2.

But how exactly should ‘clothing’ be defined? Let us take Loren’s definition of clothing as a starting point. Clothes, she argues, are ‘any items used to *enclose* or *modify* the body’; tattoos are also included in this category, since they permanently alter a person’s skin, and were usually visually evident to onlookers.<sup>18</sup> As Gordon M. Sayre notes, tattooed or adorned skin could function in a similar manner to clothing, since it conveyed information about identity and status.<sup>19</sup> Tattoos will not be discussed in this chapter, since there is little evidence about these practices in missionary narratives about the regions under discussion (*‘le piquage’*, as it was termed in French, was far more common in the Mississippi Valley and Louisiana).<sup>20</sup> Still, Loren’s broad definition of clothing is useful, since it highlights the diversity of ways in which bodies of the eastern woodlands were adorned (and perceived). What constituted ‘clothing’ for one group of people might be viewed as ‘nakedness’ by another. For European authors, for instance, ‘nakedness’, did not always mean nudity, but could have diverse cultural and rhetorical meanings.<sup>21</sup>

Yet clothing did not only ‘enclose’ the body; it could provide a means to extend it and engage with the surrounding environment. Since clothing and identity were – and *are* – entangled, clothing has sometimes been described as a ‘social skin’ (an observation particularly apt in

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<sup>18</sup> Diana DiPaolo Loren, *The Archaeology of Clothing and Bodily Adornment in Colonial America* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010), 16. My emphasis.

<sup>19</sup> Gordon M. Sayre, *Les Sauvages Américains: Representations of Native Americans in French and English Colonial Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 167. On tattooing, see Loren, *The Archaeology of Clothing and Bodily Adornment in Colonial America*, in particular, 37-43.

<sup>20</sup> Sayre, *Les Sauvages Américains*, 167.

<sup>21</sup> For a nuanced analysis of ‘nakedness’ in captivity, see Wendy Lucas Castro, “Stripped: Clothing and Identity in Colonial Narratives,” *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 6, no.1 (2008): 104-36. See especially, 105-107.

relation to Sophie White's analysis of clothing and race).<sup>22</sup> This description highlights the slippage between bodies and adornments that, for instance, extend a body's reach or allow it to more easily navigate an environment. Gloves were 'detachable parts' that could be transferred from person to person, sometimes allowing a person's power to be transmitted through or embodied by the object; a monarch's glove could bestow the royal touch.<sup>23</sup> Conversely, when Le Jeune's canoe overturned, his cassock became saturated with water, making it heavier and dragging him under. This *permeability* of his clothing rendered it an ineffective barrier, as it soaked up the river water. Although clothing could 'enclose', then, it was rarely impenetrable and did not prevent interaction with the environment.

Since the environment of New France was regarded as 'rude' and *sauvage* (here meaning 'wild'), European authors were keen to separate – and protect – their bodies from it. Technologies – such as Le Jeune's much-wished-for rowing boat – demonstrated their mastery of unforgiving landscapes. In contrast, these observers often highlighted the fact that Indigenous clothing was made from skin and fur, rather than fabrics woven or spun by people. This, colonial authors implied, demonstrated the 'untamed' nature of the wearer (clothing made from animal skins, for example, could have connotations of 'nakedness').<sup>24</sup>

Early modern accounts of the New World typically represent this vast territory in one of two ways: either as a lost Eden, in which the naked bodies of Indigenous peoples represent the innocent nudity of Adam and Eve; or, as the antechamber of hell, in which barbarous cultural

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<sup>22</sup> Terence S. Turner, "The Social Skin," in *Not Work Alone: A Cross-Cultural View of Activities Superfluous to Survival*, ed. Jeremy Cherfas and Roger Lewin (London: Temple Smith, 1980): 112-40.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, "Fetishizing the Glove in Renaissance Europe," *Critical Inquiry* 28, no.1 (2001), 116-18.

<sup>24</sup> Sayre, *Les sauvages américains*, 154.

practices, such as cannibalism, are prevalent.<sup>25</sup> The trope of nakedness is always present; though, as Sayre has pointed out, there is often a ‘dissonance’ between authors’ assertions that Indigenous people did not have clothing, farming, or writing, and accounts which testified that these ‘markers of civilization’ were, in fact, present. Indeed, in the day-to-day lives of Indigenous North Americans, nudity was rare.<sup>26</sup> Like the ‘untamed’ landscape of the colony, European authors suggested, Indigenous bodies had to be ‘clothed’ (appropriately) and ‘civilised’.<sup>27</sup> Any discussion of bodies in New France, then, must take into account not only clothing, but environment. As Tim Ingold argues, the nature/culture binary is an artificial divide. Humans, he asserts, are organisms and, as such, embody both nature *and* culture.<sup>28</sup> As much as an individual tries to shape their environment, they are, in turn, shaped *by* it. ‘We inhabit our environment.’ Ingold asserts, ‘we are part of it; and through this practice of habitation it becomes part of us too.’<sup>29</sup>

Until recently histories of colonial encounters have tended to look at encounters between Europeans and Indigenous people.<sup>30</sup> In her recent work on the archaeology of the Eastern

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<sup>25</sup> This applies to European literatures written by both Catholics and Huguenots. For a discussion of these two interpretations, see Frank Lestringant, *Le Huguenot et le sauvage: L’Amérique et la controverse coloniale, en France, au temps des guerres de la religion* (Genève: Droz, 2004), 21.

<sup>26</sup> On the trope of the ‘naked savage’, see Scott Manning Stevens, “New World Contacts and the Trope of the ‘Naked Savage’,” in *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Elizabeth D. Harvey (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 128; Gordon M. Sayre, *Les Sauvages Américains: Representations of Native Americans in French and English Colonial Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 145.

<sup>27</sup> On correspondences between bodies and landscapes in eighteenth-century New France travel narratives, see Stéphanie Chaffray, “Corps, territoire et paysage à travers les images et les textes viatiques,” *RHAF* 59, no.1-2 (2005): 7-52.

<sup>28</sup> Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (London: Routledge, 2000), 3.

<sup>29</sup> Ingold, *Being Alive*, 95.

<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984).

Woodlands, Diana DiPaolo Loren argues that the trope of ‘familiar meets unfamiliar’ can be used to broaden the idea of encounter as a conceptual category: ‘the early colonial Eastern Woodlands’, she argues,

were more than just *European* or *Native*, as social, political, personal, sexual, and economic relations took place between men, women, Native Americans, Europeans, Africans, settlers, missionaries, traders, slaves, and explorers from different social backgrounds.’<sup>31</sup>

Scholars, then, are beginning to examine bodies (and representations of bodies) as *loci* of colonial encounters that provide insights into the multifaceted power dynamics of colonial exchanges.<sup>32</sup> But historical analyses of colonial bodies continue to focus overwhelmingly on the ‘naked’ bodies of Indigenous ‘Others’. In recent years, historians of early modern French missions, notably Dominique Deslandres, have called for an ‘ethnohistory’ of missionaries.<sup>33</sup> I do not intend to suggest that Jesuits have been ignored or marginalised in historiographical literature, but rather to argue that an understanding of missionaries’ ‘self-fashioning’ and the ways in which this was challenged, can assist the historian in understanding not only their motivations, but how they were perceived by others, notably the Indigenous individuals they sought to convert.<sup>34</sup> How, Deslandres asks, can missionaries’ accounts be read as sources for

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<sup>31</sup> Diana DiPaolo Loren, *In Contact: Bodies: Bodies and Spaces in the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Eastern Woodlands* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2008), 3.

<sup>32</sup> See, for instance, Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, “Introduction: Bodies, Empires, and World Histories,” in *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, ed. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 3.

<sup>33</sup> Dominique Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire: Les missions françaises au XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 14; Dominique Deslandres, “À quand une ethnohistoire des missionnaires?” *Études d’histoire religieuse* 61 (1995): 115-24; Dominique Deslandres, “Qu’est-ce qui faisait courir Marie Guyart? Essai d’ethnohistoire d’après sa correspondance,” *Laval théologique et philosophique* 53, no.2 (1997): 285-300.

<sup>34</sup> Stephen Greenblatt argues that during the Renaissance ‘self-fashioning’ (through behaviour, clothing, etc.) enabled the conscious manipulation of identities (within a society’s established behavioural codes). See



colonial history if historians are unaware of their motivations?<sup>35</sup> In general – and putting to one side very particular circumstances (notably captivity narratives in which missionary prisoners are ‘stripped’)<sup>36</sup> – missionary bodies are always portrayed as being clothed. As we shall see, even when clothing was damaged, tattered, or of very little practical use, it was nonetheless retained – in written sources, at least. These sources contrast ‘clothed’ and therefore ‘civilised’ missionary bodies, with the ‘naked’ bodies of Indigenous people. But in the context of colonial encounters, established missionary practices (clothing and religious), or, their *habit-habitus* (to borrow Defert’s useful term), were challenged by both people and environments. An ethnohistorical analysis of Jesuit clothed bodies (and their descriptions of other bodies) allows for a discussion not only of the ways in which environment affected missionary bodies and practices, but also of the ways in which their responses to environmental challenges may have shaped Indigenous perceptions of these missionaries and their beliefs.

### **Jesuit ‘self-fashioning’**

Unlike monastic orders, such as the Benedictines or the Franciscans, members of the Society of Jesus were not compelled by rule to wear specific garb. Since their missionary vocation demanded a certain amount of flexibility – they might be sent to any number of locations, where the demands of climate and culture could vary considerably – there were very few stipulations regarding clothing in the Society’s regulations. Ignatius of Loyola’s *Constitutions* listed only three requirements for a missionary’s clothing:

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Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980). For a detailed examination of the concept see Greenblatt’s introduction, 1-9.

<sup>35</sup> Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire*, 14.

<sup>36</sup> On the ‘stripping’ of captives, see Castro, “Stripped.”

first it should be proper; second, conformed to the usage of the region where one is living; and third, not contradictory to the poverty we profess, as would happen through the wearing of silk or expensive clothes.<sup>37</sup>

Although there were no specific rules about clothing, Jesuit missionaries tended to wear clerical garb. The earliest documents stipulate a shirt, covered by a long cassock which reached the feet (but did not drag on the ground ostentatiously). A large cloak could be worn over these garments if necessary. Whilst Jesuits in Rome tended to wear black, Spanish Jesuits usually wore brown. Only bright colours, such as red and green, were to be avoided.<sup>38</sup> The geographical range of Jesuit colleges and missions thus prompted diversity of garb. For the purposes of this chapter, Loyola's stipulation that clothing should be suitable for 'the usage of where one is living' is of particular interest, since it allows a methodological focus on the ways in which (clothed) bodies and their implied practices and identities were shaped by encounters with environments (and the people that inhabited them).

Mission historiography has made much of Jesuit missionaries' willingness to adapt their bodies and practices to suit the customs of the peoples they sought to convert.<sup>39</sup> One aspect of Jesuit

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<sup>37</sup> Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, ed. and trans. by George E. Ganss, S.J. (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), 258.

<sup>38</sup> Giancarlo Rocca, *La Sostanza dell'Effimero: Gli abiti degli Ordini religiosi in Occidente* (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 2000), 460-61.

<sup>39</sup> On missionary 'adaptation', see, for example, Charlotte Castelnau-L'Estoile. "The Uses of Shamanism: Evangelizing Strategies and Missionary Models in Seventeenth-Century Brazil," in *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences and the Arts, 1540-1773*, ed. John O'Malley, S.J, Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris, and T. Frank Kennedy, S.J. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006): 616-37. It was not only missionaries on overseas missions that had to adapt. As David Gentilcore has argued for 'internal' missions in the early modern Kingdom of Naples, Jesuit missionaries proselytising in remote or 'peripheral' areas – particularly those in which a parish structure was absent – faced similar challenges to their colleagues overseas. See David Gentilcore, "'Adapt Yourself to the People's Capabilities': Missionary Strategies, Methods and Impact in the Kingdom of Naples, 1600-1800," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 45, no.2 (1994), 269.

adaptation that is often evoked is the adoption of local clothing, most famously on their mission to China. This strategy was known as *accommodatio* or ‘accommodation’.<sup>40</sup> When Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci and his companions arrived in China in the late-sixteenth century, for instance, they adopted Buddhist robes. Upon learning that the ruling elite did not hold monks in high regard, they began to dress like the Chinese literati, who wore beards and long robes with flared sleeves (hiding one’s hands was a mark of respect).<sup>41</sup> This change in attire was also the result of the Jesuits’ fear that they would be compared with Buddhist monks.<sup>42</sup> Ricci wrote in his *History*, monks:

are, and are considered to be the lowest, the lowest and most vicious people in China...And while they do not have wives, they are little concerned with guarding their chastity, even though they keep their dealings with women as well hidden as they are able.<sup>43</sup>

Jesuit missionaries were therefore keen to distance themselves from these men, both to please the Chinese elite, and to placate the French reading public. Jesuits, then, were sensitive to the

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<sup>40</sup> The ‘accommodation method’ did not only apply to dress; language and other cultural practices were adopted by Jesuits in order to gain converts, and missionaries tolerated certain non-Christian rites. Disagreements over accommodation are most apparent in the ‘Chinese Rites and Terms controversy’. See D. E. Mungello, “An Introduction to the Chinese Rites Controversy,” in *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning*, ed. D. E. Mungello (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1994), 3. Cfr. ‘The Malabar Rites Controversy’, which also centred on accommodation. See, for example, David Mosse, *The Saint in the Banyan Tree: Christianity and Caste Society in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 44-46.

<sup>41</sup> Mary Laven, *Mission to China: Matteo Ricci and the Jesuit Encounter with the East* (London: Faber & Faber, 2012), 19-20. On Matteo Ricci, see also, R. Po-chia Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci, 1552-1610* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Cfr. Roberto de Nobili, an Italian Jesuit missionary in India who dressed in the clothes of a Brahman hermit, adopted vegetarianism, and would not allow himself to be called ‘Parangue’ (the term locals used for Christians). See Ines G. Županov, *Disputed Mission: Jesuit Experiments and Brahmanical Knowledge in Seventeenth-Century India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 5.

<sup>42</sup> Laven, *Mission to China*, 191-92.

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in Laven, *Mission to China*, 191.

meanings and associations that their clothing could have, both on the mission terrain and at home.<sup>44</sup>

As Tara Alberts has demonstrated, however, the Jesuits were themselves divided as to the correct *way of proceeding* when it came to missionary garb. Although the 1580 consultation called by Alessandro Valignano (the Visitor who had been sent in the 1570s to inspect the Asian missions) had concluded that missionaries of the Society could adopt local customs (Valignano is well-known for his policies of accommodation), not all Jesuits agreed.<sup>45</sup> Francisco Cabral, who was superior of the Japanese mission at the time of the consultation, for instance, vehemently opposed this strategy.<sup>46</sup> Whilst comparisons between missions can be useful, therefore, we must be wary of making broad generalisations.

In New France, however, missionaries remained resolutely attached to their European garb. Despite the fact that they were unable to impose French customs on Indigenous peoples by force, as in the often brutal ‘reductions’ of Paraguay, they were unwilling to adopt – as many in Asia had – the clothing of those they sought to convert, even to curry favour.<sup>47</sup> The most likely reason for this is the Aristotelian influence on Jesuit education, which stressed the barbarity of certain

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<sup>44</sup> For a detailed discussion of missionaries’ ‘performance’ of identity in Southeast Asia through clothing or sometimes a lack of it - many Franciscans, for instance, went barefoot - see Tara Alberts, *Conflict and Conversion: Catholicism in Southeast Asia, 1500-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), Chapter 4, “What Type of People Are You? Performing the Missionary Identity,” especially 89-103.

<sup>45</sup> Alberts, *Conflict and Conversion*, 91. On Valignano and accommodation, see Liam Matthew Brockey, *The Visitor: André Palmeiro and the Jesuits in Asia* (Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), 15-16.

<sup>46</sup> Alberts, *Conflict and Conversion*, 91.

<sup>47</sup> On the Jesuits’ ‘failure’ to introduce strictly-regulated mission settlements in the style of the Paraguayan ‘reductions’, see Allan Greer, “Towards a Comparative Study of Jesuit Missions and Indigenous Peoples in Seventeenth-Century Canada and Paraguay,” in *Native Christians: Modes and Effects of Christianity among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas*, ed. Aparecida Vilaça and Robin M. Wright (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), especially, 28-30.

‘uncivilised’ populations.<sup>48</sup> Paul Le Jeune’s 1634 *Relation*, for instance, draws on Aristotle to explain the development of society.<sup>49</sup> In the tenth chapter of Le Jeune’s *Relation*, titled, ‘On their clothes and ornaments’ (note that clothes and ornaments are considered together here, as in Loren’s definition), the missionary identified three stages through which humanity had apparently progressed before reaching its ‘civilised’ peak in antiquity. During the first stage, he explained, men were content with the simple necessities of their lives, their only requirements being that they were fed and clothed. The second stage saw them couple ‘the tasteful and the necessary’; whilst in the third and final stage men began to contemplate science in order to perfect the human condition. According to Le Jeune, the ‘errant’ Innu (Le Jeune uses the term ‘Montagnais’) were ‘still’ experiencing Aristotle’s first stage and could not think beyond living, eating, and protecting themselves from the cold.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, Spanish Jesuit José de Acosta’s *De procuranda indorum salute* (1589) identified three categories of ‘barbarism’. The Chinese were placed at the top of this three-tiered hierarchy, since they had a stable government, law, and books (‘where there are books and engraved monuments, the people are more civilized’, Acosta asserted).<sup>51</sup> According to this model, adopting the clothing of the Chinese elite was far more acceptable than adopting that of the peoples of Canada, since the former were ‘civilized’ and

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<sup>48</sup> For an assessment of Aristotelian influence on Jesuit education, see Alison Simmons, “Jesuit Aristotelian Education: The *De Anima* Commentaries,” in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540-1773*, ed. John W. O’Malley, S.J, Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris, and T. Frank Kennedy, S.J. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999): 532-37.

<sup>49</sup> ‘It was the opinion of Aristotle’ he wrote, ‘that the world had made three steps, as it were, to arrive at perfection in his time.’ *JR*, 7: 7.

<sup>50</sup> *JR*, 7: 7-9.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Simon Ditchfield, “What Did Natural History Have To Do With Salvation? José de Acosta SJ (1540-1600) in the Americas,” in *God’s Bounty? The Churches and the Natural World*, *SCH* 46 (2010), 157-58. For Ditchfield’s analysis of this three-tiered hierarchy, see especially, 157-60.

the latter supposedly ‘primitive’.<sup>52</sup> Read in this context, Jesuit missionaries’ reluctance to adopt Indigenous clothing practices in New France can be easily explained.

### ‘S’il y a du froid, il y a du bois’: Nature and providence

Early modern ethnographic thinking held that environment and climate had a profound effect on people and their habits.<sup>53</sup> In Michel de Montaigne’s *essai*, ‘Of the Custom of Wearing Clothes’, the philosopher wondered, ‘whether the fashion of going stark naked in these lately discovered nations is forced on them by the warm temperature of the air, as we say of the Indians and Moors, or whether it is the original way of mankind.’<sup>54</sup> He argued that natural laws (i.e. those which are determined by nature) were distinguished from those ‘artificial laws’ (that is, those made by men). Since ‘all things that live, are naturally equipped with sufficient covering to defend themselves against the injury of the weather,’ he argued, it was unimaginable that humans would have been born without the ability to do likewise.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, in his *essai*, ‘On Cannibals’, Montaigne emphasised the primitive – and, by extension ‘natural’ – characteristics of Indigenous people in the New World, characteristics, he argued, that had not yet been contaminated by artificial European technologies.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> We should, however, be wary of exaggerating Jesuit agency, As Ana Carolina Hosne argues, when the Jesuits had little political or coercive power (military backing by powerful colonial authorities, for example), they had little option but to adapt. In his *Sumario de las Cosas de Japón* (1583), for instance, Valignano admitted that the Japanese were unlikely to adapt for the Jesuits. See Hosne, *The Jesuit Missions to China and Peru, 1570-1610: Expectations and Appraisals of Expansionism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 159-60.

<sup>53</sup> For recent work on climate and body in early America, see Karen Ordahl Kupperman, “Fear of Hot Climates in the Anglo-American Colonial Experience,” *WMQ* 41, no.2 (1984): 213-40.

<sup>54</sup> See “Of the Custom of Wearing Clothes,” in *The Complete Works of Montaigne: Essays, Travel Journals, Letters*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1948), 166.

<sup>55</sup> “Of the Custom of Wearing Clothes,” in Frame, trans. *The Complete Works of Montaigne*, 166-67.

<sup>56</sup> See David Quint, “A Reconsideration of Montaigne’s *Des cannibales*,” in *America in European Consciousness, 1493-1750*, ed. Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 166.

In missionary accounts of New France, natural law (and, more specifically, the role of Providence) is also evident. Paul Le Jeune, for instance, claimed that Innu visitors arrived at the Jesuits' lodging 'half-naked', but 'without complaining of the cold' (this was likely an exaggeration). This prompted him to opine that:

if nature can accustom itself to this cold, nature and grace can very well give us the heart and strength to support it cheerfully.<sup>57</sup>

'If there is cold,' the missionary continued, 'there is wood' (*'s'il y a du froid, il y a du bois'*).<sup>58</sup> Thus, the missionary coupled ethnography and scripture; nature (created by God) allowed survival, but grace rendered the experience – if not enjoyable – then at least less unpleasant. Nature also provided the clothing necessary to live in a given environment. By way of example, Le Jeune discussed his own experiences using snowshoes. When he first put them on, he asserted, 'I thought I should fall with my nose in the snow, at every step I took.' But 'experience', he continued, 'has taught me that God provides for the convenience of all the nations according to their needs.'<sup>59</sup> This assertion, though apparently based on 'experience', also echoes Matthew 6: 31-2:

do not worry, saying "what shall we eat?" or "what shall we drink?" or "what shall we wear?". For the pagans run after all these things and the heavenly Father knows you need them.

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<sup>57</sup> *JR*, 5: 125.

<sup>58</sup> *JR*, 5: 125.

<sup>59</sup> *JR*, 5: 127.

Implicit in Le Jeune's writing was a reassurance that God would provide. But anyone familiar with the scriptural reference would also have recognised a warning; only 'pagans' concerned themselves with 'earthly' comforts.<sup>60</sup> Despite nature's provision of snowshoes, however, Le Jeune was less accustomed to using them than his Innu companions. 'I walk very freely now on these raquettes' he asserted, but 'As to the Natives [*Sauuages*], they do not hinder them from jumping like bucks or running like deer.'<sup>61</sup> Here the missionary likened Innu individuals to animals. That they were dressed in fur and skin further underlined this animalistic link.

It was not only Indigenous peoples in lands far from Europe that fell into the category of 'sauvages' in European imaginations. François Desprez's *Recueil de la diversité des habits* (first published in 1562) is an octavo costume book containing 120 illustrations of clothing from around the world. This book could be considered as part of the corpus of texts relating to New France, since the introduction states that some of the illustrations are based on drawings made by the Sieur de Roberval, and others by a well-travelled, but unnamed, Portuguese sailor.<sup>62</sup> (Since none of the drawings are specifically marked as being of the peoples of New France or Canada, however, it is difficult to identify which illustrations might be attributed to Roberval). The volume includes an engraving of 'A Savage Scottish [Woman]' ('*La sauuage d'Escosse*') (Fig. 3).

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<sup>60</sup> This is a sentiment expressed frequently in Jesuit writing. See, for example, Jesuit missionary Father René Ménart's letter to a friend in 1660: 'we have been somewhat taken unawares at not being able to provide ourselves with clothing and other things; but he who feeds the little birds and clothes the lilies of the field will take care of his servants', *JR*, 46: 81. Cfr. Matthew 6: 28-30.

<sup>61</sup> *JR*, 5: 127.

<sup>62</sup> François Desprez [sic], *Recueil de la diversité des habits qui sont de présent en usage tant es pays d'Europe, Asie, Afrique et isles sauvages, le tout fait apres le naturel* (Paris, 1657), n.p.





Fig. 3: “La sauuage d’Escosse,” from François Deserps [sic], *Recueil de la diversité des habits...* (Paris, 1567), n.p.

Source: Gallica: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k102756w/f52.image>

As the fourth line of the explanatory quatrain states, she is ‘Dressed in skin against the cold’ (*De peaux vestue encontre la froidure*). Furthermore, as Penelope Dransart has pointed out, the woman’s hair ‘conjoins’ with the fur skin she is wearing, placing her in an ‘ambivalent

human-animal category'.<sup>63</sup> Areas of wild, uncultivated nature are thus associated with 'wild' people; the environments from which they inhabit furnishing their garb. Yet, since 'nature' has furnished them with the means with which to clothe themselves, they are not – to European eyes – inherently sinful, merely in state of nature, waiting to be 'civilised'. In this respect, the *sauvagerie* of New France's Indigenous population was less about bodily *difference* than it was about environment and practices.

Still, European texts highlighted perceived differences between European and Indigenous bodies. These were not usually physiological differences, but rather differences in clothing practices, postures, and behaviour, all of which – European observers implied – could be 'modified' through education. Since the concept of 'race' as a biological category did not emerge until the eighteenth century, colonial authors often attributed skin colour to dirt, grease, and body paint.<sup>64</sup> Some Europeans complimented the physiques of the Indigenous people they encountered. 'If we begin with physical advantages,' Paul Le Jeune wrote of the Innu in the *Relation* of 1634, 'I will say they possess these in abundance. They are strong,' he continued, 'tall, erect, well proportioned, agile; and there is nothing effeminate in their appearance.'<sup>65</sup> The missionary compared these men (he did not discuss women's bodies in this *Relation*, only a difference in clothing)<sup>66</sup> to 'Pictures of the Roman Emperors', which he had previously thought to be idealised depictions (as opposed to accurate renderings of historical figures). But, he wrote,

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<sup>63</sup> Penelope Dransart, "Mysteries of the Cloaked Body: Analogy and Metaphor in Concepts of Weaving and Body Tissues," *Trivium* 37 (2007), 179.

<sup>64</sup> See, for instance, Marie de l'Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, 26 August 1644, MI, *Corr.*, Letter LXXX, 220. 'ils ont la peau quasi minime à cause du soleil et des graisses dont ils s'oignent part tout la plus part'.

<sup>65</sup> *JR*, 6: 229.

<sup>66</sup> In missionary sources, women's bodies do not tend to be discussed in terms of physical attributes; clothing is the principal focus.

‘I see here upon the shoulders of these people the heads of Julius Cæsar, of Pompey, of Augustus, of Otho, and of others, that I have seen in France, drawn upon paper, or in relief on medallions.’<sup>67</sup> Since the Innu had ‘well formed bodies and organs well regulated and arranged’, Le Jeune argued, ‘their minds ought to work with ease’. ‘Education and instruction alone’, he asserted, ‘are lacking.’<sup>68</sup> For missionary observers, then, it was cultural practices – rather than any extreme physiological differences – that rendered the Indigenous peoples of North America, *sauvage*. One of these practices – perhaps the most obvious in terms of embodied identity – was clothing. But clothing practices did not only signify the expression of identity or ‘self-fashioning’; they could also be interpreted in multiple ways by observers.<sup>69</sup>

### **Cross-cultural dressing**

In the *Relations*, clothing practices are metaphors for both piety and civility. Although the word employed most frequently in the *Relations* for clothing is ‘habits’, this changes when charitable acts are being described. When speaking of charitable donations of clothing gifted to Indigenous people (whether by nuns, missionaries, French settlers, or Indigenous converts), the phrase most frequently employed is ‘*dequoy se couvrir*’ (‘something to cover oneself’).<sup>70</sup> This not only evokes the idea of shameful ‘nakedness’ (as experienced by Adam and Eve after The Fall), but

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<sup>67</sup> *JR*, 6: 229. Medallions of the kind described by Le Jeune were often displayed in European cabinets of curiosities. See Antoine Schnapper, *Le Géant, la licorne, la tulipe: Collections françaises au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1988), 133-64. As Olive Patricia Dickason points out, the so-called ‘discovery’ of the ‘New World’ was concurrent with Europe’s ‘rediscovery’ of its antique past; the period 1450 to 1550 saw numerous ancient artefacts uncovered in Rome. It is thus unsurprising that they should be compared. See Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage: And the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1984), 5-6; 283n3.

<sup>68</sup> *JR*, 6: 229.

<sup>69</sup> White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians*, 2.

<sup>70</sup> See, for example, *JR*, 40: 222.

also implies that the clothing given is plain and utilitarian, intended to cover rather than adorn. Additionally, the (re)clothing of Native people in ‘French’ garments implies a change in status. Wild ‘*sauvages*’ become sedentary, ‘civilised’ Christians.<sup>71</sup> Girls admitted to the Ursuline seminary at Quebec have their Native garments taken away and are ‘clothed in the French fashion’.<sup>72</sup> This change in bodily attire is followed by a change in bodily practice. The girls subsequently become used to ‘European’ activities, such as sleeping in beds, and the ‘European’ postures of prayer and devotional practice.<sup>73</sup> A change in clothing could, therefore, signify a change in status and identity, both inward and outward.

But the adoption of French clothing was not always regarded in a positive light. In his 1634 *Relation*, Le Jeune gave a detailed description of Innu clothing practices. ‘During the Winter’, he asserted, ‘all kinds of garments are appropriate to them ... anything is good, provided it is warm’. Practicality, he implied, was valued over appearance. Men and women, he continued, did not see the need to wear different clothes. ‘Give them a hood’, he wrote, ‘and a man will wear it as well as a woman; for there is no article of dress, however foolish, which they will not wear in all seriousness if it helps to keep them warm’. Innu dress is portrayed as being unsophisticated – the Innu, apparently apathetic on matters of style (sometimes to the point of ridiculousness). ‘Since they have had intercourse with the Europeans’, Le Jeune continued, ‘they are more motley than the Swiss’.<sup>74</sup> This description not only conjures images of brightly-

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<sup>71</sup> On the shaping of identity through garments, see White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians*, 1-2.

<sup>72</sup> See, for example, *JR*, 15: 227.

<sup>73</sup> Imposing European customs and behaviours as a means of conversion was not a strategy unique to French Jesuits in New France. Prior to the arrival of Italian Jesuit Roberto de Nobili (who would become a well-known proponent of *accommodatio*) in India, Jesuit missionaries labouring in the coastal regions of the south sought to impose Portuguese customs and culture, believing that ‘Christianization’ was ‘Portugalization’. As Ines G. Županov notes, Jesuits in Asia tended to view *accommodatio* as an Italian strategy for conversion that was usually employed in areas where Portuguese authority was weak. Nobili’s own persuasion of *accommodatio* was intended to distance himself from the Portuguese, who had acquired a poor reputation in Asia. See Županov, *Disputed Mission*, 4, 20-21, 26.

<sup>74</sup> *JR*, 7: 9.

uniformed – and, perhaps, untrustworthy – mercenaries, but the missionary also evokes the adaptation of European garments by Indigenous people. ‘Those who can have or buy French shirts wear them in the new fashion’. He continued, ‘for, instead of wearing them under [their clothing] as we do, they put them over.’ These shirts were never washed, Le Jeune recounted, and, as a result, they were ‘in no time as greasy as dish-cloths’. Le Jeune portrayed the ‘misuse’ of these garments as a lack of sophistication. Wearing a linen garment next to the skin was a European method used for cleaning the body; bodily excretions and effusions were wiped clean as the body moved around during the course of daily activities as the garment rubbed against the skin. Only the garment required washing.<sup>75</sup> This was the method used by Jesuit missionaries in New France to maintain their bodily hygiene: ‘Since I have left France,’ wrote Father François du Peron from the village of Ossossané in 1639, ‘I have not taken off my gown except to change my linen [*linge*].’<sup>76</sup> Du Peron’s statement is ostensibly a complaint about the cold, but it also suggests that some missionaries attempted to maintain French standards of cleanliness, even when it was an impossible task. Others abandoned their efforts, deeming it impossible – and perhaps chalking this hardship up to suffering acceptable *ad majoram dei gloriam* (‘for the greater glory of god’). ‘To carry linen with you’, Le Jeune wrote, ‘would require a mule, or daily washing’; neither was likely to be possible.<sup>77</sup> Although Le Jeune was disparaging of the practice of wearing linen over – rather than under – one’s clothing, he nonetheless acknowledged that the shirts were ‘just as they wish[ed] them to be, for the water, they say, runs over them and does not penetrate into their clothes’.<sup>78</sup> Far from simply adopting European clothing, then, Innu individuals adapted it to suit their own purposes.

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<sup>75</sup> Brown, *Foul Bodies*, 26.

<sup>76</sup> *JR*, 15: 167.

<sup>77</sup> *JR*, 6: 269.

<sup>78</sup> *JR*, 7: 17-19.

European clothing was also integrated into spiritual affairs. In 1634, Le Jeune wrote of the baptism and subsequent death of a young child. For burial, the missionary wrote:

They had wrapped [the child's body] in Beaver skins, and over that was a large piece of linen cloth [*un grand drap de toile*], which they had bought at the store, and over all a great double piece of bark.<sup>79</sup>

Dead bodies were usually wrapped in beaver robes (since it was believed that a dead person would take the things that were buried with them to the afterlife). Missionaries, as Erik R. Seeman has noted, remarked on the similarities between Indigenous and European burial practices. As Jean de Brébeuf mused, 'what winding sheet and shrouds are in France, beaver robes are here.'<sup>80</sup>

Furthermore, although European clothing was useful under certain circumstances, there were instances when it was a hindrance. There are very few illustrations of clothing in seventeenth-century New France, but the following eighteenth-century illustration, depicting a Meskwaki warrior ('*Guerrier Renard*'/'Fox Warrior'), includes a linen shirt tied around the man's waist. The last line of the explanatory writing underneath the watercolour reads, '*quand il ont Vne Chemis il La Mette En Braquet Quand il Faut qu'il se Batte*' (roughly translated, 'when he has a shirt he wraps it around his waist when he must fight'). Whilst European clothing was beneficial under certain circumstances, then, it could hinder in others.

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<sup>79</sup> *JR*, 6: 129.

<sup>80</sup> Quoted in Erik R. Seeman, *The Huron-Wendat Feast of the Dead: Indian European Encounters in Early North America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 65.



Fig. 4. 'Guerrier Renard'

Source: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7822108n/f1.zoom.r=.langEN>

### Jesuit Bodies: Indigenous Perceptions

In Le Jeune's *Relation* of 1636, the missionary described a race between a Frenchman and a Wendat man at Trois Rivières. On 18 August, he wrote,

sieur Godefroy, a young man of light and agile body, beat one of the Hurons in a race, before the eyes of four or five Nations, upon a wager that a Montagnés had made for him; at which the Hurons were greatly astonished, for *they look upon us as turtles in comparison with all the Natives*.<sup>81</sup>

The missionary's use of the simile, 'they look upon us as turtles', reveals more about early modern French culture than it does about Indigenous perceptions of Europeans. Turtles, as any seventeenth-century French reader familiar with Aesop's fables would have known, were notoriously slow creatures.<sup>82</sup> In the cultures of eastern North America, however, turtles were creatures imbued with spiritual meanings. 'Americans in general venerate this animal', Louis Nicolas wrote in his *Natural History*.<sup>83</sup> In Iroquoian creation stories, for instance, the earth was formed on the back of a turtle which was floating on a great body of water.<sup>84</sup> Turtle shells were also used to adorn the body and worn around the neck, waist, and other parts of the body, like 'rare jewel[s]'. Furthermore, shells could be used for religious and curative purposes. '[T]he

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<sup>81</sup> *JR*, 9: 279. My emphasis. For a short biography of Thomas Godefroy de Normanville see, *MNF*, 3: 843.

<sup>82</sup> For a seventeenth-century retelling, see Jean de la Fontaine, *Fables choisies, mises en vers* (Paris, 1668), "Le lièvre et la tortue," 259-61.

<sup>83</sup> Louis Nicolas, *Natural History, or the faithful search for everything rare in the New World, treating in general and in particular: Simple flowers, grains, herbs, fruits, bushes, trees, four-footed animals living on land and in water, birds that live on land and those that live above or in water; and finally fresh-water fish, and some salt-water ones; various insects, and several reptiles, with their figures: Divided into twelve books*, trans. Nancy Senior in *The Codex Canaensis and the writings of Louis Nicolas: The Natural History of the New World/Histoire Naturelle des Indes Occidentales*, ed. with an Introduction by François-Mac Gagnon, trans. Nancy Senior, modernised by Réal Ouellet (Tulsa, OK; Montreal: Gilcrease Museum; McGill Queen's-University Press, 2011), 348.

<sup>84</sup> See the story, "The Young Woman Fallen From Above," in Marius Barbeau, *Huron-Wyandot Traditional Narratives in Translations and Native Texts*, National Museum of Canada Bulletin 165, Anthropological Series, no.47 (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1960), 4.



natives’, Nicolas asserted, ‘use the turtle as the main instrument of their religion...they spend days and nights with a dying person, holding a turtle shell filled with pebbles which makes a dull noise as they vigorously shake this *outki*, or *manitou*, as they call it.’<sup>85</sup> Le Jeune’s comparison of French people with turtles, then, is a European gloss on Indigenous perceptions of the French, since he clearly intends the expression to convey a negative perception. Still, the missionary’s meaning is clear. The ‘astonishment’ of the Wendat spectators at Godefroy’s victory suggests that they regarded the French as being physically weak. Le Jeune’s emphasis on Godefroy’s youth and agility (he was ‘a young man of light and agile body’), implies that the latter’s physical strength would have been clear to European onlookers. Conversely, the Wendat spectators were surprised at Godefroy’s ability. Although historians must read missionary texts with their European literary contexts in mind, descriptions of Indigenous responses to European behaviour (such as the Wendat’s ‘astonishment’ at Godefroy’s victory), can go some way towards bringing non-European perspectives to historical analyses. Missionaries employed familiar language to describe their new situations, but these new contexts strained their habitual conceptual categories.<sup>86</sup> Reading Jesuit accounts for Indigenous perceptions of missionaries is thus something of a balancing act; texts cannot simply be taken at ‘face value’, but must be carefully compared for the purposes of identifying information which might clarify or contradict other sections of text.

It is well established that Jesuit missionaries in New France were often associated with the ‘black robes’ they wore. As linguist John L. Steckley has pointed out, the Wendat word used to

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<sup>85</sup> Nicolas, *Natural History*, 348. On this point, see also *JR*, 42: 149.

<sup>86</sup> For a useful discussion of the difficulties describing ‘New World’ environments using European intellectual frameworks, see Karen Ordahl Kupperman, “Introduction: The Changing Definition of America,” in Karen Ordahl Kupperman, ed. *America in European Consciousness, 1493-1750* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 3.

describe missionaries was ‘*hatitsihenstaatsi*’, which translates as ‘they are called charcoal’.<sup>87</sup> Strictly speaking, this word described the shade of the missionaries’ robes, rather than the robes themselves. Still, ‘black robes’ (‘*robes noires*’) was the translation that missionaries used in the *Relations*, and this term has remained in public consciousness.<sup>88</sup> Franciscan Recollects were similarly identified by their appearance, and referred to using the term, ‘*hochitalon*’, meaning, ‘he has bare feet’.<sup>89</sup> Clothing thus distinguished Jesuit missionaries from other European settlers.

Missionaries’ distinct black cassocks therefore affected the ways in which other people – both Indigenous people and French settlers – acted toward them. Jesuit missionary Father Francesco-Giuseppe Bressani wrote of the trouble that he had procuring transport to the Huron Country in 1634:

They would willingly have embarked some young Frenchman with weapons for hunting and war; but they did not wish to burden themselves with people who wore cassocks [*sottana*] – esteeming them useless, and even harmful to their interests.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> John L. Steckley, *Words of the Huron* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier Press, 2007), 234.

<sup>88</sup> See, for example, Brian Moore’s novel, *Black Robe* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985). To some, the term ‘black robe’ was synonymous with the spread of disease. See, for example, *JR*, 42: 135. ‘The devil’ the *Relation*’s missionary author wrote, ‘still circulates false reports, through certain Huron prisoners and renegades, who proclaim that the black gowns will pursue the same curse here as with them; that we write down the names of children; that we send them to France, where their bodies are marked with charcoal; and that, in the same ratio as these marks gradually become defaced, the persons bearing them are afflicted with ailments, until at last they die.’

<sup>89</sup> Steckley, *Words of the Huron*, 234.

<sup>90</sup> *JR*, 39: 51. I have adapted Thwaites’s translation slightly here for accuracy. The original Italian reads: ‘Haurebbero volentieri imbarcato qualche giouane Francese con armi per la caccia e per la guerra, ma non si voleuan caricar di genti, che portasse sottana, stimandoli inutili, anzi nociui à loro interessi...’

Several conclusions can be drawn from Bressani's statement. Firstly, Jesuit missionaries were clearly distinguishable from their French and other European counterparts. Secondly, young men with weapons (i.e. strong and fit individuals with useful technology) were preferred as travelling companions, the presumption being that they would be strong and fit enough to paddle a canoe effectively. Additionally, the weapons they carried would prove useful if the party was attacked and could be used to assist in the hunt. Conversely, Jesuit missionaries – here explicitly identified by their clothing as 'people who wore cassocks' – were regarded, in comparison, as 'useless'; the implication being that they were not physically fit enough to help paddle. The suggestion that a missionary presence might even be 'harmful to their interests' (that is, the interests of the canoe's owners) demonstrates that Jesuits' interventions in the political affairs of the colony could often be unwelcome (since missionaries were well-versed in Indigenous languages and cultures, they were often involved in political negotiations). Similarly, evidence suggests that Indigenous traders were more successful when they used traditional methods and maintained established relationships, which could be disrupted by Jesuit presence. Thus, when Father Jean de Quen asked to accompany traders from Sillery and Saguenay to visit nations in the subarctic region, he was refused.<sup>91</sup>

Missionaries recognised the rhetorical potential in asserting their identities through clothing, both on the mission terrain and for readers of the *Relations* in France. Descriptions of emaciated missionaries returning from long and arduous canoe journeys (with unsympathetic Native companions) are a stock trope of mission narratives. When Father Pierre Pijart arrived at Quebec from the *pays des Hurons* in 1637 he was:

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<sup>91</sup> Muriel Clair, "Seeing These Good Souls Adore God in the Midst of the Woods': The Christianization of Algonquian Nomads in the *Jesuit Relations* of the 1640s," *Journal of Jesuits Studies* 1, no. 2 (2014), 284.

all wasted away, having suffered greatly from fatigue and sickness on the journey. He was barefooted, and wore upon his head a hat and upon his body a cassock not worth two doubles; yet the house could not furnish him a change of clothing.<sup>92</sup>

This evocation of missionary suffering and poverty (he was ‘barefooted’ in tattered clothing) is consistent with descriptions of missionary ‘martyrdom’ found throughout the *Relations*, and indeed, in Catholic relations more generally.<sup>93</sup> It can also be read as a plea to French benefactors to furnish missionaries with further resources (despite Pijart’s clear need of clothing, the Jesuit residence ‘could not furnish’ this basic necessity). While the ‘poverty’ of New France’s Indigenous peoples was to be pitied, Jesuit poverty was to be lauded; still, both required charitable giving. In addition to the cultural meanings of Jesuit clothing in French-language narratives, missionaries’ appearances also had very specific cultural meanings *in situ*. In the *Relation* of the previous year, Le Jeune had described the arrival of Father Antoine Daniel in similar terms. ‘At the sight of Father Daniel’, he wrote:

our hearts melted; his face was gay and happy, but greatly emaciated; he was barefooted, had a paddle in his hand, and was clad in a wretched cassock, his Breviary suspended to his neck, his shirt rotting on his back.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> *JR*, 12: 197.

<sup>93</sup> For instance, Augustinian Friar Sebastião Manrique urged missionaries to Southeast Asia to travel ‘Apostolically’ with only the bare minimum of possessions necessary to carry out the sacraments. See Alberts, *Conflict and Conversion*, 91.

<sup>94</sup> *JR*, 12: 279.

In a letter sent before his arrival (and which was also printed in the *Relation*), Daniel had told Le Jeune that he had encountered Fathers Charles Garnier and Pierre Chastelain on his journey. Like Daniel, the Fathers were travelling with a group of Wendats. He wrote, ‘both wore their shoes in the canoe and were not paddling, which made me think they were being well treated.’<sup>95</sup> Le Jeune’s *Relation* contained a short explanation of Daniel’s letter (‘for the better understanding of this Letter,’ he asserted, ‘I will explain what made Father Daniel conclude that Father Garnier and Father Chastelain were being well-treated by their hosts, since they wore shoes, and were not paddling’).<sup>96</sup> In this explanation, the missionary described the ways in which missionaries read the bodies and clothing of their confreres in order to determine their wellbeing. In order not to bring any dirt or sand into a canoe, he explained, missionaries were compelled to board barefoot, ‘whether it is cold or warm’ and ‘unless they encounter [*si on ne rencontre*] some good Natives who let them follow their own custom [*qui nous laisse à nostre mode*].’<sup>97</sup> Here Le Jeune equates a practical request with an affront on French cultural practices. That Garnier and Chastelain were *wearing* their shoes, he implied, showed that they were with ‘good Natives’, who respected their customs. That they had not been compelled to paddle, also demonstrated some lenience on the part of their hosts. Le Jeune asserted:

he who would sail with them must know how to handle the paddle; and it is hard work, especially at first, when one is not accustomed [*accoustumé*] to it, we give to every Canoe in which any of our Fathers embark a large sheet which serves as a sail, to relieve them of this work, but although these Barbarians may be told that this sail is the Fathers’ paddle, that they do not wield any others, they do not fail sometimes to

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<sup>95</sup> *JR*, 9: 273.

<sup>96</sup> *JR*, 9: 277.

<sup>97</sup> *JR*, 9: 277. For the original French, see 276.

make them take one of wood, which has to be well worked to satisfy them.<sup>98</sup>

Given this reluctance to assist in the labour of the journey, Bressani's statement that Wendat travellers were unwilling to 'burden themselves with people who wore cassocks', is unsurprising.<sup>99</sup> Thus, while descriptions of exhausted, barefooted missionaries can be read as narratives of missionary suffering, they should also be read as narratives of somatic adaptation to environment and in the context of cultural dialogues.

But missionaries were not clueless as to the importance of adaptation. Father Jean de Brébeuf's *Instructions for the Fathers of our Society who shall be sent to the Hurons* (a text which was included in the *Relation* of 1637), contained instructions as to how to prepare oneself for, and conduct oneself on, the journey to the *pays des Hurons*. The principal – but unstated – focus of the text is how not to annoy one's travelling companions through bad canoe etiquette. Punctuality was important ('you must be careful never to make them wait for you in embarking'), as was being well-prepared (carrying a tinderbox), and eating at the start of the day (without complaint about the 'dirty, half-cooked, and very tasteless' food).<sup>100</sup> A large part of the *Instructions*, however, is concerned with behaviour in canoes and during periods of travel on foot. When travelling by canoe, Brébeuf advised:

tuck up your gowns [*habits*] so that they will not get wet, and so that you will not get water or sand into the canoe. To be properly dressed [*afin d'estre mieux appareillé*] you must have

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<sup>98</sup> *JR*: 9: 277. For the original French, see 276.

<sup>99</sup> *JR*, 39: 51.

<sup>100</sup> *JR*, 12: 117-19.

your feet and legs bare; while crossing the rapids you can wear your shoes and even your leggings.<sup>101</sup>

These regulations were clearly practical; though shoes might bring unwanted water or sand into a canoe, they could provide grip whilst crossing rivers. Other types of European clothing were also ill-advised. ‘Be careful not to annoy anyone in the canoe with your hat;’ Brébeuf asserted, ‘it would be better to take your nightcap.’ ‘There is,’ he continued, ‘no impropriety among the natives.’<sup>102</sup> In this instance, practicality takes precedence over propriety; the wide-brimmed hats worn by seventeenth-century Europeans were too large to be worn without bumping into one’s companions in the close quarters of a canoe. Nightcaps on the other hand, enclosed the head, and would protect against cold weather whilst remaining relatively unobtrusive. Additionally, the missionary’s statement that there was ‘no impropriety among the natives’ is reminiscent of his earlier statement that the Montagnais were ‘more motley than the Swiss.’<sup>103</sup> Still, wearing practical clothing was here presented, not as a measure which would increase the comfort of individual missionaries, but one which would reduce the discomfort (and annoyance) of their Native travelling companions. ‘You must so conduct yourself [e.g. be properly dressed]’, Brébeuf continued, ‘as not to be at all troublesome to even one of these Barbarians’.<sup>104</sup>

Coupled with this sartorial adaptation, missionaries were also advised to adapt their behaviour. Brébeuf warned against asking too many questions or attempting to learn Indigenous languages during long trips. Criticisms, too, were to be curbed. ‘Even if it be necessary to criticise

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<sup>101</sup> *JR*, 12: 119.

<sup>102</sup> *JR*, 12: 121.

<sup>103</sup> *JR*, 7: 9.

<sup>104</sup> *JR*, 12: 119.

anything,' he suggested, 'it must be done with modesty,' and with 'words and signs which evince love and not aversion.' 'Words' and 'signs' here combine to make meaning. Since the missionary had warned against attempts to learn Indigenous languages during long journeys (it was distracting and tiresome for a missionary's companions), the best way of communicating was through bodily 'signs' (i.e. gestures/actions and facial expressions). There were several ways to achieve this. One was to carry a share of the burden at portages (land over which canoes can be carried to avoid obstacles, such as waterfalls) when each traveller tried to carry something 'according to his strength'. Assisting in this task was one way of demonstrating commitment to one's companions; 'however little one carries,' the missionary stated, 'it greatly pleases the Natives, even if it be only a kettle.'<sup>105</sup> Emotional demeanour was also key. The missionary stated, 'you must try to be, and appear, always cheerful.'<sup>106</sup> Perhaps it was advice of this sort that Father Daniel had in mind, when – as described above – he disembarked at Quebec, 'gay and happy, but greatly emaciated'.<sup>107</sup> Le Jeune's *Instructions* continued, 'show them a cheerful face, and thus prove that you endure gayly the hardships of the voyage.' In this way, the missionary affirmed, 'You will have thus put to good use the hardships of the way.'<sup>108</sup> On the one hand, the missionary's narrative was reminiscent of early modern pilgrimage narratives. 'Do not undertake anything', he asserted, 'unless you desire to continue it; for example, do not begin to paddle unless you desire to continue paddling.'<sup>109</sup> This assertion passes as practical advice, but it could also be read as an analogy for the New France mission, where steadfastness

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<sup>105</sup> *JR*, 12: 121.

<sup>106</sup> *JR*, 12: 119.

<sup>107</sup> *JR*, 9: 279.

<sup>108</sup> *JR*, 12: 123.

<sup>109</sup> *JR*, 12: 121.



was important. On the other hand, missionary narratives demonstrated the bodily accommodations that Jesuits were willing to make in order to placate their hosts.

Comportment on the journey was not simply important to ensure that a missionary arrived at his destination, it would remain so after he had arrived. A missionary's companions, Brébeuf asserted, would 'retain the same opinion of you in their own country that they will have formed on the way'.<sup>110</sup> Journeys thus provided a testing ground where missionaries could prove their strength. '[Y]ou will meet some to-day and others to-morrow,' he stated, 'who do not fail to inquire, from those who brought you, what sort of man you are.'<sup>111</sup> A missionary's behaviour on his journey to a village could shape the reception he would receive upon arrival. Still, Brébeuf conceded, this was no simple matter. It was, he argued,

easy enough to learn, but difficult to put into practice; for, leaving a highly civilized community, you fall into the hands of a barbarous people who care but little for your Philosophy or your Theology.<sup>112</sup>

Whilst early missionary accounts emphasised the supposedly primitive nature of North American Indigenous societies, which were often said to have neither writing, laws, nor religion, many of the people missionaries encountered were curious about European scientific thought and beliefs.<sup>113</sup> Still, since many missionaries were still learning Indigenous languages, these

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<sup>110</sup> *JR*, 12: 121-23.

<sup>111</sup> *JR*, 12: 121-23.

<sup>112</sup> *JR*, 12: 123.

<sup>113</sup> See Cornelius Jaenen, "Amerindian Views of French Culture in the Seventeenth Century," *The Canadian Historical Review* 55 no. 3 (1974), 265.

more abstract subjects were difficult to discuss. Indigenous people, Brébeuf implied, valued physical strength over intellect. ‘All the fine qualities which might make you loved and respected in France’ – note the word ‘might’ here – ‘are like pearls trampled under the feet of swine, or rather of mules, which utterly despise you when they see that you are not as good animals as they are.’<sup>114</sup> That Brébeuf employed words implying uncertainty here (Thwaites’s edition uses the word ‘might’, but the original French reads, ‘*toutes les belles parties qui vous pourroient faire aimer & respecter en Frãce*’), implies that in France, too, Jesuit learning could be denigrated.<sup>115</sup> As Dominique Deslandres has shown, Jesuit missionaries labouring in the provinces of France faced similar problems to their missionary colleagues in the New World.<sup>116</sup> Nonetheless, strength was clearly valued in the eastern woodlands; missionaries were often mocked and assigned ‘women’s’ tasks, such as collecting firewood.<sup>117</sup> ‘If you could go naked,’ Brébeuf wrote in his *Instructions*, ‘and carry a load of a horse upon your back, as they do, then you would be wise according to their doctrine, and would be recognized as a great man, otherwise not.’<sup>118</sup> Historians must be wary of taking Jesuit stereotypes at face value. Whilst many sources, such as Brébeuf’s *Instructions*, portray Indigenous men as having powerful bodies, but little interest in intellectual affairs, this is simply a European prejudice. Though

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<sup>114</sup> *JR*, 12: 123.

<sup>115</sup> The Society of Jesus’s troubled history in the metropole is perhaps best exemplified by its banishment in 1594 by the Paris *parlement*, after a former pupil of the Jesuits attempted to assassinate Henri IV. The Society was re-admitted to the region in 1603, but remained controversial throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, before its eventual suppression in 1773. For a brief summary of the Society’s fortunes in France, see Joseph Bergin, *Church, Society and Religious Change in France, 1580-1730* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 112-14.

<sup>116</sup> On ‘interior’ missions in France see, Dominique Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire: Les missions françaises au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 151-93.

<sup>117</sup> On Indigenous accusations of Jesuit effeminacy, see Jaenen, “Amerindian Views of French Culture in the Seventeenth Century,” 271-72.

<sup>118</sup> *JR*, 12: 123. Here we might compare missionaries with *voyageurs* or *coureurs de bois*. Without the religious scruples of missionaries, many of these men successfully integrated into Indigenous societies and had families. For a detailed analysis of *voyageurs*, see Carolyn Podruchny, *Making the Voyageur World: Travelers and Traders in the North American Fur Trade* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

strength was undoubtedly important in North American societies – including Euro-American communities – which frequently relied on physical labour for survival, this was not the only attribute that was valued. Still, missionaries’ lack of strength and their reluctance to adopt Indigenous customs meant that their ideas were often given little credence. The ways in which a missionary responded to the challenges of the environment thus affected his chances of missionary ‘success’.

### **‘L’habit ne fait pas le moine’? : Contesting identities**

As we have seen, Jesuit clothing held different associations for different people. In missionary accounts, this clothing signified piety. Writing from the Wendat village of Ossosané in 1638, Le Jeune praised the devotion of the French servants employed in their house. Their good example, he recounted, had prompted many conversions: ‘[when Wendats] see persons who do not wear our costume, practicing, nevertheless, so exactly what we teach, they place a higher value upon our faith’.<sup>119</sup> The missionary implied that respect shown by Frenchmen who were not clerics (e.g. those who were not distinguished as spiritually important by their clothing), demonstrated the legitimacy of their teachings. There is very little detailed evidence relating to Jesuit servants, but the scattered references that do exist allow considerable insight into clothing practices and their relations to identities. The *Relation* of 1662-63, for instance, described the ‘pious’ life of Jean Guérin, who, at the time of his death in 1662, had been a *donné* (servant) in the service of the Society for more than twenty years.<sup>120</sup> Since many coadjutors were unable to withstand the harsh living conditions, and laymen were considered unreliable, Jesuits in New

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<sup>119</sup> *JR*, 15: 137.

<sup>120</sup> *JR*, 48: 133.

France engaged *donnés* (pious men who were willing to work in exchange for their maintenance).<sup>121</sup> In the words of Father Charles Garnier, a *donné* was a lay servant in clothing, but a religious at heart (*‘un domestique séculier d’habit, mais religieux de cœur’*).<sup>122</sup> According to Father Jérôme Lalement’s *Relation* of 1662-63, only one thing had prevented Guérin from requesting to become a full member of the Society of Jesus, the ‘fear’ that ‘the cassock he would wear might cause him to be esteemed more highly than he deserved’.<sup>123</sup> Here again, clothing is conflated with identity. In this instance, however, Guérin is concerned that his outward appearance might misrepresent him, and ‘cause him to be esteemed more highly *than he deserved*.’ That the cassock is the subject of this clause, while Guérin is the object, implies the transformative – and sometimes inadvertent – power of clothing in the shaping of identities. Indeed, Guérin’s acknowledgement that the wearer might perceive themselves differently from the people they encountered suggests his keen awareness that appearances could be deceptive.

This was by no means a new concept. The 1694 *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française* included the proverb, *‘L’habit ne fait pas le moine’* (‘The habit does not make the monk’), and explained ‘One must not judge people by appearances, by the outside.’<sup>124</sup> The proverb, however, is far older. François Deprez’s *Recueil* includes an illustration of a Prior accompanied by the following quatrain:

Here is a portait of a big fat prior

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<sup>121</sup> For a brief discussion of *donnés* in Canadian religious communities see, Arnaud Bessière, “Les domestiques des communautés religieuses au Canada au XVIIe siècles,” *Études d’histoire religieuse* 74 (2008), 49-50.

<sup>122</sup> Charles Garnier to his brother, 23 June 1642, cited in Jean Côté, S.J., “Domestique séculier d’habit, mais religieux de cœur,” *RHAF*, 10, no.2 (1956), 189.

<sup>123</sup> *JR*, 48: 147.

<sup>124</sup> *DAF* (1694), s.v. “habit.” The original French reads: ‘L’on ne doit pas juger les personnes par les apparences, par le dehors.’

Dressed in habits which fit him well  
 He has no interest in changing them  
 As it's often *the habit that makes the monk*.

[*Pourtraict est cy, vn gros & gras prier  
 Vestu d'habits, qui luy sont fort ydoine  
 De les changer il n'est point curieux  
 Car s'est souvent l'habit qui fait le moyne.*]<sup>125</sup>

In this quatrain, the author inverts the well-known proverb '*l'habit ne fait pas le moine*', implying, on the contrary, that all monks are inherently corrupt. The word 'habit' is used playfully here, encompassing both clothes and practices. The monk's lack of interest ('*curiosité*') in changing these 'habits' (sartorial and implied), which 'fit him well' (make him comfortable/'suit' him and his chosen vocation well) suggests corruption. This further underscores his description as 'big' and 'fat', presumably from his comfortable/exploitative lifestyle. The *Recueil*'s verses are typical of sixteenth-century anti-clerical propaganda; the printer, Richard Breton, was a Protestant who had published popular works on Protestant morality.<sup>126</sup> This anti-clerical stance is further emphasised by the inclusion of prints adapted from François Boussuet's *De Natura Aquatiliū Carmen* (1558), a zoological anthology of sea creature prints, which are relabelled as fantastical ecclesiasts, such as 'The Sea Monk', a sea creature dressed in monastic garb.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> François Deserps [sic], *Recueil des la diversité des habits*, n.p. My translation and emphasis.

<sup>126</sup> On Breton's anticlericalism, see Ann Rosalind Jones, "Habits, Holdings, Heterologies: Populations in Print in a 1562 Costume Book," in "Meaning and Its Objects: Material Culture in Medieval and Renaissance France," ed. Margaret Burland, David LaGuardia, and Andrea Tarnowski, *Yale French Studies* 110 (2006), 97.

<sup>127</sup> Jones, "Habits, Holdings, Heterologies," 16.

But this collection also suggests a long-standing association between clothes, identities, and religious practices during the turbulent years of the long Reformations. Written a century later, Lalemant draws on these associations in his portrayal of Jean Guérin. His depiction of a man unwilling to appropriate clothing which he associates with a particular (sacred) identity reaffirms the sanctity of religious garb and the holiness of those individuals who wear it.<sup>128</sup> In contrast to the well-fitting robes of Desprez's Prior, Jesuit robes – as depicted in the *Relations* – are often well-worn or damaged (like Father Daniel's 'wretched cassock' [*méchante soutane*']), implying not only poverty, but fortitude in the face of great hardships. While it might seem anachronistic to compare seventeenth-century narratives to sixteenth-century propaganda, born out of the confessional conflicts of reformation Europe, there are clear parallels to be made.

Since French Catholic and Huguenot bodies wore the same European garb, it was possible for a Huguenot in New France to 'pass' as a Catholic. Although, as we saw in the previous chapter, some Huguenots were discovered and converted during the ocean voyage to New France, others were not exposed until their arrival.<sup>129</sup> In the *Relation* of 1637, for instance, Le Jeune recounted that the ships had 'left us', two '*personnes de la religion prétenduë [réformée]*' (i.e. Huguenots: those of the 'supposedly reformed faith').<sup>130</sup> These heretics, he wrote, were soon converted

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<sup>128</sup> Cfr. The criticism of Jesuits in China and Japan by Dominicans, who argued that in wearing the silk clothing associated with the literati, Jesuits were not converting others to Catholicism, but themselves becoming those they sought to convert. Missionaries also came under fire for abandoning their habits to disguise themselves as laypeople in areas where Christians were persecuted. Critics argued that in wearing the clothes of those they impersonated, missionaries *became* them. See Alberts, *Conflict and Conversion*, 100.

<sup>129</sup> Some no doubt remained undetected. Marie-Aimée Cliche has identified several protestant wills from the mid-eighteenth century. Although no testator openly declared their Protestantism, the absence of both a declaration of Catholicism and of the invocation of saints, Cliche argues, indicates their Protestant character. See Marie-Aimée Cliche, *Les pratiques de dévotion en Nouvelle-France: Comportements populaires et encadrement ecclésial dans le gouvernement de Québec* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1988), 255. For a short study of the history of Protestantism in New France, see Robert Larin, *Briève Histoire des protestants en Nouvelle-France et au Québec (XVIe – XIXe siècles)* (Saint-Alphonse-de-Granby: Éditions de la Paix, 1998).

<sup>130</sup> Due to slight inaccuracies in the language of Thwaite's translation of the 1637 *Relation*, I have chosen to use my own translations of the *MNF* version instead. *MNF*, 3: 537. 'Les vaisseaux nous avoient laissé deux personnes

(*'elles se sont rangées à la vérité de l'Eglise catholique'*).<sup>131</sup> The missionary uses the language of order (specifically, the verb, 'ranger') to imply that these errant French souls have been brought *back* into the fold (although he does not elaborate on the method of conversion).

It was not only Huguenots that posed a moral danger to the colony. In the 1637 *Relation*, Le Jeune also bemoaned the drunkenness and overindulgence that occurred during the summer months when ships from France brought people and supplies to the colony: 'more drinks and refreshments are consumed during this time than during all the rest of the year', he complained.<sup>132</sup> This, he argued, was not an accurate representation of the colony. 'I would here implore', he wrote, 'those who wish to pass judgement on the [moral] state of our population:

close your eyes during the time in which the ships are anchored  
in our ports and open them when they leave or some time  
after.<sup>133</sup>

Le Jeune's advice to 'close your eyes' was not only intended to prevent the sins of the French from being exposed, it also aimed to prevent the infection of new settlers through temptation by sight. Whilst, on the one hand, the eyes were viewed as 'windows' of the soul (light was believed

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de la religion prétendue. Elles se sont rangées à la vérité de l'Eglise catholique et ont protesté publiquement qu'ils désiroient vivre & mourir en cette sainte créance'

<sup>131</sup> *MNF*, 3: 537.

<sup>132</sup> *MNF*, 3: 537. 'on fait plus de dégast de boissons et de rafraichissemens pendant ce temps-là qu'en tout le reste de l'année.'

<sup>133</sup> *MNF*, 3: 537. 'J'aurois icy une prière à faire à tous ceux qui veulent porter jugement de l'estat de nostre peuplade: c'est de fermer les yeux pendant que les navires sont à l'ancre à nos ports et de les ouvrir à leur départ ou quelque temps après'.

to be the medium of physical as well as spiritual sight),<sup>134</sup> they could also ‘let in’ harmful influences. Le Jeune’s language, however, is not wholly condemnatory. Whilst the lewd and drunken behaviour of the French was undoubtedly sinful, the missionary implied that it was – at least partly – understandable. ‘At the sweet sight of our compatriots, we want to rejoice and fall into excess’, he wrote.<sup>135</sup> The missionary’s use of the pronoun ‘we’ suggests that he was empathetic; he too felt joy at the sight of his compatriots. Nonetheless, he implied, temptation had to be resisted: we ‘want’ to ‘fall into excess’, but we should not surrender to this urge.

Settlers, the missionary argued, had to be wary of appearances; the ‘sweet sight’ of one’s compatriots could be deceptive. Father Jérôme Lalemant, superior of the New France mission, wrote that on 21 May 1646:

a man named Thomas [...] a native of La Rochelle, who until then only had the appearance of being catholic, & deep down was a Huguenot, abjured [his heresy] and professed his faith under my guidance, after which he made his general confession.<sup>136</sup>

Even outward bodily acts, such as attending mass, could not prove a person’s inner devotion. Indeed, in the context of continuing confessional conflict, certain acts of colonial violence can also be read as acts of religious violence.

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<sup>134</sup> Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 11. See also Matthew 6:22. ‘The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light.’

<sup>135</sup> *MNF*, 3: 537. ‘Dans la douce veue de nos compatriotes, on se veut resjouir et on tombe dans l’excez.’

<sup>136</sup> Lalemant was superior of the New France mission from 1645-1650 and 1659-1665. See, Léon Pouliot, ‘Lalemant, Jérôme,’ in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed July 1, 2014, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/lalemant\\_jerome\\_1E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/lalemant_jerome_1E.html). *JJ*, 46. My translation. ‘vn nommé Thomas [...] natif de la Rochelle, qui iusques alors n’auoit esté qu’apparemment catholique, & au fond estoit Huguenot, fit abiuration & profession de la foy en particulier entre mes mains, en suite de quoy il fit sa confession generale.’



In an earlier *Relation*, Paul Le Jeune portrayed violence against Huguenot bodies as being justified. In his 1632 *Relation*, the missionary described the fate of Jacques Michel, a Huguenot, who, filled with remorse at having helped the English (or rather, Le Jeune added, those Frenchmen who had become English [*des François reniez et anglisez*]), died suddenly after the country was taken.<sup>137</sup> The missionary continued:

I learned that the natives had dug him up and done all sorts of ignominious acts to his body, cut it up into pieces [*le mirent en pièces*], [and] gave it to their dogs'.<sup>138</sup>

The Innu warriors who exhumed this body did so as a calculated insult. Not even animal bones were fed to dogs, since this was believed to anger the dead animal's soul. When such affronts were made, other animals would no longer sacrifice themselves to the hunt.<sup>139</sup> Rather than condemning these actions, Le Jeune appears to take grim satisfaction from the fate of this treacherous Frenchman. 'That's what traitors get', he declared, 'I pray to God that it opens the eyes of others'.<sup>140</sup> Violence against traitorous Huguenot bodies was thus portrayed as being acceptable.

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<sup>137</sup> *MNF*, 2, 310.

<sup>138</sup> *MNF*, 2, 310. My translation. 'J'ay appris icy que les sauvages le déterrèrent et firent toute sorte d'ignominie à son corps, le mirent en pièces, le donnèrent à leur chien.'

<sup>139</sup> Emma Anderson, *The Betrayal of Faith: The Tragic Journey of a Colonial Native Convert* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 32-33.

<sup>140</sup> *MNF*, 2: 310. 'Voilà le salaire des perfides. Je prie Dieu qu'il ouvre les yeux aux autres.'

As we shall see, Jesuit descriptions of Indigenous violence are often reminiscent of violent acts recorded during the religious warfare of the sixteenth-century. But this is just one way of reading these texts. As will become clear in what follows, Indigenous appropriation of missionary clothing also had clear cultural meanings.

Earlier in this chapter, we examined some of the ways in which Indigenous individuals adapted European clothing for practical use. This section will analyse some of the possible spiritual connotations of adapted missionary garb. In his 1661 *Relation*, Father Claude Dablon described the death of Father Jacques Le Maistre, a Sulpician from Montreal.<sup>141</sup> According to the *Relation*, Le Maistre had accompanied eight men to the fields, where they were reaping grain. The priest had withdrawn on his own to recite his office in a quieter spot, when he was suddenly shot. Despite Le Maistre's grave injuries, he ran to the reapers to warn them, but they found themselves surrounded by fifty Haudenosaunee warriors. Two of the eight men were killed, but according to the *Relation*, the other six managed to escape. 'The Iroquois,' Dablon wrote:

thus left undisputed masters of the battlefield directed their wrath against the dead, since they had been unable to accomplish more against the living. Pouncing, accordingly, on Monsieur Le Maistre, they cut off his head, and uniting mockery with cruelty, stripped off his cassock, which one of their number donned. Clothed in this precious spoil [*dépoüille*], he paraded pompously in sight of Montreal, braving the town with an insolence truly barbaric.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Jacques Le Maistre left La Rochelle for New France in 1659, travelling as chaplain for three Hospitalières (Catherine Macé, Judith Moreau de Brésoles, and Marie Maillet). After their arrival in Quebec, the party travelled to Montreal (then Ville-Marie) where Le Maistre became bursar of the Sulpicians. See Olga Jurgens, "LE MAISTRE, JACQUES," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed July 13, 2015, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/le\\_maistre\\_jacques\\_1E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/le_maistre_jacques_1E.html). On the Sulpicians, see John A. Dickinson with the collaboration of Angélique Da Silva-Gauthier, "Les Sulpiciens au Canada," in *Les Sulpiciens de Montréal: Une histoire de pouvoir et de discrétion, 1657-2007*, ed. Dominique Deslandres, John A. Dickinson, and Ollivier Hubert (Montréal: Fides, 2007): 33-84.

<sup>142</sup> For Dablon's account of Le Maistre's death see, *JR*, 46: 217-219. Cfr. Marie de l'Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, September 1661, *MI, Corr.*, Letter CXCVI, 667. There are slight variations between these two accounts.

Dablon's account is intended to demonstrate the barbarity of the Haudenosaunee men, who maimed Le Maistre's dead body. Further details of the incident are given in a letter written by Marie de l'Incarnation to her son in September 1661. Having killed Le Maistre, Marie wrote, 'these Barbarians made loud whooping noises [*firent des huées extraordinaires*] as a mark of the joy that they felt having killed a black robe.'<sup>143</sup> She continued:

A Renegade among their number stripped him [*le dépouilla*], and re clothed himself in his robe, and having put on a shirt [*chemise*] on top as a surplice [*en forme de surplis*] processed around the corpse, in derision of what he had seen done at the church at funerals.<sup>144</sup>

As we shall see, 'stripping' missionaries is a trope which appears frequently in the *Relations* and which connotes – amongst other things – the stripping away of markers of 'civilised' society.<sup>145</sup> The French verb *depouiller* also had connotations of skinning (an animal, for instance).<sup>146</sup> Marie's account ends with the cutting off of Le Maistre's head, followed by the attackers' retreat into the woods. 'That is the way that these Barbarians make war', she wrote, 'They make their attack, then retreat into the woods, where the French cannot go.'<sup>147</sup> Although

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<sup>143</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, September 1661, 667. 'ces Barbares firent des huées extraordinaires pour marque de joie qu'ils avoient d'avoir tué une robe noire.'

<sup>144</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Claude Martin Quebec, September 1661, 667. 'Un Renégat de leur troupe le dépouilla, et se revêtit de sa robe, et aient mis une chemise par dessus en forme de surplis faisoit la procession autour du corps, en dérision de ce qu'il avoit veu faire à l'Église aux obsèques des défunts.'

<sup>145</sup> For an examination of this trope in early American captivity narratives, see Castro, "Stripped," 107.

<sup>146</sup> *DAF* (1694), s.v. "depouiller."

<sup>147</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, September 1661, 667. 'Voilà la façon dont ces Barbares font la guerre: Ils font leurs coups, puis ils se retirent dans les bois, où les François ne peuvent aller.'

Marie does not explain why the French could not go into the woods, but the most likely explanation is the danger of attack by those (such as the Haudenosaunee) who were far more used to navigating the terrain to which many Frenchmen were ill-accustomed. Writing about the woods around Sept-Îles, for instance, Louis Nicolas wrote that they were ‘very hard to pass through, on account of the density of the trees, although these are very small; all french clothes [*les hardes francoises*] are torn in them.’<sup>148</sup> Rhetorically speaking, too, the warriors retreat into the woods is symbolic of a return – in Marie’s eyes – to wildness. Marie de l’Incarnation described the young seminarians who ran away to re-join their families in similar terms: ‘they climb, like squirrels, our palissade, which is high as a bulwark, and go running into the woods’, she wrote to her son in 1668.<sup>149</sup> Marie’s description of the Haudenosaunee retreat also connotes cowardice; they strike and retreat, rather than staying to fight.

Whilst the killing and stripping of the priest is intended to convey barbarity, a closer look at these accounts conveys a variety of cultural meanings. In her seminal article, ‘The Rites of Violence’, Natalie Zemon Davis argued that far from being random acts of cruelty, violence carried out during the French Wars of Religion was largely influenced by traditional – usually judicial – punishments and was didactic in nature.<sup>150</sup> This is not to deny the brutality of the acts in question, but rather to attempt to understand how they came about and what they might

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<sup>148</sup> *JR*, 59: 59.

<sup>149</sup> Marie de l’Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, 9 August 1668, MI, *Corr.*, Letter 235, 802. ‘elles grimpent comme des écurieux notre palissade, qui est haute comme une muraille, et vont courrir dans les bois.’

<sup>150</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, “The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France,” *Past and Present* 59 (1974), 53.

signify.<sup>151</sup> The act of ‘stripping’ Le Maistre’s cassock from his body can thus be examined from several perspectives.<sup>152</sup>

From the perspective of the French onlookers, this act might have provoked several culturally-conditioned responses: firstly, horror at the indignity of stripping a dead body naked, especially that of a priest and, secondly, anger at the heretical act of wearing the dead priest’s clothing and thereby mocking him. To be stripped of one’s gowns or ‘defrocked’ (*défroquer*) signified a humiliating removal from office.<sup>153</sup> This act may also have evoked cultural memories of the religious violence which had taken place in France a century before. For instance, in 1593 in Aubenas, France, two Jesuits were killed by an angry mob. Two of the murderers donned the priests’ habits and hats, to which they attached squirrel tails that signified lust – an implication that the priests had not observed clerical celibacy.<sup>154</sup> There are numerous other recorded incidences in which priests and their garments are destroyed, adapted or adopted in acts of confessional violence. In 1561, for instance, a priest in Montauban who was discovered celebrating mass was mounted backwards on a donkey and led through the streets. This carnivalesque penance ritual was usually reserved for adulterers; in this case, the priest had

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<sup>151</sup> See Natalie Zemon Davis, “Writing ‘The Rites of Violence’ and Afterward,” *Past and Present*, 214 (2012), 16.

<sup>152</sup> For a useful discussion of the ways in which sources can be read from different perspectives, see Emma Anderson, “Blood, Fire, and ‘Baptism’: Three Perspectives on the Death of Jean de Brébeuf, Seventeenth-Century Jesuit ‘Martyr,’” in *Native Americans, Christianity and the Reshaping of American Religious Landscapes*, ed. Joel W. Martin and Mark A. Nicholas (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010): 125-58.

<sup>153</sup> *DAF* (1694), s.v. “défroquer.” ‘Il ne se dit guere qu’en raillerie, En parlant d’un Religieux, qui quitte l’habit de Moine & la profession Monache pour passer dans un autre Estat, par dispense du Pape, ou par quelque autre voye canonique.’

<sup>154</sup> See Denis Crouzet, *Les guerriers de Dieu: La violence au temps des troubles de religion, vers 1525 – vers 1610*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 1990), 691. Crouzet’s interpretation of the squirrel tails draws on Christian Jouhaud, “Readability and Persuasion: Political Handbills,” in *The Culture of Print: Power and the Use of Print in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Roger Chartier (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 252-56.

committed adultery with the mass.<sup>155</sup> When the procession arrived at the main square, the priest was forced to dismount, burn his own liturgical vestments and trample a chalice and a Eucharist (the latter had been attached to the front of his garments) under his feet. No other punishment was pronounced.<sup>156</sup> These two brief examples demonstrate the multifarious meanings of clothing in early modern confessional cultures. In the first example, the Jesuits' clothing is re-appropriated in order to further insult the dead priests (and the Catholic faith). In the second example, however, clothing embodies the wrongdoer and destruction of the garment (coupled with ritual humiliation) suffices as punishment.<sup>157</sup>

Haudenosaunee onlookers would have been unfamiliar with the confessional violence of the long reformations, but the appropriation of Le Maistre's clothing would have nonetheless had important cultural meanings. In order to analyse the ways in which the stripping of the Sulpician's cassock may have been understood by the Iroquois witnesses, let us first examine and compare it with other accounts describing the removal of missionary clothing.

Outside of warfare – which will be examined later in this chapter – the most common reason for an individual's clothing to be 'stripped' (as recounted in the *Relations*) was that an item of clothing had been dreamt about. The *Relation* of 1665-66 included a description of a 'dream-guessing' ceremony at Oigoen.<sup>158</sup> The term used to refer to this ceremony in the *Relations* is *Honnnouaroria* (and variations thereof), a word similar to the word used by Haudenosaunee

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<sup>155</sup> Crouzet, *Les guerriers de Dieu*, 691.

<sup>156</sup> Crouzet, *Les guerriers de Dieu*, 691.

<sup>157</sup> Théodore de Bèze gives a different version of the account in which the priest is disembowelled and his intestines are sold. That both of these scenarios are plausible, however, further underlines the versatility of clothes as markers of identities. On de Bèze, see Crouzet, *Les guerriers de Dieu*, 691.

<sup>158</sup> *JR*, 42: 155-69.

communities today to describe the Midwinter Ceremonial, a ritual which reflects on the year past and prepares the community for the coming year.<sup>159</sup> When this festival was announced by the village elders, Father Claude Dablon recounted,

nothing was seen but men, women, and children running like maniacs through the streets and cabins, - this, however, in a far different manner from that of Masqueraders in Europe, the greater number being nearly naked and apparently insensible to the cold, which is well-nigh unbearable to those who are most warmly clothed.<sup>160</sup>

The missionary here acknowledges parallels with European ‘Masqueraders’, that is, those who participated in carnival festivities at Mardi Gras. But he mentions these revellers only to stress the difference between them and their ‘nearly naked’ Haudenosaunee counterparts. When one of the dreamers announced that his dream had commanded him to kill a ‘Frenchman’, he sought out the resident Jesuit missionaries to obey it. Rather than allowing the missionaries to be killed, however, another villager ‘threw him a French coat’, telling him that it had belonged to the dead man. Dreams were akin to prophesies; if a person dreamt that they had to acquire an object, for instance, this had to be done in order not to incur the wrath of spirits. Furthermore, Dablon recounted by way of explanation for the incident:

just as he who has captured a prisoner in war, often takes only his apparel [*dépoiïlles*], and not his life, so he who has dreamed that he is to kill some one, very often contents himself with his clothes [*habits*], without assailing his person.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> It should be noted that the term, *honnouaroria*, does not always denote this ceremonial; ‘dream guessing’ could also be carried out in order to cure illnesses or before hunting or war. See Elizabeth Tooker, *The Iroquois Ceremonial of Midwinter* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), vii, 85.

<sup>160</sup> *JR*, 42: 155.

<sup>161</sup> *JR*, 42: 159-61.

The man who was given a French coat, however, was unsatisfied, though not with the coat itself. Rather, the coat – which took the place of the ‘Frenchman’ he had wanted to kill – embodied a person whose death now required avenging. According to Dablon, he worked himself into a ‘frenzy’ demanding that the Frenchman’s ‘death’ be avenged.<sup>162</sup> The coat, then, did not have one fixed symbolic purpose, but embodied a man’s life (albeit an imagined one), which continued to have ramifications after the man’s ‘death’.

Other dreams more-explicitly target the Jesuits. The *Relation* of 1661-62, for instance, included Father Simon Le Moine’s account of a man who dreamed that he was wearing the missionary’s cassock. The man ran through the village, ‘in his frenzy uttering only his determination to strip [*depoiüller*] Ondesonk [Le Moine], and to be obeyed, in order to obey his dream.’<sup>163</sup> Similarly, there are several accounts in which people who are ill dream that the acquisition of a cassock will cure them of their illness. This was the case for a woman in Onondaga in 1676, who, in the words of Jesuit Father Jean de Lamberville, ‘was impertinent enough to Sing that she had dreamed of my cassock and that she would die if I did not give it to her.’<sup>164</sup> The *Relation* of 1656-57 also told of a sick woman at Onondaga who, ‘had dreamed that she required a black gown to effect her cure’. Since the chances of obtaining a cassock from a Jesuit were slim, the Onondagans appealed to the Dutch, who, in the words of the *Relation*:

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<sup>162</sup> *JR*, 42: 155-57.

<sup>163</sup> *JR*, 47: 183.

<sup>164</sup> See, for example, *JR*, 60: 189.



sold them at a very high price the wretched cassock [*pauvre s[ou]tanne*] of Father Poncet, who had shortly before been despoiled [*dépouillé*] of it by the Annienhronnons.<sup>165</sup>

The woman who obtained his cassock recovered and believed that it was the acquisition of this garment that had cured her. According to the *Relation*, she ‘wished to keep it all her life as a precious relic’.<sup>166</sup> As we shall see in Chapter 4 of this thesis, dreams could disrupt – consciously or otherwise – missionary practices. Indeed, on another occasion, Le Moyne recounted that a man had broken into the chapel in order to take the crucifix, as his dream had commanded.<sup>167</sup>

Father Antoine Poncet’s capture and subsequent return to the French is in itself an interesting case study for the meanings of clothing in Jesuit narratives of captivity. In 1653, Poncet had been captured by the Iroquois just above the mission village of Sillery; Jesuits at Quebec became aware of this when Father Jean de Quen arrived with the former’s skullcap.<sup>168</sup> In a later letter recounting his captivity, Poncet asserted that he and his companion (a Frenchman, Maturin Franchetot), were ‘ordered to strip ourselves [*nous dépouïller*], and give up what was left of our French garments.’ These had apparently been damaged on the journey but were still considered valuable enough to be taken from them. By way of replacement, ‘a blue great-coat, all in rags,’ was ‘thrown over [his] back’, while his companion received, ‘an old linen doublet, badly tattered.’<sup>169</sup> When they reached their destination (a Haudenosaunee village), they were again

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<sup>165</sup> *JR*, 43: 273. It is not clear how this cassock came to be in the hands of the Dutch, but the account is clearly intended to imply their greed and immorality.

<sup>166</sup> *JR*, 43: 273.

<sup>167</sup> *JR*, 47: 183-85.

<sup>168</sup> *JR*, 38: 191.

<sup>169</sup> *JR*, 40: 127.

forced to strip ‘completely naked’ (‘except our breech-clouts’) and run through the assembled crowd who beat them with staves and switches.<sup>170</sup> The Father was tortured (his left index finger was cut off), before being taken to the next village, where he was adopted, taking the place of a man who had been killed ‘by those on our side’ (i.e. the French or their allies). Upon entering the longhouse of the man’s sister, a mourning ritual took place, which, ‘according to their custom’, prompted ‘the departed to become alive again in my person.’ As soon as the ritual was completed, his maimed finger was dressed and he was given ‘half a blanket, to serve me as a robe and a bed’, ‘stockings and shoes after their fashion’, and a ‘very greasy shirt’.<sup>171</sup> Through the ritual and re-clothing, Poncet had become – in the eyes of his captors – a member of their nation. Sometime after, a captain arrived at the village, tasked with securing Poncet’s release in exchange for three Haudenosaunee hostages held at Trois Rivières. The man gave him ‘an old hat’ and ‘promised to conduct me to the Dutch, in order to have me clothed, and then to take me back to the country of the French’. When the peace was finally negotiated and Poncet returned to the French, he arrived at Montreal, ‘in a wretched canoe’ (*mechant canot*), and ‘dressed in the Dutch fashion’ (*habillé en hollandoise*).<sup>172</sup>

Clothing in New France, then, was re-used and could change meaning, depending both on *who* was wearing it and *when/where*. This in itself is not significant. Re-using clothing and materials was common in the early modern period (though there is little material evidence of this everyday practice, surviving aristocratic garments aside).<sup>173</sup> The *Journal des Jésuites*, for instance, reveals

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<sup>170</sup> *JR*, 40: 127-29.

<sup>171</sup> *JR*, 40: 133-39.

<sup>172</sup> *JR*, 38: 197.

<sup>173</sup> Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the ‘Ancien Régime’*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 8; On the rarity of preserved cloth in archaeological contexts, see Loren, *The Archaeology of Clothing and Bodily Adornment in Colonial America*, 44-45.

that in 1654, the Jesuits at Quebec gave ‘some black material from an old cassock’ to Mademoiselle Giffar ‘for lining sleeves’.<sup>174</sup> There is no indication that this re-use implied anything other than ‘making-do’ in a situation where European materials were in short supply.

But like Poncet’s cassock – which re-appeared with ‘new’ significance (as a ‘cure’ for sickness) after it had been stolen from him – other missionary garments were similarly transformed in meaning by their new owners. Le Maistre’s cassock, the ‘stripping’ of which was examined above, also re-appeared at a later date imbued with new meanings. The *Relation* of 1660-61, for instance, described Father Simon Le Moyne’s mission to Onondaga, where he hoped to negotiate the release of French captives held by various nations of the Haudenosaunee.<sup>175</sup> Only nine of the prisoners were released (largely thanks to Garakontié, the ‘captain’ of Onondaga who was on friendly terms with the Jesuits). The others remained, but promises were made to release them after the winter. The letters of these captives will be examined in Chapter 5, but for now, let us focus on the prisoners who were released. The men were on their way home (accompanied by Garakontié) when they encountered some Onondagan warriors, who, in Le Moyne’s words were, ‘bearing home some French scalps’. When enemies were killed (as opposed to taken captive), they could be beheaded or scalped, and these parts of the body were often taken home as war trophies.<sup>176</sup> One member of the group was, ‘arrayed in a black Gown

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<sup>174</sup> *JJ*: 13. My translation. ‘Le 12. [Novembre 1645] on donna à Mad. Giffar de l’estoffe noire de vieille sotane pour doubler des manches.’

<sup>175</sup> Onondaga was the ‘capital’ of the Five Nations Iroquois League and the location at which important negotiations often took place. Gilles Havard, *The Great Peace of Montreal of 1701: French-Native Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 21. See also Gilles Havard, “Postes français et villages indiens: Un aspect de l’organisation de l’espace colonial français dans le Pays d’en Haut (1660-1715),” *RAQ* 30, no.2 (2000), 12-13.

<sup>176</sup> Ron Williamson, ““*Otinontsiskiaj ondaon*” (“*The House of the Cut-Off Heads*”): The History and Archaeology of Northern Iroquoian Trophy Taking,” in *The Taking and Displaying of Human Body Parts as Trophies by Amerindians*, ed. Richard J. Chacon and David H. Dye (New York: Springer, 2007), 194.

[*vne Robe-noire*], of which he had made a great parade, glorying in its possession as if it had been an illustrious trophy.’ This *Robe-noire* was Father Le Maistre’s cassock.<sup>177</sup> In his account of this encounter, Le Moyne gave a detailed description of the freed captives’ responses to this meeting. ‘At this sight’, he asserted:

our Frenchmen, as if struck by a thunderbolt, saw all their hopes defeated, especially as they knew the wearer of this cassock was a Captain of importance, Otreouati by name, who had been in irons at Montreal two years before and upon escaping had determined to take revenge for his imprisonment by the death of some Frenchmen of rank – as in truth he had done by the murder of Monsieur Le Maistre, Priest, in whose costume he had attired himself [*des dépouilles duquel il s’ëtoit habillé* ]<sup>178</sup>

The missionary’s phrasing here is particularly interesting, since the French noun *dépouilles* connotes remnants (as in, corporeal remains), and war spoils.<sup>179</sup> These words may also have had carnivalesque associations, since an early modern game, loosely translatable as ‘strip the king’ (*Jouër au Roy dépouillé*) consisted in removing, piece by piece, items of clothing worn by the person designated – for the purposes of the game – as the ‘King’.<sup>180</sup> Thwaites’s modern English translation of this term as ‘costume’ is nonetheless apt, since it implies performance. In wearing his war spoils, Otreouati was not only demonstrating his strength as a warrior, but he sought to intimidate the French by wearing the attire of a person who he knew to be of spiritual importance. That he wore Le Maistre’s clothing – rather than garments taken from the other

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<sup>177</sup> *JR*, 47: 95.

<sup>178</sup> *JR*, 47: 95.

<sup>179</sup> *DAF* (1694), s.v. “depouille.”

<sup>180</sup> *DAF* (1694), s.v. “depoüillé.”

dead Frenchmen – demonstrates his knowledge that, as a priest, Le Maistre occupied an important position in French colonial society.

In this context, it is clear why missionaries were able to present the deaths of their confreres as having been ‘*in odium fidei*’ (‘in hatred of the faith’), which was a requirement for martyrdom. For missionaries and readers in France, the desecration of missionaries’ bodies, either physical or embodied (through their clothing, for instance) was reminiscent of early modern French confessional conflict. It is, however, important to clarify that while missionaries’ bodies were sacred – that is, consecrated, by way of their holy vow – their cassocks were not. Cassocks (*sotana*, in Italian, or *soutane*, French) were worn *under* (*sotto/sous*) liturgical vestments. The latter (such as a chasuble and alb) were worn *over* the cassock, for the celebration of the Eucharist. Both could be blessed, but would not have been consecrated.<sup>181</sup>

When Father Isaac Jogues was taken prisoner by Haudenosaunee warriors in 1642, he described his stripping and torture at the hands of his captors. ‘I saw the Barbarians well covered with the clothes which they had taken from us, and, which vexed me, with the sacred robes, which they profaned.’<sup>182</sup> Jogues is likely here referring to his liturgical vestments. Though priests often had to travel with few possessions, they were sometimes able to carry these vestments along with the portable ‘chapels’ (that is the paraphernalia – chalice, altar cloth, etc. – that they used for the celebration of mass).<sup>183</sup> Either way, his use of the term, ‘profaned’, draws attention to

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<sup>181</sup> See *Rituel du diocese de Quebec*, “Benediction des habits Pontificaux & Sacerdotaux en general”, and “Benediction particuliere pour chaque Habit Pontifical ou sacerdotal,” 519-21.

<sup>182</sup> *JR*, 39: 213.

<sup>183</sup> For instance, in 1645, the Jesuits loaned a ‘*chapelle garnie*’ (‘complete chapel’) to secular priest, Gilles Nicolet for a trip to Isle-aux-Oies. See, *JJ*, 8.

the iconoclastic nature – at least, in the eyes of the French – of the callous treatment of the missionary’s garments.<sup>184</sup>

Thus, it is apparent that both French and Indigenous clothing could embody, since it could act in the world (prompting sometimes unexpected outcomes), as well as be acted upon. For the Indigenous peoples of New France, the taking of body parts could have spiritual significance. As archaeologist Ron Williamson has pointed out, parallels can be drawn between the beheading of enemies and the spirit Oscotarach (or ‘Pierce-Head’), who lived on the road to the village of the souls (a village to which the souls of dead people were said to travel after death).<sup>185</sup> In general, however, missionaries were not treated any differently from other captives. The majority of the tortures inflicted on them were the same as those inflicted on prisoners from other nations; though they might take on spiritual significance in hagiographic narratives.<sup>186</sup> Indeed, the practice of taking war captives was also important. While some were ritually tortured (in order to avenge deceased clan members), others were adopted, taking on the roles – and sometimes the names and identities – of deceased clan members.<sup>187</sup>

## Conclusion

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<sup>184</sup> Cfr. Susan Juster’s discussion of iconoclasm in New England. Susan Juster, “Iconoclasm Without Icons? The Destruction of Sacred Objects in Colonial North America,” in *Empires of God: Religious Encounters in the Early Modern Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011): 216-37.

<sup>185</sup> Williamson, “‘*Otinontsiskiaj ondaon*’ (‘*The House of the Cut-Off Heads*’),” 193.

<sup>186</sup> On hagiographic accounts of missionary deaths see Anderson, “Blood, Fire and ‘Baptism’,” 127-34. Cfr. Allan Greer and Jodi Bilinkoff’s geographically wide-ranging volume on colonial hagiography in the Americas. Greer and Bilinkoff, eds., *Colonial Saints: Discovering the Holy in the Americas, 1500-1800* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>187</sup> On the adoption of war captives by the Haudenosaunee, see Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 32-35.

As this chapter has demonstrated, clothing, environment and identities in New France were entangled. In retaining their European clothing, missionaries sought to prevent themselves from becoming like *'les sauvages'*. But this decision did not protect them from the colony's 'rude' environment. Indeed, their cumbersome clothing often caused them problems when they were travelling with Indigenous groups. Not only did it hinder a missionary's progress, but it could also annoy his travelling companions. Furthermore, missionaries became synonymous with the 'black robes' they wore and these became vehicles through which missionaries, and their doctrine, could be challenged. However, whilst accounts of 'stripping' can be read as part of a long tradition of literature relating to religious violence and confessional conflict, they must also be read in the context of Indigenous North America. Changing one's clothing – or having one's clothes changed – could prompt the transformation of identities.

## Chapter 3

### Making Sacred Landscapes: Portable Chapels and Processions

#### Introduction

The ‘ceremonies of possession’ that accompanied and enacted European conquests of land in the so-called ‘New World’, have, for some time now, been the subject of historical scrutiny.<sup>1</sup> The work of Patricia Seed, in particular, has demonstrated that far from being homogenous, ‘European’ acts, ritual acts of possession – cross planting, speeches, ceremonial processions, *Te Deums*, etc. – varied and were diverse in meanings and intents.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, in certain circumstances, Indigenous ‘participation’ in these rituals was considered necessary in order to validate them. For instance, the French explorer Jacques Cartier was careful to stipulate that when he planted a cross on Canadian territory in 1534, he had assured the ‘consent’ – however dubious – of the ‘Stadaconans’ (that is, the Saint Lawrence Iroquoians living in the village of

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, L.C. Green and Olive P. Dickason, *The Law of Nations and the New World* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1989), in particular, 7-17; Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe’s Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Tracy Neal Leavelle, “Geographies of Encounter: Religion and Contested Space in Colonial North America,” *American Quarterly* 56, no.4 (2004), 913-43; Michael Witgen, “The Rituals of Possession: Native Identity and the Invention of Empire in Seventeenth-Century Western North America,” *Ethnohistory* 54, no.4 (2007), 639-68. More recent works have employed the term, ‘dispossession’, which implies not only taking possession of land, but the act of taking ‘ownership’ away from its current inhabitants. See, for instance, Allan Greer, “Dispossession in a Commercial Idiom: From Indian Deeds to Land Cession Treaties,” in *Contested Spaces of Early America*, ed. Juliana Barr and Edward Countryman (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 69-92.

<sup>2</sup> Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession*, 3.



Stadacona).<sup>3</sup> Ceremonial possessions, then, were moments of encounter. But crucial to these encounters was landscape, which was ‘ritually altered’ by the ceremonies.<sup>4</sup>

A planted cross did not, however, guarantee the establishment – or the endurance – of the Catholic faith. Writing from Tadoussac in 1730, Jesuit missionary Father Pierre Laure bemoaned the fact that little remained of the former mission, save the ruined foundations of a stone house and church.<sup>5</sup> ‘Ah!’ he exclaimed in his relation to the mission superior, ‘why am I not in a position to erect again that cross at Tadoussac on its former ruins, to give it fresh brilliancy, and make it shine in a new sanctuary?’<sup>6</sup> In order to ensure the establishment and endurance of Catholicism in New France, constant ritual *re*-assertion was necessary. In ‘urban’ settlements, such as Québec, the faith was established (or *re*-established, since the settlement was home to predominantly French *habitants*) though the erection of churches and the implementation of regular holy rites and rituals, such as masses and processions, which marked out the town’s ‘sacred landscape’.<sup>7</sup> Recent work on rites in early Canada have tended to focus on the period following 1659, when François de Laval, Bishop of Petraea, arrived in the colony, replacing the Jesuit superior as the most senior church official in the colony.<sup>8</sup> Ollivier Hubert,

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<sup>3</sup> According to the account, Cartier ‘tricked’ the Stadaconans by telling them that the cross was merely a ‘beacon’ which would guide the French back in the future. See Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession*, 56-57. On the issue of Indigenous ‘consent’ see especially, 56-63. On the Saint Lawrence Iroquoians see, Conrad E. Heidenreich, “History of the Saint Lawrence-Great Lakes Area to A.D. 1650,” in *The Archaeology of Southern Ontario to A.D. 1650: Occasional Publications of the London Chapter, Ontario Archaeological Society*, no. 5 (1990), ed. Chris Ellis and Neal Ferris (London: Ontario Archeological Society, 1990): 475-92.

<sup>4</sup> This useful phrase is borrowed from Tracy Neal Leavelle. See Leavelle, “Geographies of Encounter,” 914.

<sup>5</sup> *JR*, 68: 79.

<sup>6</sup> *JR*, 68: 83.

<sup>7</sup> For an examination of the ways in which the sacred was ‘mapped’ onto an early modern city see, Simon Ditchfield, “Reading Rome as a Sacred Landscape, c.1586-1635,” in *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 167-92.

<sup>8</sup> On Laval’s appointment, see Luca Codignola, “The Holy See and the Conversion of the Indians in French and British North America, 1486-1760,” in *America in European Consciousness, 1493-1750*, ed. Karen Ordahl

for instance, has examined the role of ecclesiastical rites in the creation of the Canadian church as a social institution and in the regulation of behaviour of the ‘body social’ (*corps social*) from the late-seventeenth century onwards.<sup>9</sup> But little attention has been paid to the period following the Jesuits’ arrival at Quebec in 1632. Furthermore, while works such as Marie-Aimée Cliche’s *Les pratiques de dévotion en Nouvelle-France*, have examined ‘popular’ devotional practices (devotion to the cult of saints, alms giving, confraternity membership, etc.) there has been little detailed discussion of the use of rites and rituals in the creation of sacred space.<sup>10</sup> Despite the historiographical focus on *initial* possessions, then, scant attention had been paid to what I will refer to as ritual *re*-possessions.

Missionaries faced further ‘ritual’ challenges when it came to the conversion of Indigenous people. Since many of the peoples they sought to convert were migratory hunter-gathers, such as the Algonquian nations who lived on the northern shores of the Saint Lawrence, they often found themselves performing religious rites ‘on the move’. Some ‘permanent’ mission settlements were established, notably the village of Sillery in 1637, but even then, the mission’s Indigenous inhabitants often absented themselves during the hunting season.<sup>11</sup> This was not an obstacle unique to the Jesuits of New France. As Dot Tuer argues, even the strictly regulated,

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Kupperman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 209-11. Prior to Laval’s appointment as Bishop of Petraea *in partibus infidelum* (amongst the infidels) in 1659, the archbishop of Rouen, as the Ordinary of the port of Dieppe, had jurisdiction over ecclesiastical affairs in New France. See Guy-Marie Oury, *Les Ursulines de Québec, 1639-1953* (Sillery: Septentrion, 1999), 40.

<sup>9</sup> Ollivier Hubert, *Sur la terre comme au ciel: La gestion des rites par l’Église catholique du Québec (fin XVIIe – mi-XIXe siècle)* (Sainte-Foy, QC: Presses de l’Université Laval, 2000), 1.

<sup>10</sup> Marie-Aimée Cliche, *Les pratiques de dévotion en Nouvelle-France: Comportements populaires et encadrement ecclésial dans le gouvernement de Québec* (Québec: Presses de l’Université Laval, 1988).

<sup>11</sup> On Sillery see, James P. Ronda, “The Sillery Experiment: A Jesuit-Indian Village in New France, 1637-1663,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 3, no.1 (1979): 1-18; Kenneth M. Morrison, “Montagnais Missionization in Early New France: The Syncretic Imperative,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 10, no.3 (1986): 1-23; Marc Jetten, *Enclaves amérindiennes: les “réductions” du Canada, 1637-1701* (Sillery: Septentrion, 1994).

coercive regimes of the Paraguayan *reducciones* ('reductions') show 'fluidity and movement back and forth between the mission and the forest'.<sup>12</sup> The ratio of women to men living in these missions was five to one in the early-eighteenth century. Tuer argues that although some fatalities (many of the women are listed as 'widows') were caused by attacks by hostile Guaycurú and Chaco groups, it is likely that many of the men chose to remain in the forest, rather than to live in the 'reductions'.<sup>13</sup> In New France, Indigenous people were referred to as '*sauvages*' by French missionaries and *habitants*, and were thus associated with the 'wild' ('*sauvage*') environment of the forest (the word '*sauvage*' is etymologically related to the Latin '*silva*', meaning forest). In European conceptions, Indigenous people were thus 'of the forest', as opposed to the 'built', urban environment, which connoted civilisation ('*cit *' was related to the Latin, '*civis*').<sup>14</sup> As we saw in Chapter 2, Father Claude Dablon described the actions of Otreouati, who, having stripped Le Maistre of his cassock, 'paraded pompously in sight of Montreal' before retreating 'into the woods'.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Dot Tuer, "Old Bones and Beautiful Words: The Spiritual Contestation between Shaman and Jesuit in the Guaran  Missions," in *Colonial Saints: Discovering the Holy in the Americas, 1500-1800*, ed. Allan Greer and Jodi Bilinkoff (New York: Routledge, 2003), 83. Since the Wendats were sedentary, Jesuits hoped that they would be able to establish reductions in Canada. However, unlike the Guaran  – who had few options outside the reductions (where they risked subjugation and forced labour under the Spanish system of *encomienda* and capture by slave traders from Brazil) – the Indigenous peoples of eastern North America had fewer 'incentives' to remain in the missions. See Jetten, *Enclaves am rindiennes*, 15; Allan Greer, "Towards a Comparative Study of Jesuit Missions and Indigenous Peoples in Seventeenth-Century Canada and Paraguay," in *Native Christians: Modes and Effects of Christianity among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas*, ed. Aparecida Vila a and Robin M. Wright (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 23, 30. On the Guaran  reductions, see also, Nicholas P. Cushner, *Why Have You Come Here? The Jesuits and the First Evangelization of North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), especially Chapter 6, "The Guaran ," 101-27.

<sup>13</sup> Tuer, "Old Bones and Beautiful Words," 83-4.

<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of this point in relation to the Quebec Ursulines and their attitudes toward Indigenous seminarians, see Oury, *Les Ursulines de Qu bec*, 58.

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 2 of this thesis, 130.

A binary opposition between ‘*sauvage*’ Indigenous people and ‘civilised’ French *habitants*, between forest and town, was therefore implied in colonial writings. But putting aside the obvious problems of colonial stereotypes, there is a further issue that needs to be examined here. People did not – and do not – exist unmoving in spaces (i.e. forest, urban environment, etc.), but move between and *through* them, creating connections, forging relationships, and establishing and embellishing (or challenging) practices.<sup>16</sup> As one historian has recently argued in relation to Algonquian ‘visitors’ in early modern London (England), ‘urban’ and ‘Indigenous’ histories – though often discussed in binary opposition – were ‘enmeshed’.<sup>17</sup> This was reflected in the ways in which people described both ‘urban’ and non-urban environments. Inuit visitors in eighteenth-century London, for instance, described the city according to their own ‘cultural logics’; St Paul’s Cathedral was compared with Ikkigockeatuie, a mountainous headland in their homeland.<sup>18</sup> Conversely, European explorers described icebergs, using comparisons with ‘urban’ architecture, notably cathedrals.<sup>19</sup> It should, however, be noted that with a population of around 200,000 in 1600, London was a very different urban environment from Quebec. By 1666 (the end of the period discussed in this chapter), the latter had a population of around only 555.<sup>20</sup> Whilst the number of inhabitants in Quebec was relatively small – many villages in France

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<sup>16</sup> Tim Ingold argues for the primacy of movement in habitation of landscapes; ‘wayfaring’, he argues, ‘is the fundamental mode by which living beings inhabit the earth.’ See Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (London: Routledge, 2011), 12.

<sup>17</sup> Coll Thrush, “‘Meere Strangers’: Indigenous and Urban Performances in Algonquian London,” in *Urban Identity and the Atlantic World*, ed. Elizabeth Fay and Leonard von Morzé (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 201.

<sup>18</sup> Coll Thrush, “The Iceberg and the Cathedral: Encounter, Entanglement, and Isuma in Inuit London,” *Journal of British Studies* 53, no.1 (2014), 59.

<sup>19</sup> Thrush, “The Iceberg and the Cathedral,” 72-73. As we shall see later in this chapter, Jesuit missionary Father Pierre Biard compared an iceberg to Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris. See *JR*, 5: 17.

<sup>20</sup> Mark S.R. Jenner and Paul Griffiths, “Introduction,” in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London, c.1500-1750*, ed. Paul Griffiths and Mark S.R. Jenner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 2; Marcel Trudel, *La population du Canada en 1666: Recensement reconstitué* (Sillery: Septentrion, 1995), 49.

would have had populations of a similar size – it was ‘urban’ in the sense that it was the seat of French government and the colony’s sole port.<sup>21</sup>

This chapter will present two comparative case studies that demonstrate the ways in which landscapes could be ‘ritually altered’. Reciprocally – as we saw in Chapter 1 – environment (such as the stormy ‘Ocean Sea’) could alter the shape of religious rites, such as mass. Time is also a factor that needs to be taken into account. ‘Sacred’ time could be established through ritual. For instance, the liturgical calendar was marked by feasts and processions.<sup>22</sup> But time could also shape spaces, which, through habitual sacred use – through processions, for instance – could acquire particular meanings and significance.<sup>23</sup>

The first case study will examine the ‘temporary’ spiritual possessions made by Jesuits travelling with Indigenous – in particular, Algonquian – groups. Through an examination of portable ‘chapels’, I will argue that liturgical objects could create temporary sacred possessions of landscape. Reciprocally, these practices could be disrupted or shaped by environmental factors, such as the weather. The ‘built’ environment, in this case, temporary shelters built for hunting trips or other journeys, provided a place for worship. But, as we shall see, these

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<sup>21</sup> Whilst Quebec was the port at which foreign goods arrived in the colony, Montreal was the centre for trade with the Indigenous nations of the *pays d’en haut*. See Gilles Havard, *The Great Peace of Montreal of 1701: French-Native Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Phyllis Aronoff and Scott Howard (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 4-5. For a discussion of the complexities of ‘urban identities’ in Atlantic history, see Leonard von Morzé, “Introduction,” in *Urban Identity and the Atlantic World*, ed. Elizabeth Fay and Leonard von Morzé (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 1-21.

<sup>22</sup> On the liturgical calendar, see Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), especially Chapter 2, “The ritual calendar,” 62-88.

<sup>23</sup> For an examination of ‘time’ and ‘landscape’ as ‘an enduring record – and testimony to – the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt in it’, see Tim Ingold, “The Temporality of the Landscape,” *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2 (1993), 152-74.

structures were also rhetorically important; missionaries and converts alike invoked the built environment to explain points of faith.

Building on this analysis, the second section of this chapter will examine the slow build up and establishment of sacred places in the settlement of Quebec. Like the temporary sacred possessions made by itinerant missionaries, I will argue, the ‘urban’ landscape could also be ‘ritually altered’ through religious practices, such as processions. This ‘ritual alteration’ was also ‘temporary’, in the sense that once a procession had ended, urban life continued as normal. But the regularity of these processions, which often followed the same routes, habitually visiting the same sacred sites (notably the settlement’s religious institutions), created a civic religious community. The ‘habit of feeling’, as David Morgan asserts, is ‘practiced over and over’.<sup>24</sup>

### **Moving missionaries, moving chapels**

Missionaries moving through landscapes sought to make them holy through the creation of temporary sacred spaces. While historian Tracy Neal Leavelle has focused on the ‘ritual alteration’ of the landscape by (frequently contested) acts, such as cross planting, this section will emphasise the temporary nature of sacred possessions, notably the celebration of mass.<sup>25</sup> Missionaries, I will argue, did not intend these rites to be permanent sacred ‘possessions’, but rather temporary ones, like the sowing of seeds (a frequent missionary metaphor), which would through time and – most importantly, *repetition* – flower into faith.

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<sup>24</sup> David Morgan, “Introduction: The Matter of Belief,” in *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 4.

<sup>25</sup> See Leavelle, “Geographies of Encounter,” 914.

Missionaries created these temporary possessions through the rite of mass and the use of portable devotional objects. As we saw in the previous chapter, Jesuit missionaries, who travelled long distances to what they often described as ‘remote’ Indigenous villages, carried few possessions, usually only what they were able to physically carry on their persons. The altars they erected were thus often makeshift and impermanent affairs. In order to perform holy rites (such as mass) missionaries carried portable chapels (*‘chapelles’*) or ‘mass kits’ that were made up of various devotional objects and garments (chalices, chasubles, albs, candles, etc.).

The use of portable chapels allowed a certain flexibility; mass could, in theory, be performed anywhere. Chapels appear frequently in missionary accounts. Le Jeune’s *Relation* of 1638 details the journey of Father Antoine Daniel to teach a group of Algonquins (who had apparently asked to be instructed in the faith), and contains a list of belongings carried by the missionary.<sup>26</sup> Since the account describes the near-drowning of Armand (Armand Jean Andehoua), one of two Wendat seminarians who had been living with the Jesuits at Quebec, these objects appear only incidentally.<sup>27</sup> But they nonetheless perform an important rhetorical function in the account. According to Le Jeune’s *Relation*, Armand got into difficulty when, ‘the surging of the water dashed against his canoe and overturned it with all that was in it’. His travelling companion was a (non-Christian) Algonquin man. This man, the missionary recounted, ‘had nothing but his own

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<sup>26</sup> It unclear to which nation Le Jeune is referring when he uses the word ‘Algonquin’, since it was used in early-seventeenth-century French accounts to describe the people living in the Ottawa Valley and also several neighbouring groups. See Timothy G. Pearson, *Becoming Holy in Early Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2014), 64.

<sup>27</sup> Though the parish registers relating to Andehoua’s baptism were lost in the 1640 fire that destroyed the parish church at Quebec, his baptism is recorded in the 1638 *Relation*. His baptismal name, Armand Jean, was chosen by Charles de Montmagny in honour of Armand Jean du Plessis de Richelieu (Cardinal Richelieu). Montmagny apparently ‘deem[ed] it appropriate that a Prince of the Church, who favo[u]rs this rising Church, should gather the fruits thereof.’ See, *JR*, 14: 161. For a short biography of Armand Jean Andehoua see, *MNF*, 3: 831.

body in the canoe’, and ‘thought only of saving himself’, swimming safely to shore when the canoe was overturned. But Armand, Le Jeune continued,

wishing to save a Chapel that the Father was carrying in order to say the holy Mass, and a quantity of porcelain and other baggage, enclosed in a chest, went down so far that he was lost to sight. Behold the chest, the chalice, the alb, and the chasuble, and all his outfit engulfed on the one hand, and he on the other.<sup>28</sup>

Whilst the aim of this account was to emphasise the piety of a newly converted Wendat man, it nonetheless gives the historian important insights regarding both the devotional objects carried by missionaries and their significance. Chasuble, chalice, and alb are all mentioned, forming a ‘Chapel’ (*Chapelle*) or oratory.<sup>29</sup> This term evoked not only a collection of objects, but a physical structure where one went to worship. This second, broader meaning allowed physical structures to be imagined onto – and incorporated *into* – diverse environments. Whilst Armand’s fellow traveler apparently swam to shore, ‘wishing only to save himself’, Armand’s devotion almost cost him life. ‘This poor young Christian,’ Le Jeune wrote,

having struggled with death until his hands were all skinned and his body all bruised, found himself at the bottom of the river, upon a rock; he made of it a more favo[u]rable Chapel than the one he had just lost.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *JR*, 14: 245-47.

<sup>29</sup> In missionary accounts the term ‘*chapelle*’ was favoured over ‘*oratoire*’.

<sup>30</sup> *JR*, 14: 247.



In this account, the objects of the missionary's 'chapel' were not necessary for the formation of an 'imagined' space of devotion.<sup>31</sup> As the *Relation* clarified, 'I mean to say that he addressed himself to God from the bottom of the abyss.' The man committed himself to God: 'let me die, or cause me to live,' he apparently uttered – 'not from his mouth, which he kept tightly closed, but from his heart' – 'you are my God.' No sooner had he expressed these 'affectionate sentiments' than 'his body felt itself lifted to the surface' (crucially, he was not in charge of his body, but it miraculously 'felt itself lifted' [*'son corps se vit esleué'*]). In one further display of piety following his deliverance, the man was 'embarrassed' to have lost the missionary's ecclesiastical ornaments.<sup>32</sup> This account is interesting, since it frames Armand's piety in similar terms to those of his missionary 'teachers'.<sup>33</sup> The episode mirrors Le Jeune's account (discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis) of his near-drowning in 1632 ('I had already given my life to our Lord,' the missionary asserted, 'without asking him to rescue me from this danger; believing it better to let his will be done, I accepted death cheerfully.')<sup>34</sup> Parallels, too, can be drawn with Marie de l'Incarnation's mysticism ('we see ourselves in the abyss of divine misericord', she wrote before undertaking the ocean crossing to Canada).<sup>35</sup> Indigenous piety was here framed using the same rhetorical strategies as missionary piety. Though Armand's Algonquin companion had swum to shore, thinking 'only of saving himself', Armand's perseverance

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<sup>31</sup> Muriel Clair has recently argued that as a result of a 'sanctuarization' of the individual body and soul in early modern France (which can be attributed, in part, to devout humanism), sacrality was no longer reliant on ecclesiastical structures, a point to which we shall return later in this chapter. See Muriel Clair, "'Seeing These Good Souls Adore God in the Midst of the Woods': The Christianization of Algonquian Nomads in the *Jesuit Relations* of the 1640s," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1, no. 2 (2014), 297.

<sup>32</sup> *JR*, 14: 247.

<sup>33</sup> The central argument of Micah True's recent book is that while Jesuit missionaries were 'masters' and 'teachers' (as educators and priests), they were simultaneously 'students', who learned Indigenous languages and cultural norms from those they sought to convert. See Micah True, *Masters and Students: Jesuit Mission Ethnography in Seventeenth-Century New France* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 6.

<sup>34</sup> See Chapter 2 of this thesis, 89.

<sup>35</sup> See Chapter 1 of this thesis, 39.

elevates him – in the eyes of the missionary – above his pagan companion.<sup>36</sup> There is one key difference here, however. In this account, Father Daniel is positioned as ‘teacher’ and guide (when, in fact, *he* is being guided through the landscape by his travelling companions). When Armand begins to make ‘excuses’ about losing the sacred vessels, the missionary simply answers, “It is enough, my son, it is enough that you are living; do not let us speak of our loss, but let us bless God for rescuing you from death.”<sup>37</sup> Whilst the missionary has to rely on others to guide his journey, he nonetheless acts as a spiritual authority, portraying Armand’s survival as an act of divine providence.

Ignatius of Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises* were regularly performed by missionaries in New France, and their influence is here evident.<sup>38</sup> Intended to be carried out over a prolonged period (they are divided into four ‘weeks’), the *Exercises* are a series of guided meditations, which require the exercitant to imagine him or herself (the Ursulines also performed the *Exercises*) in a variety of places.<sup>39</sup> The most frequently cited meditation is the fifth exercise of the first week, the ‘Meditation on Hell’. ‘Here it will be,’ the *Exercises* state, ‘to see in the imagination the length, breadth, and depth of hell.’<sup>40</sup> The ‘imagined’ chapel, on its incongruous location on the

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<sup>36</sup> Cfr. Timothy Pearson’s analysis of the death of Joseph Onoharé who through ‘performance’ of Christian virtues during his execution had, in the words of Father Paul Ragueneau, ‘died a Christian, and not as a common savage’. See Pearson, *Becoming Holy in Early Canada*, 75,

<sup>37</sup> *JR*, 14: 247.

<sup>38</sup> At the end of April 1648, for instance, Father Jérôme Lalemant performed the *Spiritual Exercises* at Sillery. See *JJ*, 107.

<sup>39</sup> Mutio Vitelleschi, the Jesuit Superior General in Rome, wrote to Marie de l’Incarnation in 1640, granting the Quebec Ursulines permission to carry out the *Exercises*. See Mutio Vitelleschi to Marie de l’Incarnation, Rome, 7 January 1640, *MNF*, 4, Doc. 110, 444.

<sup>40</sup> Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises*, in *Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, ed. George E. Ganss with the collaboration of Parmananda R. Divarkar, Edward J. Malatesta, and Martin E Palmer (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 141.

riverbed, signified to readers of the *Relation* that worship and piety were possible anywhere and even in the most extreme circumstances.

A missionary's chapel could thus create a holy place wherever it was erected (or imagined). In the seventeenth century, the word, 'chapel' ('*chapelle*') had multiple meanings. Antoine Furetière's *Dictionnaire Universel* (1690) listed several definitions. First and foremost, it designated a church that was neither the main parish church, nor the church of a priory. It could also be used to describe the room in a church where mass was said and 'chapels' in the houses of the wealthy were common.<sup>41</sup> Most relevant with regard to this thesis, is the *Dictionnaire's* section on etymology. After listing the opinions of various scholars on the Latin and Greek roots of the word, Furetière noted the following:

Others [believe] it [the word, 'chapel'] derives from *cape & scree* [*cape & chape*], which served to cover the body, as if the chapel was nothing more than a covered place.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire Universel* (1690), s.v. 'chapelle'.

<sup>42</sup> Furetière, *Dictionnaire Universel*, s.v. 'chapelle'. 'D'autres le derivent de *cape & chape*, qui servoit à se couvrir le corps, comme si la chapelle n'estoit autre chose qu'un lieu couvert.'

In New France – as in Furetière’s definition – chapels were often simply covered places, created through the addition of holy objects (‘chapels’).<sup>43</sup> But how did ‘chapels’ function in New France? How did their environment affect their use?<sup>44</sup>

That there was no bishop in New France until 1659 posed practical problems for devotional practices. A partial document in the Jesuit archives in Rome includes a list of questions relating to the authority of missionaries to consecrate holy objects, such as altar stones, chalices, and patens (‘paten’ or ‘patina’, the plate used to hold the consecrated bread).<sup>45</sup> Could a missionary consecrate these items, the document asked, when this was – according to Francisco Suárez’s *De Sacramentis* – the role of a bishop?<sup>46</sup> The answer was in the affirmative, since Paul III’s 1549 bull, *Licet debitum* stated that missionaries could consecrate these objects ‘*in locus remotissimis*’ (‘in the most remote place[s]’).<sup>47</sup> Missionaries were ‘*in partes infidelium*’, that is ‘amongst the infidels’ and were therefore outside the usual boundaries of Catholicism, and without the usual parish structures (in the ‘*forêt sauvage*’, as opposed to the ‘civilised’ towns

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<sup>43</sup> On the sacralisation of spaces through the addition of holy objects in mission settlements see, Clair, “‘Seeing These Good Souls Adore God in the Midst of the Woods,’” 290-91. Clair has written extensively on chapels, in particular on chapel décor. See, for instance, her PhD thesis, “Du décor rêvé au croyant aimé: Une histoire de décors des chapelles de mission jésuite en Nouvelle-France au XVIIe siècle” (PhD diss., Université du Québec à Montréal, 2008). On the importance of relics in the creation of holy places, see Muriel Clair, “Corps et décor: Les reliques dans les chapelles amérindiennes en Nouvelle-France au XVIIe siècle,” in *Reliques modernes: Cultes et usages chrétiens des corps saints de Réformes aux révolutions*, ed. Philippe Boutry, Pierre Antoine Fabre and Dominique Julia (Paris: Éditions de l’École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2009), 2: 785-822.

<sup>44</sup> On the important influence of environmental factors, such as natural light, in the creation of distinctly ‘native’ forms of piety see Muriel Clair, “Entre vision et audition: La lumière dans les mission iroquoises du 17e siècle,” *Anthropologie et Société* 30, no.3 (2006): 71-92.

<sup>45</sup> “Propositions faites au P. Provincial,” (1635), reproduced in *MNF*, 3: 24-27.

<sup>46</sup> “Propositions faites au P. Provincial,” 24-25. Francisco Suárez (1548-1617) was an influential Jesuit theologian, who taught theology at some of the most renowned universities during his forty-four year career. On Suárez and his works, see Bernardo J. Cateñis, “Francisco Suárez,” in *Early Modern Philosophy of Religion*, vol. 3 of *The History of Western Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Graham Oppy and N.N. Trakakis (Durham: Acumen, 2013): 75-87.

<sup>47</sup> “Propositions faites au P. Provincial,” 24-25.

and cities of Europe). Since this was the case, the document concluded, they had the right to consecrate the abovementioned devotional objects. The following question concerned altars: was a missionary permitted to carry an altar (that is, a portable altar stone) in order to say mass on his journey (*‘pour dire la messe en faisant chemin par le pays de la Nouvelle-France’*)? Again, the answer was affirmative. There were, however, some rites which were forbidden, notably the consecration of holy oil, which still required a bishop.<sup>48</sup> This was also true for the consecration of churches, though these could be blessed by missionaries.<sup>49</sup>

In the early years of colonisation, ‘chapels’ (here, objects that were used for the celebration of mass) were rare. As such, the Jesuits at Quebec sometimes loaned these objects to secular priests, who travelled outside of the town to perform mass in others settlements. A record of some of these loans is preserved in the *Journal des Jésuites*, a journal kept by the Jesuit superior at Quebec. The entry for 25 October 1645 records that Charles de Montmagny (the governor) and Gilles Nicolet (a secular priest), had asked to borrow a ‘*chapelle garnie*’ (‘furnished oratory’, or ‘chapel’) for their trip to Isle-aux-Oies, where the governor was cultivating the land.<sup>50</sup> The journal entry reads as follows:

He was given one [‘furnished oratory’] in which there was a Silver chalice, a new chasuble, a very beautiful and large cloth, and a handsome alb, and everything else in keeping; he desired, most of all, that we give him a candle and hosts; in short, nothing was wanting.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> “Propositions faites au P. Provincial,” 25.

<sup>49</sup> “Propositions faites au P. Provincial,” 25.

<sup>50</sup> Charles-Honoré Lavardière and Henri-Raymond Casgrain, eds., *Le journal des Jésuites: publié d’après le manuscrit original conservé aux archives du Séminaire de Québec* (Québec: Léger Brousseau, 1871), 8. For ease, I will quote from the English translation given in Thwaites, *JR*, 27: 87.

<sup>51</sup> *JR*, 27: 87.

On 4 December, a '*Chapelle complete*' ('complete chapel', or oratory) was sent to Beauport, although the reason for this is not recorded.<sup>52</sup> While the chapel loaned to Nicolet contained a chalice made of silver, the chalice included in the 'Beauport chapel' was made of pewter, which was less valuable and more commonly used to make drinking tankards and tableware.<sup>53</sup> On 24 May 1646, the pewter 'beauport Oratory', now in the care of François Chavigny de Berchereau (a friend of the governor), was on its way to Trois Rivières, where Jesuit Bartélemy Vimont was to baptise Chavigny's daughter.<sup>54</sup> A note in the journal for 1645 recorded that this chalice had been broken, but had been repaired and re-consecrated (an act that was permitted – as we saw above – since the missionaries were '*in partes infidelium*').<sup>55</sup> Being in the 'forests', thus afforded the Jesuits certain ritual liberties. Alongside the Jesuits' lending of 'chapels' to secular priests, this evidence suggests a shortage of liturgical vessels, garments, and other objects necessary for the correct performance of sacramental rites. Read in this context of scarcity, the above-mentioned loss of Father Daniel's chapel in a canoe accident was a serious spiritual inconvenience.

Technically speaking, only precious metals, such as gold and silver, were considered appropriate for holding communion bread and wine, since the doctrine of transubstantiation held that this bread and wine became the body and blood of Christ during the mass. In practice, however,

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<sup>52</sup> According to Lucien Campeau, visits from a priest imply that Beauport was becoming an important agglomeration. See *MNF*, 6: 428n48.

<sup>53</sup> *JR*, 27: 107. On the use of pewter for tableware see Dominique Margairaz, "City and Country: Home, Possessions, and Diet, Western Europe, 1600-1800," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, ed. Frank Trentmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 199.

<sup>54</sup> *JR*, 28: 191.

<sup>55</sup> *JR*, 27: 107.

pewter was often used as a cheaper alternative.<sup>56</sup> A bishop's 'chapel' was usually made from silver, as befitted his status. The pieces that remain today of the '*chapelle*' of Jean-Baptiste de la Croix de Chevrières de Saint-Vallier (the second bishop of Quebec) comprise an altar cross and a pair of candleholders, both of which were made by Alexis I Loir, one of Louis XIV's silversmiths.<sup>57</sup> There are no extant remains of François de Laval's 'chapel', but, in an ostentatious act of self-denial, he had his own bowl and goblet melted down in order to make a ciborium for the Illinois mission.<sup>58</sup> In the context of this 'remote' mission, then, where holy objects were rare, the acts which led to their making could themselves be construed as holy.

Just as the making of holy objects could demonstrate devotion, so too could the manner in which they were moved. When Father Gabriel Druillettes went on a 'flying mission' (that is an itinerant mission outside of established mission settlements) to the Abenakis, the objects of his 'chapel' took on new meanings in the context of his voyage. In his 1651-52 *Relation*, Jesuit Father Paul Ragueneau recounted the ways in which Druillettes was 'hono[u]red' by the Abenakis. 'If he were on a journey with them,' Ragueneau wrote, 'the best Canoe was chosen, and he was given the most comfortable seat.' Furthermore, 'if he wished to ply the paddle, they snatched it out of his hands, saying that his occupation was to pray to God.'<sup>59</sup> As we saw in the previous chapter, paddling was something of a rite of passage for missionaries, since it proved their strength and usefulness on journeys. In this case, either the Abenakis were unwilling to be slowed down by an inexperienced paddler or they thought that the Jesuit's skills were better employed elsewhere.

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<sup>56</sup> Donald L. Fennimore, "Religion in America: Metal Objects in Service of the Ritual," *American Art Journal* 10, no.2 (1978), 23.

<sup>57</sup> Joanne Chagnon, "Les chapelles des évêques de Nouvelle-France," in *Les arts en Nouvelle-France*, ed. Laurier Lacroix (Québec: Publications du Québec, 2012), 92-93.

<sup>58</sup> Chagnon, "Les chapelles des évêques de Nouvelle-France," 93.

<sup>59</sup> *JR*, 38: 29.

“Pray for us and we will paddle for you,” the Abenakis apparently told the Father.<sup>60</sup> At portages, the missionary ‘always loaded himself with his Chapel,’ but his companions sometimes, ‘begged him to put it on the sacks or packets which they bore on their shoulders, saying that this little burden for Jesus lightened the weight of their load.’<sup>61</sup> The spiritual importance of these objects was thus recognised and incorporated into the logistics of the journey. The apparent reverence of the Abenaki travellers for these objects does not imply a rejection of their established beliefs, since – as Kenneth Morrison has argued – they did not separate ‘traditional’ and ‘Christian’ spirituality.<sup>62</sup> Read in this context, Druillette’s role on the journey was not necessarily to contribute to the physical tasks, but the spiritual ones.

The meaning of objects could thus shift subtly as they moved – and were moved – through environments. Silvia Spitta has recently argued that object exchange between the ‘Old World’ and the ‘New’ was fundamentally unequal. Whereas American objects arrived as ‘specimens’ in the Old World (often without people or texts to give them context), European objects arrived in the New World with the people who used them, thus providing them with cultural meanings (or at least with the meanings their possessors gave them).<sup>63</sup> Yet Spitta overlooks an important point: missionaries had little control over their environments, either built or ‘natural’. The objects that they carried arrived in distinctly Indigenous settings, which shaped their use and – by extension – meanings. During Druillettes’s journey the missionary would no doubt have said

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<sup>60</sup> *JR*, 38: 29. I have modernised Thwaites’s English translation, in which the word ‘thee’ appears instead of ‘you’.

<sup>61</sup> *JR*, 38: 29.

<sup>62</sup> Kenneth M. Morrison, “The Mythological Sources of Abenaki Catholicism: A Case Study of the Social History of Power,” *Religion* 11, no.3 (1986), 236.

<sup>63</sup> Silvia Spitta, *Misplaced Objects: Migrating Collections and Recollections in Europe and the Americas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 9.



mass using the objects that were so diligently carried by his companions. As Kenneth Morrison has pointed out, Abenaki people equated Druillettes's role with that of a shaman. In 1650, for instance, the missionary had been travelling with a party of Abenakis when the group ran out of provisions. Druillettes offered a mass for their deliverance and, as he concluded the rite, a hunter arrived bearing the news that three moose had been killed.<sup>64</sup> That the objects of Druillettes 'chapel' were considered to be important is thus no surprise. When looking to understand the possible meanings of objects then, environment, as well as an object's mover, must be taken into account.

But how did movement through environment affect these chapels? And how did this movement shape the landscape? In order to answer these questions, let us now examine a journey taken by Jesuit Father Jean de Quen on the eve of Corpus Christi in 1640.

On the eve of the feast, Jean de Quen set out with for Tadoussac with an Innu man named Charles Meiachkawat.<sup>65</sup> The journey was not without difficulty. De Quen described the strong winds which seemed to make 'war' with the travellers. Before night fell, the group stopped to set up camp on some rocks 'where they would have passed the night with no other covering than the sky' had de Quen not 'implored' his companions to find a place where they might build a cabin. They heeded his wishes and a cabin was constructed using sheets of bark and five or six poles. Despite this hastily built shelter, they were 'beaten all night by the wind and the rain'.<sup>66</sup> The next day, the weather did not improve and the missionary passed his time in the 'house'

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<sup>64</sup> For a detailed discussion of this incident, see Kenneth M. Morrison, *The Solidarity of Kin: Ethnohistory, Religious Studies, and the Algonkian-French Religious Encounter* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 91.

<sup>65</sup> *JR*, 21: 81-83. For a short biography of Charles Meiachkaouat see *MNF*, 5: 830.

<sup>66</sup> *JR*, 21: 83-85.

that his companions had constructed. This house, he recounted, was ‘very poor in worldly goods, but richly provided with the blessings of heaven’. He told to his escorts of ‘the honor that was paid on that day (it was the feast of Corpus Christi) to the Son of God, with pomp and magnificence, in the whole of Europe’. The missionary then erected a ‘little Altar’ so that he could say mass. His companions aided him with such affection that he was ‘greatly moved thereby’. When they saw that the floor where the missionary would walk was damp and muddy, they ‘threw a robe on the ground which served [him] as a carpet’. De Quen then stretched an altar cloth across the cabin, ‘to separate the faithful from the unbelievers’. This done, the missionary began the mass, ‘not’, he confides, ‘without astonishment that the God of gods should stoop once more to a place more wretched than the stable of Bethlehem’.<sup>67</sup>

The cabin-chapel described by de Quen was a temporary structure. Shelters such as these were common in New France and are frequently described in the *Relations*.<sup>68</sup> Although de Quen’s shelter was ostensibly a cabin, it became, both literally and figuratively, a chapel; its purpose and function changed. Although buildings in New France changed purpose in numerous ways, this section will focus on transformations from everyday to sacred.<sup>69</sup> Structures which were normally secular could change purpose through the addition of sacred objects (such as de Quen’s altar) and at specific times (on feast days like Corpus Christi – as in de Quen’s account – or

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<sup>67</sup> *JR*, 21: 81-87.

<sup>68</sup> See for example, *JR*, 7: 35; *JR*, 67: 93.

<sup>69</sup> Muriel Clair has highlighted the importance of sacred ‘houses’ in Christian spirituality. Jesuit missionaries, she argues, sought to present chapels as comforting, ‘domestic’ spaces of retreat. The Wendat chapel of Lorette, for instance, was modelled on the *Santa Casa* from Loreto in Italy, the ‘house’ of the Holy Family. “Le lieu culturel”, Clair argues, “se doit d’avoir une fonction domestique.” See Clair, “Une chapelle en guise de maison: Notre-Dame de Lorette en Nouvelle France: Devotions et iconographie,” *Les Cahiers du Centre de Recherches Historiques* 41 (2008), URL: <http://crrh.revues.org/3412>; DOI: 10.4000/crrh.3412, especially the section titled, “Deux fonctions assignées à la chapelle: liturgique et domestique.” The above quotation can be located in the section titled, “La chapelle de Lorette,” paragraph 110.

simply for the saying of mass).<sup>70</sup> Temporality, therefore, played an important role. In their annual *Relations*, Jesuit missionaries noted the precise hours of their devotions, and also the ability of Indigenous Christians to regulate their prayers, despite their lack of ‘European’ technology, such as clocks. Location must also be taken into account. How does the location of the object change its meaning? And how does the journey or journeys affect it?

Here I would like to briefly draw attention to the artist Simon Starling’s *Shedboatshed (Mobile Architecture No 2)*, which was the winner of the Turner Prize in 2005 (see Fig. 5 below).



Fig. 5: Simon Starling, *Shedboatshed (Mobile Architecture No.2)*

Installation view, *Turner Prize 2005* exhibition

© Tate 2005

Source: <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/turner-prize-2005/turner-prize-2005-artists-simon-starling>

Starling began with a wooden shed, which he dismantled. He used the wood from this shed to construct a boat in which he sailed down the Rhine. Upon reaching the Kunstmuseum in Basel,

<sup>70</sup> On the sacralisation of spaces through the addition of holy objects see, Clair, “‘Seeing These Good Souls Adore God in the Midst of the Woods,’” 290-91

he dismantled this boat and (re)built a shed, which was put on display there.<sup>71</sup> I am not suggesting that Starling's process should be too closely compared with de Quen's chapel, but it does provide us with a useful object to 'think with'. *Shedboatshed*'s meaning during construction differed from its meaning when it was on display in the Kunstmuseum (after it had been sailed down the Rhine). New layers of association – and probably sediment from the river – had been added. Before de Quen's trip, the cabin-chapel he described did not yet exist in that form. It existed merely as several 'sheets' of bark and five or six poles; objects which could potentially be used for various purposes, assembled and reassembled many different times and in any number of ways. Each new construction would inevitably have a slightly different meaning, shaped by its environment and the people who frequented it. Strips of birch bark – such as the ones used to construct the cabin-chapel – would have been used for a number of purposes. They were used as mats, rain covers, to make baskets and canoes, and had numerous other functions.<sup>72</sup> Yet during the storm which detained de Quen's party, these strips of bark became a shelter and a sanctuary, at least in the eyes of the missionary. Louis Nicolas's ink drawing of an 'Algonquin birch bark cabin' (*'cabane d'escorce a l'algonquine'*) provides a useful example of how this shelter could have looked (see Fig. 6 below).

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<sup>71</sup> For a short biography of Simon Starling and a discussion of the rationale behind *Shedboatshed*, see the Tate Britain website; "Turner Prize 2005 artists: Simon Starling," <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/turner-prize-2005/turner-prize-2005-artists-simon-starling>.

<sup>72</sup> See, for example, *JR*, 67: 137.



Fig. 6: 'cabane descorse a lalgonchine'. Detail from the *Codex Canadensis*. Source: *The Codex Canadensis and the Writings of Louis Nicolas: The Natural History of the New World/Histoire Naturelle des Indes Occidentales*, ed. by François-Marc Gagnon, trans. by Nancy Senior, and modernised by Réal Ouellet (Tulsa, OK.; Montreal: Gilcrease Museum; McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011), 135.

But why is thinking about the construction/deconstruction/reconstruction of this 'chapel' important? According to Michel de Certeau, the analysis of social phenomena must be accompanied by a study of the use to which individuals and/or groups put them.<sup>73</sup> This will ultimately give us a sense of the potential social meanings of these phenomena. In order to gain

<sup>73</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven F. Rendall (London: University of California Press, 1984), x.

a more nuanced (and, potentially, a more socially and culturally aware) picture we must also, in the words of de Certeau, ‘analyse [their] use by users who are not makers’, those who did not conceive the object.<sup>74</sup> In the case of de Quen’s cabin-chapel, however, users were also makers, (though they did not conceive that the shelter would become a ‘chapel’). De Quen’s companions not only made but conceived the cabin, albeit at his behest. The design was their own, and was a product of Algonquian – as opposed to European – culture.

Unfortunately, however, we do not know what the missionary’s companions thought of the structure. At one point, a robe was thrown on the muddy ground inside the cabin so that the missionary could attend to the altar. De Quen interpreted this as a gesture of piety but it may also have been one of hospitality, or – more likely – to protect against the cold. De Quen’s companions had not initially intended to build a shelter; it was the missionary who had ‘urged’ them to do this. Yet after hearing mass inside the cabin (which by this point had miraculously transformed into a chapel), the Christians of the group, in de Quen’s words, ‘wished to confess and hear communion’. Even those who were not Christians, he wrote, ‘maintained a profound silence during this divine Sacrifice, and they also had a great desire to be Christians’.<sup>75</sup> Perhaps the non-Christians were awed by ceremony, as the missionary suggests. But there could be other explanations for their apparent reverence. They could simply have been curious to see this European perform a strange ritual, the significance of which would have been unclear. While the cultural implications of the divine office would have been readily understood by both Catholics and Huguenots in France, this context was absent in Canada.<sup>76</sup> I am not suggesting

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<sup>74</sup> De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, xi.

<sup>75</sup> *JR*, 21: 85.

<sup>76</sup> On contested sacred boundaries in France, see Keith P. Luria, *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Conflict in Early-Modern France* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 52.

that there were not similarities; Christianity may have been new to the Indigenous peoples of Canada but ‘religion’ was not. Perhaps the missionaries’ companions remained silent because they respected the beliefs and spiritual ceremonies of their new acquaintance. Indeed, it was considered to be a great insult to interrupt a person who was addressing a group.<sup>77</sup> There was, therefore, some cultural overlap, and this provided the Catholic rite with a certain amount of weight. It did not, however, mean that it was ‘understood’.

But the ‘built’ environment played an important role in the shaping of Indigenous Catholicism, since it shaped the ways in which converts conceived – and explained – Catholic beliefs. In 1642, one of the two Wendat seminarians living with the Quebec Jesuits apparently described his conception of terrestrial life versus the ‘eternal’ life of Heaven. The *Relation* of that year included the speech as recorded by the missionaries:

“We are here as in a temporary Cabin [*vne Cabane de passage*]; we are hastening towards death. We shall take nothing with us; these good things, for which we work so hard, escape from our hands, and we are promised everlasting gifts; we would be great fools to refuse them. The food that you give us,” said they, “is consumed; our clothing wears out; our head-dresses fade, and lose their lustre and their beauty. Everything passes away, everything changes. The happiness of Heaven will never change, you say...”<sup>78</sup>

The principal metaphor employed here – that of life as a ‘temporary cabin’ – provides a clear example of the built environment shaping conceptions and, ultimately, beliefs. So too can we see the shaping of daily practices – or at least the contemplation thereof – using the framework

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<sup>77</sup> James Axtell, “The Power of Print in the Eastern Woodlands,” *WMQ* 44, no.2 (1987), 304.

<sup>78</sup> *JR*, 22: 147.

of belief. Food is eaten, clothing becomes worn and faded. All these processes could be rationalised through doctrine: terrestrial life was fleeting, celestial life was eternal. Actions and contemplation combined could prompt belief. David Morgan's theory of the 'slow sedimentary practice of belief' is useful here. 'Belief', Morgan argues, is built up over a lifetime through habitual actions.<sup>79</sup> Here, divine contemplation is facilitated through everyday practices. It is impossible to know how far the man's 'reported' speech resembled the words actually spoken. But even if this account has been embellished by its Jesuit author, it nonetheless demonstrates that missionaries were thinking about – and explaining – points of theology using the familiar: the environment of New France.

Missionaries were well aware of the importance of rhetoric in Indigenous cultures. 'There is no place in the world', wrote Father Paul Le Jeune, 'where Rhetoric is more powerful than in Canada'. Still, he argued, 'it [rhetoric] has no other garment than that with which nature has given it [*n'a point d'autre habit que celui que la nature luy a baillé*];' he continued, 'it is completely naked and wholly simple [*toute nuë & toute simple*], and yet it controls all these tribes...'<sup>80</sup> Le Jeune's use of the metaphor of clothing here again demonstrates the perceived connection between bodies and landscapes; Canada's 'rude' environment apparently shaped the 'simple' clothing (and ideas) of its Indigenous peoples. Indeed, the missionary's statement belies the complexity of rhetorical strategies used by the people of Indigenous nations, and which have been the subject of detailed analysis by historians.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Morgan, "Introduction," 4-5.

<sup>80</sup> *JR*, 5: 195.

<sup>81</sup> For a discussion of the utility of analysing Indigenous speeches in historical research, see Havard, *The Great Peace of Montreal of 1701*, 10-11.



As missionaries became more familiar with the Indigenous cultures of North America they began to employ these rhetorical strategies for their own purposes. One example of this approach is *De Religione*, a document attributed to Belgian Jesuit Father Philippe Pierson that was written with the intention of being used to convert the people of the Haudenosaunee.<sup>82</sup> The work used a number of metaphors relating to both the ‘natural’ and ‘built’ environment in order to illustrate theological points. For instance, the example Pierson gave to describe the Christian concept of spirit used the metaphor of a house with a closed door:

We humans have thick bodies. Frequently we are stopped  
when we are anxious to go, because a place is closed to us.  
Sometimes we wish, “Let me go there,” and we will wish, “Let  
us past before it becomes too narrow for us.  
Would it be possible to enter a house when still the door  
is closed?  
Would you not run into something?  
But a spirit does not run into anything. Nothing is too narrow  
for it and nothing stops it.”<sup>83</sup>

Like the ‘temporary cabin’ metaphor above, Pierson’s analogy for the concept of the spirit relied on listeners’ experiences of the world around them. As we shall see in the following chapter, the lived world often shaped the ‘imaginations’ of Indigenous people and Jesuits alike. Missionaries regarded the importance of rhetoric amongst those they sought to convert as a sign of great potential. ‘I think it is Cicero’, Le Jeune mused, ‘who says that all nations were once vagabond and that eloquence has brought them together; that it has built villages and cities.’<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> On the authorship of *De Religione*, see John L. Steckley, ed. and trans., *De Religione: Telling the Seventeenth-Century Jesuit Story in Huron to the Iroquois* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 3-6.

<sup>83</sup> Steckley, ed., *De Religione*, 55. Since ‘Haudenosaunee’ can be roughly translated as ‘people of the longhouse’ this metaphor is particular apt. On the term ‘Haudenosaunee’ see, Dean Snow, *The Iroquois* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 60.

<sup>84</sup> *JR*, 5: 195.

Here, the missionary equated ‘building’ and ‘civilisation’. ‘If the voice of men has so much power,’ Le Jeune asked rhetorically of his readers, ‘will the voice of the spirit of God be powerless?’<sup>85</sup>

### **Sowing seeds?**

Unlike a planted cross, these temporary chapels would have left little trace on the landscape. In missionary accounts, the ephemeral nature of these places is what renders them so holy. In 1651, for instance, Father Jacques Buteux described the journey he undertook to the Atikamegw mission.<sup>86</sup> Like de Quen, he recounted the hardships he faced, both in terms of the unforgiving weather, and the danger of attack from hostile Haudenosaunee warriors. After four day’s travel, he reached his destination and was truly amazed by what he saw. ‘[W]e were taken to a chapel made of the bark of certain very odoriferous pine-trees’ the missionary recounted. This chapel had been ‘built by the hands of these good Christians, wherein no European had ever set foot’.<sup>87</sup> Smell is the first thing de Quen mentions about the chapel, indicating not only that it was very strong but that it would have been associated with the ritual practices therein. In this situation too, it is clear that a number of sensory stimuli were in operation.<sup>88</sup> Perhaps new Christians came to associate their faith with this very specific pine odour? Or perhaps walking through a pine forest could trigger religious sentiments; smell being a well-known memory stimulus. Furthermore, it is also significant that the chapel was ‘built by the hands’ of the converts. This direct haptic contact implies the builders’ close physical relationship to the building. Indeed,

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<sup>85</sup> *JR*, 5: 195

<sup>86</sup> *JR*, 37: 19-67.

<sup>87</sup> *JR*, 37: 55.

<sup>88</sup> Muriel Clair, “Entre vision et audition,” 73.

that no European had ever set foot in this chapel suggests no immediate European involvement in its construction. ‘God had done, without us,’ Buteux mused, ‘what I could not have hoped to do myself after long instructions.’<sup>89</sup> Here, the missionary not only acknowledges God’s benevolence but also his own worldly insignificance.

Some of the most interesting and creative acts of piety are those carried out by Indigenous Christians far from chapels or mission settlements (and thus far from the prying eyes of Jesuit missionaries). Distance, then, provided a certain amount of religious freedom.<sup>90</sup> Although many missionaries lamented their inability to spend substantial periods of time with Indigenous groups, Father Gabriel Druillettes wrote that the Abenaki had ‘preserved and *increased*’ their faith for three or four years, despite the fact that they ‘had no master or Teacher to cultivate that first germ and seed which he had sown in their hearts in passing, so to speak, and very hastily.’<sup>91</sup> Haste is a concept which appears throughout the *Relations*. Sudden conversions or demands for baptism are viewed with suspicion; the motives for these are doubted. Yet here, haste is not viewed as wholly negative. Missionaries had ‘sown’ the seeds of faith, and the Abenaki converts had ‘preserved and increased’ it.

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<sup>89</sup> *JR*, 37: 55.

<sup>90</sup> In a recent article, Muriel Clair argues that Algonquian individuals’ ‘liberty’ to leave and return to mission settlements was counteracted by a Jesuit insistence on continuity of practice. Although an individual might travel, she argues, ‘they carried departed places within themselves during their travels.’ See Clair, “‘Seeing These Good Souls Adore God in the Midst of the Woods’: The Christianization of Algonquian Nomads in the *Jesuit Relations* of the 1640s,” *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1, no. 2 (2014), 298-300.

<sup>91</sup> *JR*, 38: 17.

Chapels, however, were not necessary for worship. In his *Relation* of 1651, Father Paul Ragueneau describes the actions of Christians from Tadoussac when they find themselves far from a chapel on days which are set aside for holy reflection:

The time that they give on Sundays and holy days to the hearing of holy Mass, when they are near their Chapel, they employ piously in the woods: they place themselves in the same posture, feigning to themselves that they are present at the Sacrifice; and they recite the prayer that they are made to say at the beginning and at the end of Mass and during the elevation of the sacred Host, offering themselves in holocaust to the Father eternal, together with his Son.<sup>92</sup>

These ‘imaginary’ chapels are portrayed in a wholly positive light. This passage is again reminiscent of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Scholar Muriel Clair has argued that, ‘nomadism was no longer an obstacle to the Catholic religion,’ since, as a result of devout humanism, it was transformed into ‘an emanation of interiority, a “sanctuarization” of the individual body and soul,’ that was ‘liberated from an ancient model of sacrality which was consubstantial with the architecture and ecclesial structures of the Middle Ages’.<sup>93</sup> Whilst it is clear that interior piety was a feature of post-Tridentine piety, medieval religious practices were by no means tied to church buildings. In 1281, for instance, the Council of Lambeth ordained that:

At the elevation of the body of our Lord, the bells should be struck on one side, so that the people, who do not have time to concern themselves with the celebration of masses every day whenever they are in the fields or houses, genuflect.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> *JR*, 37: 193.

<sup>93</sup> Clair, “‘Seeing These Good Souls Adore God’,” 297.

<sup>94</sup> Quoted in John H. Arnold and Caroline Goodson, “Resounding Community: The History and Meaning of Medieval Bells,” *Viator* 43, no.1 (2012), 122.

Similar injunctions can be seen across Europe and demonstrate a desire to incorporate the laity into religious ritual without damaging their economic output.<sup>95</sup> Whilst numerous examples of this ‘imagined’ devotion are given in the *Relations*, this form of ‘worship’ was by no means novel in the early modern period, nor unique to converts in New France.

The quiet, ‘remote’ nature of woodland areas was especially suited to this type of reflection. According to Ragueneau, it was also well-suited to being heard by God. ‘The Spirit of God’, the missionary wrote, ‘is everywhere holy and everywhere adorable, but it is not listened to everywhere equally’. ‘The stillness of the woods’, he continued, ‘seems more adapted for the reception of its influence than the great noise of the Louvres and Palaces’.<sup>96</sup> Here, the missionary adapts a well-known colonial trope. European observers often compared the environment of North America to the urban centres of Europe.<sup>97</sup> Descriptions of New France, for example, frequently made reference to well-known Parisian landmarks. Jesuit missionary Pierre Biard famously compared an iceberg to the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. ‘In some places’, the missionary recounted of his voyage to New France:

there appeared lofty pieces of floating and wavering ice...as big and broad as if several castles were joined together, or, as you might say, as if the Church of notre Dame de Paris, with part of its Island, houses, and palaces should go floating out on the water.’<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> For additional examples, see Arnold and Goodson, “Resounding Community,” 122-23.

<sup>96</sup> *JR*, 37: 191-93.

<sup>97</sup> Thrush, ““Meere Strangers’,” 199-200.

<sup>98</sup> *JR*, 3: 181.

This was an oft-repeated theme in the *Relations*. Le Jeune's *Relation* of 1632, for instance, described two icebergs 'of enormous size'; 'as the sunlight fell upon them' he asserted, 'you would have said they were Churches, or rather, mountains of crystal.'<sup>99</sup> Biard's evocation of Notre Dame de Paris (and part of the island on which it was built) would have served – for those readers who were familiar with France's capital – as a useful indication of its vast size. The juxtaposition of 'natural' and 'built' phenomena (icebergs and churches) was a cultural 'translation' that allowed Europeans to make sense of the unfamiliar.<sup>100</sup> Ragueneau's account highlights the contrast between the material and 'urban' wealth of 'great', European palaces and the relative poverty (at least in terms of European wares) in the forests of New France.

For contemporaries in Old France, these new forms of piety would have been difficult to understand. Jesuit missionaries themselves recognised that in order to understand the nature of this new form of worship, one really had to experience it. '[O]ne must be there in person', mused Father Lalemant, 'to conceive the satisfaction there is in seeing Jesus Christ hold sway, for the first time, over an Altar bedecked with bark and subject to the slightest accidents of nature'.<sup>101</sup> Not only does this 'poor', bark altar symbolise the power of faith despite poverty, but the 'accidents of nature' it must overcome render Indigenous piety all the more precious and miraculous. 'What is a common thing to you in Old France', wrote Father Le Jeune to his superior in 1636, 'rejoices us to the bottom of our hearts in our little Churches built of foreign

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<sup>99</sup> *JR*, 5: 17.

<sup>100</sup> Catharine Randall, "Cathedrals of Ice: Translating the Jesuit Vocabulary of Conversion," *International Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue internationale d'études canadiennes* 23 (2001), 17-18.

<sup>101</sup> *JR*, 46: 285.

wood'.<sup>102</sup> In recognising the likelihood of 'accidents of nature', the missionary not only evoked the fragility and ephemerality of these structures, but the effect that the environment could have on them. This fragility, he implied, made them all the more miraculous.

### **Religious Processions in Quebec**

The Corpus Christi mass described by de Quen was remarkable – in the missionary's eyes – because of its exceptionality. The birch bark structure in which it took place was impermanent and subject to destruction by the elements. As argued above, the missionary did not intend to establish a permanent sacred space in the forest. The celebration of Corpus Christi in Quebec, however, was aimed at establishing sacred spaces in the settlement. Missionaries 'ritually altered' the urban landscape through the repetition of mass and frequent processions. While processions were temporary, their frequent and regular repetition – often via the same processional route – created a civic religious community. Although Jesuit missionaries were responsible for converting the Indigenous people of New France, they also had a responsibility to ensure that the colony's French settlers maintained their devotions, despite the lack of a clear parish structure.

### **Corpus Christi**

In 1646, Father Jérôme Lalemant, superior of the New France mission, recorded, in the journal he kept of the Society's activities, the first detailed account of the feast of Corpus Christi (*Fête-*

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<sup>102</sup> *JR*, 9: 147.

*Dieu*) since the Jesuits' return to New France in 1632.<sup>103</sup> '[T]he Blessed Sacrament', he wrote, 'was exposed on the Day of the feast, and on Sunday till after vespers; and there was a benediction every day in the octave.'<sup>104</sup> The feast was accompanied by an elaborate procession involving priests, French laypeople and Indigenous converts. Lalement described the event in great detail, from the order of the procession and the clothes and costumes of its participants to the music (singing) and sounds (bells, cannon-fire, and musket shots) created *en route* and at the various temporary altars at which the procession paused. Processions on Corpus Christi or during other feasts, such as that of the Assumption or of Saint Mark, followed different routes, depending on numerous factors, such as the weather or type of celebration, but they usually toured the principal sites of the settlement (both sacred and secular): the parish church (or its equivalent), the Ursuline convent, the *Hôtel-Dieu* (hospital), and the fort. Further stops could also be made at the houses of powerful or influential settlers. These pauses – to sing and/or pray – were often accompanied by the ringing of church bells, canon fire, or musket shots, marking out places of spiritual and secular importance. But processions did not always go to plan; in 1660, the Corpus Christi procession had to be cancelled because of bad weather, and instead took place during the Octave on the Sunday that followed.<sup>105</sup>

Historians of early modern Europe have paid a considerable amount of attention to processions, but little attention has been paid to these rituals in New France.<sup>106</sup> Throughout the 1640s and

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<sup>103</sup> *JR*, 28: 191-97. For ease, I have used Thwaites's translation of the journal. The autograph manuscript is held in the archives of the Seminary of Quebec, but an edited version is available. See *Le journal des jésuites publié d'après le manuscrit original conservé aux archives de Séminaire de Québec*, ed. by MM. les abbés Lavardière et Casgrain (Québec: Léger Brousseau, 1871).

<sup>104</sup> *JR*, 28: 191.

<sup>105</sup> *JR*: 45: 153-55. On the Feast of Corpus Christi in 1649, rain prevented processions at both Quebec and Montreal. Both were held the following Sunday. See *JR*: 34, 53-55.

<sup>106</sup> Leavelle, "Geographies of Encounter," 914.



1650s, a number of processions were recorded – in considerable detail – in a journal kept by the Jesuits at Quebec. Known to historians as the *Journal des Jésuites*, the journal provides detailed accounts of the colony’s ecclesiastical and political affairs. A semi-private journal (in the sense that it was not intended for publication), its contents allow historians valuable insights into religious practices, rather than the ‘theory’ found in diocesan rituals, such as Jean-Baptiste de la Croix de Saint-Vallier’s *Rituel du diocèse de Québec* (1703).<sup>107</sup> This chapter complements and responds to the work of Ollivier Hubert, who has analysed ecclesiastical rites – and the ways in which they were shaped by their participants – from the end of the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>108</sup> There has been little examination of rites prior to the arrival of the François de Laval, the Bishop of Petraea, in the colony in 1659.

What follows here will focus on events surrounding the feast of Corpus Christi, though examples will be drawn from other important feasts, notably the Feast of the Assumption. Exceptional processions also took place in the event of natural disasters, such as those which followed the earthquake of 1663.<sup>109</sup> Although thousands of leagues from France, French Catholics at Quebec could – and did – follow the same liturgical calendar as their compatriots in France. But processions were not simply rituals imported from France and planted – like a cross – on the mission terrain. The roles of those taking part in processions were carefully cast and scripted, paying close attention to lay and ecclesiastical hierarchies and local circumstances. As we shall see, one of the key differences between European processions and their Atlantic world

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<sup>107</sup> The importance of ‘practice’, as opposed to ‘theory’, is highlighted by John Bossy in his study of the rite of mass. See John Bossy, “The Mass as a Social Institution, 1200-1700,” *Past and Present* 100 (1983), 32.

<sup>108</sup> Hubert, *Sur la terre comme au ciel*.

<sup>109</sup> See, for example, Marie de l’Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, September-October 1663, MI, *Corr.*, Letter CCVII, 711.

counterparts was the participation of Indigenous converts, whose integration into the proceedings added new socio-political dimensions to the rituals.

In 1646 Father Jérôme Lalemant gave a detailed description of the Corpus Christi procession.

The missionary wrote:

it was decided that Monsieur the Governor should name, on his part, whomsoever he pleased to bear the Canopy; that the two churchwardens [*marguilliers*] should also bear it, and one Native [*Sauvage*]: that, in subsequent years, the churchwardens, with the Curé, should settle who might properly be invited to bear it, - the disposition of three staves being left free to them, and the disposition of the 1<sup>st</sup> to Monsieur the governor. Those who carried it this year were Monsieur Tronquet, on behalf of Monsieur the Governor; Monsieur des Chastelets and Monsieur giffar, churchwardens; and noel negabambat.<sup>110</sup>

The canopy ('*daiz*') (see Fig. 7 below) signalled the importance of the Eucharist it protected from the elements.<sup>111</sup> Carrying the canopy during such a significant procession (Corpus Christi as the celebration of the body of Christ was one of the most important feasts) was thus a mark of an individual's power and influence.<sup>112</sup> What is interesting about Lalemant's journal entry is that it also describes who was given the responsibility of *choosing* who should carry the canopy, who was permitted to bestow that 'honour'. In 1646, the Jesuits (the principal religious authorities in the colony) were responsible for this. For future years, they decided,

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<sup>110</sup> *JR*, 28: 193.

<sup>111</sup> In royal processions, too, kings would walk or ride on horseback under a baldacchino or canopy. See Sergio Bertelli, *The King's Body in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, trans. R. Burr Litchfield (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), especially chapter 5, 97-113.

<sup>112</sup> On the centrality of the Eucharist in Catholic belief, see Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 1-2.

churchwardens would be given the task of choosing three of the four bearers. The final bearer was to be chosen by the governor. While the nomination of one man was therefore the responsibility of the colony's principal secular authority, most of the responsibility fell to church officials. Still, those chosen to bear the canopy were often important figures in 'lay' society. Secular society and sacred ritual were not easily separated.



Fig. 7. "on fait la procession du st sacrament," in Claude Chauchetière, *Narration de la mission du Sault depuis sa fondation jusqu'en 1686*, 10. Source: [http://pistard.banq.qc.ca/unite\\_chercheurs/description\\_fonds?p\\_anqid=20070608142021705&p\\_classe=P&p\\_fonds=1000&p\\_centre=03Q&p\\_numunide=4293](http://pistard.banq.qc.ca/unite_chercheurs/description_fonds?p_anqid=20070608142021705&p_classe=P&p_fonds=1000&p_centre=03Q&p_numunide=4293)

Indigenous participants in processions at Quebec were usually from the nearby mission village of Sillery. The missionary's stipulation that one Indigenous person should be given a stave of the canopy was likely motivated by politics, since the task was often given to a high-status individual, usually a 'captain'. Noel Negabamat, who took part in the procession in 1646, was praised throughout the *Relations* as a particularly pious convert. In 1645, he had taken an active role in the peace negotiations with the Haudenosaunee.<sup>113</sup> In 1647, 'Estwet', an Innu captain from Tadoussac carried the canopy. In both 1648 and 1650, Jean-Baptiste, '*le sauvage*', was assigned the fourth stave of the canopy ('fourth' in the sense that the journal always lists the Indigenous canopy-bearer last).<sup>114</sup> Jean-Baptiste Etinechkouat was an Innu chief also resident at Sillery.<sup>115</sup> The political reasons behind the inclusion of these men in processions is therefore evident. But the comportment of converts in processions did not always please missionaries. At the 1650 procession, Lalemant noted disapprovingly, Jean-Baptiste was 'very poorly clad, - to wit, in an old Blanket'.<sup>116</sup> Despite careful planning and scripting, then, participants did not always behave in what missionaries deemed to be appropriate ways.

Converts participated in processions, then, but they did so on their own terms. As Marc Jetten has pointed out, residents of Sillery seem to have had little taste for processing at Quebec.<sup>117</sup> On the Feast of the Assumption in 1648, Lalemant recorded, that 'the natives [*sauvages*] were not

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<sup>113</sup> J. Monet, "NEGABAMAT, Noël, Tekouerimat," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed September 30, 2015, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/negabamat\\_1E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/negabamat_1E.html).

<sup>114</sup> *JR*, 32: 91. For the original French see, *JR*, 32: 90. On the Feast of Corpus Christi in 1649, Lalemant was in Montreal. As noted above, the procession was rained off and took place on the following Sunday. Although Lalemant notes that a procession took place at Quebec, he gives no details as to who bore the canopy that year.

<sup>115</sup> For a short biography of Jean-Baptiste Etinechkaouat, see *MNF*, 3: 841.

<sup>116</sup> *JR*, 35: 47.

<sup>117</sup> Jetten, *Enclaves amérindiennes*, 47.

in sufficient number to form a body, and thus what there were of them went behind’, that is, behind those with a ceremonial role in the proceedings.<sup>118</sup> In 1650, the missionary wrote that, ‘The natives came too late, which occasioned a little confusion; we nevertheless proceeded’.<sup>119</sup> Neither was the attendance of French laity always as high as the missionaries would have hoped. On the Feast of the Circumcision in January 1660, Lalemant wrote, ‘few people accompanied the Clergy in the procession’. On this occasion, he mentioned pointedly, the governor was also absent.<sup>120</sup>

Processions are not always recorded in detail in the Jesuits’ *Journal*. Sometimes their occurrence is simply noted. When Father Paul Ragueneau was superior, for instance, he was far less assiduous in detailing the religious ceremonies of Quebec than Lalemant had been. But this lack of detail is also revealing. The information which the superior *does* include can give historians clues about which aspects of religious life he regarded as important enough to record. In 1651, for instance, Ragueneau’s entry concerning the feast of Corpus Christi is limited to the following lines:

The procession took place after vespers. I bore the Blessed Sacrament; Monsieur de More, Monsieur Menoil, Monsieur Severstre, and an Algonquin, bore the canopy.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> *JR*, 32: 101.

<sup>119</sup> *JR*, 35: 45. Cfr. Tuer, “Old Bones and Beautiful Words,” 84. In the reductions of Paraguay, Corpus Christi celebrations could be a source of conflict. When a Guaraní shaman left the reduction of San Ignacio on the feast day accompanied by some residents, the Jesuits threatened punishment and the local cacique was killed during the dispute. Attendance – or non-attendance – at Corpus Christi celebrations in New France did not provoke such extreme conflict.

<sup>120</sup> *JR*, 45: 129-31.

<sup>121</sup> *JR*, 36: 129.

Whilst Ragueneau does not provide the elaborate details given by Lalemant about previous celebrations, his entry nonetheless highlights what he likely regarded as the most important roles in the procession: the bearing of the Blessed Sacrament and the carrying of the dais which both protected it and marked it out as sacred. Proximity to the Eucharist thus marked out people of high status. Whilst the French canopy-bearers are named, however, the ‘Algonquin’ man is not. His inclusion in the record as ‘an Algonquin’ implies that it was his identity as an Algonquin, rather than his individual identity, that the missionary regarded as being important. Historian Patricia Seed has stressed the importance of Indigenous people in French ceremonies of possession; and a similar strategy seems to have been at play here.<sup>122</sup>

### **Processions as spectacle**

The participation of converts in processions was not new. In 1639, when the colony learned of the birth of the Dauphin (the future Louis XIV), the resulting celebrations included bonfires, fireworks, and a *Te Deum Laudamus*.<sup>123</sup> Cannon fire, Le Jeune recounted, ‘resounded in our great Forests.’ He continued, ‘The Hurons who were present placed their hands on their mouths, in token of admiration and astonishment.’<sup>124</sup> The missionary here implied the wonderment of the Wendat viewers, but stressed that the procession ‘would have delighted all of France if it had appeared in Paris.’<sup>125</sup> The settlers at Quebec, the missionary implied, were as capable as

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<sup>122</sup> Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession*, 56-63.

<sup>123</sup> *JR*, 15: 219-21.

<sup>124</sup> *JR*, 15: 221. Placing a hand on one’s mouth as a sign of wonder is a common trope used to describe Indigenous people. See, for example, *JR*, 5: 259.

<sup>125</sup> *JR*, 15: 221.

their Parisian compatriots in the creation of impressive civic spectacles. The Feast of the Assumption was chosen for this procession. Appearing in the *Jesuit Relation* of 1639, this account was intended to stress the king's sovereignty over the territory. 'When the procession commenced its march,' the *Relation's* missionary author recounted, 'the cross and banner were carried in front.' The commissary general of the Compagnie des Cent-Associés came next 'walking at the head of the Native men', who were clad in garments which the king had sent from France.<sup>126</sup> This procession, then, acted as a form of territorial possession, with the participation – and thus 'consent' – of Indigenous converts.

But these events were not simply occasions for the French at Quebec to 'display' their colonial authority. In 1646, for instance, two chiefs arrived from Tadoussac. Lalement's entry in the *Journal* noted the importance of their clothing:

They were, Estwet especially, dressed for the most part in french style, a shirt of white Holland linen, a neckband of lace, and a Scarlet Cloak, Etwet was trying to be on equal footing with Monsieur the governor, and in every way acted the Sovereign.<sup>127</sup>

As discussed in the previous chapter, clothing oneself in the 'french style' could have multiple meanings in New France. The 'white Holland linen' shirt worn by Estwet was a sign – for Europeans – of 'civilisation'. But Lalemant conceded the very deliberate use of European clothing by the Innu man, who was 'trying to be on equal footing' with the governor, and 'in every way acted the Sovereign.' Estwet's comportment does not imply subservience to the

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<sup>126</sup> *JR*, 15: 227.

<sup>127</sup> *JR*, 28: 205.

French, but rather his use of clothing to convey his authority. Of course, wearing elaborate ceremonial clothing was not simply a European tradition that he had adopted. When Estwet took his predecessor's place as leader, he had worn ceremonial garb and had also taken his name (Estwet).<sup>128</sup> By clothing himself in the 'french style' here, he is asserting his own political authority.

### **Processional Routes: Claiming the Sacred**

Although the routes of Quebec processions varied, depending on weather and occasion (amongst other factors), they tended to visit the settlement's principal religious and civic sites. By way of a brief example, let us follow the route of the 1646 Corpus Christi procession. Lalement recounted that:

The Hospital nuns, having represented their right of seniority in the country over the Ursulines, by virtue of having built in it two years before the latter, - *Item*, because the Hospitals are always privileged and have the first rank, - the course of the procession was past the temporary altar at the fort, near the flagstaff; then to the Hospital, then to the temporary altar at Monsieur Couillart's [house]; then to the Ursulines: and thence back to the parish church.<sup>129</sup>

The Hospitalières and the Ursulines were absent from the procession itself (since they were cloistered this was not permitted). However, they did participate, both when processions stopped for prayers at their 'stations' (the *Hôtel-Dieu* and Ursuline convent, respectively) and in the

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<sup>128</sup> Timothy J. Shannon's article, "Dressing for Success on the Mohawk Frontier", explores the role of clothing in eighteenth-century diplomacy. See Shannon, "Dressing for Success on the Mohawk Frontier: Hendrick, William Johnson, and the Indian Fashion," *WMQ* 53, no.1 (1996): 13-42.

<sup>129</sup> *JR*, 28: 191.



preparations for the festivities. Although they were not physically present in the procession itself, then, they were nonetheless represented in other ways. In some respects, the Ursulines took on what might be described as ‘backstage’ roles in the preparation of processions. The most obvious example of this is the nuns’ role in the clothing of some of the procession’s participants. Lalemant’s long list of participants for the 1648 procession began with a cross-bearer at the front of the procession (flanked by two boys in surplices with wreaths on their heads), a group of Indigenous converts ‘led by father le Jeune’, ‘twelve torches, of 12 trades’ (presumably carried by 12 tradesmen), lay choristers, and,

Then followed louys, *clad by the hospital nuns* as an Angel; and he led by the hand two little natives [*sauuages*]. Then followed Benjamin as an Angel, *dressed by the Ursulines*; he bore a corporal-case between two little natives [*sauuages*] carrying wax candles.<sup>130</sup>

Louys and Benjamin have been identified as Louis Pinard and Benjamin Anceau. The former was a fourteen-year-old Jesuit *donné* who would be sent to the Huron mission later that year and the latter was a ten-year-old who had been raised by the Ursulines and who entered into the service of the Jesuits in 1648.<sup>131</sup> That Louys walked in front of Benjamin further underlines the Hospitalières’ precedence in ecclesiastical affairs. The nuns’ respective positions in the ecclesiastical hierarchy (their ‘*rang*’) was symbolised by the men who wore the clothing made by them. Although nuns could not participate in the procession, then, their contributions

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<sup>130</sup> *JR*, 32: 89-91.

<sup>131</sup> See *MNF*: 7, 442n41; 442n42. For biographies of Louys and Benjamin see, *MNF*, 7, 852-53 and 828-29, respectively.

nonetheless gave them a role in the proceedings.<sup>132</sup> Like the Jesuits' pupils, students of the Ursulines also participated in processions, usually 'led' by particularly pious laywomen. During the procession of the Feast of the Assumption in 1639, Madame de la Peltie, the Ursulines' lay foundress, had 'beside her three or four Native girls [*filles Sauvages*] dressed in the french fashion.'<sup>133</sup> Though the nuns were not present, the presence of their pupils provided visible evidence of the nuns' roles as missionaries and educators. Pious laywomen, such as Anne Gasnier ('Madame de Monceaux') and Marie Favery ('Mademoyselle de repentigny') also played prominent roles in the religious life of the colony.<sup>134</sup> Both took part in the 1650 Corpus Christi procession, leading the body of women who were taking part.

The Ursulines also contributed to processions on other feast days. On the feast of the Assumption in 1646, Lalemant carried an image of the Virgin, painted in silver, which belonged to the Ursulines.<sup>135</sup> The following year, he processed last 'with the virgin of the Ursulines.'<sup>136</sup> An image or statue of the Virgin was usually carried during this feast (just as the Eucharist was carried on Corpus Christi). Statues of Mary were what historian Karin Vélez has described as 'a sort of mobile communication device.' The objects were not simply for 'calling' for divine

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<sup>132</sup> This was by no means an isolated incident. Cfr. Ulrike's Strasser's discussion of the acquisition of the relic of Saint Dorothea by the nuns of the Pütrich convent in Munich. Due to their claustration, the nuns could not participate in the procession which translated the saint's remains to their cloister's church. But, Strasser argues, their fashioning of lavish garments for the saint's body nonetheless allowed them to forge a place for themselves in the public procession. See Strasser, "Bones of Contention: Cloistered Nuns, Decorated Relics, and the Contest over Women's Place in the Public Sphere of Counter-Reformation Munich," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 90 (1999), 284.

<sup>133</sup> *JR*, 15: 227.

<sup>134</sup> To cite one example, Mademoiselle de Repentigny was godmother to Teouathuron, Armand-Jean Andehoua's companion at the Huron seminary. The men were baptised together in 1638 and Touathuron was given the baptismal name, Joseph. See *JR*, 15: 161.

<sup>135</sup> *JR*, 28: 223.

<sup>136</sup> *JR*, 30: 191.

intervention, but their portability as pieces of ‘*urban driftwood*’, ‘expanded the Catholic sphere of influence well beyond the walls of European cities and the Atlantic coast.’<sup>137</sup> The Madonna of Lalemant’s account was an image, but it acted in a similar way, claiming the streets of Quebec as Catholic territory. That the Ursulines’ Virgin was processed around the settlement provided an opportunity for asserting their spiritual ‘possession’ of colonial space without the necessity of walking through it.

### **Learning practices**

Since the ‘slow sedimentary practice of belief’, to once again draw on David Morgan’s useful phrase, was built up over a lifetime, missionaries tried to engage young members of the community in its ceremonial activities. As noted above, Louys and Benjamin (ten and fourteen years old, respectively) were two young boys whose role in the procession was to ‘lead’ (‘louys ‘led by the hand [*‘menoit par la main*’] two little natives’) and look after the young Indigenous children in their care. A group of converts near the front of the procession was also ‘led’ (*‘conduit’*) by Le Jeune, an act which highlighted their position as ‘neophytes’, rather than members of the French lay community, who walked behind in a separate body. Angels featured frequently in the Corpus Christi processions of the 1640s. In 1646, Lalemant recorded:

6 french angels, and two little natives [*sauuages*] in their costume, all carried candlesticks or tapers, except the last two, who bore corporal cases.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Karin Vélez, “Urban Driftwood: Mobile Catholic Markers and the Extension of the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic Public Sphere,” in *Urban Identity and the Atlantic World*, ed. by Elizabeth Fay and Leonard Von Morzé (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 61. Vélez’s emphasis.

<sup>138</sup> *JR*, 28: 195

For Lalment, however, ‘6 french Angels’, was too many. The following year, he noted, ‘two little Angels, who led between them a little native [*vn petit sauuage*]’ (again, note the role of Europeans as ‘leaders’ of converts). He continued, ‘that is very meet, and it is enough.’<sup>139</sup> That the youngsters were also carrying corporal-cases (*corporaliers*) implies their active involvement in the rites integral to the processions. These cases would have contained corporals (*corporaux*), that is, cloths placed under objects containing consecrated items usually placed on altars during mass (i.e. chalices and ciborium). Although young men and boys played important roles in the procession, the presence of children who were too young could prove to be a hindrance. Following the 1648 Corpus Christi procession, Lalemant noted that, ‘the natives [*sauuages*] whom louys was leading were too small for so long a march’, thus implying that they had disrupted the order in some way, perhaps by walking too slowly.<sup>140</sup>

The inclusion of children in the procession was considered to be important, since through participation they would learn the habit of piety at an early age. For Jérôme Lalemant, author of the 1647-48 *Relation*, the imitation of these holy rites by children was a sign that Catholicism was becoming rooted in everyday life. ‘The children of the natives,’ he wrote, like those of Europeans, are little monkeys; they imitate everything they see done.’ He continued,

It may be believed that, since the foundations of this new world were laid, they had never had any processions; but, as they see some from time to time, they have commenced to form processions in their own fashion. A few days ago, a small band of

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<sup>139</sup> *JR*, 30: 181.

<sup>140</sup> *JR*, 32: 91.

these little innocents was observed marching in order; one bore a Cross, another a banner, others candlesticks made in the Native fashion [*à la Sauvage*] or naturally formed. Some sang, while others walked two by two, as they had seen us do. All this teaches us that Christianity is becoming founded and established among these peoples.<sup>141</sup>

That children were adopting – and adapting, ‘in their own fashion’ – rituals of Catholicism was, for Lalemant, clear evidence that Catholicism was taking root in Canada and becoming part of the everyday landscape. Even if these acts did not necessarily indicate *faith*, they implied the normalisation of pious practices, which would, in time, lead to further conversions. This attitude is clearly evident in the writings of earlier missionaries, in particular, Pierre Biard, who was a missionary in Acadia in the early years of French colonisation. In his *Relation* from Port-Royal, the missionary wrote:

it comforts us to see these little Natives, though not yet Christians, yet willingly, when they are here, carrying the candles, bells, holy water and other things, marching in good order in the processions and funerals which occur here. Thus they become accustomed to act as christians, to become so in reality in his time.<sup>142</sup>

Reformed bodily comportment was viewed as being one of the first steps toward conversion.<sup>143</sup>

On this early mission, children were enlisted on Sundays and holy days to assist with the

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<sup>141</sup> *JR*, 32: 225.

<sup>142</sup> *JR*, 2: 53.

<sup>143</sup> For a discussion of the methods used by early missionaries in Acadia, see Dominique Deslandres, “La mission chrétienne: Français, Anglais et Amérindiens au XVIIe siècles,” in *Transferts culturels et métissages Amérique/Europe, XVIe – Xxe siècle/Cultural Transfer, America and Europe: 500 Years of Interculturation* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1996), 513-26; Dominique Deslandres, “*Exemplo aequo ut verbo*: The French Jesuits’ Missionary World,” in *Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540-1773*, ed. by John W. O’Malley, S.J., Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris and T. Frank Kennedy, S.J. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 264. We should, however, be wary of making too stark a contrast between ‘Catholic’ and ‘Protestant’ bodies. As Martha L. Finch has argued for dissenters in the Plymouth Colony, the body was, ‘at the center of the

religious ceremonies. '[W]e preach and sometimes have processions,' Biard wrote, 'the boys of our children of the forest carrying before us, when they are present here, tapers and censers and other sacred utensils.' He continued, 'For thus, little by little, they become accustomed to our ceremonies.'<sup>144</sup> Indeed, Biard's description of these ceremonies was intended as a justification for the possible future incorporation of some Indigenous customs into Catholic practices. He continued:

You cannot all at once eradicate the deep-rooted customs and habits of any people, whoever they may be. The Apostles did not do it, neither was it done several centuries after them; witness the ceremonies of the candles on Candlemas, the Processions of the Rogation-days, the Bonfires of saint John the Baptist's day, the holy Water, and many other traditions that we have in the Church, which have been introduced for a laudable purpose, to convert to a good usage what had only been abused.<sup>145</sup>

Just as early Christianity had integrated elements of pagan ritual into its practices, so too – as we shall see in chapter four – would the missionaries of New France.

### **Distributing the sacred**

When the relics of Saint-Flavian and Felicity were translated to New France in 1666, they were distributed amongst the colony's principal religious institutions.<sup>146</sup> The relics were processed around the town, visiting all four religious houses, and a box containing portions of these relics

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English Protestant dissenters' theology'. Finch, *Dissenting Bodies: Corporealities in Early New England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), xii.

<sup>144</sup> *JR*, 2: 91.

<sup>145</sup> *JR*, 2: 153.

<sup>146</sup> See "Translâtion des Reliques de SS. MM. flauian et felicita 30 aoust 1666," AAQ, 12A, Registre A, 52-53.

was left in each of the colony's four churches (those belonging to the Jesuits, the Hospital nuns, the Ursulines and the parish church).<sup>147</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation described the procession in a letter to her son Claude the following month. 'Since the relics had to be taken into the four Churches of Quebec', she wrote, 'we had the consolation of seeing this magnificent ceremony.'<sup>148</sup> Thus, although the nuns could not take part in the procession, which would have taken them outside of their cloister, they could instead watch from the choir. Unlike the Corpus Christi processions, the dais was carried by four Frenchmen: Monsieur de Tracy (lieutenant general of New France), Monsieur de Courcelles (the governor), and 'the two most notable of the nobility'.<sup>149</sup> On this occasion the nun does not mention whether or not any converts attended. The *Journal des Jésuites* noted that, 'The authorities [*puissances*] carried the first canopy'. But there was such an outpouring of fervour at the arrival of these relics that the Ursulines' church floor was not strong enough to support all those who were present. Lalemant recounted, 'The floor of the ursulines' Church gave way, under the weight of the crowd of people, as the procession came out.'<sup>150</sup> 'Many fell into the vault,' he continued, 'which is rather deep; but no one was injured.'<sup>151</sup> The colony was still building and creating the infrastructure to support its religious rituals. But the slow sedimentary practice of building belief had begun.

It was not only processions that led to the creation of a religious community. The custom of making holy bread (*'pain bénit'*) for the parish was an important civic ritual. Holy bread differed

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<sup>147</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, 16 October 1666, MI, *Corr.*, Letter CCXXII, 767.

<sup>148</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, 16 October 1666, 767. 'Comme il falloit porter les reliques dans les quatre Eglises de Québec, nous eûmes la consolation de voir cette magnifique cérémonie.'

<sup>149</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, 16 October 1666, 767. 'les deux plus considérables de la noblesse'

<sup>150</sup> *JR*, 50: 197.

<sup>151</sup> *JR*, 50: 197.

from communion bread in that it was not consecrated, but rather blessed by a priest. Each week, parishoners took turns bringing bread for the community. This bread would be blessed by the priest before mass and then handed out at the offertory.<sup>152</sup> But this custom did not only promote community cohesion, it was also the source of numerous disputes over precedence, so much so, that the Jesuits had discontinued the practice.<sup>153</sup> In 1645, however, this practice was re-instated due to the insistence of the town's toolmakers. In order to prevent any disputes, however, the Jesuits laid down strict rules. The first related to the order in which the bread would be distributed. After the priest and the governor received their portion, the rest would receive it according to where they happened to be in the church. In order to avoid privileging those who habitually sat near the front, the distribution would alternately begin at the front and then at the rear of the building.<sup>154</sup> The second rule related to the provision of bread. At the first distribution of the bread, the governor was given the '*chanteau*,' that is, the smallest piece of bread, which was placed on the top of the bread pile. This signified to the congregation that he would be in charge of providing bread the next time it was distributed, usually a Sunday or a feast day.<sup>155</sup> Thus, it fell to the governor to provide the blessed bread for the feast of the Circumcision. But on whom would this honour next be bestowed? In the *Journal*, Lalemant recorded that it had been decided after 'some discussion' that the churchwardens should:

begin at the top of the side of Ste. genevieve, as in case of a street;  
then to return from behind, as if by another street, and to continue  
in that way.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> See Philip T. Hoffman, *Church and Community in the Diocese of Lyon, 1500-1789* (London: Yale University Press, 1984), 56.

<sup>153</sup> *JR*, 27: 113.

<sup>154</sup> *JR*, 27: 113-15.

<sup>155</sup> *JR*, 27: 115, 314n21. See also *DAF* (1694), s.v. "chanteau." The entry reads, 'Le morceau de pain qu'on envoie à celui qui doit rendre le pain benit la feste ou le Dimanche prochain.'

<sup>156</sup> *JR*, 27: 119.



To ensure that this order was kept, Father Barthélemy Vimont ‘drew up a list.’<sup>157</sup> The streets of Quebec were not yet clearly marked out, but the sharing of this task by the community marked the geographical limits of the congregation (the parish of Quebec, as we saw earlier, had not yet been erected). Two weeks after the Feast of the Circumcision, the churchwardens provided the bread together (likely to avoid any quarrels over precedence), and then ‘they *gave it* to Monsieur Maheu, the nearest house on the Costeau de St. genevieve.’<sup>158</sup> Thus, the responsibility of providing the holy bread was quite literally passed on to the next person, via the ‘*chanteau*’. Making, sharing, and distributing bread carried connotations of friendship and community in the early modern period.<sup>159</sup> But the sharing of this task here – with its very clear rules – also delineated Quebec’s sacred geography.

Despite the rules carefully laid down by the Jesuits, however, disputes over bread-provision periodically re-emerged. For instance, in 1646, the *Journal* recorded that:

Madame Marsolet, having to make the blessed bread desired to present it with the greatest possible display; she had furnished it with a toilet, - a crown of gauze or linen puffs around it. She wished to add candles, and quarter-écus at the Tapers, instead of the gold écus pieces which she would indeed have desired to place thereon; but seeing that we were not willing to allow her

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<sup>157</sup> *JR*, 27: 119.

<sup>158</sup> *JR*, 28: 145-47.

<sup>159</sup> See Roy Porter, “Preface,” in Pietro Camporesi, *Bread of Dreams: Food and Fantasy in Early Modern Europe*, trans. David Gentilcore (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 10.

this, she nevertheless had it carried with the toilet and the Crown of puffs.<sup>160</sup>

Lalemant regarded Madame Marsolet's 'decoration' of the bread as an unnecessary and vain display of wealth. More than that, however, he was concerned that it might cause conflict amongst the other parishoners. Thus, he noted solemnly,

before blessing it, I had all that removed and blessed it with the same simplicity that I had observed with the preceeding portions, especially with that of Monsieur the Governor, - fearing lest this change might occasion Jealously and Vanity.<sup>161</sup>

The missionary's actions, then, were motivated not only by concern over impropriety, but by his fear of ruffling the Governor's feathers. But this was not an isolated incident. In 1660, the soldiers at the fort were charged with the provision of bread on the feast of the Epiphany. But as they were delivering the bread to the church, the *Journal* records, 'they played the drums and fifes, and thus they marched to the offering, returning in the same manner at the end of mass.' This pomp and circumstance, Lalemant remarked, 'greatly offended Monseigneur the Bishop' (that is, François de Laval who had arrived in the colony the previous year).<sup>162</sup> The situation was resolved, however, when the soldiers 'carried a loaf to him'. This act of repentance was well-received; the Bishop, in turn, sent them '2 pots of brandy and 2 livres of tobacco.'<sup>163</sup> As

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<sup>160</sup> *JR*, 28: 153-55. Thwaites's edition of the *Relation* translates 'pain benit' as 'bread for consecration'. I have adapted this to read, 'blessed bread', since bread which is 'consecrated' is the bread used for the sacrament of the Eucharist.

<sup>161</sup> *JR*, 28: 155.

<sup>162</sup> *JR*, 28: 153-55.

<sup>163</sup> *JR*, 45: 131.

the religious personnel changed and grew, practices shifted and adapted to suit the needs of the community. Civic religious practices could cause conflict, but they also created and shaped the sacred contours of a community.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has analysed what might seem to be two very different sets of circumstances: the first, the celebration of mass in temporary chapels in the forest, and the second, the establishment of ritual practices, notably Corpus Christi processions in the urban environment of Quebec. In both cases, however, we have seen the ‘temporary possession’ of environments through sacred ritual. Whilst in the woods of Canada these fleeting possessions left little trace on the landscape, processions in the city left discernable marks, creating and delineating the boundaries of a religious community. Through participation in civic rituals (notably the making of the *pain-bénit*) the *habitants* of Quebec became part of a religious community, though not all were equal. Furthermore, since people were constantly moving through and between communities, it is necessary to highlight transient community members, such as the Indigenous converts present during Corpus Christi processions in Quebec. Analysing all these factors together demonstrates not only the complexities, but the fluidity and diversity of practices and their associated beliefs.

## Chapter 4

### Being Dead?: Imagining the Sacred

On 26 November 1637, in the Wendat village of Ihonatiria in Wendake, a woman lay dying.<sup>1</sup> Like many of her kinsfolk, she had fallen victim to the European epidemic that was sweeping the country.<sup>2</sup> The woman – her name was not recorded – was baptised by one of the Jesuit missionaries living in the village. But despite this baptism (which many Wendats believed to have a curative function), she succumbed to her illness the following day.<sup>3</sup> After her death, her father approached the missionaries to describe a ‘dream’ (*songe*; exactly whose word this is is unclear) that his daughter had experienced shortly *after* her death, when she was, for a brief period, revived. The woman, he recounted, had lain still awhile – and that all had thought her dead – when suddenly:

having awakened from this profound lethargy, she had asked for us [the missionaries], and had declared that she did not want to go where the Hurons went after death, [but] that she wished to go to Heaven where the French went; that she had just come from there, and that she had seen a vast number of Frenchmen, wonderfully beautiful, and some natives of her acquaintance who had been baptised – among others, one of her uncles, and her sister who had died a Christian a few days before.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *JR*, 13: 149. Ihonatiria was sometimes referred to as Saint Joseph (I) by Jesuit missionaries. It was an Attignawantan (Bear Nation) village and was located in the extreme west of Wendake. On the location of Ihonatiria, see Conrad E. Heidenreich, *Huronian: A History and Geography of the Huron Indians, 1600-1650* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), 31-34.

<sup>2</sup> Gary Warrick has estimated that between 1634 and 1637, epidemics killed around 20% of the Wendat-Tionontate population. See Warrick, *A Population History of the Huron-Petun, A.D. 500-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 222-23. For a detailed analysis of European epidemics in the 1630s, see Gary Warrick, “European Infectious Disease and Depopulation of the Wendat-Tionontate (Huron-Petun),” *World Archaeology* 35, no.2 (2003): 258-75.

<sup>3</sup> *JR*, 13: 149

<sup>4</sup> *JR*, 13: 149.

The woman's sister, the missionary recounted, had asked her whether *Echon* (the Jesuit Superior, Father Jean de Brébeuf), had given her anything before her death. When she replied that she had received nothing, her sister showed her a 'bead bracelet' (perhaps a rosary) that he had given her. Seeing this, Le Mercier asserted, the woman had 'resolved to return, and come and ask us for the same'. She had then 'come to herself', and after relating her 'dream' (*songe*), she immediately became unconscious and died.<sup>5</sup>

Although this account would be dismissed by François Le Mercier (the author of the account which appeared in the 1637 *Relation*) as nothing more than an 'amusing dream', invented to obtain 'a few strings of beads', it nonetheless provides a useful starting point for an investigation of 'imagined' spaces.<sup>6</sup> The 'Heaven where the French went', is placed in opposition to '[the place] where the Hurons went' (that is, the village of the dead); these afterlives are envisioned as two separate – but not mutually exclusive – *places*. By contrast, in Christianity, heaven was the only afterlife for the 'saved'. Hell and purgatory existed for sinners and the unbaptised, but no other afterlife was acknowledged. Further, the woman's movement between the 'lived' and the 'spirit' world was not through any divine intervention (as would be necessary for a Christian 'resurrection'), but through her own volition, she 'resolved to return'. As we shall see, this is reminiscent of Wendat dreaming practices (in which an object must be acquired in the 'lived'

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<sup>5</sup> *JR*, 13: 149-51.

<sup>6</sup> *JR*, 13: 149.

world after it has been dreamt about), but also of accounts in which people journey across the landscape to the village of souls (to retrieve deceased relatives, for instance).<sup>7</sup>

As we saw in the previous chapters of this thesis, ‘being alive’ or inhabiting the world, is the ability to shape the environment whilst being simultaneously shaped by it.<sup>8</sup> But what about *being dead* in seventeenth-century Canada? How did the everyday world shape the spirit world and vice versa?

Whilst anthropologists often focus on ‘communities of the living’ (which along with landscape, can be ‘mutually constitutive’), little attention has been paid to these communities’ relationships with ‘communities of the dead’.<sup>9</sup> This is an argument made by archaeologists Jennifer Birch and Ronald Williamson in their recent work on Northern Iroquoian village relocation. Due to a combination of environmental factors (the depletion of natural resources, such as firewood, fields that were no longer fertile, etc.) and socio-political factors, villages moved fairly frequently, leaving ‘abandoned villages’ scattered across the landscape.<sup>10</sup> But, as Birch and Williamson stress, these villages were only ‘partially abandoned’, since after the departure of their living inhabitants, they became part of the ‘ancestral landscape’. As ‘communities of the dead’, the villages (and the ossuaries related to them) remained spiritually important, even after the departure of the living, as places of pilgrimage or religious practices.<sup>11</sup> ‘Living’ and ‘dead’

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<sup>7</sup> On the influence of Wendat dreaming practices on the request for the ‘string of beads’, see Erik R. Seeman, “Reading Indians’ Deathbed Scenes: Ethnohistorical and Representational Approaches,” *The Journal of American History* 88, no.1 (2001), 42. For an example of a Wendat story in which a man travels to the village of souls to retrieve his dead sister, see *JR*, 10: 149-53.

<sup>8</sup> Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (London: Routledge, 2011), 95.

<sup>9</sup> Jennifer Birch and Ronald F. Williamson, “Navigating Ancestral Landscapes in the Northern Iroquoian World,” *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 39 (2005), 139.

<sup>10</sup> Birch and Williamson, “Navigating Ancestral Landscapes in the Northern Iroquoian World,” 141-44.

<sup>11</sup> Birch and Williamson, “Navigating Ancestral Landscapes in the Northern Iroquoian World,” 141-42.

persons interacted, too, when – for instance – food was thrown onto the fire for dead ancestors during village celebrations.<sup>12</sup>

In the context of colonial encounters, spiritual places could also be places of exchange. As historian Erik R. Seeman has argued, ‘deathways’ (that is, burial practices, deathbed scenes and other rituals associated with death and dying) were ‘a common ground that allowed individuals to reach across cultural boundaries and understand unfamiliar peoples.’<sup>13</sup> But when historians of conversion – and indeed, Seeman – speak of religious ‘blending’ or ‘syncretism’ (the merging of distinct religious practices and/or beliefs) they are usually referring to the adoption – however piecemeal – of Catholic practices by Indigenous communities and individuals (with or without missionary supervision).<sup>14</sup> How, they ask, did particular groups or individuals perceive, adopt and adapt Catholic practices? Many scholars have discussed missionary adaptations to Indigenous environments (see, for instance, chapter 2 of this thesis), and have highlighted the ‘concessions’ they were often compelled to make in the celebration of Catholic rites. Despite these changes in missionary *practices*, very few historians have discussed the subtle shifts in *mentalities* that such changes could provoke. Dominique Deslandres, for instance, has argued that ‘the encounter’ between missionaries and ‘the *Other*’ (‘*l’Autre*’) was one-way. For Jesuit missionaries, she asserts, the religion of ‘the *Other*’ was ‘inadmissible, incorrect, and

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<sup>12</sup> Birch and Williamson, “Navigating Ancestral Landscapes in the Northern Iroquoian World,” 145.

<sup>13</sup> Erik R. Seeman, *Death in the New World: Cross-Cultural Encounters, 1492-1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 5.

<sup>14</sup> See Erik R. Seeman, *The Huron-Wendat Feast of the Dead: Indian-European Encounters in Early North America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

impossible.’<sup>15</sup> ‘The *Other*’, she argues, had ‘almost no impact on missionary mentalities and methods’.<sup>16</sup>

This chapter will challenge this view, and will argue that Jesuit mentalities were shaped by both environment and Indigenous religious beliefs. Contributing to recent historiography on ‘imagined’ spaces of encounters (notably ‘deathways’, but also, as we shall see, dreams and visions), it will argue that spiritual exchange went both ways: Wendats were influenced by Catholicism but Jesuit mentalities could also be shaped by Iroquoian beliefs, some of which were deeply rooted in the lived environment, an environment which missionaries also inhabited. Inspired by the work of Birch and Williamson, the first section will discuss the ways in which the landscape of Wendake – in particular, the journey to the village of souls – shaped Wendat conceptions of Heaven, how it was accessed and who could go there. Building on this discussion, the second section will examine the role of these ‘ancestral landscapes’ in the shaping of Jesuit mentalities. I am by no means suggesting that Jesuit missionaries considered ‘converting’ to the belief system of the Wendats.<sup>17</sup> As already noted in the introduction to this thesis, ‘conversion’ is not a useful term to describe religious exchange, since it is a ‘European’ category of analysis that does not take into account Indigenous conceptions of belief systems.<sup>18</sup> For Iroquoian peoples, for instance, adopting some elements of Catholicism did not necessitate the rejection of

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<sup>15</sup> Dominique Deslandres, “Entre persuasion et adhésion: La mission française au XVIIe siècle,” *Théologiques* 13, no.1 (2005), 95.

<sup>16</sup> The first section of Deslandres’s article is emphatically titled, ‘L’Impact quasi nul de l’altérité sur les mentalités et méthodies missionnaires.’ Deslandres, “Entre persuasion et adhésion,” 96.

<sup>17</sup> Deslandres rightly asserts that the notion of Jesuits being ‘converted’ by the spiritual practices of the Indigenous peoples they encountered is a back-projection of present-days values. See Deslandres, “Entre persuasion et adhésion,” 95.

<sup>18</sup> See Allan Greer, “Conversion and Identity: Iroquois Christianity in Seventeenth-Century New France,” in *Conversion: Old Worlds and New*, ed. Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 177.



their own religious practices.<sup>19</sup> Post-Tridentine Catholicism was not so flexible; it was, after all, the ‘one true faith’ (for Huguenots, for instance, ‘abjuration’ or rejection of their ‘heresy’ was necessary for conversion). But this is not to say that individual missionary mentalities were not shaped – sometimes unconsciously – by their environments. As I will argue in the second section of this chapter, the ‘slow sedimentary practice of belief’ (to once again borrow David Morgan’s useful phrase) meant that missionaries gradually incorporated elements of their bodily experiences into their imaginations, consciously or otherwise.<sup>20</sup> Drawing on a wide variety of missionary sources relating to ‘imagined’ sacred spaces (in particular dreams and visions), this chapter will argue that just as the environment had an impact on practices in the ‘lived’ world, so too could it shape imaginations.

### **Converting Wendat imaginations?**

For the Wendat of Ihonatiria, one of the principal means through which the living accessed the spirit world was through dreams. As Ann Marie Plane and Leslie Tuttle remind us, dreams are inherently individual experiences; we cannot experience the dream of another. Yet, while we can only experience a dream ‘as reported’, the reporting process itself is a ‘social act’.<sup>21</sup> As Tuttle argues, conversion occurred in the same interior ‘place’ as a dream, which was thus

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<sup>19</sup> Greer, “Conversion and Identity,” 177. For a discussion of religion as one among many commodities in Indigenous alliance making, see Denys Delâge, “La religion dans l’alliance franco-amériennienne,” *Anthropologies et Sociétés* 15, no.1 (1991): 55-87.

<sup>20</sup> On the ‘slow sedimentary practice of belief’, see David Morgan, “Introduction: The Matter of Belief,” in *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief*, ed. David Morgan (London: Routledge, 2010), 4-5.

<sup>21</sup> Ann Marie Plane and Leslie Tuttle, “Introduction: The Literatures of Dreaming,” in *Dreams, Dreamers and Visions: The Early Modern Atlantic World*, ed. Ann Marie Plane and Leslie Tuttle (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 6.

viewed by Jesuit missionaries as ‘a battleground between God and evil spirits’.<sup>22</sup> Dreams, Dominique Deslandres asserts, were ‘the theatre of an intense and simultaneous campaign of evangelization...an essential war of the seventeenth century’.<sup>23</sup> In the context of post-Tridentine Catholicism, missionaries were keen to establish which dreams were of spiritual importance, and which dreams were not.<sup>24</sup> The ‘authenticity’ of dreams will not be focussed on in detail here; rather it will be argued that dreams (to use Mary Baine Campbell’s terms) are ‘sensually perceptible’, ‘epistemic things’.<sup>25</sup> In a recent article, Campbell employs ‘thing theory’ to analyse the materialisation of objects dreamed by Indigenous peoples in the waking world. Dream things, she argues, could become material realities.<sup>26</sup> But how might bodies have perceived ‘imagined’ spaces? In the context of European-Indigenous encounters in Wendake, it is possible to ask another question: how might Wendat people have perceived heaven? Through an examination of haptic, or embodied experiences of ‘imagined’ spaces, this section will argue that ‘imagined’ spaces were sites of cross-cultural conflict, resistance, and cooperation. Wendat conceptions and embodied experiences of heaven (in particular those of converts) were largely influenced by their own non-Christian spiritual beliefs, most especially, ideas about how embodied souls ‘sensed’, and journeyed to, the afterlife.

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<sup>22</sup> Leslie Tuttle, “French Jesuits and Indian Dreams in Seventeenth-Century New France,” in *Dreams, Dreamers, and Visions: The Early Modern Atlantic World*, ed. Ann Marie Plane and Leslie Tuttle (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 168.

<sup>23</sup> Dominique Deslandres, “Dreams Clash: The War over Authorized Interpretation in Seventeenth-Century French Missions,” in *Empires of God: Religious Encounters in the Early Modern French Atlantic*, ed. Linda Gregerson and Susan Juster (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 146.

<sup>24</sup> Deslandres, “Dreams Clash,” 146.

<sup>25</sup> Mary Baine Campbell, “Immaterial Objects: Things in Dreams,” *Exemplaria*, 22 (2010), 157; 159.

<sup>26</sup> Campbell, “Immaterial Objects,” 157-58.

Without over-emphasising the importance of environmental factors, it is also necessary to highlight the fact that these spiritual experiences were taking place in specifically Indigenous – in this case Wendat – spaces, where European missionaries constituted a minority. Bruce Trigger, for instance, estimates that the population of Ihonatiria may have been around 300 in 1634.<sup>27</sup> Although the missionaries occupied a privileged place in the village (their presence as guests was established at a 1635 council between the Wendat and the French),<sup>28</sup> they were nonetheless outsiders whose beliefs were often contrary to those whom they sought to convert. This section will begin with an analysis of Wendat beliefs about the afterlife. This will be followed by a discussion of the ways in which these beliefs could have shaped Wendat conceptions and perceptions or embodied experiences of a Catholic heaven or heavens.

Before going any further, it is necessary to acknowledge an important methodological problem: all extant early seventeenth-century written sources relating to Wendat spiritual beliefs were penned by European missionaries. Some scholars (notably literary critic Stephen Greenblatt) argue that European textual representation of the New World can only tell ‘us’ about European methods of representation.<sup>29</sup> ‘Subalterns’ (people living ‘outside’ privileged groups), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues, ‘cannot speak’; their voices are obscured by the ideologies and even the discursive methods of their oppressors.<sup>30</sup> The reported speeches of seventeenth-century Wendat individuals – in the *Jesuit Relations*, for instance – are clear examples of this. Wendat

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<sup>27</sup> Bruce Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660* (1976; repr. Montreal: McGill Queen’s University Press, 1987), 852n1.

<sup>28</sup> Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 495.

<sup>29</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 7.

<sup>30</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’, in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988): 271-313.

individuals are often set up as ‘straw men’ to be reasoned with and convinced of the error of their ways. Yet re-reading these accounts with these limitations in mind can nonetheless provide important information about Indigenous beliefs and practices.

Central to Wendat beliefs was the concept that the human soul was divisible. Different names were given to different manifestations of this soul. *Esken*, for instance, was the name given to the soul when it left the body. When a body was taken to be buried, the soul walked in front of it. ‘They give to it even a head, arms, legs, - in short, a body’, wrote Jesuit missionary, Father Paul Le Jeune, editor of the first *Jesuit Relation*, which was published in 1634. This personified soul moved at will around the villages of the living, where it left noticeable traces. Souls, for instance, were believed to eat from the food remaining in communal kettles after feasts; it was for this reason that many of the living refused to eat leftovers.<sup>31</sup> The mention of ‘kettles’ indicates that the account told to the missionary was clearly shaped by what might be described as ‘post-contact’ society. Of principal interest to Wendat traders were metal goods, such as knives, awls, and axe heads, which they were able to acquire from the French. These objects were prized; their cutting edges were more effective than those of similar tools fashioned from stone or bone. Indeed, *Agnonha* (‘Iron People’) was the name that the Wendat gave to the French.<sup>32</sup> Kettles (made from sheets of brass or copper and moulded around iron hoops), were also popular trade goods; partly owing to their prestige and potential supernatural powers, but also because they were easier to transport than clay pots, being both lighter and less fragile.<sup>33</sup> The appearance of kettles in accounts of Wendat spiritual beliefs, therefore, could be an

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<sup>31</sup> *JR*, 10: 141-43.

<sup>32</sup> Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 360.

<sup>33</sup> Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*. On the popularity of metalware, 360; on the portability of kettles, 411. For further information, see Calvin Martin, “The Four Lives of a Micmac Copper Pot,” *Ethnohistory* 22, no. 2 (1975): 111-33.

indication that these stories were adapted after the arrival of Europeans in North America. Adaptation, anthropologists suggest, is an important feature of oral histories and an intrinsic part of storytelling processes.<sup>34</sup> Searching for ‘pure’, unadulterated versions of origin stories and other spiritual narratives is, therefore, futile. Additionally, this approach is problematic, as it implies that Indigenous societies were static before the arrival of Europeans.

Around every 12 years, the Wendat held a Feast of the Dead and, at this point, the souls of all those who had died – if they were physically able – would journey to the village of souls, which would become their new home. Geographically speaking, the village of souls was situated in the lived world. When Le Jeune asked where it was, one man told him that:

it was toward the Tobacco nation, that is to say, toward the West, eight leagues from us, and that some persons had seen them [the souls of the dead] as they were going; that the road they took was well-beaten, that they passed near a rock called *Ecaregniondi*, which has often been found masked with the paint that they use to smear their faces.<sup>35</sup>

The village of the dead, then, was not only situated in a very precise, lived geographical space (‘toward the West, *eight leagues* from us’); traces of the dead were visible in this space of the living. Tracks, such as the ‘well-beaten’ path, and paint smeared on a rock called *Ecaregniondi*, were clearly apparent. The souls of the dead had ‘touched’ and marked the world of the living. Some people – yet significantly, only certain individuals – had actually ‘seen’ the souls begin their journey. It is not clear whether this was a chance sighting or whether the individuals in

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<sup>34</sup> Elizabeth Tooker, *Native North American Spirituality of the Eastern Woodlands: Sacred Myths, Dreams, Visions, Speeches, Healing Formulas, Rituals and Ceremonials* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1979), xii-xiii.

<sup>35</sup> *JR*, 10: 145.

question had privileged access to the spirit world. Within Wendat society, for instance, shamans were believed to be intermediaries between humans and spirits.<sup>36</sup> Scholars today have identified the geographical placement of *Ecaregniondi*, the rock, but its exact location need not be discussed here.<sup>37</sup> What is important for our purposes is that the rock was a ‘real’ geographical feature of the seventeenth-century landscape. The dead therefore, not only inhabited the spiritual world, but they also ‘touched across space’ (from the spiritual to the secular). Events in the spiritual world could therefore have very material consequences in the ‘lived’ world.

The rock itself was also viewed as sacred. In a second account recorded by Le Jeune, the departing souls of the dead had to pass the longhouse of a man named *Oscotarach*, or ‘Pierce-head’ before they arrived at the village of souls. This being, we are told, removed the brains from each soul before he or she proceeded to the village.<sup>38</sup> Archaeologist Charles Garrad argues that *Oscotarach* (‘Pierce-head’) and *Ecaregniondi* (the rock which was marked by passing souls) were probably the same entity. Since *Oscotarach* (‘Pierce-head’) was an eternal deity (i.e. one who would eternally endure), he had to be made from a long-lasting substance, such as rock, in order to be visible to humans.<sup>39</sup> This personification of a geological feature is also consistent with the Wendat animist belief that humans, animals, and indeed objects could be imbued with spiritual qualities and formed part of a ‘sacred-circle of life’, wherein all beings

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<sup>36</sup> On the different abilities of shamans, see Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 79-80.

<sup>37</sup> Birch and Williamson, “Navigating Ancestral Landscapes in the Northern Iroquoian World,” 145; see also Charles Garrad, “Ekarenniondi and Oscotarach,” available for download on the Wyandot Nation of Kansas website: <http://www.wyandot.org/PETUN/RB%201%20to%2020/PRI20.pdf>, 3-5.

<sup>38</sup> *JR*, 10: 147.

<sup>39</sup> Garrad, “Ekarenniondi and Oscotarach,” <http://www.wyandot.org/PETUN/RB%201%20to%2020/PRI20.pdf>, 2; For a useful summary of ‘beings-other-than-human’, see Tooker, *Native North American Spirituality*, 11-30.

were interdependent.<sup>40</sup> As Wendat spiritual beliefs and embodied experiences attest, the secular world touched the spirit world and vice versa. It is more fitting, then, to view secular and spiritual worlds as one and the same, or at least co-existing, overlapping realms, which sometimes occupied the same place.

Some souls were unable – even in death – to undertake a journey to the village of souls. Provision was made for these souls; and they inhabited a place, which was at once connected to and separated from the world of the living. The souls of young children and the very elderly, for example, remained in their people’s country, where they would live in ‘their own particular villages’. The location of these villages in relation to the villages of the living is not mentioned. That the noise of longhouse doors and children playing could sometimes be heard by the living suggests that they were in close proximity.<sup>41</sup> While the village of souls was removed from villages of the living, villages for the souls of dead children and elderly people co-existed with them. The village of souls was only for those who were able to find it. Bruce Trigger asserts that there was ‘no ethical significance’ attached to the fact that some Wendat individuals went to the village of souls, whilst others remained in villages adjacent to the villages they had inhabited during their lifetimes.<sup>42</sup>

One did not happen upon this world accidentally, but it was deliberately sought out to bring back a dead relative or to acquire an object that had been dreamt about.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, numerous

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<sup>40</sup> For a detailed explanation of the sacred circle of life, see Georges E. Sioui, *For an Amerindian Autohistory: An Essay on the Foundations of a Social Ethic*, trans. by Sheila Fischman (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992), in particular, Chapter 2, “The Sacred Circle of Life,” 8-19.

<sup>41</sup> *JR*, 10: 143-45.

<sup>42</sup> Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 506.

<sup>43</sup> *JR*, 10: 149-57.

obstacles had to be overcome *en route*. In one account, a river had to be crossed using a precariously placed tree trunk as a bridge. In addition, this crossing was guarded by a dog that jumped at the passing souls in an attempt to make them fall.<sup>44</sup> Souls that toppled off the tree-trunk bridge, Le Jeune recounted were ‘at the same time carried away by the violence of the torrent and stifled by the waters’.<sup>45</sup> The significance of this fate would not have been lost on the Catholic missionary, whose own faith (as we saw in the first chapter) was replete with stories in which water symbolised a powerful force to be overcome. It is unclear what the eventual fate of these souls was, but the account makes no mention of second attempts to cross the river. What is similarly uncertain is exactly *where* the spirit world began. Although the river is a clear example of an obstacle that had to be overcome in order to access the village of souls, it is neither the first nor the last in most of the accounts related by Le Jeune. However, given that the Wendat viewed the material and spiritual worlds as being intimately connected, it seems anachronistic to ask such a question.

What is clear is that the village of souls could be elusive. One man, seeking to reclaim his dead sister from the village, ‘travelled twelve days toward the setting Sun, where he had learned the village of souls was’.<sup>46</sup> He did not eat or drink until the evening of the twelfth day, when his sister appeared to him and made him a dish of meal cooked in water. When he tried to touch her, however, she vanished. Each day for the next three months, the same thing occurred. Eventually, the man came to a river, which he was able to cross using an unstable bridge. Indeed, only after passing several other ‘tests’ did he eventually reach the village. Common themes,

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<sup>44</sup> *JR*, 10: 147.

<sup>45</sup> *JR*, 10: 149.

<sup>46</sup> It should be noted that this account also situates the village of souls in the west, ‘toward the setting sun’. *JR*, 10: 143.



then, are evident in Le Jeune's accounts: Physical and mental obstacles must be overcome; spaces which – to European eyes – might appear to be forests, become (through spiritual intervention) sites of both mystery and connection; and the souls of the dead reach out to the living through sensory interaction. Although the man in the above account was given daily material sustenance (a dish of meal) by his sister, he was unable to touch her. Thus, while the spirit world satisfied his need to eat, his desire for a physical sensory connection was denied. His sister was visible – and her presence could have material consequences – but she was not able to return permanently to the world of the living. The story's implication is clear: the dead could not be brought back to life.<sup>47</sup>

What, then, can our understanding of Wendat spiritual beliefs add to our analysis of the deathbed dream this chapter began with? In the dream, the woman's father recounted, his daughter had encountered both her uncle and her sister. Her sister, he told the missionaries, had asked her whether the Jesuit Superior (Jean de Brébeuf) had given her anything before her departure. When she answered in the negative, her sister replied, “As for me, here is a bead bracelet that he gave me”. On hearing this, the woman decided to return from heaven and ask for a bracelet of her own. She died shortly after recounting her experience and the beads were never received. Shortly after her death, however, the woman's father visited the missionaries and asked ‘that as many beads be given to her as to her sister, in order to satisfy her’.<sup>48</sup> ‘The sole purpose of this imaginary dream’, Le Mercier recounted dismissively, ‘was to get a few strings of beads’.<sup>49</sup> Missionaries often gave beads, which were highly prized among Indigenous people, as rewards to particularly

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<sup>47</sup> Several Wendat stories caution that the dead should not be brought back to the land of the living. See Georges E. Sioui. *Huron-Wendat: The Heritage of the Circle* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 40-41.

<sup>48</sup> *JR*, 13: 149-51.

<sup>49</sup> *JR*, 13: 149.

enthusiastic or devoted ‘neophytes’.<sup>50</sup> The father’s purpose in recounting his daughter’s dream may simply have been to acquire strings of beads, but this in itself could be read as a spiritual act. For the Wendat, dreams were of the utmost spiritual importance. If an individual dreamt that he or she was to acquire an object, this object had to be found upon waking. If such portents were ignored, dire spiritual consequences – even death – might ensue. Dream objects find form in, and cross boundaries into, the secular, waking world. When a person touched such an object, they were touching an object that had been sensed across a boundary.

But by the time the 1637 *Relation* reached the reader it had been reported – and most likely reworded – no less than three times: firstly by the dreamer’s father, secondly by Le Mercier (the French Jesuit author of the account), and thirdly by the French provincial superior in Paris. At each stage of representation, the motivation for recounting the dream most likely differed. Accounts of dreams are rare, notes Mary Baine Campbell, and are often ‘recorded incidentally, [or] shaped for specific rhetorical or devotional ends’.<sup>51</sup> Le Mercier’s depiction of the account – and he was the first person to put it down on paper – could clearly be placed in the latter category. It forms part of a narrative which attempts not only to portray Wendats as greedy (the dreamer is not content to be in heaven, but is instead preoccupied by jealousy), but also to discredit the very practice of dreaming and the beliefs it supports. ‘These and similar fancies [*resveries*]’, Le Mercier asserted indignantly, ‘pass among them as veritable resurrections, and serve as a foundation ... for the belief they have regarding the state of souls after death’.<sup>52</sup> It was the Christian devil, he believed, who ‘deceive[d] them *in their dreams*’.<sup>53</sup> The devil, then, not only

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<sup>50</sup> Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 507.

<sup>51</sup> Campbell, “Immaterial Objects,” 160.

<sup>52</sup> *JR*, 13: 153.

<sup>53</sup> *JR*, 10: 147.

vexed the inner spirituality of European missionaries; he could also penetrate the imaginations of Indigenous people. As we saw with ‘other-than-human’ beings like *Oscotorach* it was not only human souls who inhabited the spirit world. Over a decade later, in 1650, Le Mercier would triumphantly assert that although dreams were once the God of the Wendat, ‘Now, God is *in their dreams*’.<sup>54</sup> Dreams, the missionary believed, had been converted.<sup>55</sup>

What is important for this analysis, however, is not the reason or reasons that this dream – ‘imaginary’ or otherwise – was recounted. That both Wendat reporters (the dreamer and her father) state that heaven can be accessed in the same way as the village of souls and left at will is significant when assessing Indigenous reception of Catholic ideas about heaven, hell, and sacred spaces. For instance, the woman recounted that she had, ‘just come from there [i.e. heaven]’, implying a journey – and a crossing of boundaries – albeit a very quick one. Significantly, too, the presence of heaven did not negate the presence of a coexistent Wendat afterlife. The woman asserted that, ‘she did not want to go where the Hurons went after death, [but that she] wished to go to the heaven where the French went.’ Both existed, but were not in the same spiritual place. In fact, some Wendat men expressed shock when they were told that baptised enemy warriors of the Haudenosaunee would go to the same heaven as they (and indeed all baptised Christians who had not sinned).<sup>56</sup> Clearly, then, there was room for more than one afterlife in Wendat conceptions of the sacred (and in the perceived spiritual space necessary for such a conglomeration). Unlike some European Christians, many of whom remained embroiled in the confessional conflicts of the long Reformations, the Wendat individuals cited above do

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<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Dominique Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire*, 436. My translation.

<sup>55</sup> Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire*, 436. On the devil as an agent of evangelisation see, Dominique Deslandres, “‘Le Diable a beau faire...’, Marie de l’Incarnation, Satan et l’Autre,” *Théologiques*, 5 (1997), 23-41.

<sup>56</sup> *JR*: 13, 73.

not seem to have believed that their personal choices rendered the beliefs of others ‘false’. Whilst religious practices and beliefs of North American Indigenous nations bore some resemblance to one another, they nonetheless differed in important ways.<sup>57</sup> One could, therefore, view Catholicism as ‘just another’ religion in a continent whose peoples were already accustomed to the notion of diverse spiritual practices.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, whilst the *Relations* contain accounts of shamans who try to discredit the beliefs and practices of Jesuit missionaries, these shamans’ do not make any attempts to convert Europeans. This could, of course, be the simple result of missionary reporters’ editorial choices, but the omission is nonetheless striking. Indigenous peoples, it could be argued, did not try to convert others to their spiritual beliefs. Furthermore, stories collected by twentieth-century anthropologists do not present beliefs in a deliberately didactic manner; the intention of the speakers does not seem to have been to convince ‘outsiders’ of the credibility of their beliefs, nor do they assume that they have unique and privileged access to ‘the truth’.<sup>59</sup>

Conceiving a Catholic afterlife, Le Mercier allowed, was a difficult task for those who had not been brought up by Catholic parents or in Christian lands. ‘These poor peoples’, he sympathised, ‘have all the trouble in the world to form ideas of Heaven.’<sup>60</sup> Although Wendat people were familiar with the concept of an afterlife, some were surprised at the differences between heaven and their own spiritual realms. One man in Ihonatiria, for instance, was shocked to learn that

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<sup>57</sup> William C. Sturtevant, “Preface,” in Elizabeth Tooker, *Native North American Spirituality of the Eastern Woodlands: Sacred Myths, Dreams, Visions, Speeches, Healing Formulas, Rituals and Ceremonials* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1979), xi.

<sup>58</sup> As Bruce Trigger has argued, the ‘Huron believed Christianity to be only one more ritual society’. See Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 496.

<sup>59</sup> Sturtevant, “Preface,” in Tooker, *Native North American Spirituality in the Eastern Woodlands*, xiii.

<sup>60</sup> *JR*, 13: 179.

heaven was a peaceful place. “How?”, he exclaimed, ‘...“We people think that the dead make war among themselves as well as the living.”’.<sup>61</sup> Others were disappointed that there were no fields to work, no fishing to be done, and no hope of marriage. Furthermore, the inhabitants of heaven were styled as being predominantly French. For instance, the woman had seen ‘a *vast number* of Frenchmen’, but only, ‘*some* natives of her acquaintance’.<sup>62</sup> Multiple meanings could again be read in this statement. We might read it as an indication that Wendat converts believed that they would be in a minority in heaven (and this was certainly the case in some instances) or as a Jesuit admission that conversion rates were not as high as they would have liked. Whatever the case, the demographics of the spiritual world were of obvious concern to potential converts. These characteristics were sometimes deciding factors in matters of conversion. Thus, mental conceptions of afterlives (and imagined perceptions of what it would be like to inhabit them) were often decisive factors in an individual’s decision to accept or decline baptism (which was inextricably linked with heaven).

While it is possible to read Wendat perceptions in some accounts, the *Relations*’ overall rhetorical strategy cannot be ignored. The French had a clear advantage, the missionary believed, when it came to conceiving heaven. God, he argued, had ‘illuminated our [the French’s] minds with his eternal truths’. ‘This favo[u]r’, he asserted, was, by contrast, ‘not felt by us [*n’est pas sensible*] in the middle of France as it is among these barbarians [*parmy ces barbares*]’. He continued:

In France, the knowledge of these things seems to be a part of our nature. We imbibe them with our milk, the holy name of God is one of the first words we lisp, and these rude

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<sup>61</sup> *JR*, 13: 179.

<sup>62</sup> *JR*, 13: 149. My emphasis.

impressions of infancy continue to develop almost insensibly, according to our growth, through the instruction, good example, and piety of our parents; so that these advantages very often blind our eyes, and many find themselves at the point of death who have never, perhaps, once in their lives thanked God heartily for this so special favo[u]r.<sup>63</sup>

In France, the missionary implied, embodied, sensory experiences ensured not only that the young were aware of basic religious tenets, but that this knowledge was imparted almost from birth (to minds predisposed to receive it). This knowledge was ‘imbibed’ with a baby’s mother’s milk before the child could talk or was capable of listening. As a result, the missionary gushed somewhat idealistically, ‘the holy name of God is one of the first words that we lisp’. This knowledge, he added, grew, ‘almost insensibly’ (*presque insensiblement*), through the ‘instruction, good example, and piety’ of their parents. The ‘rude impressions’ of youth thus became more sophisticated. The bodily experience of religion was so engrained in everyday life, Le Mercier suggested, that it was almost imperceptible.

Le Mercier’s rhetoric was based in a missionary belief that there was no difference between European and Indigenous bodies; the only difference, he implied, was rooted in behaviour. Education and religious instruction were possible. This sentiment is echoed in the writings of Marie de l’Incarnation, the first superior of the Ursuline convent and seminary of Quebec. Many of Marie’s letters describe the ‘progress’ of the young Indigenous women who had been taken to the convent. ‘Madeleine Amiskoveian’ wrote Marie de l’Incarnation, ‘is in her manners as though she has been raised among us [*parmy nous*]’. The nun continued, ‘she could not have a more sweet and flexible disposition; she makes sure that her companions follow their duty; she

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<sup>63</sup> *JR*, 13: 179.

drinks in God's bounty.'<sup>64</sup> For other seminarians, Marie de l'Incarnation suggested, the process of what has sometimes been referred to as 'Frenchification', took longer. 'Marie Negambat', the nun wrote, was not quite so quick to learn, but through practice, 'becomes more and more accomplished every day'.<sup>65</sup>

The apparent predisposition of the French toward heaven, however, had its drawbacks. Knowledge acquisition was so subtle, Le Mercier argued, that it was not universally appreciated. Indeed, many French people arrived on their deathbeds without having once thanked God for his grace. It was for this reason, the missionary argued, that Christians should be reminded of the suffering the world.<sup>66</sup> And this is where New France comes in. The 'ignorance and blindness of our Natives', Le Mercier asserted, 'make us appreciate the blessing that we possess in knowing the eternal truths'. He continued, quoting the Bible: '*Beati qui vident quæ vos videtis, vobis autem datum est nosse mysteria regni Dei.*'<sup>67</sup> This reference to Matthew 13.13 – 'Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you and not to them' – is a warning to the inhabitants of 'Old', metropolitan France. The people of New France, the missionary argued, were ignorant of God's grace. ('Though seeing they do not *see*; though hearing they do not *hear* or understand.')<sup>68</sup> One man's solution, the missionary continued, was to place sick beds in the street:

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<sup>64</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Paul Le Jeune, Quebec, January 1640, MI, *Corr.*, Letter XLI, 91. 'Madeleine Amiskoveian est en ses moeurs comme si elle avoit esté eslevée parmy nous; ils ne se peut voir une humeur plus douce et plus flexible; elle fait tenir toutes ses compagnons en leur devoir; elle gousté grandement les choses de Dieu.'

<sup>65</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Paul Le Jeune, Quebec, January 1640, 91. 'Marie Negabamat devient tous les jours plus accomplie.'

<sup>66</sup> *JR*, 13: 179-81.

<sup>67</sup> *JR*, 13: 181.

<sup>68</sup> Matthew 13:13. My emphasis.

A holy personage has said that the wise providence of God had ordained that the sick poor should lie ill in the streets and public places, not only to provide exercise for the charity of good people, but also to reveal to us the obligations we are under to him for having preserved our health; that all the plagues we see are so many favors that he does us, and so many tongues which speak to us and invite us to render to him a million thanksgivings.<sup>69</sup>

This sermon-like passage reveals one of the missionary's intentions in describing the deathbed agonies of Indigenous individuals: the representation of suffering to the people of France and the Old World, who, despite – and because of – their privilege had forgotten the grace of God. A deathbed scene in New France thus became, through its placement in the *Relations*, a 'sensible' example to those in 'Old' France. Le Mercier thus sought to shape practice in Europe though evoking the environment of New France in the imaginations of French readers.<sup>70</sup>

Le Mercier was, of course, irritated by the misconceptions of the Wendats, in particular, of the man who had told him of his daughter's dream ('Truly, a man with exalted ideas of heaven and of the state of the blessed', he drily remarked).<sup>71</sup> Significantly, however, the missionary did not say whether or not he corrected this false belief. The Wendat woman's (or her father's) complex spatial understanding of heaven was, of course, doctrinally problematic. Citing Jean de Brébeuf's oft-quoted statement that dreams were 'the principal God of the Huron', historian

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<sup>69</sup> *JR*, 13: 179-81.

<sup>70</sup> Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, a series of pious meditations intended to guide prayer and contemplation, were frequently carried out by Jesuits. The influence of these exercises can be seen here. For an introduction to the *Spiritual Exercises*, see George E. Ganss, "General Introduction," in *Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, ed. George E. Ganss with the collaboration of Parmananda R. Divarkar, Edward J. Malatesta, and Martin E Palmer (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 50-54.

<sup>71</sup> *JR*, 13: 151.



Leslie Tuttle argues that Jesuit missionaries associated dream interpretation with idolatry.<sup>72</sup> This does not seem to have been the case with Le Mercier, however. Missionaries were usually quick to point out misunderstandings surrounding the faith, but in this case, the missionary remained uncharacteristically silent. Perhaps he regarded this particular misapprehension as a harmless fancy rather than a serious heretical offense? Certainly, this was the view of Father Jacques Frémin, a missionary at the Iroquois mission. Writing thirty years after Le Mercier, Frémin asserted that Indigenous beliefs in the power of dreams should be viewed as superstition, rather than ‘fully fledged Idolatry’. This, he believed, was justified, as the Haudenosaunee did ‘not worship their dream or offer it a sacrifice’.<sup>73</sup>

Whether or not the account presented to Le Mercier was ‘true’, we can assume that the man who told it was reasonably confident that the missionary would accept it as being so (otherwise there would be no point recounting the dream in the first place). Given Jesuit missionaries’ often creative means of explaining Christian doctrine in a language that did not have direct translations for many of the words they were trying to express, misinterpretations such as this were commonplace.<sup>74</sup> What this account reveals, however, is that despite religious instruction and exposure to Catholic beliefs, Wendat understandings of heaven were highly coloured by their non-Christian spiritual experiences and beliefs. Thus, for Wendat Christians, actions in heaven could have very material consequences in the secular world.

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<sup>72</sup> Tuttle, “French Jesuits and Indian Dreams,” 171.

<sup>73</sup> *JR*, 54: 99.

<sup>74</sup> For an example of the use of Wendat terminology to express Catholic concepts, see John L. Steckley, *De Religione: Telling the Seventeenth-Century Jesuit Story in Huron to the Iroquois* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004).

Conversely, material objects could be transported from the secular to the spiritual world; and this further complicated the potential spatial boundaries of heaven. Included in Le Mercier's 1637 mission report, is the story of another unnamed Wendat woman who also died of a European-imported disease (the names of Indigenous women are recorded far less frequently in the *Relations* than their male counterparts). The woman's parents, the missionary wrote, attributed this sickness, not to missionary presence in the village, but to the loss of a red hat. Although Le Mercier does not elaborate, it is reasonable to assume that this hat had some spiritual significance, perhaps related to a dream. Before her burial, the woman's parents begged the missionaries to give their daughter another hat. That they asked this of the missionaries also implies that it is a European-made hat, or a hat made in a European style. In a later *Relation*, Paul Le Jeune noted that French nightcaps – in particular, red ones – were especially popular amongst Indigenous people because of the striking colour.<sup>75</sup> When Le Mercier asked why this was so important, the man gave the following response: ““How,” said he, “do you expect the French to recognize her in Heaven if she is not does not wear their livery?”” That French ‘livery’ is important again implies a belief that heaven was a ‘French’ place, which was geographically distinct from other afterlives. Furthermore, the man's statement that a hat buried with his daughter would travel *with* her to heaven is clearly influenced by the Wendat practice of leaving objects with the bodies of the dead to serve them in the afterlife.<sup>76</sup> This practice went directly against biblical teachings. According to the Bible, ‘worldly’, material goods cannot be taken to heaven. As Ecclesiastes, chapter 5, verse 11 states:

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<sup>75</sup> *JR*, 44: 289.

<sup>76</sup> European grave goods, Erik R. Seeman has argued, ‘quickly became central to Wendat mortuary practices’. See Seeman, *The Huron-Wendat Feast of the Dead*, 4. On ‘dream things’, see Campbell, “Immaterial Objects,” 157-73. On New France, see especially, 166-70.

Everyone comes naked from their mother's womb,  
 and as everyone comes, so they depart.  
 They take nothing from their toil  
 that they can carry in their hands.

The missionary was clearly exasperated by what he implied to be the stubborn retention of Wendat customs, despite repeated instruction. '[I]s it not altogether pitiful,' he exclaimed, 'that this old man, after having heard *so often* about Heaven, still continued in this ignorance?'<sup>77</sup> Frequent contact with missionaries (who, at this point, were living at Ihonatiria) would have ensured that he had frequent access to Catholic knowledge, if he chose to learn. However, it is not certain that he would have understood what he heard, or that the missionaries would have expressed their teachings clearly. Furthermore, it is not certain that he would have wanted to learn. Dream spaces, then, were not only areas of what Seeman would view as cultural 'blending'; they could also act as spaces of religious preservation and even resistance.

The Jesuits' preoccupation with gaining souls for heaven did not go unnoticed. One man told Brébeuf that his people were not pleased when the missionaries asked the sick "'where they wished to go after death, to heaven or to hell?'" "'That is not right;" ' he told the missionary, "'we people do not ask such questions, for we always hope that they will not die, and that they will recover their health.'"'<sup>78</sup> Here, the man points out a fundamental difference between the practices of Wendat shamans and Jesuit missionaries: shamans sought to heal, whilst missionaries sought to populate heaven. The emphasis on baptism (particularly in the early years

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<sup>77</sup> *JR*, 13: 31. My emphasis.

<sup>78</sup> *JR*, 13: 127.

of the New France mission) also goes some way toward explaining the link which many Wendat individuals perceived between baptism and heaven.<sup>79</sup>

This section has explored some of the interpretative possibilities of sources describing ‘imagined’ spaces. Whilst the very personal nature of dream and spiritual spaces renders analysis difficult, it is clear that some Wendat individuals presented the soul’s ‘journey’ to heaven as an embodied spiritual experience. It is the very physical and haptic nature of these spiritual journeys that renders some Wendat Christian beliefs so different from their Catholic counterparts. To quote anthropologist Tim Ingold, ‘The path, and not the place, is the primary condition of being, or rather becoming.’<sup>80</sup> The spiritual journey of the soul and the things it carried with it (the red hat, for example) would shape its experiences in heaven. The Middle Ground described by Richard White was socio-economic. And the ‘deathways’ described by Seeman are framed as ‘spiritual’. Yet, to view a distinction between the socio-economic and the spiritual is in itself anachronistic. Boundaries are useful to think with, but we must be wary of over-emphasising their importance. To do so, is to ignore Indigenous conceptions of ‘inhabiting’ a landscape, a landscape wherein all beings, animate and inanimate are interconnected. The landscape of New France was – like the landscape of ‘Old’, metropolitan France – imbued with the sacred. But ‘sensing’ this sacred was a complex process of cultural exchange, which took place in a clearly Indigenous environment.

### **Jesuit imaginations: Orienting the body in an ‘imagined’ landscape**

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<sup>79</sup> Allan Greer points out that while many Wendats believed that baptism caused death, the Haudenosaunee, who were evangelised later, worried that their childrens’ souls might be stolen by missionaries. Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 7.

<sup>80</sup> Tim Ingold, *Being Alive*, 12.

As we saw in first section of this chapter, one way that Wendats navigated the sacred landscape was through the use of geographical markers. *Ekarenniondi*, as we saw above, was the rock which one passed on the way to the village of souls. But how did missionaries orient themselves in unfamiliar landscapes? As we saw in Chapter 2 of this thesis, Jesuits were often reliant on Indigenous guides to conduct them to mission settlements either by canoe or on foot. When left to their own devices, Jesuit embodied practices – in particular prayer – gave them the means to comprehend their surroundings.

### **Measuring distance and time**

During the early modern period, parts of the body were used both to signify and measure distance. In the accounts of travellers to New France, for instance, body parts appear as markers of proximity and distance. After making the ocean crossing to the colony in 1639, Mother Cécile de Sainte-Croix wrote that her party had been, ‘two fingers [away] from death’ (*‘à deux droigts de la mort’*), when the ship they were travelling aboard almost collided with an iceberg. Mother Cécile’s assertion not only indicates her bodily proximity to mortal peril, but that she was almost close enough to touch – and thus, to perceive – death. As we have seen, this was a sentiment also experienced by Jogues’ when he was a ‘public prisoner’ in an Iroquoian village and, as a result, ‘every day within two finger-lengths of death’ (*‘tous les iours à deux droigts de la mort’*).<sup>81</sup> The body was a tool of measuring, then, but it could also be one of understanding.

Bodily experiences of prayers and psalms, such as the *Ave Maria* and the *Miserere*, were also used to describe the passing of time. For the measurement of time, the type of prayer was not

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<sup>81</sup> *JR*, 31: 53; 52.

unrelated to the activity being carried out. The *Constitutions* of the Quebec Ursulines, written by Jérôme Lalemant in 1647, stipulated that every Friday, each nun should carry out a penance, whipping herself in her cell ‘for the space of a *miserere*’ (*l’espace d’un miserere*) and a *Christus Factus*, (a gradual honouring Christ’s suffering).<sup>82</sup> This was no ‘imagined’ temporal referent, but rather an instruction to recite the psalm *whilst* carrying out the act of penance (how quickly or slowly the psalm was recited would have been a case of individual preference!) One of the penitential psalms, the *miserere* was a particularly apt measurement of time for acts of repentance; the words of the psalm underscoring the penitent’s chastisement.<sup>83</sup> Implicit in the *Constitutions*’ instruction too, was the fact that this psalm was so well-known that it could be recited by heart (the *miserere* was frequently chanted and sung both during masses and other religious services).<sup>84</sup> Jesuit missionaries also used the psalm to measure and describe time during and after moments of extreme danger when God’s mercy was sought. In a 1629 letter, Father Charles Lalemant described the moments leading up to what he thought would be his death in a shipwreck (the missionary survived). ‘We were preparing ourselves to meet death,’ Lalemant wrote, ‘which could not be farther away than three *Miserere*’s [sic], when I heard some one call me on the deck of the ship’.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, in a letter included in Father Claude Dablon’s *Relation* of 1676-77, Father Jean Baptiste Boucher described the moment when his ship almost smashed into a rocky islet in stormy weather. ‘It lacked only The Space of time needed to say a *miserere*’, he wrote, ‘for us to have been lost beyond recovery’.<sup>86</sup> While these accounts do not describe the

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<sup>82</sup> Jérôme Lalemant, *Constitutions et Règlements des Ursulines de Québec* (1647), ed. Soeur Gabrielle Lapointe (Québec, 1974), 71.

<sup>83</sup> The *miserere* is Psalm 51.

<sup>84</sup> For examples of the *miserere* being sung in New France, see *JJ*, 81, 113, 134, 233, 316.

<sup>85</sup> *JR*, 4: 237.

<sup>86</sup> *JR*, 60: 259-61. The original French reads: ‘il ne falloit plus que l’Espace dvn miserere pour estre perdus sans retour.’ *JR*, 60: 258-60.

active recital of the psalm, they nonetheless point toward an embodied awareness of the amount of time that it *would* take to recite it. In this instance, the missionaries did not use body parts (fingers, hands, feet, etc.) to describe proximity and distance, but rather the bodily experience of the time it *would* take to cover this distance, the embodied memory of practice. The prayer may also have shaped the experience. Indeed, the *Miserere*'s connotations – as a plea for divine misericorde – would not have been lost on readers of the missionary's account.

Penitential acts aside, the *Miserere* was also a measure of time in lay society more generally. In seventeenth-century parlance, 'I'll be back in a *Miserere*' ('*Je reviendray dans un Misereré*'), was the equivalent of the present-day, 'I'll be back in a jiffy'.<sup>87</sup> The term, *miserere*, was thus a synonym for a short amount of time. The seventeenth-century idiomatic phrase, 'it's only been a *Misereré*' ('*il n'a esté qu'un Misereré*') supports the implied brevity of this prayer.<sup>88</sup> From today's perspective, this might appear strange; at nineteen verses in length, the *Miserere* could not be described as short. But just as early modern perceptions of sensory phenomena – and environmental conditions of sensing – differed from those of the present-day, so too did perceptions of time.<sup>89</sup> Of course, these could also be dependent on a number of factors, including social expectations, local customs, and personal preferences. For the Ursuline nun carrying out her weekly self-flagellation, the *Miserere* may (or may not) have seemed awfully long, depending on her bodily and mental responses to pain.

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<sup>87</sup> *DAF* (1694), s.v. "misereré."

<sup>88</sup> *DAF* (1694), s.v. "miserere."

<sup>89</sup> On the historical specificity of sense perception, see Mark M. Smith, "Producing Sense, Consuming Sense, Making Sense: Perils and Prospects for Sensory History," *Journal of Social History* 40, no. 4 (2007), 841-42.

Recipe books are also useful sources for the analysis of time measurement. Nicolas Lemery's remedy for hysteria or the swelling of the womb, for instance, was to be boiled 'for the length of a *miserere*' ('*la longueur d'un miserere*').<sup>90</sup> Lemery's writings are particularly useful, in that they provide several recipes in which the *Miserere* appears, each one giving slightly different instructions on its use. While the above-cited recipe could imply that the *miserere* should be recited in order to gauge boiling time, Lemery's recipe for a multi-purpose medicinal ointment (which had to be made in the month of May) implied that the mixture should be stirred for the amount of time that it *would take* if one were to recite the *Miserere*; 'continue stirring on a low heat', the recipe states, 'for same amount of time that it would take to say a *Miserere mei Deus*' ('*remuant toujours sur petit feu autant de temps que l'on seroit à dire un Miserere Mei Deus*').<sup>91</sup> Several other recipes, notably those for an ointment called *Gratia Dei* for wounds and ulcers, some odoriferous lozenges made by the Carthusian monks at the Grande Chartreuse monastery, and an incense recipe made by the same, all indicated that the ingredients had to be boiled and stirred, '*l'espace d'un miserere*' (literally 'for the space of a *miserere*').<sup>92</sup> Time and space are here intertwined. Given the religious characters of these three recipes, it is tempting to view this phrase as an instruction to recite the prayer whilst stirring (which would also lend a particular rhythm to the making process). However, given the fact that these words are present in other recipes as shorthand for a certain amount of time as understood by the reader, it is unclear whether actual recitation was necessary. At the same time, other stipulations – notably, the condition that one recipe had to be made during the month of May – point to the importance of

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<sup>90</sup> Nicolas Lemery, *Nouveau recueil de secrets et curiositez les plus rares et admirables de tous les effets que l'art de la nature sont capables de produire, très-utiles & nécessaires à tous ceux qui son curieux de conserver leur santé*, tome 1, 8e édition (Amsterdam, 1709), 321.

<sup>91</sup> Lemery, *Nouveau recueil*, 373

<sup>92</sup> Nicolas Lemery, *Recueil des plus beaux secrets de medecine, pour la guerison de toutes les maladies, blessures, & autres accidens qui surviennent au Corps humain; Et la maniere de préparer facilement dans les Familles les remédes & médicamens qui y sont nécessaires* (Amsterdam, 1709), 147; 271.



making processes in the creation of successful remedies.<sup>93</sup> Spaces in time (i.e. the month of May) could also be key factors in these processes. In this context, recitation of a particular prayer is not at all out of place. Indeed, the simple evocation of this prayer would be enough to bring its associated meanings to the minds of readers and makers. Embodied practices of recitation, therefore, enabled Europeans to gauge time through embodied temporality, which was particularly important in an age when timepieces remained relatively rare.<sup>94</sup>

### **Landscape and Imaginations**

Mission historiography has made much of Jesuits' 'adaptation' to local customs and practices, but there has been little analysis of their personal (interior) spiritual development.<sup>95</sup> As we saw in Chapter 2, Jesuit bodies might have adapted 'to the usage of the region in which they lived', but what about Jesuit *minds*? How did missionaries' imaginations adapt to new environments? Whilst scholars have interpreted the 'harsh' landscapes of New France as 'crosses' stoically borne by missionaries in imitation of the martyrs, very little attention has been paid to how these landscapes – and the people who inhabited them – shaped Jesuit imaginations. While the previous section of this chapter examined influences of Wendat beliefs on individual Wendat conceptions of heaven, this section will discuss Iroquoian influences on Jesuit experiences of the 'imaginary'.<sup>96</sup> Through an examination of Isaac Jogues's dream-visions, it will argue that

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<sup>93</sup> See Lemery, *Nouveau recueil*, 372.

<sup>94</sup> The Jesuit residence of Quebec did have a clock during this period, but individual missionaries would not have carried timepieces. For the Jesuit clock see, *JR*, 8: 111-13.

<sup>95</sup> On missionary adaptation, see John W. O'Malley, "The Historiography of the Society of Jesus: Where Does It Stand Today?" in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540-1773*, ed. John W. O'Malley, S.J., Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris, and T. Frank Kennedy, S.J. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999): 3-37.

<sup>96</sup> The term Iroquoian here signifies the Iroquoian-speaking groups of the Eastern Woodlands, notably the people of the Wendat Confederacy and the Haudenosaunee.

the ‘imagined’ spiritual experiences of missionaries were shaped, not only by their surroundings, but by the practices of the Indigenous people they encountered.

In recent years, dreams and visions have enjoyed considerable attention in the historiography of the Atlantic World.<sup>97</sup> The imaginary, as scholars have pointed out, was just as much a terrain of conversion as the ‘material’ world.<sup>98</sup> But so too was it a place where missionaries processed their experiences of New France, placing them within the context of their Catholic beliefs. To what extent, then, did experiences in New France shape missionary imaginations? And how far did Iroquoian beliefs provoke subtle shifts in Jesuit mentalities?

### **The Dream-Visions of Isaac Jogues**

Isaac Jogues’s dream-visions provide a useful case study for the examination of missionary experiences of imagined spaces. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, whilst very few descriptions of early modern dreams are extant, three distinct accounts in which Jogues describes his dreams survive, allowing for a comparative analysis. Secondly, one of these dreams took place in 1638 at the Jesuit residence of St Joseph in Ihonatiria (where Jogues had been resident since 1636). The missionary’s dream must therefore be placed within the same context as that of the Wendat woman whose death was recounted at the start of this chapter: widespread epidemic and death, and the resultant conversations between missionaries and Wendats about – to borrow Erik R. Seeman’s term – ‘deathways’. Indeed, as we shall see, it was

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<sup>97</sup> See, for example, Ann Marie Plane and Leslie Tuttle, eds., *Dreams, Dreamers and Visions in the Early Modern Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Mary Baine Campbell, “Gender, Colonialism, and the Queerness of Dreams: Seventeenth-Century Dreamwork,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 44, no. 1 (2014): 187-213; Campbell, “Immaterial Objects,” 157-73.

<sup>98</sup> See, in particular, Deslandres, “Dreams Clash,” 144.

not only Indigenous conceptions of the imaginary which were altered as a result of missionary encounters. Thirdly, and finally, Jogues provides commentary on several of his dreams, allowing for the examination of the missionary's dream analysis and the possible meanings of these accounts.

Whilst Jogues's dreams provide an invaluable source for the study of the imaginary, we must nonetheless proceed with caution. The missionary's accounts survive, not in the form of autograph documents, but as transcribed and edited sources. This is not, in itself, an obstacle, but we must remember that the form in which we read them today was not the form originally intended by the author. As Chapter 5 of this thesis will argue, form and meaning were inextricably linked. Of particular note for this chapter, however, is the fact that Jogues's accounts have all been preserved in *Memoires touchant la mort et la virtue des Peres Isaac Jogues, Anne de Noue, Anthoine Daniel, Jean de Brebeuf, Gabriel Lallement, Charles Garnier, Noel Chabanel & un seculier René Goupil*. More commonly known as the Manuscript of 1652, this book, bound in purple velvet, is a compendium of documents relating to the lives and deaths of eight Jesuits who died in the course of their mission to New France.<sup>99</sup> As Allan Greer, has argued, the Jesuits 'were writing hagiography, not history'.<sup>100</sup> Even so, reading this collection of sources 'against the grain', and in tandem with more-explicitly ethnographic materials, can allow the historian to identify possible Indigenous influences on Jesuit imaginations, included – consciously or unconsciously – in missionary accounts.

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<sup>99</sup> *Memoires touchant la mort et la virtue des Peres Isaac Jogues, Anne de Noue, Anthoine Daniel, Jean de Brebeuf, Gabriel Lallement, Charles Garnier, Noel Chabanel & un seculier René Goupil*. This document is commonly referred to as MS 1652 and will be hereafter referred to as MS 1652. AJC, Q-0001, 202. For a nuanced analysis of this manuscript as a relic, see Julia Boss, "Writing a Relic: The Uses of Hagiography in New France," in *Colonial Saints: Discovering the Holy in the Americas*, ed. Allan Greer and Jodi Bilinkoff (London: Routledge, 2003): 211-33.

<sup>100</sup> Greer, *Mohawk Saint*, viii.

Perhaps unsurprisingly (given his role as a Jesuit ‘martyr’), Isaac Jogues’s dream-visions focus primarily on suffering and entrance to the celestial paradise after the Last Judgement. After arriving in the colony in 1636, Jogues spent several years as a missionary in Wendake (known to missionaries as the ‘*pays des hurons*’), before being taken prisoner by a party of Haudenosaunee warriors in August 1642.<sup>101</sup> Like other captured enemy warriors, Jogues was paraded from village to village, experiencing summary torture in each. While some prisoners would be executed in a ritual ceremony, others were adopted to replace family members lost to war or epidemic. The missionary’s captives could not agree what to do with Jogues and his companion, René Goupil, so they became ‘public’ prisoners, free to move about the village, but unprotected by family ties. As the *Relation* stated:

when they [the Iroquois] retain some public prisoner, like the Father, without giving him to any individual, this poor man is every day within two finger-lengths of death. If some rascal beat[s] him to death, no one will trouble himself about it.<sup>102</sup>

Goupil, for instance, was killed after he traced the symbol of the cross on the forehead of a young boy.<sup>103</sup> But Jogues remained with the Haudenosaunee until November 1643, when he escaped to England on Dutch ship (though he would subsequently ‘achieve’ ‘martyrdom’ when he was captured for the second time in 1646).<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> *JR*, 31: 21.

<sup>102</sup> *JR*, 31: 53.

<sup>103</sup> *JR*, 31: 55.

<sup>104</sup> For a brief outline of Jogues’s life, see Georges-Émile Giguère, “JOGUES, ISAAC,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed March 9, 2015, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/jogues\\_isaac\\_1E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/jogues_isaac_1E.html).

The first dream that we will examine occurred during the missionary's first period of captivity. The account appears in two separate sources, firstly, in the *Relation* of 1647, and secondly, in the 1652 Manuscript.<sup>105</sup> In the account, Jogues describes a dream which he had during his time as a prisoner. It begins with the missionary's recollection that he regularly left the village to pray in solitude, or, in his words, 'to groan more freely before you, O my God; in order to offer you my prayer, and to lift the sluice, in your presence, of my distress and my complaints.'<sup>106</sup> One day, the missionary dreamt that he left the village, as usual, but that when he returned he 'found all things new'. He continued:

those great stakes which surrounded our village appeared to me changed into towers, bulwarks, and walls of an illustrious beauty: so that, however, I saw nothing that was newly built, but indeed a city, highly venerable for its antiquity. Doubting if it were our village, I saw some Hiroquois come out, with whom I was very well acquainted, who seemed to assure me that in truth it was our village. Filled with astonishment, I approached that City; having passed the first gate, I saw these two letters, L.N., engraved in large characters upon the right column of the second gate, and next a little lamb, slaughtered. I was surprised, being unable to conceive how Barbarians who have no knowledge of our letters could have engraved these characters; and, while I was seeking the explanation of it in my own mind, I saw overhead, in a roll, these words written, *Laudent nomen ejus*. At the same time, I received a great light in the depth of my soul, which caused me to see that rightly were they praising the name of the lamb, who in their distresses and tribulations were striving to imitate the gentleness of him who, like a lamb, had said no word to those who, having robbed him of his fleece, were leading him to death.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> For the account as it appears in the 1647 *Relation*, see *JR*, 31: 63-69. For the account in the Manuscript of 1652, see MS 1652, AJC, Q-0001, 202, 97-104.

<sup>106</sup> *JR*, 31: 63

<sup>107</sup> *JR*, 31: 63-65.

The implied meaning of this dream is clear: the ‘Barbarians’ of New France would – in time – become Christians, striving to imitate the ‘gentleness’ of Christ, who had died for their sins.

But an examination of 1652 Manuscript – in particular, Father Paul Ragueneau’s small editorial additions – allows for a more detailed analysis of the dream’s possible meanings. Here I would like to focus on one specific aspect of this document: the representation of the lamb of Christ. In the 1652 copy of the text, Ragueneau’s indecisive editorial stance on the figure of the lamb, merits further investigation. Following the letters ‘L.N.’, Ragueneau – perhaps not confident in his drawing abilities – left a blank, underlined space in his text, accompanied by the note (in the vernacular French, rather than scholarly Latin), ‘there should be the figure of a lamb here’ (*‘fault icy figure un agneau’*) (see Fig. 8, below).<sup>108</sup> Below the words, ‘*Laudent nomen ejus*’ (‘praise his name’), however, the mission superior did draw a small banner bearing these words, which flies above the letters ‘L.N.’, and a small, rough, sketch of a lamb, marked with the words, ‘*un agneau*’ (‘a lamb’) (see Fig. 8).<sup>109</sup> Save a few occasional woodcuts produced in France, it is rare to find images in Jesuit accounts.<sup>110</sup> Ragueneau’s inclusion of a small drawing of a lamb (inserted within the lines of the text) highlights the importance of the lamb in Jogues’s original manuscript. This is further underscored by Ragueneau’s note, ‘there *should* be a lamb here’ (my emphasis), which implies that the drawing was present in Jogues’s no-longer-extant, autograph manuscript. The parallel between the missionary’s life and the life of Christ is evident. Just as Christ had

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<sup>108</sup> MS 1652, AJC, Q-0001, 202, 98.

<sup>109</sup> MS 1652, AJC, Q-0001, 202, 98.

<sup>110</sup> One clear exception being the ink illustrations in Claude Chauchetière’s *Narration de la mission du Sault*. See Chauchetière, *Narration de la mission du Sault depuis sa fondation jusqu’en 1686*, ed. Hélène Avisseau (Bordeaux: Archives départementales de la Gironde, 1984). The original manuscript is held in the Archives départementales de la Gironde (Bordeaux). A digital reproduction is available via the BAnQ: [http://pistard.banq.qc.ca/unite\\_chercheurs/description\\_fonds?p\\_anqsid=20070608142021705&p\\_classe=P&p\\_fonds=1000&p\\_centre=03Q&p\\_numunide=4293](http://pistard.banq.qc.ca/unite_chercheurs/description_fonds?p_anqsid=20070608142021705&p_classe=P&p_fonds=1000&p_centre=03Q&p_numunide=4293)

carried his cross to Calvary, Jogues believed that with every village he entered he drew nearer to death.

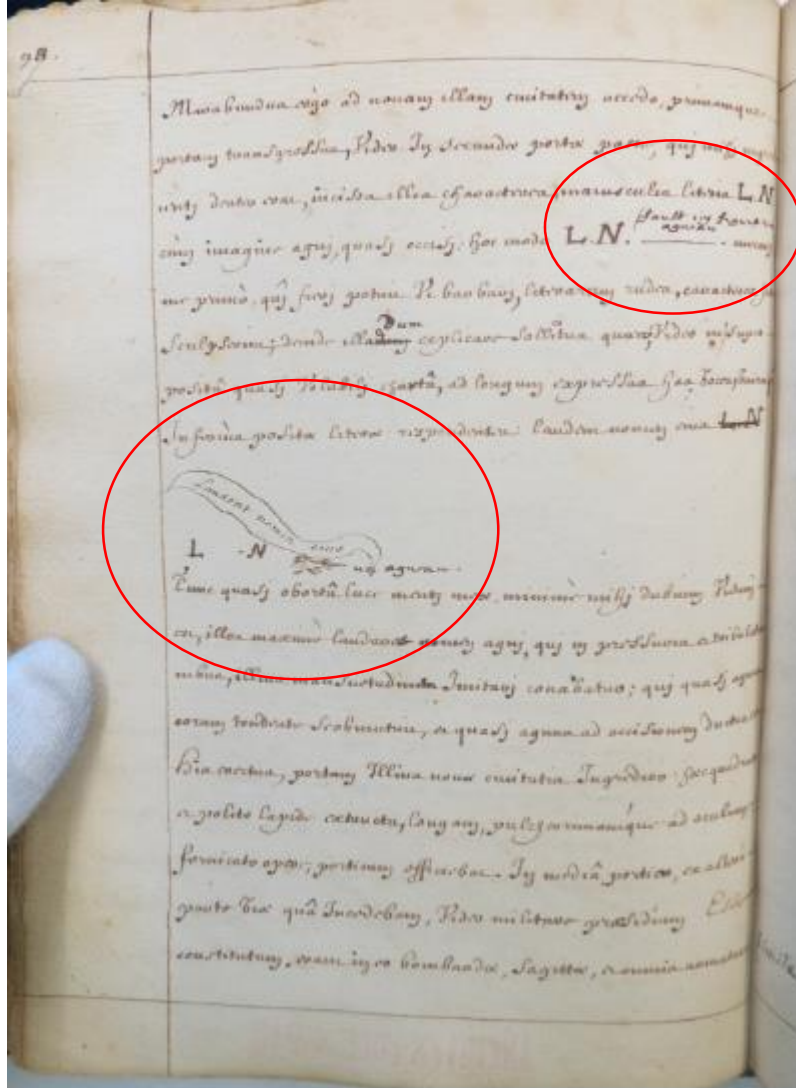


Fig. 8. “Manuscript of 1652,” AJC, Q-001, 202, 98.  
Les Archives des jésuites au Canada/The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada

But this sketch – and the dream engraving that it represented – draws on Indigenous as well as European, pictographic traditions. In Jogues’s account, the letters L.N. (representing ‘*Laudent*

*nomen ejus*’) and a lamb were engraved on the right column of the second gate into the city, which had been transformed from the ‘great stakes’ of the ‘original’ village (that is, the village where Jogues was being held captive). In France, city gates and ceremonial gates did not often have decorated columns; these usually remained plain. Paintings or bas-reliefs were usually on ‘overdoor’ panels (see Fig. 9, below). It seems likely, therefore, that the engravings on the gate columns in Jogues’s dream were influenced by something he had seen in North America. One possible source of inspiration for this figure are dendroglyphs (tree carvings) and pictographs (in particular, those painted and sketched on trees), which could convey multiple messages to the inhabitants of the eastern woodlands. Very few scholars have analysed these complex systems of communication. Given the lack of rock art in the Eastern Woodlands – which can perhaps be accounted for by the lack of suitable rock surfaces – some scholars have argued that trees were the principle support of non-portable art.<sup>111</sup> As a result of the extensive European exploitation of timber resources, ‘post-contact’, it is likely that many of these carvings were destroyed.<sup>112</sup> Nonetheless, there are several copies of seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century pictographs in ethnographic and political documents.<sup>113</sup> The earliest known documentary example of this phenomenon is a manuscript dated 1666. On the basis of the script, this document has been attributed to Jesuit missionary Joseph-Marie Chaumonot.<sup>114</sup> As Allan Greer has

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<sup>111</sup> Fred E. Coy, Jr., “Native American Dendroglyphs of the Eastern Woodlands,” in *Rock Art of Eastern North America: Capturing Images and Insight*, ed. Carol Diaz-Granados and James R. Duncan (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), 3-4; Edward J. Lenik, *Making Pictures in Stone: American Indian Rock Art of the North East* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2009), 23.

<sup>112</sup> Lenik, *Making Pictures in Stone*, 23.

<sup>113</sup> For an analysis of Anishinaabe (the autonym used by Ojibwe, Odawa/Ottawa, Chippewa, Nipissing or Potawatomi people) pictographs on treatises and other documents from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century see Heidi Bohaker, “Reading Anishinaabe Identities: Meaning and Metaphor in *Nindoodem Pictographs*,” *Ethnohistory* 57, no.1 (2010), 11-33.

<sup>114</sup> Allan Greer, “A Wandering Jesuit in Europe and America: Father Chaumonot Finds a Home,” in *Empires of God: Religious Encounters in the Early Modern Atlantic*, ed. Linda Gregerson and Susan Juster (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 118.



recently argued, the focal point of this manuscript is its images, which depict – amongst other martial pictographs – animals representing clan ‘totems’ (symbols signifying a particular group – see Fig. 10, below), animals carrying weapons, and captive prisoners. Text, as Greer points out, is ‘secondary’ to these images, demonstrating Chaumonot’s immersion in Iroquoian culture and its resultant influence on the manuscript. Chaumonot, he argues, drew extensively on Native semiotic systems, even when producing a documents aimed at a French audience.<sup>115</sup>



Fig. 9. Arch of triumph for Louis XIII’s royal entry to the Faubourg Saint-Jacques, in *Eloges et discours sur la triomphante réception du Roy en sa Ville de Paris après la réduction de La Rochelle...* (Paris, 1629), 34.

Source:

<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8446773b/f47.item.r=arc%20de%20triomphe>

<sup>115</sup> For Greer’s analysis of this manuscript, see Greer, “A Wandering Jesuit in Europe and America,” 118-19. For a reproduction of the manuscript with an accompanying commentary, see *RAQ* 26, no. 2 (1996): 5-10.



Fig. 10. Pierre-Joseph-Marie Chaumonot, “Mémoire concernant la nation Iroquoise.” (1666). Detail showing turtle and wolf totems. Reproduced in *RAQ* 26, no.2 (1996), 5-10.

The text does, however, provide useful context for readers unfamiliar with Iroquoian culture. The missionary described the composition of the Iroquois League and listed the names of each clan in both Iroquoian and French: Turtle, Wolf, Bear, Beaver, etc. More importantly for our purposes, he also described the ways in which clans’ animal totems were deployed. ‘Each tribe has,’ the missionary asserted, ‘in the gable of its cabin, the animal of its tribe painted; some black, others red.’<sup>116</sup> He also provided a detailed description of the meanings of specific pictographic forms. ‘When they do go to war,’ he wrote, ‘and wish to inform those of the party who might pass their path,

they make a representation of the animal of their tribe with a hatchet in his dexter paw; sometimes a sabre or a club; and if the same party is made up from several tribes, each draws the animal of his tribe, and their number, all on a tree, from which the bark is removed. The animal of the tribe which heads the expedition is always foremost.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>116</sup> E.B. O’Callaghan ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York procured in Holland, England, and France by John Romeyn Bordhead*, 15 vols. (Albany: Weed, Parsons, and Company, 1855), 9: 48.

<sup>117</sup> O’Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 9: 48.

Pictographs were thus complex symbols, which could convey detailed messages. The missionary recounted. 'When they have lost any of their party on the field of battle,

They sketch men with the legs in the air, and without heads, and in the same number as they have lost; and to denote the tribe to which they belonged, they paint the animal of the tribe of the deceased on its back, the paws in the air; and if it be the chief of the party that is dead, the animal is without the head.<sup>118</sup>

French soldiers and missionaries also left marks on trees, but these tended to be less complex in form; usually, these engravings were crosses. One example of this phenomenon appears in Jesuit missionary Father Jacques Buteux's 1651 journal of his journey to the Atikamekw nation, which he hoped to convert to Catholicism. On the fifteenth day of his journey, Buteux wrote, his travelling party built a small chapel and erected a small cross when they set up camp for the evening. 'Hitherto', he asserted, 'we had contented ourselves, at our various camps, with carving a Cross on a tree; but in this spot we planted that noble standard.'<sup>119</sup> On the one hand, the travellers were imitating Jacques Cartier and other European colonisers who erected crosses in order to 'claim' territorial possession in the 'New World'.<sup>120</sup> On the other, they were inscribing themselves into the complex pictographic cultures of the eastern woodlands.

While European dendroglyphs appear relatively frequently in colonial and missionary documents, they are rarely analysed as anything other than statements of colonial possession. A

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<sup>118</sup> O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 9: 49.

<sup>119</sup> *JR*, 37: 33.

<sup>120</sup> Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 56-63; see also, L.C. Green and Olive P. Dickason, *The Law of Nations and the New World* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1993), especially 7-16.

closer examination of these engravings, however, reveals more complex meanings. For instance, in 1646, when Jesuit Father Anne de Nouë failed to arrive at Fort Richelieu as expected, a soldier from the fort along with ‘2 Hurons’ went in search of the missionary. When they found de Nouë’s shelter, the Wendat men uncovered his tracks and followed them in the hope of locating the missionary. Instead, they found his corpse; de Nouë had died from exposure.<sup>121</sup> What happened next is testament to the many forms of cultural exchange present in the ‘middle ground’. Having made a prayer to God, the soldier ‘notche[d] a cross on the nearest tree’.<sup>122</sup> This would not have seemed unusual to a European observer; crosses were marked in a variety of locations in Europe for numerous purposes, territorial and personal.<sup>123</sup> But, in this context, it can also be read as a memorial which would have been legible to both Europeans and Indigenous people. Sketches of ‘men with legs in the air’ alongside ‘the animal of the tribe of the deceased on its back’, could give information about the number of warriors who had died and which clans they had belonged to. The cross also evoked multiple meanings. Marked on the tree nearest the spot where de Nouë’s body had lain, it indicated the ‘clan’ to which the missionary had belonged: that of Christ. This association would have been evident to the two Wendat men in the search party and its significance would not have been lost on the soldier who carved it.

Following this brief examination of dendroglyphic and pictographic customs, several points can be made about the meanings of the lamb in Isaac Jogues’s dream. Engraved on the right column of the second gate into the missionary’s imagined city – which had once been constructed from a wooden palisade stake – it can be read as a marker of territory and possession, but also of

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<sup>121</sup> *JR*, 29: 21-25.

<sup>122</sup> *JR*, 29: 25.

<sup>123</sup> For an example of cross planting in ‘Old’ France, see Amanda Eurich, “Sacralising Space: Reclaiming Civic Culture in Early Modern France,” in *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 259-81.

belonging. In this reading, the lamb can be interpreted as a pictorial rendering of Jogues's – and the 'imagined' city's – 'clan'; they were part of Christ's flock, here represented as totemic lamb. We might also speculate that Ragueneau's insistence on the lamb's importance in the Manuscript of 1652 was a result of its prominence in the original manuscript, which – as we shall see below – implied Jogues's desire to imitate Christ. Add to this Jesuit missionaries' distribution of small *Agnus Dei* tokens, in particular to French Christians, but also to important Indigenous leaders and children, and the lamb stands out as an important symbol of Catholic identity.<sup>124</sup>

Other aspects of the missionary's dream were clearly influenced by his physical experiences of pain as a prisoner with the Haudenosaunee. In his dream, the missionary was lead before a 'judge', who beat him severely with a switch. He wrote:

although only a single hand struck me, I felt as much pain as I experienced at my entrance into the first village of the Hiroquois, when all the youth of the county, armed with sticks, treated us with unequalled cruelty.<sup>125</sup>

The missionary's physical experience of pain in the 'lived' world – whilst 'running the gauntlet' in the Haudenosaunee villages through which he had travelled – provided him with a physical, sensory gauge with which he could measure and describe his experiences. Jogues's account of one such entrance into a village is detailed in the 1647 *Relation*, and is styled as a journey on the road to Calvary and heaven:

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<sup>124</sup> For the distribution of *Agnus Dei*, see *JJ*, 76; 290; *JR*, 11: 173.

<sup>125</sup> *JR*, 31: 67.

The procession [of prisoners] beginning to enter this narrow way of Paradise ... it was indeed then that I was able to say with my Lord and master, *Supra dorsum meum fabricaverunt peccatores*, ‘Sinners have built and left monuments of their rage upon my back.’<sup>126</sup>

This account demonstrates the missionary’s desire to follow in the footsteps of Christ and his missionary confreres who had already attained ‘martyrdom’. This longing is confirmed in his dream analysis when he confides that the blows which he had received convinced him that, ‘I followed him who preceded me but not along the same path’.<sup>127</sup> As Timothy Pearson reminds us, the doctrine of the communion of the saints (*communio sanctorum*) stated that all saints, past and future, were connected with one another and imbued with similar qualities which prompted them to carry out similar actions.<sup>128</sup> For Jogues, experiential visions provided him with a promise – a *taste*, to borrow a word which the missionary used to describe an earlier dream – of his ‘glorious’ future in the Celestial Paradise.<sup>129</sup> The road, however, would be one of suffering. Indeed, after the ‘judge’ had beaten him, his forgiving embrace provided the missionary with solace. Jogues described it thus:

Finally, as if my judge had admired my patience, he laid down the rod, and, falling on my neck, embraced me; and in banishing my griefs, he filled me with a consolation wholly divine and entirely inexplicable.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> *JR*, 31: 41.

<sup>127</sup> François Roustang, ed., *Les jésuites de la Nouvelle-France* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1961), 193. All translations from Roustang are my own. ‘je suivis celui qui me précédait, mais non d’un pas égal.’

<sup>128</sup> Timothy G. Pearson, *Becoming Holy in Early Canada* (London: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2014), 7.

<sup>129</sup> For Jogues’s use of the word taste and related gustatory terms, such as ‘delights’ (‘délices’), see Roustang, ed. *Les Jésuites de la Nouvelle-France*, 187-88.

<sup>130</sup> *JR*, 31: 67.

Just as patience and stoicism in the face of suffering was admired in Indigenous cultures, so too was it a prominent theme in hagiographical discourses; here again, the missionary draws on his experience of both European and Indigenous cultures.<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, that his consolation was ‘entirely inexplicable’, does not imply the missionary’s confusion, but rather his inability to describe it, something which we will return to later in this chapter.

Having awoken from this dream - ‘Having returned to myself’, as Jogues puts it – the Jesuit begins to meditate on its possible meanings. Here, the missionary’s phrasing suggests an ‘out of body’ experience, not unlike those experienced in Wendat dreams when the soul left the body to roam the spirit world. In Jogues’s account, however, the primary agent was God, not an independent soul. ‘God’, he explained in the 1647 *Relation*:

had wrought wonders in my soul, - not only because of the connection, which these things had among themselves, but especially because of the great fire of love which my Judge had kindled in the depth of my heart, the remembrance of which alone, several months later, drew from me tears of the sweetest consolation.<sup>132</sup>

This dream experience, Jogues implied, had permitted him to see the ‘connection’ between things in his ‘lived’ experience and his path to Paradise. Unlike the ‘things’ of Indigenous dreams, which could ‘move’ from the dream world to the waking world, the ‘things’ of Jogues’s

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<sup>131</sup> For a nuanced discussion of the ways in which missionary actions could simultaneously resonate in – and be made to appeal to – European and Indigenous cultural contexts, see Emma Anderson, “Blood, Fire, and ‘Baptism’: Three Perspectives on the Death of Jean de Brébeuf, Seventeenth-Century Jesuit ‘Martyr,’” in *Native Americans, Christianity and the Reshaping of American Religious Landscapes*, ed. Joel W. Martin and Mark A. Nicholas (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), especially 140.

<sup>132</sup> *JR*, 31: 69.

dream are sensory ‘emotives’ (pain and consolation), which are inextricably linked.<sup>133</sup> The suffering of his lived experienced was a pre-requisite for his eventual spiritual consolation in heaven, which would be eternal (unlike his brief sojourn on the earth).

In his post-dream analysis the missionary makes clear parallels between the city of his dreams and the Celestial paradise:

I therefore thought that this city, placed in a singular fashion where our village was, was the dwelling-place of the blessed, where I did not deserve to enter, but where I would enter one day, if I persevered with patience and faith until the end, and I hoped that this village in which I had suffered, and suffered still, would change into this saintly city for me.<sup>134</sup>

Jogues’s description of the ‘singular’ and astonishing position of his dream city – that is, the fact that it was in the same location as the village where he was being held captive – echoes the wonder and confusion he had expressed earlier in his account. The missionary had initially doubted that the village he visited in his dream was the village where he was being held captive. But, having seen ‘some Hiroquois come out [of the village], with whom I was very well acquainted,’ he was reassured ‘that in truth it was *our* village’.<sup>135</sup> While it was the same village, however, it was appearing to him in another state and at another time. Jogues’s dream can,

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<sup>133</sup> William Reddy coined the term ‘emotive’ to describe the nature of emotions as ‘performative utterances’, which simultaneously ‘do things to the world’, whilst at the same time being influenced by it. See William Reddy, “Against Constructionism: The Historical Ethnography of Emotions,” *Current Anthropology* 38, no.3 (1997), 331.

<sup>134</sup> Roustang, ed., *Les jésuites de la Nouvelle-France*, 192. ‘J’ai donc pensé que cette cite, placée de façon singulière où se trouve notre bourgade, était la demeure des bienheureux, où je ne méritais pas d’entrer mais où j’entrerais un jour, si je persévrais avec patience et fidélité jusqu’à la fin, et j’espérais que cette bourgade en laquelle j’avais tant souffert et souffrais encore se changerait pour moi en cette sainte cité.’

<sup>135</sup> *JR*, 31: 63. My emphasis.



therefore, be characterised as a prophetic dream-vision. The missionary implied that he was seeing/experiencing the village at an unspecified time in the future, when the Indigenous peoples of New France had been converted to Christianity.<sup>136</sup>

Yet, Jogues's dream analysis also provides useful insights into his experiences and conceptions of space. His insistence on the 'singular' or 'striking' position of the village, which was in the same location as the Haudenosaunee village, highlights the necessity of his suffering on the mission terrain to achieve the saintliness conferred on his missionary and apostolic forefathers. His actions in the worldly, sinful village of his waking existence would therefore have direct consequences for his existence in the celestial city. Jogues's dream city and his place of captivity, then, overlapped in space and disrupted the chronological flow of time.

Although the missionary highlighted parallels between his vision and the vision experienced by John in the book of Revelations,<sup>137</sup> it could also be argued that Jogues's dream was influenced by Iroquoian spiritual beliefs. Indeed, clear similarities can be read between Jogues's dream experience and the Wendat afterlife. For instance, although the village to which Jogues returned bears a clear resemblance to John's vision in Revelation, its position and overlap with the lived world implies the influence of the concept of the village of souls on the missionary's experience. The afterlife of Jogues's dream (though styled as the paradise of Revelation) was geographically situated on Iroquoian terrain. Despite – and perhaps *because of* – its location, the missionary was

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<sup>136</sup> On embodied vision see, David Morgan, *The Embodied Eye: Religious Visual Culture and the Social Life of Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012). See especially chapter 8, "At the Cusp of Invisibility: Visions, Dreams, and Images," 185-206.

<sup>137</sup> Roustang, ed., *Les jésuites de la Nouvelle-France*, 192.

keen to point out that it was, ‘celestial rather than terrestrial (*‘céleste plus que terrestre’*).<sup>138</sup>

Though *on* the earth, it was not *of* the earth.

Jogues’s account also draws on his earlier dream experiences, implying the status of this dream experience as just one amongst many, interconnected experiences, both physical and ‘imaginary’. His account ends with the following textual meander, evoking his feeling that he was walking in the footsteps of his dead confrere, René Goupil:

And though I follow him from afar, through the diversions and curves of the path, I am sad that he hides himself from my sight. Sometimes, too, when pursuing him, attracted by the beauty of the temples I pass along the way, I enter to pray. And, when I stay there a long while, retained by beauty itself or charmed by the sweetness of the orations, then, I suffer for having lost him again.<sup>139</sup>

The ‘sweetness’ evoked in the missionary’s account echoes his experience in an earlier dream, which occurred at Ihonatiria on 11 May 1638, and to which we will now turn.<sup>140</sup> Jogues had been studying the Wendat language with his fellow missionary, Father Pierre Chastellain, when he suddenly became tired and asked if he might be excused to rest a while. Chastellain advised him to take a nap in the chapel, but Jogues, embarrassed at the idea of sleeping in such close

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<sup>138</sup> Roustang, ed., *Les jésuites de la Nouvelle-France*, 192.

<sup>139</sup> Roustang, ed., *Les jésuites de la Nouvelle-France*, 193. ‘Et, tandis que je le suis de loin, à travers les detours et les courbes du chemin, je me plains qu’il se dérobe à ma vue. Parfois aussi, le poursuivant, attire par la beauté des temples que je recontrais en chemin, j’y entrais pour faire oraison. Et, lorsque j’y reste longtemps, retenu par la beauté elle-même ou charmé par la suavité des chants, ensuite, je souffre de l’avoir encore perdu.’

<sup>140</sup> See Roustang, ed., *Les jésuites de la Nouvelle-France*, 187-188. For the original Latin text, see MS 1652, AJC, Q-0001, 202, 104-107. For a transcription of this manuscript, see *MNF*, 4, Doc. 24, 43-46.

proximity to the sacrament, chose to sleep outside in woods.<sup>141</sup> Indeed, he marvelled that others could be more united with God while sleeping than he was during his orations. ‘I went into the woods’, he wrote, filled with confusion at the thought that others, even when sleeping, were more united with God than I was in my prayers’.<sup>142</sup> Once asleep, the missionary dreamed that he saw himself singing psalms and vespers with the other Fathers and their servants, as was their usual routine. Father Pijart began to sing the first verse of a psalm and Jogues joined him. When the verse ended, the missionary found that he was no longer in the Jesuit residence, but was in a place that he did not know. Other verses suddenly began to be sung with ‘so much sweetness’ (*‘une telle suavité du chant’*) that ‘all human melodies seem[ed] dirty in comparison’ (*‘toute mélodie humaine même la plus suave, semble sordide en comparaison de celle-ci’*).<sup>143</sup> Indeed, Jogues continued, it would be a grave error to compare this melody with earthly ones (*‘Je commetrais une grave injustice à son égard si je la comparais avec la mélodie terrestre’*).<sup>144</sup> The missionary’s earlier assertion that he did not remember which verses were being sung (*‘je ne me souviens plus bien de quel psaume il s’agissait’*), is thus portrayed, not as a simple case of forgetfulness, but rather as an *inability* to remember; as Saint Paul wrote of one of his own visions in 2 Corinthians 12:4, ‘he was caught up to Paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell’.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> ‘Incubation’, that is, sleeping in a temple in the hope that one would be healed by a deity, was an antique practice which seventeenth-century ecclesiasts would have been familiar with. See Deslandres, “Dreams Clash,” 144.

<sup>142</sup> Roustang, ed., *Les jésuites de la Nouvelle-France*, 187. ‘j’allai dans le bois voisin, tout rempli de confusion à la pensée que les autres, même pendant qu’ils dormaient, étaient davantage unis à Dieu que moi dans mes oraisons.’

<sup>143</sup> Roustang, ed., *Les Jésuites de la Nouvelle-France*, 188. The Latin reads, ‘tanta suavitate cantus’. See MNF, 4, Doc. 24, 45.

<sup>144</sup> Roustang, ed., *Les Jésuites de la Nouvelle-France*, 188.

<sup>145</sup> Roustang, ed., *Les Jésuites de la Nouvelle-France*, 188. Lucien Campeau highlights the similarity between Jogues account and Paul’s vision in 2 Corinthians 12: 1-6. See, MNF, 4, Doc. 24, 45n5.

Jogues's evocation of the 'sweetness' of the psalms he heard (and 'tasted') in his dreams implies the richly synaesthetic and immersive quality of the experience. The missionary's implied gustation of the singing was more than metaphorical. The early-seventeenth century dictionary, *Thresor de la langue francoyse* (1606) gives the definition (in Latin) of the verb, 'to taste' ('gouster') as '*Gustare*' ('to taste') and '*sapere*', a verb which connotes tasting and understanding.<sup>146</sup> Thus, although Jogues could not express the celestial melody's sweetness, he could taste it and therefore *know* it. In contrast with early modern investigative uses of the senses as examined in historiographical literature,<sup>147</sup> this form of tasting did not require scholarly discernment or analysis, but was instead bestowed through God's grace. In the late-seventeenth century, the verb 'to taste' also connoted goodness. One of the figurative meanings listed in the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie françoise* (1694), for instance, was '*Approuver, trouver bon*' ('to approve of, to find good').<sup>148</sup> As Psalm 34:8 states, 'Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.' Sensing God, then, did not require particular abilities or additional study. But neither was it permanent. Jogues's vision, his 'taste' provided only a small sample of what awaited in the eternal life.<sup>149</sup>

As we saw above, however, missionaries argued that Europeans' early sensory experiences rendered them more able to conceive Heaven, the knowledge of which was 'imbibed' with their

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<sup>146</sup> *Thresor de la langue francoyse* (1606), s.v. "gouster."

<sup>147</sup> Mark S. R. Jenner, "Tasting Lichfield, Touching China: Sir John Floyer's Senses," *Historical Journal* 53 (2010): 647-670.

<sup>148</sup> *DAF* (1694), s.v. "gouster."

<sup>149</sup> As Mark Jenner has observed, in 'tasting', food is synedochal; a portion is taken for the whole. See Priscilla Pankhurst Ferguson, "The Senses of Taste," *AHR Forum: The Senses in History*, *AHR* 116, no.2 (2011), 372n1.

mothers' milk.<sup>150</sup> Whilst European 'refusal' to *see* that the Lord was good, was considered to be heresy, the 'inability' of Indigenous people to conceive this was, for the Jesuits – at least, initially – understandable. Continued 'stubbornness', however, was condemned in the strongest possible terms.<sup>151</sup> But the missionary did remember the words of one verse, which François Roustang has identified as Psalm 131:7 ('We will go into his tabernacle: We will adore in the place where his feet stood').<sup>152</sup> The notion of following in the footsteps of saintly forebears – both physically and spiritually – is therefore key; the physical and the spiritual are here inseparable. Though not always perceptible or explicable, then, the divine was nonetheless a source of guidance and consolation.

### **Embodied temporality**

If we apply the notion of embodied temporality to Jogues's vision – which he did not think had lasted longer than an *Ave Maria* ('*neque enim puto ultra Ave et Sancta perdurasse*') – we can gain useful insight into his experiences of space and time. Whilst the missionary's account of his dream is detailed and prolonged, his own analysis of the experience suggests that in 'real' time the moment was fleeting; '*Felix hora, brevis mora,*' ('blessed time, brief pause'), he tells us. The missionary's assertion that the dream had lasted no longer than an *Ave Maria*, further contributes to this sense of brevity. At one verse in length, an *Ave* is short when compared to a *Miserere*. But the events that occurred in Jogues's dream seem to last longer than an *Ave*. Indeed, whilst the missionary's embodied knowledge of the *Ave* permitted him to use it as a category for

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<sup>150</sup> *JR*, 13: 179.

<sup>151</sup> Let us think back, for example, to Le Mercier's exasperation that one man 'having heard *so often* about Heaven, still continued in this ignorance?' See above, 220.

<sup>152</sup> Roustang, ed., *Jésuites de la Nouvelle-France*, 188n1.

gauging the amount of time he had been dreaming, time moved more slowly in his dream than it did in the lived world.

While space and time were linked, then, this connection was not unproblematic. Although phrases, such as ‘*l’espace d’un miserere*’, implied a measurement of time, which could be mapped out in text, or sung, uniting its participants in a sonic community, the exact length of time was – and still is – highly subjective.<sup>153</sup> As we have already seen, the consolation (or spiritual affect) caused by Jogues’s dream endured within him for some time – at least until he penned his account (‘*il demeura en moi une suavite si grande que, même maintenant, le souvenir d’une telle douceur pénètre mon âme d’une suavité incroyable*’).<sup>154</sup> One scholar has interpreted this statement as a direct reference to Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises*, which states that if a spiritual experience prompts devotion to the celestial, it is a gift from God.<sup>155</sup> Furthermore, though the missionary’s writing very clearly separates the realm of his dream from the lived environment, the ‘sweetness’ he experienced in this dream remained in his soul for some time afterwards. Whilst objects could not move across Catholic dream spaces (as they could between the Wendat dream realm and the ‘lived’ world), *feelings* could move across space and time. And – Jogues jubilantly ends his account – if all this could be experienced in ‘exile’ (i.e. in New France), how much more could be experienced in the afterlife? (‘*Si tu procures tant de choses en exil, combien plus dans le palais!*’)<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> On the subjectivity of time, see Arstila Valtteri and Dan Lloyd, eds., *Subjective Time: The Philosophy, Psychology and Neuroscience of Temporality* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014). For a helpful introduction to the concept, see Valtteri and Lloyd, “Preface,” i-xi.

<sup>154</sup> Roustang, ed., *Les Jésuites en la Nouvelle-France*, 188.

<sup>155</sup> *MNF*, 4, Doc. 24, 46n7.

<sup>156</sup> Roustang, ed., *Les Jésuites en la Nouvelle-France*, 188.

Furthermore, in contrast with the *Miserere*, the *Ave* asks for intercession (specifically that of the Virgin Mary), rather than forgiveness. Jogues recognised his own lowliness; he stated that the reason he slept in the woods (rather than in the chapel) was that sleeping so close to the host would have been somewhat irreverent (*'j'estimais que, pour moi, dormir devant la majesté de mon Dieu que je devais craindre et adorer, n'irait pas sans quelque irrévérence'*).<sup>157</sup> But the evocation of the *Ave* (a request for intercession) implies his belief that the dream was a result of divine intervention. In this context, too, Jogues's evocation of the *Ave Maria* could be read as a silent, but nonetheless tangible, desire for God's grace. The familiarity of seventeenth-century readers with this prayer, which was frequently chanted, sung, and set to music, would have ensured that its mention in Jogues's account held bodily resonance for its readers. Reading missionary accounts, therefore, requires not just an analysis of text, but also of early modern bodily responses to these texts.

While scholarly examinations of cultural hybridities tend to focus on changes in Indigenous cultures, it is clear that the reverse is also evident. Though missionaries were reluctant to admit it, Indigenous practices and beliefs could shape their spiritual experiences, whether unconsciously or otherwise. Owing to the subtlety of these spiritual adaptations, missionaries may have been unaware that they were taking place. The task of uncovering them is therefore fraught with difficulties. Examining the environments to which texts refer and the cultures that surrounded their authors, however, can highlight factors that shaped both mentalities and the ways in which these texts were understood.

## Conclusion

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<sup>157</sup> Roustang, ed. *Les Jésuites en la Nouvelle-France*, 188.

In conclusion, then, this chapter has demonstrated the ways in which Wendat religious practices – notably journeys through landscapes to the village of souls – shaped individual understandings of Christian concepts, in particular, Heaven. Furthermore, it has contended that missionaries’ knowledge of these journeys and their bodily experiences of what Birch and Williamson have called ‘ancestral landscapes’, shaped their ‘imaginations’, whether consciously or otherwise. As previous chapters have argued, bodies and practices could be affected by environment. But, the ‘deep shape of belief’, as David Morgan asserts, ‘is the history and momentum of embodied practices’, which are built up over the course of a person’s life.<sup>158</sup> One can never be certain what another person *believes* – and the intent of this chapter was not to make any such judgements. Still, as the final section argued, it is nonetheless possible to trace instances where environment left its mark on the imagination.

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<sup>158</sup> David Morgan, “Introduction,” 4-5.



## Chapter 5

### Translating the Sacred: From New France to France

#### Introduction

When a group of around 40 Wendats was defeated by a Mohawk war party near Montreal in 1643, the Jesuit letters they carried, along with the year's annual Huron Relation were stolen by the Mohawk victors.<sup>1</sup> The loss of these documents was a source of great annoyance for Jesuit Father Paul Le Jeune. Since the *Relation* (written by Father Barthélemy Vimont) had already examined events at Tadoussac and Montreal, he wrote:

it would be now in order to speak of the Nations higher up, but the Iroquois, - having robbed us of the Relation, and of the letters which our Fathers who are in those more distant regions wrote to persons who hono[u]r them with their friendship and their help, - having, I say, taken from us that little treasure, have constrained us to keep silence.<sup>2</sup>

All was not lost, however, since 'some Frenchmen and some Natives of our allies' had been travelling behind the warriors and had 'picked up some papers which they had thrown into the woods'. These were sent to France where Le Jeune incorporated them into the *Relation*.<sup>3</sup> 'Let us not,' the missionary wrote, '...pass lightly over these fragments of letters [*fragments de*

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<sup>1</sup> *JR*, 23: 267.

<sup>2</sup> *JR*, 25: 19.

<sup>3</sup> *JR*, 25: 19. Lucien Campeau has attributed their inclusion in the *Relation* to Le Jeune, since the missionary was in France at the time of the *Relation*'s publication. See *MNF*, 5: 772n1.

*lettres*]: everything is not ruined, since we lose only the accessory, and since the essential remains intact.’<sup>4</sup>

The theft of the *Relation* – and Le Jeune’s response to it – provides a useful starting point for an analysis of the ways in which the movement of missionary writings affected their meanings for French readers. Although ‘fragments’ of the stolen letters were recovered, they relayed a grim picture of life in the colony. One such ‘fragment’, penned by Father Jérôme Lalement (the superior of the Huron mission) described its missionary author’s fear for the safety of his brethren. ‘As long as the River shall be beset from every direction by the Iroquois,’ he had written, ‘I shall have much anxiety about sending any of our Fathers to Kebec, for fear of exposing them to the enemy.’<sup>5</sup> The inclusion of this ‘fragment’ in the 1642-43 *Relation* served a probative function. Its materiality and unfortunate fate confirmed its author’s fears: travelling missionaries risked attack and capture, which would inevitably result in ritual torture and possible execution.<sup>6</sup>

Under such dire circumstances, letters and relations that *did* arrive at their intended destination were – as we shall see later in this chapter – considered to be nothing short of miraculous. In an earlier *Relation*, Paul Le Jeune had asserted that the letters missionaries received from France were ‘relished as fruits of the terrestrial Paradise.’<sup>7</sup> To ‘pass lightly’ over the ‘fragments’

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<sup>4</sup> *JR*, 25: 29.

<sup>5</sup> *JR*, 25: 25.

<sup>6</sup> Issac Jogues’s captivity is discussed in an earlier chapter of the same *Relation*, which includes a letter written by the missionary during his time as a prisoner. Interestingly, Jogues wrote that he had received ‘several letters from the Hurons, with the *Relation* taken near Montreal’. See, *JR*, 24: 297. For a full account of Jogues’s captivity, see *JR*, 24: 271-307.

<sup>7</sup> *JR*, 5: 83.

gathered up by the French and their allies after the Mohawk warriors' attack would, he implied, have been to ignore the hand of divine providence. The *Relations*' missionary authors often included letter 'fragments' in the printed *Relations*, evoking the dangers they faced in the colony. The materiality of these letters – and their rhetorical functions in the *Relations* – was thus of crucial importance to how they were read. Given the myriad dangers posed to letters sent from New France to France, the printed *Relations* into which they were eventually transformed might in themselves prompt the wonder of a reader.

Despite the recent upsurge of scholarly interest in early modern 'relations', there has been little analysis of the materiality of the missionary letters from which they were composed.<sup>8</sup> Further, whilst scholars have examined the logistics of transatlantic correspondence, little attention has been paid to the spiritual significance of letters' materiality.<sup>9</sup> How was it described in texts, such as the *Relations*, and how might this have affected readers? This is surprising, since not only did the complex editorial process involved in the production of the *Relations* require a vast number of letters to be sent, but these letters played an important rhetorical function in the publication. The annual *Relation* was composed each year by the Jesuit mission superior at Quebec using letters sent to him by missionaries in the field (from the Huron mission, for instance). These were usually reworked and combined to form a structured narrative, but they were sometimes included verbatim. On other occasions, whole letters would be cited in text. Once written, the *Relation* would be forwarded to the mission superior in Paris who would do a final edit of the text before it was printed.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, as scholars have recently pointed out, the

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<sup>8</sup> On the 'relation' as a mode of writing, see Thomas Cohen and Germaine Warkentin's introduction to the *Renaissance and Reformation* special issue on the 'relation'. Cohen and Warkentin, "Things Not Easily Believed: Introducing the Early Modern Relation," Special issue, *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* 34, no.1-2 (2011): 7-23.

<sup>9</sup> On transatlantic correspondence, see Jane E. Harrison, *Until Next Year: Letter Writing and the Mails in the Canadas, 1640-1830* (Quebec: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1997). See also Jane E. Harrison, "The Intercourse of Letters: Transatlantic Correspondence in Early Canada, 1640-1812" (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2000), <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk2/ftp03/NQ53759.pdf>. Cfr. recent studies of the eighteenth-century English-speaking Atlantic world: Konstantin Dierks, *In My Power: Writing and Communications in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Sarah M.S. Pearsall, *Atlantic Families: Lives and Letters in the Later Eighteenth-Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). At present, the only in-depth examination of seventeenth-century English colonial correspondence is Katherine Grandjean's recent work, *American Passage: The Communications Frontier in Early New England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> On the editorial process for the *Jesuit Relations*, see Allan Greer, "Introduction," in *The Jesuit Relations: Natives and Missionaries in Seventeenth-Century North America*, ed. Allan Greer (Boston: Bedford/St-Martin's 2000), 14. Forty of the forty-one known editions of the *Jesuit Relations* were printed by Parisian printer Sébastien Cramoisy and his successor Sébastien Marbre-Cramoisy. The only exception to this was the 1637 *Relation* which was printed by the Rouen printing house of Jean Le Boulenger. It is unclear why Boulenger was chosen to print this edition rather than Cramoisy. This *Relation* had a number of typographical errors, however, and the printing

production of the *Relations* was a decidedly French operation. Unlike other volumes published by Sébastien Cramoisy, both the Pope and Jesuit Superior General in Rome were largely absent from the New France *Relations*.<sup>11</sup> Very few scholars have discussed the mechanics of how these *Relations* came into being and – most importantly – how this shaped the ways in which French audiences read them.<sup>12</sup>

Whilst previous chapters of this thesis focused on the ways in which missionaries not only shaped, but were *shaped by* the environments they moved through, this chapter will ask how these environments shaped missionary letters and *Relations*. How did these objects move between New France and France and how did this movement affect the ways in which French readers perceived and responded to them?

Recent scholarship has demonstrated the ways in which communities could be forged over great distances through the circulation and exchange of holy letters and objects.<sup>13</sup> Drawing on Benedict Anderson's theory of 'imagined communities', Julia Boss argues that the creation and circulation of hagiographic texts prompted the creation of an 'imagined' Catholic community.<sup>14</sup> Boss argues that in New France, a colony with very few relics, the 1652 Manuscript, though a hagiographic composite text likely composed to secure canonisation of the 'North American

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of the following year's *Relation* was again given to Cramoisy. See Lawrence C. Wroth, "The Jesuit Relations from New France," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 30 (1936), 134-35; 138-49.

<sup>11</sup> See Catherine Desbarats, "1616-1673: Les Jésuites, *Relations des Jésuites*," in *Monuments intellectuels de la Nouvelle-France et du Québec ancien: Aux origines d'une tradition culturelle*, dir. Claude Corbo (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2014), 52.

<sup>12</sup> Bronwen Catherine McShea argues that 'as physical objects and texts', the *Relations* should be viewed as 'artifacts' of the Paris Jesuits' partnership with an 'increasingly centralized, imperially ambitious, and image-conscious French monarchy', a partnership facilitated by Cramoisy and others. See McShea, "Cultivating Empire Through Print: The Jesuit Strategy for New France and the Parisian *Relations* of 1632 to 1673," (PhD diss., Yale University, 2011), 23.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Karin Vélez, "'A Sign That We Are Related to You': The Transatlantic Gifts of the Hurons of the Jesuit Mission of Lorette, 1650-1750," *French Colonial History* 12 (2011), 31-44.

<sup>14</sup> Julia Boss, "Writing a Relic: The Uses of Hagiography in New France." In *Colonial Saints: Discovering the Holy in the Americas*, ed. Allan Greer and Jodi Bilinkoff (New York: Routledge, 2003), 213.

Martyrs', could itself be considered a relic. The fragmentary composition of the manuscript, she suggests, embodies the struggles of the 'martyred' missionaries, whose bodies also became fragments after their usually violent deaths.<sup>15</sup> Printed relations, too, were often composite. As Réal Ouellet has argued in his study of relations in French North America and the Antilles, a relation was a 'fragmented text' (*'un texte fragmenté'*) collated using diverse sources (letters, journals, etc.).<sup>16</sup>

This first section of this chapter will analyse missionary letters and their spiritual meanings as objects and as narrative tools in the *Relations*.<sup>17</sup> This will be followed by an examination of the bodies of those who moved missionary letters. Cases of sacred 'translation' aside, letters did not move themselves.<sup>18</sup> Movement of letters thus implies the *bodies* of letter bearers. But why use the term bodies here at all? Letter bearers, in the tradition of biblical messengers, could add to their letters' content orally.<sup>19</sup> But they might also, in the case of missionary letter-bearers, act as

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<sup>15</sup> Boss, "Writing a Relic," 225-26.

<sup>16</sup> Réal Ouellet, *La Relation de voyage en Amérique (XVIe-XVIIIe siècles): Au carrefour des genres* (Paris: Hermann, 2015), 4. First published 2010 by Presses de l'Université Laval.

<sup>17</sup> Letters were integral to the Jesuits' global enterprise, since the *Constitutions* stipulated that frequent correspondence between Rome and the provinces, as well as locally and between provinces, was necessary to ensure unity of practice. See Luce Giard, "The Jesuit College: A Center for Knowledge, Art, and Faith, 1548-1773," *Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits* 40, no.1 (2008), 8-9. The principal focus of this chapter is the correspondence that formed the printed relations and letters sent from missionaries in New France to their correspondents in France. For a discussion (focusing on German-speaking provinces) of the circulation and compilation of internal Jesuit communication (i.e. the *litterae annuae* that were sent to Rome from each province to be edited and compiled before Society-wide dissemination), see Markus Friedrich, "Circulating and Compiling the *Litterae Annuae*: Towards a History of the Jesuit System of Communication," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* (2008): 3-39.

<sup>18</sup> For a stimulating analysis of the Holy House of Loreto, which 'translated' itself to new locations on several occasions before finally settling in Loreto see, Karin Vélez, "Resolved to Fly: The Virgin of Loreto, the Jesuits, and the Miracle of Portable Catholicism in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World" (PhD thesis, Princeton University, 2008). Due to the unpredictability of sending letters, it was preferable to have them carried. See Jane E. Harrison, "The Intercourse of Letters," 126-28.

<sup>19</sup> Alain Boureau, "The Letter-Writing Norm, a Mediaeval Invention," in *Correspondence: Models of Letter-Writing from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, by Roger Chartier, Alain Boureau, and Cécile Dauphin, tran. by Christopher Woodall (Padstow: Polity Press, 1987), 26.

authenticators for a letter's content. In other cases, their bodies, changed and sometimes scarred by the 'hostile' environment of New France, could act as illustrative examples of the suffering endured by missionaries for the Catholic faith, their trials 'at the hands' of their enemies written on their bodies. Bodies and letters, it will be argued, were intimately connected. Furthermore, an examination of non-missionary letter bearers in Canada (in particular, Indigenous converts) will complicate this analysis, not only highlighting the roles of Indigenous persons in correspondence networks, but the implied power that this conveyed.<sup>20</sup> The final section of this chapter will explore the ways in which missionary correspondence made New France perceptible to people living in 'Old' France. Through the examination of missionary letters as both 'relations' and 'curiosities', I will argue that the affective qualities of letters (in particular, birch bark letters), could prompt readers to give financially and spiritually (through prayers and good deeds) to the mission, thus *shaping* it from across the Atlantic Ocean.

### **'Lost' letters and missionary spirituality**

Missionary correspondence practices were shaped by the environment. Since letters had to cross the Atlantic Ocean, the risk of a letter being lost *en route* to France was high. As we saw in the extract that opened this chapter, however, 'loss' of letters was a recurring theme in the *Relations* and it had important spiritual meanings.

Corresponding across the Atlantic Ocean was not always easy, but missionaries found inventive ways of incorporating mishaps into their narratives. In May 1645, Jesuit missionary Father Charles Garnier penned a letter to his younger brother, Father Henri de Saint-Joseph, a Carmelite

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<sup>20</sup> With the notable exception of Katherine Grandjean's recent work on communications in early New England, little attention has been paid to the role of Indigenous letter-bearers in communications networks. On Indigenous letter-bearers, see Grandjean, *American Passage*, for instance, 42-43; 45-48.

in the city of Tours. ‘I wrote you two letters last year,’ the missionary recounted, ‘of which one was succinct and the other longer.’ ‘I think’, he mused,

that Our Lord judged that the shorter one, in addition to his grace, would serve you more than both letters together; or rather, he wanted to prevent you from being too greatly diverted from your usual communications with him, allowing the letters to be lost.

‘Perhaps’, Garnier added, ‘he also wanted to teach you to seek all your consolation in him alone and in his most blessed will’.<sup>21</sup> The loss of these letters, the missionary implied, was not a mere accident, but rather a direct result of divine intervention.

‘Lost’ letters, such as the one described above, are a frequent *leitmotif* in the writings of New France missionaries. Scholars, too, have been eager to highlight ‘missing’ pieces of historical evidence. Edited collections of missionary accounts, notably Lucien Campeau’s *Monumenta Novae Franciae*, draw our attention to ‘gaps’ in mission correspondence. In Campeau’s carefully researched footnotes, the phrase ‘*lettre perdue*’ (‘this letter is lost’) is a frequent refrain. ‘Lost’ letters, however, provide numerous methodological obstacles for historians. How can we study a letter if it no longer exists?

Two categories of ‘lost’ letters can be identified: those recognised as ‘lost’ by contemporaries, and those referred to in historical texts, but which historians have been unable to locate. The letters discussed in this chapter can be placed in the first category. ‘Lost’ letters, I will argue,

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<sup>21</sup> Charles Garnier to Henry de Saint Joseph, Hurons, ca. May 1645, *MNF*, 6: Doc. 60, 256. All translations from Garnier’s letters are my own. ‘Je vous avois écrit deux lettres l’an passé, dont l’une étoit succincte et l’aultre plus longue. Je croy que Nostre-Seigneur a jugé que la plus succincte, jointe à la grâce, vous serviroit plus que toutes les deux ensembles; ou plustost il a voulu vous oster un trop long divertissement des entretiens ordinaires que vous avez avec luy, permettant que cettre lettre ait esté perdue. Peut-être aussi qu’il veut vous apprendre à chercher toute vostre consolation en luy seul et en sa très sainte volonté.’

were integral components of mission narratives; they could ‘say’ as much as those which arrived. Of course, this was only possible if a letter’s intended recipient was aware that it was ‘lost’ in the first place (by means of another letter, for instance).

Scholarly work on object agency – and, more recently, object ‘failure’ – has highlighted the significance of the ways in which absence, loss, or misuse do not simply obscure knowledge of the past, but can, in fact, add to it. Whereas ‘successful’ objects go unnoticed, those which ‘fail’ or are misused, can provide insight into what Julian Yates has called, ‘the silent work of “things” in the production of what we take to be human drama.’<sup>22</sup> In the correspondence of New France missionaries, the invocation of these ‘lost’ objects highlighted not only the unpredictability of transatlantic correspondence networks – and, by extension, landscapes of conversion – but also the importance of narratives which arrived (and survived). Without these ‘lost’ letters, the letters that did reach their destinations would have achieved far less spiritual (and historical) significance.

My focus here will not be on the content of ‘lost’ letters – that is, descriptions of the events the New France mission – but rather on their materiality. ‘[F]orm’, as Roger Chartier asserts, ‘produces meaning’.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, as ‘lost’ letters no longer ‘exist’ in material terms, we must rely on their descriptions by contemporaries. Missionary letters often included detailed descriptions of their writing and sending processes, as well as recording whether or not correspondence had been received. It is these descriptions that will be the focus of my analysis

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<sup>22</sup> Julian Yates, *Error, Misuse, Failure: Object Lessons from the English Renaissance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xix.

<sup>23</sup> Roger Chartier, “Meaningful Forms,” *Times Literary Supplement* (London, England) Issue 4514 (Friday 6 October 1989), *Liber*, no.1, 8; on the materiality of letters in early modern England, see James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter Writing, 1512-1635* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).



here. While Jane E. Harrison has argued that letters were far more likely to be misplaced than meet the dramatic ends so often described, it is clear that these descriptions had an important rhetorical function in missionary accounts.<sup>24</sup> The reconstruction of these letters' material trajectories – and the rhetorical figuring of these trajectories in mission narratives – demonstrates 'lost' and delayed letters' ability to shape time, space, and devotional practices.

In seventeenth-century mission narratives from New France, descriptions of the letter-writing process – and the hardships it entailed – can be read as an expression of the mission's continuing difficulties and volatile environment. 'You complain that you did not receive the numerous letters that I wrote you last year,' wrote Marie de l'Incarnation to her son, Claude, in September 1643. She continued:

[The letters have to cross] One thousand leagues of ocean and what is more [they] are subject to risks, and every year [the letters] we are brought and those which go back to France run the same risk.<sup>25</sup>

As ocean travel between the two continents was usually only possible between the months of April and November,<sup>26</sup> the arrival of the first sailing vessel in spring and the departure of the last vessel in autumn were important temporal markers.<sup>27</sup> Outside this period, communication

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<sup>24</sup> Harrison, *Until Next Year*, 60.

<sup>25</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, 1 September 1643, MI, *Corr.*, Letter LXVIII, 183. All translations from Marie's correspondence are my own. 'Vous vous plaignez que vous n'avez pas reçu les amples lettres que je vous écrivois l'an passé. Mille lieues de mers et plus sont sujettes aux hazards, et tous les ans ce qu'on nous apporte, et ce qui repasse en France court la même risque.'

<sup>26</sup> There were exceptions to this, however. See Gilles Proulx, *Between France and New France: Life Aboard the Tall Sailing Ships* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1984), 58-59.

<sup>27</sup> Harrison notes that the first vessels would arrive at Quebec in May, at the earliest. Harrison, *Until Next Year*, 55.

with the Old World was impossible; letters could not be sent or received (although they could be composed). Yet, as we saw in the first chapter of this thesis, even when the ocean was navigable, it was not certain that a vessel – and thus the letters it carried – would arrive at its intended destination.

Missionaries were well aware of their letters' spiritual significance. The letters of Jesuit missionary Father Charles Garnier frequently discuss 'lost' letters, and can therefore be used as a useful case study for their analysis. Born in around 1606, the second son of Jean Garnier (an undersecretary in Henri III's private household) and Anne de Garrault (a noblewoman from Orleans), Garnier was educated at the Jesuit Collège de Clermont in Paris before entering the novitiate of the Society of Jesus in 1626. In 1635, he was nominated to become a missionary in New France,<sup>28</sup> where he arrived on 11 June 1636, following a two-month ocean crossing.<sup>29</sup> Although Garnier is remembered, first and foremost as one of the eight so-called, 'North American Martyrs', the events of his death will not concern us here.<sup>30</sup> Rather, I will focus on a series of letters sent by Garnier to his father, Jean Garnier, and two brothers, Monsieur de Sainte-Marie and Father Henri de Saint Joseph, between 1636 and his death in 1649. These letters have been preserved in a small notebook, now held at the *Archives des Jésuites au Canada* in Montreal.<sup>31</sup> They are not in Garnier's hand, but are thought to be contemporary copies. Lucien Campeau has speculated that the notebook may have been compiled by Henri de Saint-Joseph

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<sup>28</sup> Florian Larivière, "GARNIER, CHARLES (Ouracha)," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed May 17, 2014, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/garnier\\_charles\\_1E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/garnier_charles_1E.html).

<sup>29</sup> Charles Garnier to Jean Garnier, Quebec, June 1636, *MNF*, 3, Doc.47, 148-49.

<sup>30</sup> For an analysis of the 'martyrs'' legacies in memorial practices and collective memories, see Emma Anderson, *The Death and Afterlife of the North American Martyrs* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

<sup>31</sup> Charles Garnier, S.J, 'Copies contemporaines des lettres', *AJC*, GLC, Q-0001, D95.1.

in 1652, when the mission superior of New France, Paul Ragueneau, began collecting information regarding the martyrdoms of his confreres in the 1640s.<sup>32</sup> Like many of the mission's surviving letters, these objects have been preserved in an institutional archive, that of the Society of Jesus.<sup>33</sup> Each letter is distinct, but collectively, the letters form part of a larger narrative, illustrating the pious life of the missionary. Although the letters are presented chronologically in Campeau's edited *Monumenta*, this is not the case for the contemporary copies. As Garnier attests in these letters, they were often received a considerable amount of time after they had been sent, and sometimes two or three would arrive at once. The original narrative, therefore, was temporally disjointed. This in itself is not an unusual problem for historians; as Carlo Ginzburg asserts, the job of the historian is to piece together historical traces in order to construct narrative threads.<sup>34</sup> What is significant, however, is that Garnier himself identified breaks in his narrative and shaped them to his own rhetorical purposes. Although the 'lost' letters interrupt his narrative, they are nonetheless integral to this narrative as embodiments of the missionary's own struggles, both temporal and spiritual.

Furthermore, the act of letter writing – and the ability to send letters – was directly linked to the environment and events of a mission. Landscapes shaped letters' contents and could even prevent their arrival. As Garnier asserted in a 1642 letter to Henri de Saint-Joseph, these events were often outside the missionaries' sphere of control.

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<sup>32</sup> Ragueneau was collecting information for the Manuscript of 1652 (discussed in chapter 4, above). See Lucien Campeau's description of this *cahier* in *MNF*, 2, Appendix XXIII, 775-76.

<sup>33</sup> As Luke Clossey has pointed out, documents sent from overseas missions to Europe, in particular to institutional centres, such as Rome or Madrid, were more likely to survive than those sent between missions. See Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 19.

<sup>34</sup> Carlo Ginzburg, *Threads and Traces: True, False, Fictive*, trans. by Anne C. Tedeschi and John Tedeschi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 1.

It was [for me] an affliction sent from heaven, when I learned last year, in the month of September, that the letters that I wrote you during the summer had arrived at Quebec, with several others, after the departure of the last vessels returning to France... I hope that Our Lord will abundantly compensate [you for] the consolation that he would have given you by my letters, since you say that that is what you use them for ordinarily. I hope that this letter will find the one I wrote you last year at Quebec.<sup>35</sup>

Garnier thus attributed his letters' late arrival at Quebec to the will of God. Rather than a logistical mishap, the letters' delay is styled as an act of divine providence. Six years later, in 1648, Garnier again wrote to his brother, informing him that he had not received his letters, as 'no Huron came back up here last summer from there [Quebec] because of the danger the [Iroquois] enemies pose on the river.' He added, 'I thank you once more for the chest that you sent me two years ago, in case you have not received my letters from last year'.<sup>36</sup> The wars of the 1640s and the rapidly deteriorating Huron mission are thus reflected in the missionary's interrupted correspondence.

Furthermore, a letter's content and length could be affected by the manner of sending. 'I must go now,' wrote Garnier to his brother Henri in 1649, 'as the canoes are leaving' (*Je brise icy, car les canots partent*).<sup>37</sup> The original French verb 'briser' means 'to break', thus evoking a

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<sup>35</sup> Father Charles Garnier to Father Henri de Saint-Joseph, 22 May 1642, *MNF*, 5, Doc. 55, 240. 'Ce me fut une affliction envoyée du ciel quand j'appris l'an passé, au mois de septembre, que la letres que je vous avois écri pendant l'été étoit arrivée à Québec avec plusieurs autres après le départ des vaisseaux pour retourner en France... J'espère que Nostre-Seigneur aura suplée abondamment par soy-même à la consolation qu'il vous eût donné par mes letres, puisque vous dites qu'il s'en sert d'ordinaire pour vous en donner. J'espère que cette letre se joindra à Québec à celle que je vous écrivois l'an passé.'

<sup>36</sup> Father Charles Garnier to Father Henri de Saint-Joseph, 25 April 1648, *MNF*, 7, Doc.53, 243. 'parce que aucun Huron ne remonta l'été dernier de là-bas icy haut à cause du danger des ennemis qui est sur la rivière... je vous remercie de rechef de la quaisse que vous m'envoyâtes il y a deux ans, dans la crainte que j'ay que vous n'ayez point receu mes lettres de l'an passé.'

<sup>37</sup> Father Charles Garnier to Father Henri de Saint-Joseph, 12 August 1649, *MNF*, 7, Doc. 113, 531.

rupture in Garnier's narrative.<sup>38</sup> This narrative, he implied, would continue, but at a more appropriate time. In actuality, this was Garnier's last (known) letter to his brother; the missionary would be killed in December that year when a group of Haudenosaunee warriors attacked the mission settlement of Saint Jean.<sup>39</sup>

To combat broken or damaged correspondence networks and ensure their news was received in France, missionaries employed diverse strategies. Marie de l'Incarnation, for instance, sent similar letters on different ships, often providing a summary in subsequent letters.<sup>40</sup> Charles Garnier, too, duplicated or repeated information to ensure that his correspondent understood his communication.<sup>41</sup> What the correspondent did and did not know often had to be anticipated. 'If you have seen last year's Relation', Charles Garnier wrote to his elder brother Monsieur de Sainte-Marie in April 1638, 'you will know that, since my arrival with Father Chastelain, this country has been afflicted by sickness.'<sup>42</sup> Other correspondents' knowledge was easier to predict. 'You *will* have learned in the Relation', Garnier wrote to his brother Henri de Saint-Joseph,

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<sup>38</sup> *Thresor de la langue francoyse* (1606), s.v. "briser."

<sup>39</sup> For an account of Garnier's death, see the *Relation* of 1649-50, Chapter 3, "Of the Capture and Devastation of the Mission of Saint Jean, by the Iroquois; and of the Death of Father Charles Garnier, who was Missionary There," *JR*, 35: 107-45.

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Marie de l'Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, 18 October 1654, MI, *Corr.*, Letter CLXIII, 549.

<sup>41</sup> See Charles Garnier to Henry de Saint-Joseph, Hurons, ca. May 1645, *MNF*, 6, Doc. 60, 258.

<sup>42</sup> Charles Garnier to Monsieur de Sainte-Marie, Bourg de l'Immaculée Conception, La Rochelle, 28 April 1638, *MNF*, 4, Doc. 17, 22. 'Si vous avez veu la Relation de l'an passé, vous aurez appris que ce pays est affligé de la contagion depuis que j'arrivay icy avec le Père Chastelin.'

that last year, the good Joseph Chichoatenhoua, who was our first and our model Christian living in this borough, was killed in his field last summer by the enemies.<sup>43</sup>

Knowledge was therefore anticipated, known facts were expanded upon, and reactions were described. Although there is little concrete information about the circulation of the *Jesuit Relations*, they were widely read and discussed in French religious communities.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, just as missionaries reacted to or expanded upon information in the *Relations*, they also used these *Relations* to supplement or flesh out their own accounts. Writing to his brother Henri de Saint-Joseph in June 1649, Charles Garnier twice referred his brother to the annual relation for further details. Speaking of the death/‘martyrdom’ of Jesuit missionary Father Antoine Daniel, the missionary wrote, ‘You will know the particularities of his death when you read the Relation’. In the following paragraph of the same letter, the missionary briefly recounted the deaths of two other missionaries, Fathers Jean de Brébeuf and Gabriel Lalement. ‘But’, he concluded, ‘I am sending you the Relation where you will learn at greater length what happened at their deaths’.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Charles Garnier to Henry de Saint-Joseph, Sainte-Marie de Hurons, 23 June 1641, *MNF*, 5, Doc 17, 17. ‘Vous aurez appris par la Relation que l’an passé le bon Joseph Chichoatenhoua, qui a été notre premier et notre bon chrestien deumeurant en ce bourg, fut tué l’esté passé par les ennemis dans son champ.’

<sup>44</sup> Garnier’s uncertainty over whether or not his brother had seen the *Relation* can be explained by his brother’s indecision over his religious vocation. At the time of writing, Monsieur de Saint-Marie was not living in a religious community. His access to the *Relations* would therefore have been uncertain. On Monsieur de Saint-Marie, see Campeau’s explanatory note preceding Garnier’s 1638 letter, *MNF*, 4, Doc.17, 21. On the circulation of the *Relations* see, Greer, ed., *The Jesuit Relations*, 15. Luca Codignola attributes the ‘celebrity’ of the New France missions to the printed *Relations*; the English Jesuit mission in Maryland, he notes, did not produce annual printed relations and was less-well known. See Luca Codignola, “Few, Uncooperative and Ill Informed? The Roman Catholic Clergy in French and British North America,” in *Decentring the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective*, ed. Carolyn Podruchny and Germaine Warkentin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 182-83. It should be noted, however, that there were a number of reasons why Jesuits in Maryland were relatively unsuccessful. It had far fewer personnel than the New France mission (since most of the priests from the English Jesuit province were involved in clandestine Catholic activity in England) and fewer resources (the English Jesuits were granted little land). For a useful comparison of the two missions, see James Axtell, “White Legend: The Jesuit Missions in Maryland,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 81, no.1 (1986): 1-7.

<sup>45</sup> Charles Garnier to Henri de Saint-Joseph, Sainte-Marie des Hurons, 25 April 1649, *MNF*, 7, Doc.101, 494.

What these letters reveal, then, is a complex network of knowledge exchange built around sometimes fragmentary evidence that could be supplemented or enhanced using other accounts.

But it was not only the New France *Relations* which were used to supplement existing information. In his *Relation* of 1637, Father Paul le Jeune recounted that he had received a fragment of a letter which contained the following thinly-veiled criticism of the New France mission:

“There is reason for edification in all that has been inserted in the Relation which has been sent. We would ask, however, for some enlightenment as to what we may hope for the establishment of the Christian Religion, and the communication with countries contiguous to the savages, their frontiers and boundaries.”<sup>46</sup>

The answer, Le Jeune asserted in the same *Relation*, was to look at relations of what was occurring in Paraguay: ‘If he who wrote this letter has read the Relation of what is occurring in Paraquais [Paraguay], he has seen that which shall some day be accomplished in new France.’<sup>47</sup>

The ‘reductions’ of Paraguay had grown out of the Jesuit missions in Brazil and thus provided a potential – if over-ambitious – model for the expansion of the New France missions.<sup>48</sup> If his

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<sup>46</sup> *JR*, 12: 219-21.

<sup>47</sup> *JR*, 12: 221. Thwaites’s clarification.

<sup>48</sup> On the connection between the missions of Paraguay and Brazil see *JR*, 12, 276n28. Despite the Jesuits’ global remit, scholars have rarely taken a comparative approach to mission history. See Allan Greer, “Towards a Comparative Study of Jesuit Missions and Indigenous Peoples in Seventeenth-Century Canada and Paraguay,” in *Native Christians: Modes and Effects of Christianity among Indigenous People of the Americas*, ed. Aparecida Vilaça and Robin M. Wright (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 21. Recent examples of comparative mission history include, Takao Abé, *The Jesuit Mission to New France: A New Interpretation in the Light of the Earlier Jesuit Experience in Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Ana Carolina Hosne, *The Jesuit Missions to China and Peru, 1570-1610: Expectations and Appraisals of Expansion* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013). For a comparative discussion of missionary relations, see Takao Abé, “What Determined the Content of Missionary Reports? The *Jesuit Relations* compared with the Iberian Jesuit Accounts,” *French Colonial History* 3 (2003): 69-83.

correspondent was well-read, Le Jeune's riposte implied, he would already be aware of the work being done in Paraguay and would easily have made a connection, or a 'relation', between these missions and the future missions of New France and its adjacent territories. Furthermore, he argued, conversion took time. 'These peoples where we are,' he asserted, 'are exactly like those of the Americas, called Paraquais, who not long ago were eating each other.' He continued, 'Count how many years the Portuguese have held these regions in America, whence we hear of so splendid conversions.' Viewed in this light, he mused, 'I have often said, and I say it again, that I am surprised at the advancement that God is granting this infant Church, considering the short time employed, up to the present, in converting these barbarians.'<sup>49</sup>

There were other factors, missionaries argued, that would prevent conversion of New France's Indigenous peoples on the scale seen in other missions. In a letter written from an Oneida village in 1668, Father Jacques Bruyas wrote that missionaries wishing to travel to New France 'do not need to expect to see thousands of Unbelievers converted, as in the missions, of china, Tonquin, etc. All the Iroquois Together are not more than 2,000 men bearing arms.'<sup>50</sup> Historians have frequently passed over such comparisons.<sup>51</sup> But, as the above example demonstrates, missionaries in New France were aware of the diverse circumstances of different missions and

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<sup>49</sup> *JR*, 12: 221.

<sup>50</sup> *JR*, 51: 139. One estimate suggests that by 1665, there were around 70,000-80,000 'Chinese Christians'. See Nicholas Standaert, "Christianity Shaped By the Chinese," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Reform and Expansion, 1500-1660*, ed. by R. Po-chia Hsia. Vol 6 of *The Cambridge History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 559. Daniel Richter estimates that the total population of the Five Nations Iroquois could have been as small as 8,600 in 1670, an estimate based on English colonial official Wentworth Greenhalgh's 1677 estimate that the Iroquois had 2,150 warriors (a 1:4 warrior-to-population ratio is assumed). See Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 114, 331n19.

<sup>51</sup> Greer, "Towards a Comparative Study of Jesuit Missions and Indigenous Peoples in Seventeenth-Century Canada and Paraguay," 23. The most well-known account of Jesuit missions in Paraguay is Antonio Ruiz de Montoya's *Conquista espiritual hecha por los religiosos de la Compañía de Jesús en las prouincias del Paraguay, Paraná, Uruguay y Tape* (Madrid, 1639).



marshalled these circumstances to ‘justify’ differing rates of ‘success’. Similarities between so-called ‘barbarians’ were also used to gauge how long conversion might take. For instance, Le Jeune argued that the peoples of North America were ‘exactly like’ those of Paraguay since they were ‘cannibals’, implying that the conversion of the former would take a similar amount of time as that of the latter.

Additionally, there were often textual and structural similarities between relations from diverse missions, which would allow readers to draw parallels and make comparisons; though a seasoned reader would be familiar with several styles. For example, Pierre Pelleprat’s 1655 *Relation des missions des PP. de la Compagnie de Jesus dans les Isles et à la terre meridionale* used a similar format to the New France *Relations* (that is, division into chapters that alternate between a narrative and encyclopedic style). Like the New France *Relations*, Pelleprat’s 1655 *Relation* was published by Cramoisy and would have likely attracted the same readership.<sup>52</sup> *Relations*, then, were documents that could be read on their own. But they could also be supplemented and augmented through comparisons with relations discussing other mission terrains.<sup>53</sup>

## Writing bodies

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<sup>52</sup> Réal Ouellet and Marc André Bernier, “Pierre Pelleprat’s *Accounts of the Jesuit Missions in the Antilles and in Guyana* (1655),” in *Jesuit Accounts of the Colonial Americas: Intercultural Transfers, Intellectual Disputes, and Textualities*, ed. Marc André Bernier, Clorinda Donato, and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in association with the UCLA Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies and the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 2014), 374-76. In contrast to this style, printed reports from Asia and South America usually followed the style of the Jesuits’ annual letters. See the above-cited chapter by Ouellet and Bernier, 376.

<sup>53</sup> The circulation of mission and hagiographic texts *between* European colonies, however, has rarely been examined. For a notable exception, see Allan Greer, “Iroquois Virgin: The Story of Catherine Tekakwitha in New France and New Spain,” in *Colonial Saints: Discovering the Holy in the Americas, 1500-1800*, ed. Allan Greer and Jodi Bilinkoff (New York: Routledge, 2003): 235-50.

In the *Jesuit Relations*, the ability to overcome environmental obstacles to letter-writing is presented as a heroic sign of missionary perseverance. For instance, Jesuit missionary Father Paul Le Jeune recounted that the winter of 1633-34 was so cold that his ink froze in its pot. He was obliged, he wrote, to ‘place a little pan of hot coals near to my inkstand; otherwise I should have found black ice instead of ink’.<sup>54</sup> But this hardship was relatively mild compared to that faced by Father Francesco-Giuseppe Bressani. The following extract, which appears in Bressani’s *Brief Relation* in 1653, was taken from a letter the missionary composed whilst captive in a Haudenosaunee village:

The letter is badly written, and quite soiled, because, in addition to other inconveniences, he who writes it only has one finger on his right hand; and it is difficult to avoid staining the paper with the blood that flows from his wounds, not yet healed; he uses arquebus powder for ink and the ground for a table.<sup>55</sup>

This letter is not simply about the trials of letter writing in inhospitable environments; it is filled with the rich symbolism of martyrdom and ecclesiastical authority. Unlike some hagiographic texts from the seventeenth century, the account was not deliberately written in blood, but was inadvertently ‘soiled’ – at least, that is what its missionary author implied.<sup>56</sup> Rather than representing his blood as a symbol of his passion for the faith, the missionary portrays it as worldly and unclean. Paradoxically, this display of humility only serves to confirm the missionary author’s ‘saintliness’. Priests’ fingers, as historian Emma Anderson notes, were particularly significant, given that a priest had to be whole of body to say the mass. Since Jogues

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<sup>54</sup> *JR*, 5: 125.

<sup>55</sup> *JR*, 39: 55.

<sup>56</sup> On hagiographic texts written in blood, see Boss, “Writing a Relic,” 223.

was a ‘martyr’, however, the Pope made an exception, stating that ‘It would be unjust that a martyr for Christ should not drink the blood of Christ.’<sup>57</sup>

A description of writing materials was sometimes also given, implying the significance of this additional information to readers. In these texts, birch bark letters often symbolise the dire circumstances of French captives of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, who, for want of paper, were often compelled to write their letters on birch bark (and, in one instance, on gunpowder wrapping paper).<sup>58</sup> This is most-clearly apparent in a series of fragments that appeared in the *Relation* of 1660-61, and narrated the experiences of several Frenchmen who were captive in Haudenosaunee villages.<sup>59</sup> François Hertel, a young soldier from Trois Rivières, used birch bark for a letter written whilst he was captive in a Mohawk village in 1661. As a prisoner, Hertel had been tortured (and, as was customary, his hand and fingers had been burned and mutilated).<sup>60</sup>

‘My Father,’ Hertel wrote to Jesuit Simon Le Moine:

bless the hand that writes you, which has had one finger burnt in a Calumet as reparation to the Majesty of God, which I have offended. The other hand has a thumb cut off, - but do not tell my poor Mother.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Emma Anderson, “Blood, Fire, and ‘Baptism’: Three Perspectives on the Death of Jean de Brébeuf, Seventeenth-Century Jesuit ‘Martyr’”, in *Native Americans, Christianity and the Reshaping of the American Religious Landscape*, ed. Joel Martin and Mark A. Nicholas (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 131.

<sup>58</sup> *JR*, 47: 85-87.

<sup>59</sup> *JR*, 47: 83-93.

<sup>60</sup> This practice ensured that captives were identifiable and prevented them from using weapons against their captors. See Richer, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 66.

<sup>61</sup> *JR*, 47: 85.

Another Frenchman who was being held captive alongside Hertel opened his letter to Le Moine in a similar fashion: 'I have scarcely any fingers left,' he said 'so do not be surprised if I write badly'.<sup>62</sup> The mens' bodily suffering was engraved on, and embodied by their letters. Although these letters might appear to be highly personal evocations of suffering, they clearly conform to contemporary standards of hagiographic writing.

Writing under trying circumstances was a common theme in Jesuit writings from a number of provinces. In Elizabethan England, for instance, Catholic priests and recusants had to send their communications secretly, since the practice of Catholicism was outlawed. Jesuit John Gerrard's autobiography recounts that while imprisoned in the Tower of London, the priest wrote letters using invisible ink and the wrappings of oranges for paper.<sup>63</sup> Like Bressani's letter, Gerrard's autobiography described the priest learning to write again (since his hands had been broken by torture) and the use of improvised writing materials. He used a toothpick as a pen and the juice of oranges for invisible ink. Some of his communications were written on the paper which he used to wrap and send rosaries made from orange peel.<sup>64</sup> Bressani's writings, therefore, should be read within the broader context of Jesuit spiritual autobiography, which placed an important emphasis on the act of writing as a spiritual trial.

In the 1660-61 *Relation*, which recounts the stories of several Frenchmen and missionaries held captive by the Haudenosaunee, Paul Le Jeune included several letters written from captivity. One of the letters included in this text had been written by a Frenchman who was taken captive

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<sup>62</sup> *JR*, 47: 87.

<sup>63</sup> Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England*, 101.

<sup>64</sup> Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England*, 167.

by Mohawk warriors. ‘Happily,’ Le Jeune recounted, ‘the writer of the above Letter was himself its Bearer [*le porteur*].’<sup>65</sup> When the man was prisoner, he was presumably unable to find anyone willing to carry his letter, and perhaps arrived with his friend before another opportunity presented itself. Indeed, it was these ‘various fragments of letters’ (*divers fragmens de Lettres*), Le Jeune argued, which would show readers ‘how Providence has wrought to give us more than we hoped for.’<sup>66</sup> Far from shying away from or ‘camouflaging’ the *Relations*’ multiple and fragmentary composite parts – a trait which Réal Ouellet associates with the authors of travel relations – the missionary actively highlighted them.<sup>67</sup> The ‘confusion’ that these fragments could provoke might not, he asserted, be unpleasant, but would instead, he implied, show the wonders of Providence, even in the chaotic landscape of New France.<sup>68</sup>

### **Missionary letter-bearers**

Bressani himself arrived in France in 1650, carrying a letter from Marie de l’Incarnation to her son, Claude. ‘You will *see* a living Martyr’, Marie wrote in this letter, ‘of whose sufferings you have *heard*, especially of his captivity in the country of the Iroquois’.<sup>69</sup> The missionary’s body, therefore, acted as a living example of holy suffering as described in the *Relations*. This was an opportunity, Marie implied, for Claude to acquire ocular proof of the sacrifices made in New France for the holy faith, sacrifices which – up until this point he had only *heard* about. Marie

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<sup>65</sup> *JR*, 47: 87.

<sup>66</sup> *JR*, 47: 69.

<sup>67</sup> Ouellet, *La Relation de Voyage en Amérique*, 4.

<sup>68</sup> *JR*, 47: 69.

<sup>69</sup> Marie de l’Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, 30 October 1650, MI, *Corr.*, Letter CXXXI, 406. My emphasis. ‘Vous verrez un Martyr vivant, des souffrances duquel vous avez cy-devant entendu parler, sur tout de sa captivité au païs des Hiroquois.’

evokes an Aristotelian sensory hierarchy – with sight being the most important sense, and hearing placed below it. (Hearing also has connotations of unreliability – and it is significant that the term for rumour in seventeenth-century French is ‘*un bruit qui court*’). But Bressani’s body is also presented as an object of awe-inspiring curiosity. ‘Without seeming to’, Marie continued, ‘*look* at his [Bressani’s] hands; you will *see* them mutilated, and almost without one finger which is whole’.<sup>70</sup> As literary scholar Silvia Spitta has recently reminded us, Indigenous people brought to the Old World were often viewed as specimens, objects of study like those which could be seen in the vast *Wunderkammern*, or ‘cabinets of curiosity’ in the homes of wealthy Europeans.<sup>71</sup> Here, however, the tables are turned. Bressani, a white, male, European missionary, becomes one such object. Unlike Jogues, Bressani did not return to New France to become a ‘martyr’, retiring instead to the city of Florence, where he devoted the rest of his life to preaching.<sup>72</sup>

The letter I described above was one of Marie’s shorter letters to Claude; we might speculate that she believed the missionary’s body needed little additional explanation, except for the initial interpretative guide she included in her text. Marie had written to her son two weeks previously, informing him that she had sent him a letter with each of the missionaries who was returning to France that winter. ‘Please receive these saintly figures’, she wrote, ‘as though they were *living Martyrs*, who have undertaken [spiritual] works, and suffered incredible hardships [*croix*

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<sup>70</sup> Marie de l’Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, 30 October 1650, MI, *Corr.*, Letter CXXXI, 406. My emphasis. ‘Sans faire semblant de rien, regardez ses mains; vous les verrez mutilées, et presque sans aucun doigt qui soit entier.’

<sup>71</sup> Silvia Spitta, *Misplaced Objects: Migrating Collections and Recollections in the Americas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 9.

<sup>72</sup> For Bressani’s biographical details, see Albert Tessier, “BRESSANI, FRANÇOIS-JOSEPH,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed July 9, 2014, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/bressani\\_francois\\_joseph\\_1E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/bressani_francois_joseph_1E.html).

*incroyables*] for those who have not experienced the Huron mission'.<sup>73</sup> Here again, Marie implies missionary rank: the missionaries' bodies should be exalted because of the 'incredible hardships' they had experienced, hardships that other Europeans could only imagine. Another letter, written two days later and sent with another returning missionary, Father Jacques Bonnin, described some relics that Marie had sent to her son. 'It is by the Reverend Father Bonnin faithful witness to the sufferings of our Saintly Martyrs that I send you their relics'.<sup>74</sup> Relics were usually accompanied by a document of authentication, but in Marie's account, Father Bonnin becomes the authenticator; he legitimises the relic and – if necessary – can provide testimony as to its origins. Not only were missionaries intermediaries – who made sensible the otherwise insensible (that is, the landscape and experience of New France), they could also add unscripted additional information. Here again, was a tradition with scriptural precedent. Both scribe and messenger are important figures in Paul's epistles: Tertius, Paul's scribe pens his own greeting at the end of the Epistle to the Romans, whilst in Ephesians, Paul mentions that his messenger will provide information not contained in the letter ('But that ye also may know my affairs, how I do, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord shall make known to you all things.')<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, in the medieval period, one of the roles of a papal nuncio was to gloss papal letters and explain the context in which they were written.<sup>76</sup> The *Relations*, then, recount not only mission narratives, but the story of these narratives' arrival in France. When

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<sup>73</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, 17 September 1650, MI, *Corr.*, Letter CXXIX, 403. My emphasis. 'Recevez s'il vous plaist, ces saints personnages comme autant de Martyrs vivans, qui ont entrepris des travaux, et souffert des croix incroyables à ceux qui n'ont pas l'expérience des Missions Huronnes.'

<sup>74</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, 19 September 1650, MI, *Corr.*, Letter CXXX 405. 'C'est par le Révérend Père Bonnin fidèle témoin des souffrances de nos Saints Martyrs que je vous envoie de leurs reliques.'

<sup>75</sup> Ephesians 6:21, cited in Boureau, "The Letter-Writing Norm," 27.

<sup>76</sup> Boureau, "The Letter-Writing Norm," 27.

missionaries acted as messengers, their bodies acted as ‘authenticators’ of accounts of missionary suffering.

### **Changed bodies**

Both Giusseppi Bressani and Isaac Jogues spent time in France after having been captured and tortured by hostile Haudenosaunee groups. Notably, both men had several fingers cut off during torture. Yet, while Bressani’s ill health forced him to remain in Europe, Jogues returned to the colony, where he would achieve his long-desired martyrdom in 1646.

After their torture, both men portrayed themselves as being unrecognisable, even to those who knew them. In a letter to Mutio Vitelleschi, the General Superior of the Society of Jesus in Rome, Bressani styled himself as unrecognisable. ‘I know not whether Your Paternity will recognize the letter of a poor cripple’, his letter began, ‘who, formerly, when in perfect health, was well-known to you.’<sup>77</sup> Isaac Jogues also changed outwardly after his ordeal. On the 5 January 1644, having escaped his Iroquois captors and undertaken a long and arduous journey back to France, Jogues arrived at the Jesuit college in Rennes. Neither the doorman nor the college rector, Father Claude Noirel, recognised him, thinking him a pauper in need of food. After hearing that he had been in New France, however, the rector asked him if he knew Isaac Jogues. “‘He is free and it is him, my reverend Father, who is speaking to you [now]”, the missionary responded. His reappearance was described as a miracle. He was regarded, the

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<sup>77</sup> *JR*, 39: 55.



*Relation* tells us, ‘as a Lazarus brought back from the dead, who must go for the last time to the country where he has already suffered so many deaths’.<sup>78</sup>

Missionary bodies were also regarded with wonder at the French court. Having heard of Jogues’s sufferings Anne of Austria (who was acting as regent on behalf of her son, Louis XIV), announced that Jogues’s tale was better than any novel. (“On feint des romans;’ she said, ‘en voilà un véritable entremeslé de grandes aventures.”)<sup>79</sup> ‘She wanted,’ the *Relation* of 1647 tells us, ‘to see him’. Here, Jogues is presented a curiosity brought to court. The missionary, for his part – and in an appropriate show of Christian humility – prevaricated. He ‘could not believe’, the *Relation* tells us, ‘that she really wanted [to see him]’.<sup>80</sup> The Queen was forced to send for him a second time.<sup>81</sup> Yet, it was, we are told, a torment for Jogues when people asked to see his disfigured hands. The missionary’s reluctance to visit the court (at this time at Saint-Germain en Laye), can also be read as a rejection of its opulence. Indeed, the *Relations* often juxtapose the hardships of the wilderness with the luxuries of the court. When she saw the missionary, the Queen was moved by his maimed body. ‘She was touched with compassion’, the *Relation* of 1647 tells us, ‘at the sight of the cruelty of the Iroquois’. A look at the original French here, allows for a more nuanced analysis. ‘Ses yeux furent touchez de compassion’, the original document reads, ‘à la veue de la cruauté des Hiroquois’.<sup>82</sup> Thus, although the missionary does

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<sup>78</sup> *MNF*, 7, Doc. 35, 126. All translations from this account are my own. “Il est en liberté et c’est luy, mon révérend Père, qui vous parle.”; ‘on le regarde comme un Lazare resuscité, qui doit aller mourir pour la dernière fois où il a dèsjà souffert tant de mo[r]ts.’

<sup>79</sup> *MNF*, 7, Doc. 35, 126. ‘La Reyne ayant ouy parler de ses souffrances dit tout haut: “On feint des romans; en voilà un véritable entremeslé de grandes aventures”.’

<sup>80</sup> *MNF*, 7, Doc. 35, 132. My emphasis. ‘il ne pouvoit se persuader qu’elle en eust véritablement envie.’

<sup>81</sup> *MNF*, 7, Doc. 35, 132.

<sup>82</sup> *MNF*, 7, Doc. 35, 126.

not touch the Queen, she is nonetheless struck by the sight of his disfigured hands; she experiences emotional affect. Here the mere sight of the missionary's body becomes a haptic, bodily interaction, which deeply affects the Queen.<sup>83</sup>

But Jogues's body not only affected people, it also left discernible traces on the landscape. After his visit to the French court, in spring 1644, Jogues made his way to the port of La Rochelle so that he could 'go back to the land of his martyrdom'. Once in New France, he was sent back to Montreal, where the 'odour' of his virtues lingered.<sup>84</sup> This is significant as holy personages are often described as having died 'in the odour of sanctity'.<sup>85</sup> Jogues's body, then, blurred the boundaries between body and relic. His body, too, produced 'sense' or 'sensation'; his smell lingering and prolonging the memory of his holy deeds (smell and memory are often closely associated).<sup>86</sup> Writing in 1650, after Jogues's eventual death, Marie de l'Incarnation evoked this slippage between body and relic, between life and death:

We can even say, that he [Jogues] is three times a Martyr, that is to say, as many times as he went amongst the Iroquois Nations. The first time he did not die, but he suffered enough, the second time, he did not suffer, and only desired to die, [*il n'est mort qu'en désir*] his heart burning continually with desire for martyrdom. But the third time, God gave him what his heart had long desired.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> See Paul Perron, *Narratology and Text: Subjectivity and Identity in New France and Québécois Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 122.

<sup>84</sup> *MNF*, 7, Doc. 35, 126.

<sup>85</sup> *MNF*, 7, Doc. 35, 126. 'Le printemps venu de l'an 1644, il se rendit à la Rochelle pour repasser au pays de son martyre, où estant arrivé on l'envoya à Montréal. Sa mémoire y est encore vivante; l'odeur de ses vertus recrée et confronte encore tous ceux qui ont eu le bonheur de le connoistre et de converser avec luy.'

<sup>86</sup> For a discussion of smell, memory, and the problems of historical specificity see, Clare Brant, "Fume and Perfume: Some Eighteenth-Century Uses of Smell," *The Journal of British Studies* 43, no.4 (2004), especially 447.

<sup>87</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, summer 1647, MI, *Corr.*, Letter CX, 324. 'Nous pouvons même dire qu'il est trois fois Martyr, c'est-à-dire autant de fois qu'il est allé dans les Nations Hiroquoises. La première fois il n'y est pas mort, mais il y a assez souffert, La 2. fois il n'y a souffert, et n'y est mort qu'en désir,

What the missionary had ‘long desired’, then, was ‘true’ martyrdom. Indeed, Marie explained, ‘We honour him as a Martyr; and, in fact, he is, because he was killed due to a hatred of our holy Faith, and [a hatred] of prayer,’ which Indigenous people viewed as ‘dangerous magic’.<sup>88</sup> As Timothy Pearson has pointed out, the temporal disjunction between Jogues’s capture and his execution four years later – after a period in France – proved to be a ‘narrative problem’ for martyrological literature.<sup>89</sup> What is remarkable about ‘living’ martyrs is that they existed in a place between life and death; they were living on borrowed time (at least, that is what the authors of publications, such as the *Relations*, implied). As we saw in the first chapter of this thesis, Marie de l’Incarnation signed a letter written from the middle of the stormy ocean (‘*on the sea*’, as she put it) with a poignant, ‘Adieu, adieu, adieu’.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, as a result of long periods of absence from mission centres, such as Quebec, whether a missionary was alive or dead was sometimes unknown. Missionary bodies, therefore, were intimately linked to the texts describing their fates.

Encounters with these living martyrs could prompt great acts of piety. For instance, Chapter 1 of the 1637 *Relation* is titled, ‘Of the Assistance which the Old France gives to the New’. Its missionary author asserted that:

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son coeur brûlant continuellement du désir du martyre. Mais la troisième fois, Dieu lui a accordé ce que son coeur avez longtemps désiré.’

<sup>88</sup> Marie de l’Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, summer 1647, MI, *Corr.*, Letter CX, 324. ‘Nous l’honorons comme un Martyr; et il l’est en effet, puis qu’il a été massacré en détestation de notre sainte Foi, et de la prière que ces perfides prennent pour des sortilèges et enchantemens.’

<sup>89</sup> Timothy G. Pearson, *Becoming Holy in Early Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2014), 48.

<sup>90</sup> Marie de l’Incarnation to François de Saint Bernard, Tours, 20 May 1639, MI, *Corr.*, Letter XXXIX, 86.

If I had to report all the acts of devotion of the Sisters of Montmartre, of the Nuns of Ave Maria at Paris, of the daughters of sainte Marie, of nostre Dame,— in a word, of a multitude of holy institutions, I should make a Relation of what is being done in your France for the welfare of ours.<sup>91</sup>

Prayers in France, missionaries believed, could have very tangible effects in the New World. When in 1639 a ship travelling to the colony narrowly missed an iceberg, one of its passengers, Mother Cécile de Sainte-Croix, an Ursuline nun, attributed this miracle to the prayers of her sisters in France. ‘We attributed our deliverance’, she wrote to the superior of the Ursuline convent at Dieppe, ‘to the prayers that you said for us’.<sup>92</sup>

### Carrying one’s own letters

The greater part of missionary correspondence was not carried by its author. The manuscript of the *Relation* of 1640-41 was one exception to this, as it was taken to Paris by Paul Le Jeune in autumn 1641.<sup>93</sup> In his prefatory letter to the provincial superior at Paris, the missionary wrote:

I do almost as he who, having written his letters should be the bearer of them. I sketched New France in the following Chapters, and I come myself to present them to Your Reverence.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> *JR*, 11: 59.

<sup>92</sup> Cécile de Sainte-Croix to the superior of the Ursuline convent at Dieppe, 1639, MI, *Corr.*, Appendice II, 953. ‘Nous avons attribué nostre délivrance aux prières que vous faisiez pour nous’.

<sup>93</sup> *JR*, 20: 12.

<sup>94</sup> *JR*, 20: 119.

But why deliver a letter in person? A letter's bearer could add significant meaning to its content. In the *Relation* of 1642-43, for instance, the missionary editor, Barthélemy Vimont, bemoaned the fact that Father Issac Jogues was not there in person to convey his report of the mission. 'The letter which he writes again from his captivity to Father Charles Lalemant', he asserted, 'speaks to us ... quite amply; but does not satisfy all the questions that we might put to him,' that is, if he were *present*.<sup>95</sup> Whilst instructive, then, letters provided an adequate, but far from ideal, method of communication. Though some theorists – notably Cicero and Erasmus – described letters as 'conversations', historian Roger Duchêne argues that whilst there are parallels (one correspondent, or set of correspondents, speaks, and the other, or others, responds), the distance between correspondents and the time a letter takes to arrive renders these two methods of communication distinct. Words written can be intercepted, whilst words spoken cannot be taken back; in written prose, difficult questions can be easily dodged.<sup>96</sup> In the above account, Father Lalemant, 'speaks' to his readers, but cannot be further questioned on the details of his report.

Although a letter could provide no substitute for conversation, it could nonetheless provide security in the case that its author was injured or otherwise delayed. Before Jérôme Lalemant left the *pays d'en haut* to make the journey to Quebec, where he would inform the mission superior of the principal events of the Huron mission, he wrote to the Provincial Superior at Paris, outlining the news he hoped to relate at Quebec. 'In my uncertainty as to what might happen to me on the way,' he announced,

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<sup>95</sup> *JR*, 25: 43.

<sup>96</sup> Roger Duchêne, *Comme une lettre à la poste: Les progrès de l'écriture personnelle sous Louis XIV* (Paris: Fayard, 2006), 195-98. For a detailed comparison of letters and conversations, see Chapter 13, "Lettre et conversation," 195-204.

I have deemed it advisable to write this letter previous to my departure, and to leave it here to be sent after me, so that in any case Your Reverence might know my latest thoughts and opinions on the conversion of these countries.<sup>97</sup>

The missionary's letter here acted as an insurance measure in case he failed to arrive. Furthermore, when the letters appeared in print, in the *Relations*, for instance, they served to highlight the volatility of the mission terrain.

But who carried missionaries' letters when the authors or their colleagues could not? How did *these* bearers shape a letter's meaning? Examining the roles of letter-bearers can illuminate the roles of people traditionally eclipsed in examinations of correspondence networks. Historians of New France have not examined the roles of Indigenous letter-bearers in missionary accounts.<sup>98</sup> The principal reason for this is likely the lack of source material. Extant material tends to eclipse Indigenous experiences in favour of highlighting the pious deeds of missionaries and converts. Indeed, it is rare for letter-bearers to be mentioned in missionary accounts. Carrying letters was rarely the sole purpose of a journey; rather, it was an additional task carried out by a person already travelling to the letter's destination. As such, there was often little choice as to who to ask to carry a missive. As we shall see, when letter-bearers are mentioned in texts, it is often for very specific rhetorical purposes. But other meanings can also be read in these appearances, from the reliance of missionaries on Indigenous people to move letters and goods, to the deliberate disruption of missionary correspondence by Indigenous nations. Existing scholarship on trade

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<sup>97</sup> *JR*, 28: 39.

<sup>98</sup> Although Jane E. Harrison's thesis mentions the importance of Indigenous letter-bearers, little detailed analysis is given. See Harrison. "The Intercourse of Letters," 140.

relations has also been facilitated through the analysis of when letters did and did not arrive with missionaries, allowing conclusions to be drawn about trade itineraries.<sup>99</sup> Given the lack of source material written by Indigenous people, this section will be limited to accounts written by Europeans (in this case, missionaries). Nonetheless, it will argue that historians must complicate existing narratives of colonial domination via the textual through a more-detailed analysis of correspondence networks. Most letters and documents did not simply move themselves from place to place (though, as recent studies have shown, the analysis of ‘object agency’ can provide useful perspectives on the study of history).<sup>100</sup> In contrast with the ‘lost’ letters of the preceding section (some of which were ‘made lost’ through divine intervention), the letters studied in this section were moved by people, all of whom had differing agendas, motivations, and allegiances. As we have seen, missionary authors exploited their bodily circumstances (pain, missing fingers, etc.) for rhetorical purposes, but they also understood the roles played by the body of the letter’s bearer. Rather than focusing simply on author and recipient (a trait exhibited by many scholars working on correspondence), this section will highlight the importance – both practical and rhetorical – of letter-bearers in correspondence networks. Inspired by Tim Ingold’s concept of the ‘meshwork’, which posits that life is ‘not a network of connected points, but a meshwork of interwoven lines’, the tangle of which is the texture of the world in which we live, it will argue that the journeys undertaken through environment materially shaped correspondence, which in turn created meanings.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> See, for example, Bruce Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660* (London: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1987), 611.

<sup>100</sup> See, for instance, Karin Vélez’s work on the chapel of Loreto, which miraculously ‘translated’ itself to several different locations. Karin Annelise Vélez, “Resolved to Fly: The Virgin of Loreto, the Jesuits, and the Miracle of Portable Catholicism in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World,” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2008).

<sup>101</sup> Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge, and Description* (London: Routledge, 2001), 63. Ingold provides a detailed discussion of the ‘meshwork’ in Part II: The meshwork’, 63-94. See also Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2013), 132-33.

## Logistics

In seventeenth-century New France, there was no official postal service.<sup>102</sup> This was not unusual; indeed, it was not until the mid-seventeenth century that a regular post was established in France, with a bi-weekly service from Paris to other parts of the country.<sup>103</sup> Missionary correspondence from Canada to France was therefore a complex process, which often required different bearers (or a series of different bearers) on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1647, the Jesuit missionaries at Trois Rivières sent letters to their brethren in the *pays des Hurons* via a group of Atikamekws, who were meeting with Wendat traders at an annual assembly. The *Relation* recounted:

We had given them [the Attikamegues traders] letters, to be conveyed by 50 Hurons who happened to be at that assembly, to our Fathers, who are in the country; and our Fathers in those regions had also given some to their Hurons, in order to be delivered to us by the Attikamegues. These good people have been faithful; they have given our letters to the Hurons, and have delivered to us those which came from our Fathers who are in that country. The Hiroquois constrained us to seek these wonderfully devious ways.<sup>104</sup>

As Bruce Tigger has pointed out, the fact that the Wendats did not personally deliver the Jesuit letters from the Huron mission to the Jesuits at Trois Rivières suggests that they did not travel all the way to Trois Rivières or Tadoussac. Instead, he speculates, they returned to Wendake or to the Ottawa Valley where they exchanged their wares with other Wendats who were permitted

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<sup>102</sup> The first Post Office at Quebec was established after the British conquest in 1763. Harrison, *Until Next Year*, 93.

<sup>103</sup> Duchêne, *Comme une lettre à la poste*, 205.

<sup>104</sup> *JR*, 31: 219.



to trade with the French.<sup>105</sup> Following the progress of these letters has thus allowed scholars to trace economic exchanges in parts of eastern North America. But what else can we deduce from texts, such as Jérôme Lalemant's above-cited 1647 *Relation*? How might we read such excerpts against the grain?

The 1647 *Relation* highlights the dependence of French missionaries on Indigenous trade networks for the purposes of communication. The missionary author's statement that the Atikamekws ('These good people'), had 'been faithful', both delivering and collecting letters, suggests that there was some doubt as to whether sending letters in this manner would be successful. The eleventh chapter of the 1647 *Relation* was devoted to the Atikamekw's relations with the Jesuits at Trois Rivières and emphasises this view of the Atikamekws as a peaceful people who were receptive to Christianity.<sup>106</sup> Rather than stressing the difficulties of relying on Indigenous travellers, however, the *Relation* emphasised French ingenuity. 'The Hiroquois', its missionary author recounted, 'have constrained us to seek these wonderfully devious ways.'<sup>107</sup>

The second half of Paul Le Jeune's 1637 *Relation* was written by Father François Le Mercier from the Huron mission. The first chapter is a journal recounting 'some of the more memorable events' that occurred from July to September that year. 'On the 8<sup>th</sup> [of August]', Le Mercier wrote, 'we received a package of letters from your Reverence through the medium of a Native [*Sauuage*], uncle of Louys de Sainte-Foy.'<sup>108</sup> The letter-bearer is here unnamed but identified by

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<sup>105</sup> Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 611.

<sup>106</sup> *JR*, 31: 209-29.

<sup>107</sup> *JR*, 31: 219.

<sup>108</sup> *JR*, 13: 17.

his familial relationship with Louys de Sainte-Foy, the baptismal name of Amantacha, a Wendat man who had been taken to France in 1626, at the age of sixteen. He was baptised – in front of a large and curious crowd – in the Cathedral of Rouen, where the Duc de Longueville and Madame de Villars were named as godparents.<sup>109</sup> Whether Louys de Sainte-Foy is mentioned because Le Jeune knew him well or because he was an important and recurring figure in the cast of those appearing the *Relations* and therefore known to assiduous readers is unclear. However, that Le Mercier mentions the letter-bearer's relation to Louis/Amantacha indicates the latter's importance to the missionaries.

Like missionary bodies, the bodies of letter-bearers are invoked to imbue missives with sacred meaning. Writing to Barthelémy Vimont from the *pays des Hurons* in 1640 (in a letter which was a postscript to the 1640 *Relation* and which was also published in the *Relation*), Jérôme Lalemant wrote of the death of Joseph Chihouatenhoua, a pious Wendat convert. 'I was preparing to write to Your Reverence for the last time in this current year, by the hand of Joseph Chihouatenhoua, our good Christian [...]'. He continued, 'now the same paper of which he should have been the bearer is used to carry to Your Reverence news of his death.'<sup>110</sup> Joseph Chihouatenhoua was baptised at Ossossané in 1638, 'being in danger of death', from an epidemic that was sweeping the village. 'Even then', Lalemant wrote in the *Relation*, 'he gave promise of being no ordinary convert.'<sup>111</sup> During his illness, the missionary continued, Chihouatenhoua was uncertain which remedies were acceptable to God – the Jesuits criticised many Wendat healing rituals, denouncing them as 'superstitious' – and informed them that he

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<sup>109</sup> *JR*, 5: 245-47.

<sup>110</sup> *JR*, 20: 79.

<sup>111</sup> *JR*, 15: 77. For a full account of Chihouatenhoua's conversion see the 1638 *Relation*, Chapter 5, "The Conversion of Joseph Chiwatenhwa, a Native of this village of Ossossané," in *JR*, 15, 77-85.

would decline any medicine that was injurious to God. Chihouatenha was given the baptismal name, Joseph. God, the missionary recounted, ‘has continued to lead him ever since.’<sup>112</sup> If he had not died when he was killed by two Haudenosaunee warriors who ambushed him while he was at work in his field, Joseph Chihouatenhoua would have been the bearer of Lalemant’s letter. Here, again, we see a certain amount of slippage between relic and page, a connection between body and text. Lalemant’s letter, the missionary himself emphasised, was written on the ‘same paper’ that Joseph would have carried, had he not been killed. The paper appears as an almost contact relic; the man, Lalemant recounted, had lived and died well. ‘No doubt this death,’ the missionary asserted, ‘although sudden for this good and excellent Christian, did not take him unprepared’, for not only was he ‘continually in the grace of God’, but he had commended his soul to God that very morning, as was his custom.<sup>113</sup> Indeed, the unexpectedness of his death – that afternoon, we are told, he had gone to the woods ‘to cut some sticks of Cedar to finish the canoe which was to carry him to Quebec [with Lalemant’s letter]’) – signified a life cut short, a journey unfinished; texts and bodies, in Lalemant’s narrative, were intertwined.<sup>114</sup> In a colony in which there were not yet any martyrs, the evocation of the sacred in everyday life was important for the creation of Catholic culture.<sup>115</sup>

One young catechumen used his position as the bearer of his letter to his advantage. Memench, a fifteen-year-old from the Nipissirinien nation, was upset and angered when the missionaries at the residence of Saint Joseph – who feared that the young man would backslide into apostasy –

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<sup>112</sup> *JR*, 15: 83.

<sup>113</sup> *JR*, 20: 79-81.

<sup>114</sup> *JR*, 20: 81.

<sup>115</sup> Timothy G. Pearson highlights the importance of local, ‘lived’ Catholicism in the creation of holy figures in early Canada. See, Pearson, *Becoming Holy in Early Canada*, 7-10.

delayed his baptism. Memench asked the missionary who instructed him to write to Father Vimont (the mission superior) and ask that he be baptised. According to the *Relation*'s report of this incident, Memench asked the Father to write the following appeal:

Father Vimont, Memench is sad because they will not baptize him: he seems to lose courage: he wishes to speak to you, so that you may have him baptized. Listen to him; this is what he says: "I have left my own country and my parents, to come here and be baptized, I do not wish to go back up there where the wicked are; I will remain here with the good people. I am young, but still I know what I am doing. I will keep up prayer all my life; I do not lie. Command, therefore, that I be baptized. If you will not do so, I shall be sad; I shall return to my own country where I shall perhaps die without Baptism. You will be the cause of it."<sup>116</sup>

Given that this extract was reported by a Jesuit missionary, it is difficult to know how far the words reported resembled those spoken. The *Relation* recounts that Memench, 'wished himself to be the bearer of the letter so that he might plead his cause in person; and he pleaded so well that he won it.'<sup>117</sup> The short extract highlights the complex relationships between written and spoken word, between objects and persons in communication systems.

If the appearance of letters in colonial sources can be read as tools of power, instances where correspondence networks are disrupted can be read as acts of resistance. In Jesuit accounts, Haudenosaunee warriors appear as the main 'threat' to missionary communication networks.

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<sup>116</sup> *JR*, 25: 131-33. I have modernised this excerpt, replacing all instances of 'thou' with 'you' and 'mayst' with 'may', etc.

<sup>117</sup> *JR*, 25: 133.

The *Relation* of 1642 described the capture of Isaac Jogues and his companions. Twelve canoes, which included food, supplies, and missionary paraphernalia required for chapels, were lost:

The poor Fathers will chiefly regret the loss of the letters written to them by several persons of merit. The Hiroquois have scattered them about here and there, on the bank of the river, and the waters have carried them away; and the Fathers are deprived of pleasant communications from those distinguished and virtuous persons. The highway robbers [*les voleurs de grands chemins*] have taken this away from them.<sup>118</sup>

The men who destroyed the missionaries' letters are here described as 'highway robbers'; they are given the status of thieves, rather than 'warriors' (the latter would have implied a certain amount of respect). Earlier in the same *Relation*, Father Barthélemy Vimont had described them as 'robbers who carry on war only like footpads [*larrons*] who besiege highways [*les grands chemins*], never showing themselves except when they find their advantage'.<sup>119</sup> This statement implies what the missionary believes to be the Iroquois' lack of bravery (the Iroquois never fight, he asserts, unless they are sure that they can win), but it also highlights the difficulties missionaries had both travelling and sending letters and goods. Given that the French often relied on letters to convey strategic information, loss of letters could be far more serious than *Relation* implied when it was stated that the destruction of letters intended for the missionaries, 'deprived [them] of pleasant communications.' Rather, the destruction of these letters can be seen as a strategic act of resistance.

### **Experiencing New France in France**

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<sup>118</sup> *JR*, 22: 271-73.

<sup>119</sup> *JR*, 22: 249.

Although museums today often discourage visitors from touching exhibits (a practice stemming from the nineteenth-century pre-occupation with the visual) early modern curiosities were often examined using a ‘hands-on’, investigative approach.<sup>120</sup> In the seventeenth century, birch bark letters were rare artefacts (paper was a more usual writing support, but due to the distance between colony and metropole, letters were infrequent). Any examination of their meanings must therefore take into account early modern cultures of collecting, which were facilitated by European exploration and colonisation of the Americas and elsewhere. Owing to their sophisticated communication networks and privileged access to specimens and curiosities, missionaries were often involved in conveying these objects to Europe.<sup>121</sup> Practices of collecting were also rhetorically significant in printed relations of exploration and colonisation. As Neil Kenny has recently argued, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century travel narratives frequently presented themselves as ‘collections’ and included lists of ‘real’ objects, as well as information ‘*recueilli*’ (gathered) by travellers.<sup>122</sup> Readers’ engagements with early modern missionary letters were therefore shaped, not only by hagiographic traditions, but by early modern collecting practices. Why else write a letter on birch bark (rather than paper), if not to stimulate the sensory curiosity of the beholder? Building on historiographies of both mission narratives and cultures of collecting, then, this section will analyse the ways in which missionary letters from New France were sensed by readers in the metropole. Rather than focusing on simply

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<sup>120</sup> Constance Classen, “Museum Manners: The Sensory Life of the Early Museum,” *Journal of Social History* 40 (2007), 895-96; 900; Classen and Howes, “The Museum as Sensescape: Western Sensibilities and Indigenous Artifacts,” in *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums, and Material Culture*, edited by Elizabeth Edwards, Chris Gosden, and Ruth B. Phillips (Oxford: Berg, 2006), 200, 208.

<sup>121</sup> Steven J. Harris, “Confession-Building, Long-Distance Networks, and the Organization of Jesuit Science,” *Early Science and Medicine* 1, no. 3 (1996), 308.

<sup>122</sup> Neil Kenny, “La collection comme mode discursif dans les relations de voyage françaises aux XVIIe et XVIII siècles,” *French Studies* 65, no.3 (2011), 360, 361, 365.

‘making sense’ of text, I will argue that a letter’s discourse – and, by extension, missionary discourse – was supported not only by its form, but by the sensory experiences of its authors, bearers, and readers.

### **‘Pious Curiosity’: Relations**

Like the above-described Jesuit letters, the printed *Relations* also made references to their fragile origins as vulnerable missives. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, there was no full *Relation* for 1655. A much shorter, twenty-eight-page octavo volume entitled, *Copie de deux lettres envoyées de la Nouvelle France au Père procureur des missions de la Compagnie de Jésus en ces contrées* was instead published by Cramoisy in 1656.<sup>123</sup> Of the five ships which set out that year for New France, only two arrived. The other three were lost (one to the English, one to the Spanish, and one that ‘was lost at sea or on some shore, no news of it having ever been received’).<sup>124</sup> This loss caused great damage, not only to French merchants, but for the colony’s Governor and settlers, who had been deprived of a great portion of their yearly provisions. Of course, the letter pointed out, this was no reflection on those charitable individuals – amongst others, Anne of Austria, the Queen Mother – who had sent aid: ‘He [God] looks no less favourably upon those who had given the greater portion of those alms’, the author gravely stated. He continued, solemnly, “‘God had given it, - God had taken it away; blessed be his Holy Name.’”.<sup>125</sup> This was a frequent refrain the texts of the *Relations*.<sup>126</sup> Given that the

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<sup>123</sup> *Copie de deux lettres envoyées de la Nouvelle France au Père procureur des missions de la Compagnie de Jésus en ces contrées* (Paris, Sebastien Cramoisy et Gabriel Cramoisy, 1656). All quotations from this work will be drawn from Thwaites, *JR*: 41, 205-33.

<sup>124</sup> *JR*, 41: 211.

<sup>125</sup> *JR*, 41: 211-13.

<sup>126</sup> See, for instance, *JR*, 22: 271.

colony was still reliant on provisions sent from France, it was imperative that current benefactors (and also potential future donors) should not be discouraged. After recounting this disaster, the author continued:

To this misfortune was added another, which was not so great but which nevertheless is very regrettable for those who tenderly love the salvation of these Peoples and who have some curiosity to learn news of them. A number of Letters, and even the Relation of occurrences there for a year have been lost.<sup>127</sup>

This above passage implies a link between intellectual and ethnographic ‘curiosity’ (the ‘passion, desire, impatience, to see, to learn, to possess things, singular things, new things, & c.’ as the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française* defines it), and the New France mission.<sup>128</sup> Curiosity, the text implied, was perfectly acceptable – laudable, even – when it was coupled with a desire to learn of conversion and salvation. As Allan Greer notes for the eighteenth-century *Lettres edifiantes et curieuses*, relations from predominantly French Jesuits in a variety of overseas missions including Asia and America, “‘curious’ content rather outweighed ‘edifying’ material’ and attracted a broad variety of readers.<sup>129</sup> These later relations, Catherine Desbarats argues, were aimed at a curious Enlightenment public; they retained fewer stories of miracles and martyrdoms than the *Relations*.<sup>130</sup> The *Relation* of 1655, analysed above, forestalled any potential criticism of ‘curiosity’ by tackling this issue head on.

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<sup>127</sup> *JR*, 41: 213.

<sup>128</sup> *DAF* (1694), s.v. “curiosité.” ‘Passion, desir, empressement, de voir, d’apprendre, de posseder des choses rares, singulieres, nouvelles, &c.’

<sup>129</sup> Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 187.

<sup>130</sup> Desbarats, “1616-1673: Les Jésuites, *Relations des Jésuites*,” 59. Links between Jesuit writings and the Enlightenment are only now beginning to be explored. See Marc André Bernier, Clorinda Donato, and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, “Introduction,” in *Jesuit Accounts of the Colonial Americas: Intercultural Transfers*,



The phrase ‘pious curiosity’ appears in the 1656-57 *Relation* to describe the justifiable desire of readers to learn of the New France mission. ‘The Reader’s pious curiosity [*saincte curiosité*]’, Le Mercier wrote, ‘will feel much satisfaction at seeing a Letter that could not be printed last year, because it was received too late’.<sup>131</sup> This phrase also appears in a 1680 letter from Pierre-Joseph-Marie Chaumonot to the Cathedral Chapter of Chartres, in which the missionary thanked the Chapter for sending a silver chemise and relics to the mission of Notre Dame de Lorette. Chaumonot described the preparation of the holy altar, and the creation of a small niche above the tabernacle in which the relics would be held.<sup>132</sup> After prayers were said by Father Potier, Chaumonot wrote,

the Father opened the reliquary, to give the people the consolation of seeing the sacred relics that it contained; he even permitted many to kiss them... Immediately, they sang high mass, which was said for you [the Cathedral Chapter of Chartres]; and all those whom the celebration of the feast and *pious curiosity* [*saincte curiosité*] had attracted to our chapel were invited to offer you the communion which they were about to make.<sup>133</sup>

That the Father added the adjective ‘pious’ to ‘curiosity’ implies a distinction between curiosity motivated by Faith, and that motivated by ‘passion, desire, impatience, to see, to learn, to possess things, singular things, new things, & c.’. In the context of the scene described by Chaumonot –

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*Intellectual Disputes and Textualities*, ed. Marc André Bernier, Clorinda Donato, and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in association with the UCLA Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies and the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 2014), 3.

<sup>131</sup> *JR*, 44: 53.

<sup>132</sup> *JR*, 61: 259-61.

<sup>133</sup> *JR*, 61: 261. My emphasis.

that is, devotional objects from Europe being venerated in New France by both French people and the Indigenous people resident at the Lorette mission – curiosity is not only presented as a desire to see new things from France (which we might expect in the case of the mission’s Indigenous inhabitants). The desire to see the new is present, but it is portrayed as being motivated purely by aspiration of salvation through devotion. Devotional objects are thus separated from mere ‘curiosities’.

Since the *Copie de deux lettres* was a departure in form from the usual *Relation*, its author was keen to stress its legitimacy. This short account of the year’s chief events gave a detailed description both of the loss of the original *Relation* sent from New France and of the editor’s attempts at recovering and rewriting the information therein:

The Messenger to whose care the recently arrived packets were confided, was robbed between La Rochelle and Paris. A box filled with papers and Letters was broken, and all its contents were scattered here and there by the robbers. The poor Messenger gathered up what he could, and brought it to us. From these papers we derive a portion of what we are about to say.<sup>134</sup>

The ‘poor Messenger’ was not blamed – at least, not publicly – for this mishap; he had, after all, ‘gathered up what he could’ and taken it to Paris. After a brief summary of events in New France, the account again noted the means by which its author had learned of these occurrences. ‘This is what we have learned from some Letters,’ the account stated, ‘and from the mouths of those who have recently returned from New France.’<sup>135</sup> The damaged remnants of the mission superior’s correspondence were thus supplemented – out of necessity – by verbal, eyewitness accounts.

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<sup>134</sup> *JR*, 41: 213.

<sup>135</sup> *JR*, 41: 219.

### Missionaries as purveyors of rare objects

‘I went out of my way to find you a moose foot but your letters came so late that I have not yet found anything’.<sup>136</sup>

Marie de l’Incarnation to ‘an Ursuline at Tours’, 7 September 1640.

Written shortly before the departure of the last ships in 1640, Marie de l’Incarnation’s letter to one of her sisters at the Ursuline convent of Tours demonstrates the role of missionaries as purveyors of rare goods to their European correspondents. That the late arrival of her sister’s letter prevented Marie from locating a moose foot – which were highly coveted in France for their medicinal value – suggests that her correspondent had made a specific request for this item.<sup>137</sup> Marie’s short response contained a promise to ‘do my best to find one, taking a singular pleasure in rendering you some little service.’<sup>138</sup> ‘You know’, she continued, ‘how worthless I am: but I do not know what I would not do for you out of affection, my dear sister, who is responsible for so much of my happiness.’<sup>139</sup> Marie thus styled her search as a favour for a friend; and the implication of her own worthlessness would have deflected any accusations of

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<sup>136</sup> Marie de l’Incarnation to an Ursuline at Tours, Quebec, 7 September 1640, MI, *Corr.*, Letter XLVIII, 114. ‘Je me suis mise en peine de vous chercher un pied d’Élan mais vos lettres sont venues si tard que je n’ay encore rien d’assuré.’

<sup>137</sup> On the curative use of moose feet, see MI, *Corr.*, Letter XLVIII, 114n.

<sup>138</sup> Marie de l’Incarnation to an Ursuline at Tours, Quebec, 7 September 1640, 114. ‘Je ferai mon possible pour en trouver, prenant un singulier plaisir de vous rendre quelque petit service’.

<sup>139</sup> Marie de l’Incarnation to an Ursuline at Tours, Quebec, 7 September 1640, 114. ‘Vous sçavez combien je suis peu en effet: mais d’affection je ne sçay ce que je voudrois faire pour vous, ma chère sœur, qui prenez tant de part à mon bonheur.’

grandeur. But the missionary was clearly associated with, and happy to source (for select individuals), rare objects present in the colony.

Marie seems to have been motivated by friendship (at least, in this case), but other missionaries gained both profit and prestige from the supply of rare goods to buyers in France. In his *Histoire Naturelle des Indes*, Jesuit Louis Nicolas boasted that he had been sought out ‘from afar’ due to the fact that he had ‘cured’ a Carthusian priest of epilepsy (‘even though he [the priest] was old’) using only one dose of powdered moose foot that he had brought back from New France.<sup>140</sup> The missionary bragged that he had received up to eight gold *louis* for only a small portion of one moose foot.<sup>141</sup> Nicolas was something of free-spirit when it came to the New France mission; he ‘tamed’ two bear cubs and was unpopular with his colleagues.<sup>142</sup> But both Marie and Nicolas’s roles as intermediaries (and perhaps as gatherer in Nicolas’s case), imply that whilst the principal role of missionaries was the conversion of Indigenous people, this was not the only task that they were associated with. Whatever their motivations, both Marie and Nicolas were regarded as purveyors of rare goods. As the request sent to Marie demonstrates, sending rare and valuable objects to France was not unusual.

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<sup>140</sup> Louis Nicolas, *Natural History, or the faithful search for everything rare in the New World, treating in general and in particular: Simple flowers, grains, herbs, fruits, bushes, trees, four-footed animals living on land and in water, birds that live on land and those that live above or in water; and finally fresh-water fish, and some salt-water ones; various insects, and several reptiles, with their figures: Divided into twelve books*, trans. Nancy Senior, in *The Codex Canaensis and the writings of Louis Nicolas: The Natural History of the New World/Histoire Naturelle des Indes Occidentales*, ed. with an Introduction by François-Mac Gagnon, trans. Nancy Senior, modernised by Réal Ouellet (Tulsa, OK; Montreal: Gilcrease Museum; McGill Queen’s-University Press, 2011), 337. On the moose foot as a remedy for epilepsy, see also 331.

<sup>141</sup> Louis Nicolas, *Natural History*, 337.

<sup>142</sup> Louis Nicolas, *Natural History*, 321. On the criticism of Nicolas by other Jesuits, see Germaine Warkentin, “Aristotle in New France: Louis Nicolas and the Making of the *Codex Canadensis*,” *French Colonial History* 11 (2010), 81-82.

The correspondence of Jesuit Father Thierry Beschefer and French collector, Cabart de Villermont, also provides useful insights into missionaries' roles in the acquisition of rare objects. Esprit Cabart de Villermont (c.1628? – 1707) was an agent of the French East India Company, though there is very little evidence concerning his activities in this position.<sup>143</sup> Amongst his correspondents in North America were some of the most renowned explorers, including Taneguy Le Gallois de Beaujeu, captain of the *Joly*, one of the royal vessels which took part in the explorations of René Robert Cavalier de la Salle, and the explorer Henri de Tonty, among others. But he also corresponded with missionaries, whose religious mobility gave them access to rare objects and knowledge.<sup>144</sup> Of Beschefer's correspondence with Villermont, only two letters are extant, but they nonetheless provide us with a useful sample of the type of information and objects that he sent to his correspondent.<sup>145</sup>

Beschefer's earliest remaining correspondence with Villermont is a letter written from Quebec in September 1687.<sup>146</sup> The letter provides a detailed analysis of Governor Jacques-René Brissay de Denonville's expedition against the Haudenosaunee. The second letter, written one month later, gives only a brief update on the conflict. This is followed by a list of the objects contained in a box that the missionary had sent to Villermont, presumably with the letter itself. Beschefer's

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<sup>143</sup> John-Paul Ghobrial, *The Whispers of the Cities: Information Flows in Istanbul, London, and Paris in the Age of William Trumbull* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 19; Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, *Orientalism in Early Modern France: Eurasian Trade, Exoticism, and the Ancien Regime* (Oxford: Berg, 2008), 108-109; Augustin Val, *Dictionnaire critique de biographie et d'histoire errata et supplement pour tous les dictionnaires historiques d'après des documents authentiques inédites* (Paris, Henri Plon, 1867), 1271.

<sup>144</sup> For a summary of Esprit Cabart de Villermont's correspondence, see Rénaud Lessard, "La Nouvelle-France comme aventure scientifique: La Contribution d'Esprit Cabart de Villermont," *À rayons ouverts: Dossier: La Renaissance* 88 (2012), 27-28, [http://www.banq.qc.ca/a\\_propos\\_banq/publications/a\\_rayons\\_ouverts/aro\\_88/aro\\_88\\_dossier4.html](http://www.banq.qc.ca/a_propos_banq/publications/a_rayons_ouverts/aro_88/aro_88_dossier4.html).

<sup>145</sup> Lucien Campeau, "BESCHEFER, THIERRY," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed November 29, 2014, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/beschefer\\_thierry\\_2E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/beschefer_thierry_2E.html). Both letters appear in *JR*, 63: 269-92.

<sup>146</sup> *JR*, 63: 269-87.

list contains a mixture of flora, stones and minerals, tools, and other objects of curiosity. Some, like the ‘24 bark dishes of various sizes’ were – given their large number – perhaps intended for sale.<sup>147</sup> Others were for scientific experiment or display in a *Wunderkammer*, or ‘cabinet of curiosity’. Of the objects intended for investigation, detailed descriptions were given. Beschefer’s list included, ‘A small gourd full of copal balsam, which was brought to me from Akansa country on the Mississippi, half-way between fort st. Louis and the sea’.<sup>148</sup> This description – vague for a person familiar with the area, but relatively specific for a seventeenth-century European – of location implies the importance of place in scientific investigation. Other items were recorded with instructions for their use. ‘Seeds of Canadian watermelons,’ one entry reads, ‘which grow without requiring any care, like squashes in France; they need not be planted as early as others.’<sup>149</sup> Missionaries were thus important agents in the diffusion of scientific knowledge.

But some scientific knowledge had to be obtained in Europe. Beschefer’s inclusion of ‘A piece of porphyry from the quarry on the island of st. Pierre’ was likely intended for scientific examination in France.<sup>150</sup> Mineral samples that he had previously sent to Villermont, for instance, had revealed the existence of a lead mine with a small amount of silver. ‘Were it not for the test that you made of the mineral I sent you last year,’ Beschefer wrote to his correspondent, ‘we would not yet know that it is a mine of lead, with traces of silver.’<sup>151</sup> As Daniela Bleichmar’s article on Nicolás Monardes (c.1508-88), the Sevillian author of the

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<sup>147</sup> *JR*, 63: 289.

<sup>148</sup> *JR*, 63: 291.

<sup>149</sup> *JR*, 63: 291.

<sup>150</sup> *JR*, 63: 291.

<sup>151</sup> *JR*, 63: 289.

*Historia medicinal de las cosas que se traen de nuestras Indias Occidentales que sirven en medicina* demonstrates, New World *materia medica* (that is, knowledge of healing practices) was, for some Europeans, easier to acquire in Europe than it was in the New World itself. Although Monardes never travelled to the Americas, he regularly treated patients returning from the New World, and thus became one of the foremost European experts on the uses of New World products as medicines.<sup>152</sup> As a result of European violence in the Americas, some Indigenous people were unwilling to share their medical knowledge with colonisers. Thus, even Europeans travelling in the New World found themselves reliant on printed books from Europe.<sup>153</sup> The library of the Jesuit college at Quebec had a Latin edition of Monardes' work, published at Antwerp by Christophe Plantin in 1578. According to an inscription on the cover page, the book was added to the collection in 1632, when the Jesuits re-established themselves at Quebec.<sup>154</sup> Two other Latin botanical treatises were included in the college's modest early collection, Rembert Dodœns's, *Florum et coronariarum odoratarumque nonnullarum historia* and Garcia de Orta's *Aromatum et simplicium aliquot medicamentorum apud Indos nascentium historia*.<sup>155</sup> These were also published by Plantin's Antwerp press (in 1568 and 1578, respectively). As Antonio Drolet points out, books about New France were, in 1632, still rare; Jesuits arriving in the country therefore brought books that they thought would be the most help in this new environment.<sup>156</sup> While Monardes's work discusses the *Indios Occidentales* (West Indies), Dodœns's focuses on Europe and Orta's, India. When the Jesuits arrived in Quebec in

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<sup>152</sup> Daniela Bleichmar, "Books, Bodies, and Fields: Sixteenth-Century Transatlantic Encounters with New World *Materia Medica*," in *Colonial Botany: Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World*, ed. Londa Shiebinger and Claudia Swann (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 87.

<sup>153</sup> Bleichmar, 'Books, Bodies, and Fields,' 92-95.

<sup>154</sup> Antonio Drolet, "La bibliothèque du Collège des Jésuites," *RHAF*, 14, no.4 (1961), 488.

<sup>155</sup> Drolet, "La bibliothèque du Collège des Jésuites," 516, 533.

<sup>156</sup> Drolet, "La bibliothèque du Collège des Jésuites," 488.

1632, therefore, they came armed with literature from a variety of geographical areas, which was of limited local relevance, implying, on the one hand, their limited knowledge of local flora, and, on the other, some doubt as to whether they would be able to easily acquire (whether through linguistic difficulties or local reluctance) botanical knowledge in New France.

In Beschefer's case, it seems that local people were unfamiliar with the materials sent for testing; French alliances with Indigenous groups facilitated knowledge exchange. Missionaries living in Indigenous communities were also able to observe first-hand the uses of local flora and fauna. Still, when political and military conflict was especially bad, it could be easier to acquire news of current affairs from outside (as opposed to inside) the colony. As Beschefer wrote to Villermont in 1687, 'We have had no more news of Monsieur de la sale, *except the few words that you wrote us.*'<sup>157</sup> A comprehensive examination of information and communication networks is not the aim of this thesis, but suffice it to say that French bodily presence in New France did not automatically confer scientific, intellectual, or strategic expertise.

In contrast to the samples sent to France for scientific analysis, some of the objects on Beschefer's list can be described as 'curiosities' (though they were not without ideological meanings). 'Pieces of bark on which figures have been marked by teeth' seem to have been included as unusual and unique objects, which hinted at the dangers of the territories newly explored by Europeans. That more than one such object had been provided might indicate that these objects were intended for distribution to friends or intellectual networks. The last object of interest to us on Beschefer's list is 'A stone dagger, the handle of which is wanting'. The missionary explained, 'it consists merely of a piece of wood of no particular shape and you can

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<sup>157</sup> *JR*, 63: 289. My emphasis.



have one [a handle] set in it'.<sup>158</sup> This dagger was intended, if not for use (stone is a far less-efficient cutting material than iron), then at least for adaptation and display. Just as Indigenous people adapted European objects, so too did Europeans adapted Indigenous objects.

Beschefer's letters themselves can be viewed as 'curiosities' to be kept and learned from. The body of Beschefer's list-letter also included ethnographic descriptions, which were clearly part of a longer correspondence with Villermont. 'I was mistaken', the missionary wrote, 'when I told you that the Iroquois wore no masks.' He continued, 'They make some very hideous ones with pieces of wood, which they carve according to their fancy.' 'When our people burned the villages of the Tsonnontouans', he explained, 'a young man made every effort in his power to get one that an outaouae [Odawa] had found in a cabin, but the latter would not part with it.' This object, he wrote 'was a foot and a half long, and wide in proportion; 2 pieces of kettle, very neatly fitted to it, and pierced with a small hole in the center, represented the eyes.'<sup>159</sup> The Tsonnontouan mask had clearly been adapted using European materials ('2 pieces of kettle'), which were evidently not being used for their intended purpose. Collecting here appears not only as a European pursuit. The Odawa man who found the mask presumably attributed some value to it, both as a war-trophy, and as an object of curiosity. Proof, the missionary implied, that the object was remarkable. As sources of ethnographic information accompanying rare objects, Beschefer's letters – written by a missionary with direct experience of New France – are thus complex objects in their own right.

### **Missionary letters as 'curiosities'**

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<sup>158</sup> *JR*, 63: 289.

<sup>159</sup> *JR*, 63: 289.

Amongst the papers of the Jesuit historian Camille de Rochemonteix is a letter penned in 1894 by Henri Omont, archivist and philologist at the *Bibliothèque nationale* in Paris.<sup>160</sup> ‘Your work on the missions in the Americas’, Omont wrote, ‘will without a doubt prompt your interest in two very fragile documents which you will permit me to signal to you.’<sup>161</sup> These ‘documents’ were two letters, ‘written on birch bark’: the first, penned in 1647 by Jesuit missionary Joseph Poncet from his posting in the Huron mission in New France to Dom Claude Martin in Paris; the second, composed by a group of young Indigenous women at the Ursuline seminary of Quebec, to Monsieur Charles Sain, *receveur général des finances* in Bourges.<sup>162</sup> Rochemonteix’s reply is no longer extant, but presumably the letter piqued his interest, for in December of the same year, he received a second letter. This missive was from one ‘A. Prempain’ and included transcriptions of the writing on the birch bark letters.<sup>163</sup> Although Prempain had managed to fully transcribe the second letter, he had only been able to decipher a ‘few words’ of the first. After listing the phrases he had been able to make out, he explained:

This is all one can glean that *makes any sense*. The low-quality ink has worn away and one can only decipher a few words here and there... To be able to read them, one needs good light [*‘un beau soleil’*] and instruments. Monsieur Omont tells me that there is one way to glean information from what remains of this artefact

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<sup>160</sup> Henri Omont (1857-1940), graduated from the *École des Chartres* in 1881, when he was hired by the *Bibliothèque nationale* to work in the department of printed books. The following year, he began working in the manuscripts department, of which he became the curator in 1899. See Bernard Joassart, “Henri Omont et les Bollandistes: Correspondance,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 123 (2005), 378.

<sup>161</sup> Henri Omont to [Camille de Rochemonteix], Paris, 27 September 1894, AJC, Fonds Rochemonteix, 4013, 359. All translations from this letter are my own. ‘Vos études sur les missions en Amérique vous feront sans doute trouver quelque intérêt à deux documents tres fragiles que vous me permettrez de vous signaler.’

<sup>162</sup> The original birch bark letters are held at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*. See Joseph Poncet to Dom Claude Martin, Sainte-Marie-des-Hurons, 28 June 1647, BNF, NAF, 6561; ‘*lettre de remerciement de jeunes Huronnes*’ to ‘*M. Sain, receveur général des finances à Bourges*’, October 1676, BNF, NAF, 6561.

<sup>163</sup> Despite an extensive search, I have been unable to identify Prempain.

[‘*monument*’]. Pick out the words that one can just about guess... lay them out one by one on [a piece of] paper, leaving gaps between them, [and] then with the help of these words, construct [‘*construire*’] sentences that will fit around them, and that *make sense*. This very tiring work would take a long time; and then, where would be the authenticity of a letter constructed [‘*fabriqué*’] in this way[?] <sup>164</sup>

Although Prempain conceded that it was possible to construct logical sentences that ‘[made] *sense*’; he challenged the ‘authenticity’ of this approach. The letter alone, he implied, had little historical meaning, except as a tangible ‘*monument*’ of the New France mission.

Prempain’s letter raises important questions about the ways in which archivists and historians have studied and catalogued materials relating to the New France mission. The rationale behind the storage of these letters seems to have been their unusual form. Although they were written almost thirty years apart (in 1647 and 1676, respectively), they were stored together in a double wooden frame, which opened like a book (see Fig. 11).<sup>165</sup> This storage solution was implemented soon after the letters’ acquisition by the *Bibliothèque nationale*; when Omont

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<sup>164</sup> A Prempain to [Camille de Rochemonteix], Tuesday 11 December 1894, AJC, Fonds Rochemonteix, 4013, 361-63. My translation and emphases. ‘Voilà tous ce qu’on peut recueillir de suivi qui offre un sens. L’encre de mauvaise qualité s’est effacée, et on n’aperçoit plus çà et là que quelques mots de loin en loin. Pour pouvoir les lire il faut un beau soleil et des instruments. M. Omont me dit qu’il n’y a qu’un moyen de tirer parti de ce qui reste de ce monument[.]

Relever les mots qu’on peut à moitié deviner... les étaler un à un sur le papier, en laissant entre eux des intervalles, puis à l’aide de ces mots, construire des phrases ou ils entreront et qui aient un sens  
Ce travail très-fatigant durerait longtemps; puis ou serait l’authenticité d’une lettre fabriqué de cette manière’  
Although the addressee’s name is not included in the letter it seems likely that it was addressed to Camille de Rochemonteix, since it was amongst his papers and was written just prior to the publication of the first volume of his *Les Jésuites de la Nouvelle-France*. Camille de Rochemonteix, *Les jésuites de la Nouvelle-France: d’après beaucoup de documents inédits*, 3 vols. (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1895-1896).

<sup>165</sup> The letters had previously been held at the library of the Abbey of *Saint-Germain-des-Près*, the mother house of the *Congrégation de Saint-Maur*, the Benedictine order to which Claude Martin belonged. For a detailed biography of Martin, see, Guy-Marie Oury, *Claude Martin: Le fils de Marie de l’Incarnation* (Solesmes: Abbaye de Saint-Pierre, 1983).

wrote to Rochemonteix in 1864, they were still ‘at the framer’s [shop]’.<sup>166</sup> The frame protected these ‘fragile documents’ (Omont’s words) from careless researchers who might damage them, but they were also stored in a manner more suited to display than study; encased in glass, they could be looked at, but not touched.<sup>167</sup> That neither of these letters were included in any of the expansive, late-nineteenth-century edited source collections relating to the New France mission is telling of the contemporary binary opposition between objects and texts.<sup>168</sup> This exclusion also explains why the letters have been largely ignored by researchers.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Omont to [Rochemonteix], Paris 27 September 1894, AJC, Fonds Rochemonteix, 4013: 360. ‘chez l’encadreur’

<sup>167</sup> This mirrors the nineteenth-century emphasis on looking at, but not touching, museum collections. This ‘hands-off’ approach was also geared towards the preservation of rare objects, one of museums’ principal functions in the period. See Constance Classen and David Howes, “The Museum as Sensescape,” 208.

<sup>168</sup> The letters are absent from the following edited source collections: Reuben Gold Thwaites ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791* (Cleveland: Burrow Brothers, 1896-1901); Lucien Campeau, ed., *Monumenta Novae Franciae*, 9 vols. (Rome: Institutum Historicum Soc. Iesu, 1989-2003).

<sup>169</sup> Though the bark letter appears as an image in Natalie Zemon Davis’s insightful chapter on Marie de l’Incarnation in *Women on the Margins*, the author provides no analysis of this object, which acts as an illustration alone. See Natalie Zemon Davis, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (London: Harvard University Press, 1995).



Fig. 11: Birch bark letter in storage frame. BNF, NAF, 6561.

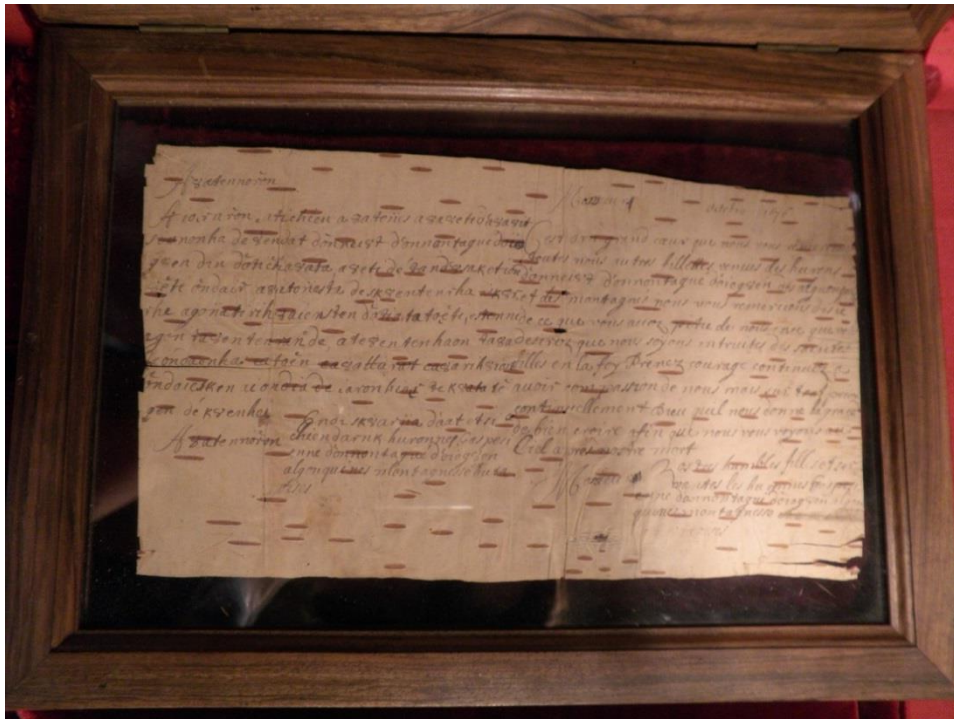


Fig.12: Birch bark letter to Charles Sain. BNF, NAF, 6561.

In recent years, scholars have become more attuned the ways in which the materiality of letters can shape their meanings.<sup>170</sup> Reading has also come to be understood as an embodied practice; readers' bodily experiences can shape their understandings of texts and vice versa.<sup>171</sup> According to Julia Boss, scholars today tend to fetishise manuscript sources and 'cling to a blind faith that the originals will lead us to some "higher truth"'.<sup>172</sup> But Boss's analysis of the Manuscript of 1652 demonstrates the complexity of the relationship between manuscript and print. The Manuscript of 1652, she argues, contains large amounts of text that had already been published in the printed *Relations*, and which had subsequently been copied into the manuscript by its scribe and the mission superior, Father Paul Ragueneau.<sup>173</sup> This shift from print to scribal text, Boss argues, was a 'process of *repersonalization*'; whereas the printed *Relations* subsumed individual actors, for instance, the manuscript referred to these actors by name. The manuscript thus embodied the missionaries' sufferings.<sup>174</sup>

### **Authenticity and proof**

The birch bark letter described by Prempain might also be read as a remnant of missionary struggle. It was written by Jesuit Father Joseph Poncet to Dom Claude Martin, Marie of the

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<sup>170</sup> Roger Chartier, "Meaningful Forms," 8; on the materiality of letters in early modern England, see James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter Writing, 1512-1635* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); James Daybell and Peter Hinds, "Introduction: Material Matters," in *Material Readings of Early Modern Culture: Texts and Social Practices, 1580-1730*, ed. James Daybell and Peter Hinds (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 1.

<sup>171</sup> For an examination of reading as a bodily practice see, Helen Smith, "'More swete vnto the eare / than holsome for ye mynde': Embodying Early Modern Women's Reading," *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 73 (2010): 413-32.

<sup>172</sup> Boss, 'Writing a Relic', 212.

<sup>173</sup> Boss, 'Writing a Relic', 216.

<sup>174</sup> Boss, 'Writing a Relic', 223; 227.

Incarnation's son.<sup>175</sup> The text, as the archivist rightly asserted, is faded and most of the words are too faint to read. Despite this, it has nonetheless been carefully preserved, framed in a small ornamental case, alongside another birch bark letter. In the cataloguing and storage of these objects, form has trumped meaning. The second letter is much easier to read, and Prempain had little difficulty providing a transcription. Written in Wendat and French, the letter was penned to Charles Sain, who was receiver general (*receveur général des finances*) in Bourges.<sup>176</sup> On 29 November 1671, a small chapel in the Ursuline church had been dedicated to the Child Jesus and, according the Ursulines' *Annales*, Sain was one its principal benefactors.<sup>177</sup> He had sent adornments for the chapel, such as paintings, gilded candlesticks, figures of the Child Jesus made of wax and wood (also gilded), gilded vases, bouquets, hangings, dye for making tapestries, and ornamental candlesticks.<sup>178</sup> The birch bark letter, a thank you note from the young women of the seminary at Quebec, was penned in 1676, so we can assume that these donations took place over a prolonged period ('*a diverses fois*', as the *Annales* stated).<sup>179</sup> Written in Wendat with a French translation alongside on the same strip of bark, the letter identified its authors as, '*très-humbles filles servantes les Huronnes Gaspésiennes Donnontagué doig8en des Algonquins Montagesses et Stoises*', that is, 'very humble servants the Hurons, Gaspesians from Onondaga, from Oiogoien, Algonquins, Montagnais, and Outaouais' (See Fig. 12). The

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<sup>175</sup> Joseph Poncet to Dom Claude Martin, Sainte-Marie-des-Hurons, 28 June 1647, BNF, NAF, 6561.

<sup>176</sup> '*lettre de remerciement de jeunes Huronnes*' to '*M. Sain, receveur général des finances à Bourges*', October 1676, BNF, NAF, 6561. The office of *Receveur général* was venal; the office holder's principal role was to collect all direct taxes (*taille, capitation*, and the *vingtièmes*). See, Roland E. Mousnier, *The Institutions of France under the Absolute Monarchy, 1598-1789*, vol. 2, *The Organs of State and Society* (London: University of Chicago Press), 207.

<sup>177</sup> Musée du Québec, *Trésors des communautés religieuses de Québec* (Québec: Ministère des affaires culturelles, 1973), exhibition catalogue, 68, 79.

<sup>178</sup> *Trésors des communautés religieuses de Québec*, 79.

<sup>179</sup> *Trésors des communautés religieuses de Québec*, 79.

letter seems to have been a collective effort. Perhaps the young women composed the letter in the presence of a nun, who penned the text itself. This might even have been styled as a pedagogical exercise. Writing letters, as Fay Bound Alberti argues, was a social undertaking that engaged author and correspondent in ‘a relationship of obligation and expectation’.<sup>180</sup> Indeed, the young women asked their correspondent to

‘Take courage: continue to have compassion for us. [And] in particular pray continually to God that he gives us the grace to believe well so that we can see you in heaven after our death’.<sup>181</sup>

The letter, then, also elicited a connection between the young women and their benefactor. Indeed, we might draw parallels here with the present-day practice of sponsoring individuals (especially children) in other countries via charitable institutions.

Jesuit documents contain numerous accounts of instances in which missionaries wrote letters for and with Indigenous individuals.<sup>182</sup> For instance, the *Relations* sometimes included examples of letters written by Indigenous converts to wealthy benefactors in France. The 1642-43 *Relation* included the following description of one of the letters printed therein:

*it would not be amiss, to close this Chapter with a letter which a Christian Neophyte has dictated, by himself, to be sent to France*

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<sup>180</sup> Fay Bound, “Writing the Self? Love and the Letter in England,” *Literature and History* 11, no.1 (2002), 10.

<sup>181</sup> ‘*lettre de remerciement de jeunes Huronnes*’ to ‘*M. Sain, receveur général des finances à Bourges*’, October 1676, BNF, NAF, 6561. I have translated this quotation from the French version of the text which reads: ‘Prenez courage: continuez à avoir compassion de nous. Soutout priez continuellement Dieu qu’il nous donne la grâce de bien croire afin que nous vous voyions au ciel après notre mort’.

<sup>182</sup> See, for, example, *JR*, 57: 53.



*to a man of consideration, his benefactor; you see his own terms and manner of expression.*<sup>183</sup>

Of particular interest here is Vimont's emphasis that this letter was dictated by the converted man '*himself*'. The missionary continued that the reader would '*see his [the convert's] own terms and manner of expression.*'

The aim of this short, thank you note to Sain seems to have been to encourage him to continue making donations to the seminary and to continue praying for the mission's success. In response for his 'generosity', the receiver general was given not only gratitude (as expressed in the letter), but a material recompense, in the letters *form*. A letter written on birch bark was something of a curiosity, given that birch bark was not used for this purpose in France. As we have already seen, Beschefer sent 'Pieces of bark on which figures have been marked by teeth' to the collector and agent, Villermont.<sup>184</sup> In the case of the birch bark letter under discussion, the content supports this rare form. The Wendat translation of the text for instance, was of little practical use to Sain. Living in Bourges, a cathedral city in central France, it is extremely unlikely that Sain would have been able to speak it. Enthusiastic future missionaries may have studied both languages with interest, but the majority of readers in France would likely have been flummoxed by the non-French text (particularly given the fact that very few language resources existed for learning Indigenous tongues). We can therefore assume that the Wendat text was included to give the letter a feeling of authenticity, as additional 'evidence' that, if not written, it was at least composed by Indigenous girls (the letter's specificity with regards to the nations to from which

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<sup>183</sup> *JR*, 14: 39.

<sup>184</sup> *JR*, 63: 291.

the young women hailed – and the careful precision with which this is recorded – implies that this was indeed the case). The exchange of gifts between the Wendats of Lorette and religious communities in both Europe (Loreto, Notre Dame de Foy, Chartres, and Saumur) and Canada (the mission of Sault St. Louis), Karin Vélez argues, created a transatlantic Catholic community.<sup>185</sup> But the birch bark letter to Sain clearly acknowledged geographical distance; the correspondents would only meet *after* their deaths (‘pray continually to God’, the letter asked, ‘that he gives us the grace to believe well so that we can see you in heaven after our death’).<sup>186</sup>

The *Relations* detail other examples of birch bark letters that were sent to French benefactors. The *Relation* of 1653-54, for instance, gave an account of the pious activities of the Congregation of Our Lady, founded by Wendats living on the Ile d’Orléans.<sup>187</sup> A fund for the poor was created by this Congregation, and supplemented by missionaries from charitable donations received from France, from the Jesuit congregation of the professed house in Paris, among others.<sup>188</sup> The Wendats, Pierre-Joseph-Marie Chaumonot recounted, ‘meeting together a short time ago to thank them, in their particular manner, for the alms’:

resolved to send them a collar on which are written, in black porcelain upon a background of white, the words, *Ave Maria gratia plena*; and they begged me to accompany this devout

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<sup>185</sup> Vélez, “‘A Sign That We Are Related to You’,” 32. For an art historical discussion of the chapel at Notre-Dame-de-Lorette and the holy objects sent to France see, Muriel Clair, “La Chapelle de Notre-Dame-de-Lorette,” in *Les Arts en Nouvelle-France*, ed. Laurier Lacroix (Quebec: Musée Nationale des Beaux-Arts du Québec/Les Publications du Quebec, 2012): 72-84.

<sup>186</sup> ‘*lettre de remerciement de jeunes Huronnes*’ to ‘*M. Sain, receveur général des finances à Bourges*’, October 1676, BNF, NAF, 6561.

<sup>187</sup> After the Wendat dispersal from Wendake in 1650, around 300 Wendats moved east to Quebec. Once there, they were resettled on the Ile d’Orléans, three kilometres from Quebec, where they remained until 1656 when Mohawk attacks – and French neutrality – forced them to relocate to the fortified settlement of Quebec. See Kathryn Magee Labelle, *Dispersed But Not Destroyed: A History of the Seventeenth-Century Wendat People* (Toronto: UBCPress, 2013), 104-107.

<sup>188</sup> *JR*, 41, 165.

offering of theirs with a letter, which I wrote in their name, on birch bark, our substitute for paper.<sup>189</sup>

Chaumonot penned the letter in Wendat with an accompanying French translation. Both the original Wendat text and the French translation of the letter from the Ile d'Orléans Congregation of Notre Dame were included in the printed *Relation*.<sup>190</sup> In addition, a prayer of offering was also included for the 'collar' (wampum) that had been sent to the Congregation at Paris: 'Receive, O Lady of Heaven, this present, offered to you by the chosen ones of your Huron Servants' it began.<sup>191</sup> The gift is thus styled as an offering, much like the glass beads often placed on altars by Indigenous converts.<sup>192</sup> This practice, influenced by the offering of tobacco and other goods to spirits, such as waterfalls, should be understood within this context. Unlike the letter to Sain, which stands alone, the Wendats' letter provides an explanation for the accompanying gifts, acting much like a letter of authentication for a relic. Given the shortage of relics in a colony with very few 'martyrs', these objects of curiosity become – like relics – tangible exhortations to piety.

There was no printing press in the area we now call Canada until printers Batholemew Green and John Bushnell arrived in Halifax in 1751.<sup>193</sup> Up until this point, (European) Canadian

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<sup>189</sup> *JR*, 41, 167.

<sup>190</sup> For the Wendat text, see *JR*, 41: 167-73.

<sup>191</sup> *JR*, 41, 175.

<sup>192</sup> On wampum in chapels, see Muriel Clair, "Note de recherche: Fonctions et usage du wampum dans les chapelles sous tutelle jésuite en Nouvelle-France," *RAQ* 35, no.2 (2005): 87-90.

<sup>193</sup> This is a stark contrast to many other Jesuit missions, where printed books in Indigenous languages were essential to the dissemination of Catholicism and printed in situ. In Japan, for instance, a European printing press was imported by Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606). Around sixty different and varied titles were produced in only twenty-four years, with works ranging from language textbooks to catechisms and liturgical manuals. See R. Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540-1770*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

textual culture was predominantly ‘scribal’, though some basic printing methods were used.<sup>194</sup> In 1717, for instance, while recuperating at the *Hôtel de Dieu*, Dumont de Montigny passed his time ‘in drawing, embroidering altar cloths, and designing blocks for pious inscriptions to be stamped in gold and silver letters, for there were no printers in Quebec.’<sup>195</sup> Writing on birch bark was not a practice traditionally undertaken by the Indigenous peoples of New France. Although ‘pre-encounter’ Indigenous cultures are often described as ‘oral’, this ‘classification’ has obscured the sign-making systems in place before European arrival.<sup>196</sup>

Paper could sometimes be scarce and this caused problems for the day to day running of the colony. Writing in 1635, Jean de Brébeuf described the use of writing in language-learning and the tools employed by the missionaries for this purpose. ‘All the French who are here have eagerly applied themselves to it,’ he wrote, ‘reviving the ancient usage of writing on birch bark, for want of paper.’<sup>197</sup> Jesuit rhetoric here styled a material shortage as a cultural renaissance (though, presumably, Brébeuf was referring to the Greek and Roman usage of papyrus, rather than birch bark). But the shortage of paper could also prove difficult in corresponding with missionary superiors in Europe. Writing in 1640 to Philippe Nappi, superior of the Professed House at Rome, Joseph-Marie Chaumonot, cited the shortage of both paper and time as the

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2005), 182. In contrast, any printed books used by Jesuit missionaries in New France had to be imported from the metropole.

<sup>194</sup> Germaine Warkentin, “In Search of ‘The Word of the Other’: Aboriginal Sign Systems and the History of the Book in Canada,” *Book History* 2 (1999), 4.

<sup>195</sup> Jean-François-Benjamin Dumont de Montigny, *The Memoir of Lieutenant Dumont, 1715-1747: A Sojourner in the French Atlantic*, ed. Gordon M. Sayre and Carla Zecher, trans. Gordon M. Sayre (Williamsburg, VA: Omohundro Institute of American History and Culture/University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 78.

<sup>196</sup> Warkentin, “In Search of ‘The Word of the Other,’” 4.

<sup>197</sup> *JR*, 8: 131-33. Whilst journeying to the *pays des Hurons*, Father Ambroise Davost had been compelled to abandon ‘a good part of the paper’ that the missionaries had been taking to the mission, thus prompting the shortage. See *JR*, 8: 81.

reason why he was unable to write to many of his Jesuit colleagues in Italy. ‘I ought to write to many Fathers who are in your Province;’ Chaumonot penned with regret, ‘but the paper and the time fail me.’<sup>198</sup> In the absence of these letters, he expressed the hope that Nappi would have the letter copied and send it to the Jesuit Superior General and to the French Provincial Superior. The request to duplicate the letter was not simply to enable its distribution to multiple recipients, but an expression of humility. ‘[D]o me the kindness,’ Chaumonot asked, ‘of correcting it beforehand, and of having it copied by some one – for it is too badly written to be presented to his Paternity.’<sup>199</sup>

The 1665-66 *Relation* provided a short update from the Quebec Hospital nuns, which was followed by what could be described as a medical and clerical supply ‘wish-list’. Included among the long list of medical supplies were the following:

*One ream of blotting paper,  
Two reams of writing-paper,  
A Roman Missal of the Latest imprint, containing the particular Prayers of the  
Saints of the Order of saint Augustine,  
Some copies of the lesser Hours, and other little Books of devotion,*<sup>200</sup>

It is also interesting to note the nuns’ request for ‘*Some copies of the lesser Hours, and other little Books of devotion*’, probably for the use of sisters. The *Relation* helpfully included instructions on how to donate the said items to the mission: items could be delivered to Sébastien Cramoisy at his shop on the rue Saint-Jacques. Alternatively, the donor’s address could be sent

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<sup>198</sup> *JR*, 18: 33.

<sup>199</sup> *JR*, 18: 33.

<sup>200</sup> *JR*, 50: 163. Italics in the original.

to the printer, who would arrange for the items to be collected.<sup>201</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation recognised the importance – and to her mind, unfairness – of Cramoisy's action in a 1668 letter to her son. 'M.C. [Cramoisy]', she asserted indignantly, 'who prints the relation and who is fond of the Hospitallers here, included, of his own accord, a letter that the Superior had written to him, and that made ripples [*a fait du bruit*] in France.'<sup>202</sup> She continued, 'what we do in this new Church is seen by God and not men; our convent conceals everything, and it is difficult to speak of that which one does not see.'<sup>203</sup> In contrast, she complained, the good works of the hospital, which was open, were 'seen by all the world'.<sup>204</sup>

Cramoisy was deeply invested in the Society of Jesus. He edited numerous texts by Jesuit scholars at the Collège de Clermont, printed textbooks for use in Jesuit classrooms, and was responsible for publishing 'relations' concerning the overseas missions of the Province of France.<sup>205</sup> He also corresponded with the Jesuit Superior General at Rome.<sup>206</sup> Furthermore, he had, since 1626, been a member of the *Compagnie de Cent-Associés*, and thus had a long-time interest in the colony.<sup>207</sup> Cramoisy's *New France Relations* did not only provide news of the

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<sup>201</sup> JR, 50: 159-61. Cramoisy also donated numerous books to the library of the Jesuits at Quebec. See Drolet, "La bibliothèque du Collège des Jésuites," 488-89.

<sup>202</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to her son, 9 August 1668, MI, *Corr.*, Letter CCXXXV, 803. 'M.C. qui imprime la relation et qui aime fort les Hospitalières d'ici, y inséra de son propre mouvement une lettre que la Supérieure luy avoit écrite, et cela fit bien du bruit en France.'

<sup>203</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to her son, 9 August 1668, MI, *Corr.*, Letter CCXXXV, 803. 'ce que nous faisons en cette nouvelle Église et veu de Dieu et non pas des hommes; notre clôture couvre tout, et il est difficile de parler de ce qu'on ne voit pas.'

<sup>204</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation to her son, 9 August 1668, MI, *Corr.*, Letter CCXXXV, 803. 'veu de tout le monde'

<sup>205</sup> For Cramoisy's connections to the Jesuits, see Henri-Jean Martin, *Livre, pouvoirs et société à Paris au XVIIe siècle, préface de Roger Chartier* (Geneva: Droz, 1999), 2: 340-41; Henri-Jean Martin, *Le Livre français sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Promodis/Éditions du Cercle de la Librairie, 1987), 56.

<sup>206</sup> Martin, *Livres, pouvoirs et société*, 2: 341n44.

<sup>207</sup> Henri-Jean Martin, "L'Édition parisienne au XVIIe siècle: Quelques aspects économiques," *Annales. Histoire, Science Sociales*, 7e Année, no.3 (1952), 306.

events of the mission; as the above example demonstrates, their role in the spiritual and material assistance of the colony – from obtaining prayers to obtaining paper – is clearly evident.

The paper shortage in New France notwithstanding, it is clear that the birch bark used for letters was not regarded simply as a paper substitute. Rather, it had important material meanings. The inclusion of Indigenous words and phrases is also evident in missionary correspondence. Writing to Marie-Gillette Roland, a sister of the Visitation, on 4 September 1640, Marie de l’Incarnation greeted her sister in Anishinabemowin (Algonquin, as she would have described it).<sup>208</sup> ‘I received great consolation reading your letter’ Marie wrote. She continued:

Ni-Misens, criðek ðasa ðapicha entaien aiega eapitch Khisadkihirariði Khi ðaparmir, sðugaðiechimir. Ni-Misens, miðitch Kasasadkihatch Dieu, Kihisadkihir. That is what came out. That is to say in our language: My Sister even though you are very far away, nonetheless I still love you, more than if I could see you. I firmly embrace you, my sister, and because you love God, that is why I love you.<sup>209</sup>

In this letter, Marie explained that she ‘could not resist’ greeting her sister in this way ‘and saying to her almost exactly [*a peu près*] what we usually say to our dear Neophytes.’<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> I would like to thank Kevin Brousseau for identifying this language as Anishinabemowin and for kindly providing me with an analysis of this sentence. Personal correspondence with Kevin Brousseau, 21 September 2015. Many thanks to John E. Bishop for putting me in touch with Kevin.

<sup>209</sup> Marie de l’Incarnation to Mother Marie-Gillette Roland, Quebec, 4 September 1640, MI, *Corr.*, Letter XLVI, 108. ‘J’ay reçu une singulière consolation à la lecture de votre lettre. Ni-Misens, criðek ðasa ðapicha entaien aiega eapitch Khisadkihirariði Khiðaparmir, sðugaðiechimir. Ni-Misens, miðitch Kasasadkihatch Dieu, Kihisadkihir. Voilà qui m’est échapé. C’est à dire en notre langue: Ma Sœur encore que vous soiez bien loin, néanmoins je vous aime toujours, plus que si je vous voiois. Je vous embrasse fortement, ma Soeur, et parce que vous aimez Dieu, c’est pour cela que je vous aime.’

<sup>210</sup> Marie de l’Incarnation to Mother Marie-Gillette Roland, Quebec, 4 September 1640, 108. ‘lui dire à peu près ce que nous disons ordinairement à nos chères Néophytes.’

Through imagined verbal communication with her correspondent, Marie envisions herself closer to France. Her love of her sisters in France could be displaced onto the Indigenous women she ‘educated’ at the seminary. To love these women, Marie implied, was to love God. The nun’s letter was also laced with humour. Her statement that an Anishinabemowin greeting suddenly ‘burst out’ of her (*‘ce qui m’a echapé’*), suggests her familiarity with local culture. She had, she implied, quickly become accustomed to speaking ‘our language’ as she called it in the letter.<sup>211</sup> This verbal image of a nun moved (by her correspondent’s letter) to exclaim *‘en savage’* (i.e. in the Native tongue), is reminiscent of mystical accounts of vows pronounced during or after mystical visions. This juxtaposition of Catholic imagery with Anishinabemowin words would have been jarring – and unfamiliar – to her correspondent (though, in time, the *Relations* would publish letters and prayers written in Indigenous languages, thus familiaring readers with these languages’ written characters – if not their pronunciation). In the context of the description that follows, of the nun sitting amongst her ‘pupils’ (whose clothes, Marie exclaimed, ‘do not smell as good as good as those of the Ladies of France!’), this statement appears to have been an attempt at humour (though, the evocation of the ‘uncleanliness’ of the Indigenous girls at the seminary was intended to denote their ‘wildness’). Marie continued that in France she had never troubled herself to read any history, but that now she read all sorts of texts *‘en sauvage’*. ‘Our Reverend Fathers,’ she exclaimed, ‘although great doctors’ (*‘quoique grands docteurs’*) learned with the nuns and did so ‘with incredible affection and docility’.<sup>212</sup> This description is reminiscent of some of the nun’s descriptions of well-behaved, pious seminarians, and pokes

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<sup>211</sup> The term ‘our’ is frequently used in the missionary appropriation of Indigenous practices and even people (converts).

<sup>212</sup> Marie de l’Incarnation to Mother Marie-Gillette Roland, Quebec, 4 September 1640, *MI Corr.*, Letter XLVI, 108. ‘ils le font avec une affection et docilité incroyable’.



affectionate fun at the learned priests who were no longer only learned teachers, but also pupils once more.<sup>213</sup>

Given that letters, such as Marie's letter to Marie-Gillette, would most likely have been shared and read aloud, it seems likely that her sisters in France would have tried to pronounce the phrases she penned. They may have been impressed by her ability to learn a language so different from their own (any attempt at pronunciation would no doubt have led to a bodily awareness that the language in front of them required the mouth to form words in ways with which they were unaccustomed). Perhaps they found the sounds strange or even amusing? That the sisters were studying *alongside* the Jesuits would also have been surprising for nuns in France, given that education was largely segregated and that women were widely believed to be less capable than men in understanding matters of theology. For instance, whereas the Jesuit Superior General wrote to Jesuit missionaries in Latin, his letters to women religious in New France were in Italian.<sup>214</sup> Seen in these terms, Marie's letter provided edification, not simply through pious example, but through entertainment and humour.

The public enjoyment of letters is a phenomenon also common outside of what might be termed 'religious' correspondence networks (though it must be remembered that the 'religious' and 'secular' cannot be clearly distinguished). Letters were objects which could be shown to the recipient's friends and networks (commercial, intellectual, etc.). The letters of Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, marquise de Sévigné (1626-1696), famous for her prolific, almost fifty-year-

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<sup>213</sup> See, for example, Marie's description of a particularly pious young seminarian, who – though she was barely old enough to speak – said her prayers with fervour in both her mother tongue and in French. Marie de l'Incarnation to Claude Martin, Quebec, 29 August – 10 September 1646, MI, *Corr.*, Lettre XCVII, 286-87.

<sup>214</sup> See, for example, Mutio Vitelleschi to Francesco-Giuseppe Bressani, Rome, 1 December 1641, *MNF*, 5, 46-47 and Mutio Vitelleschi to Marie de l'Incarnation, Rome, 21 December 1641, *MNF*, 5, 48-49.

long correspondence with her daughter, François-Marguerite de Sévigné, comtesse de Grignon, provide useful insights into the public enjoyment of letters. A close friend of Mme de la Fayette and La Rochefoucauld, Madame de Sévigné often read and composed letters with some of Paris's most renowned literary figures. 'I have never seen anything so funny as what you write about that', Madame de Sévigné praised her daughter's description of the disastrous Lenten sermon of a Minim at Aix, 'I read it to M. de la Rochefoucauld', who laughed heartily.<sup>215</sup> 'We laughed til we cried', the marquise enthused as she recounted reading another letter, 'about that girl who sang at the top of her voice in church that bawdy song she was confessing to have sung elsewhere'.<sup>216</sup> Since communal reading was commonplace in women's religious communities, it is reasonable to assume that the sisters of the Visitation of Tours took similar enjoyment – though perhaps not in quite so raucous a fashion – from Marie de l'Incarnation's letter to Mother Marie-Gillette.<sup>217</sup>

In the case of the birch bark letter sent to Charles Sain, it seems likely that it would have been shown to friends and acquaintances. Owing to its unusual form, we might also imagine that it was touched and smelled. Why else write a letter on birch bark (rather than paper), if not to stimulate the sensory curiosity of the beholder?

The receipt of such an unusual and fragile object would have given the recipient a small sample of life in the colony without ever visiting it. Early modern French cultural representations of

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<sup>215</sup> Madame de Sévigné to Madame de Grignon, Paris, Wednesday 1 April 1671, in Leonard Tancock, ed. and trans., *Madame de Sévigné: Selected Letters* (London: Penguin Books, 1982), 83.

<sup>216</sup> As discerning critics of both theatre and literature, it is no wonder that Madame de Sévigné and her daughter frequently described and critiqued sermons and church-related 'performances'. Madame de Sévigné to Madame de Grignon, Les Rochers, Sunday 12 January 1676, in Tancock, ed., *Madame de Sévigné: Selected Letters*, 177.

<sup>217</sup> The *Constitutions* of the Quebec Ursulines also stipulated that one of the sisters would read aloud when the nuns took their meals in the refectory. See Jérôme Lalemant, *Constitutions et Règlements des premières Ursulines de Québec*, ed. Soeur Gabrielle Lapointe (Québec, 1974), 168.

Canada style it as a dreary and inhospitable place. In the dedicatory epistle of Antoine du Périer's *Les Amours de Pistion et de Fortunie* (1609), dedicated to Marguerite de Valois, the author asked that any rough language be ascribed to the country he was describing.<sup>218</sup> Marie de l'Incarnation remarked that the term Canada was invoked to scare disobedient children.<sup>219</sup> Upon finding out that her daughter's husband had not been offered the governorship of Canada as his wife had hoped, Madame de Sévigné wrote to her daughter to console her. 'Look at Canada as a good thing no longer available', she advised, 'But whatever your philosophy leads you to suppose, it's a dreary business to live in another climate with people you would hate to know in this one.'<sup>220</sup> As a woman of letters, Madame de Sévigné was not opposed to learning about other countries, but she preferred to do so from the comfort of her Parisian *hôtel*. In the same letter to her daughter, she asserted, "We belong to all countries" – that is from Montaigne, but while saying that he was *very glad to be in his own home*.<sup>221</sup> Written correspondence could therefore allow a person to learn about Canada without ever leaving French soil. However, since there was often little way of verifying a letter's content, recipients had to trust that the information they had been given was accurate. Natural histories and other books written about the New World provided a source of reference, but many of these – like Montaigne's essays – were written without any first-hand experience of the distant lands they described.

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<sup>218</sup> Marie-Christine Pioffet, "La Nouvelle-France dans l'imaginaire jésuite: *terra doloris* ou Jérusalem celeste?" in *Jesuit Accounts of the Colonial Americas: Intercultural Transfers, Intellectual Disputes, and Textualities*, ed. Marc-André Bernier, Clorinda Donato and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in association with the UCLA Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies, 2014), 326.

<sup>219</sup> Davis, *Women on the Margins*, 78.

<sup>220</sup> Madame de Sévigné to Madame de Grignon, Paris, Wednesday 6 April 1672, in Tancock, ed., *Madame de Sévigné: Selected Letters*, 134. It was Louis de Bouade, Comte de Frontenac, who became Governor General in 1672. See W.J. Eccles, *Canada Under Louis XIV, 1663-1701* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964), 77.

<sup>221</sup> Madame de Sévigné to Madame de Grignon, Paris, Wednesday 6 April 1672, in Tancock, ed., *Madame de Sévigné: Selected Letters*, 134. My emphasis.

A birch bark letter, as a source of written information and a small piece (quite literally) of Canada's natural resources, was both a 'relation' and a 'curiosity'. It provided not only textual information, but novel sensory experiences (predominantly tactile, since letters are usually negotiated – opened, smoothed out, held, passed around – using the hands). Though museums today often discourage visitors from touching exhibits, early modern curiosities were often examined using a 'hands-on', investigative approach: holding an object to gauge its weight, for instance, might allow a curious individual to learn more about it than she would if she were to only look at it.<sup>222</sup> Furthermore, the ability to touch – and the ability to bestow the 'right' to touch – was a privilege that revealed dynamics of power between individuals (i.e. private collectors and the guests who they permitted to handle objects from their collections).<sup>223</sup> 'Careful,' Charles Sain might have breathed, as he handed his newly acquired birch bark letter to one of his acquaintances, '*feel* how fragile it is'. Indeed, touch has long been associated with proof; in scripture, 'doubting' Thomas was only convinced of Christ's resurrection *after* he had touched him.<sup>224</sup> Read in this context, birch bark letters authenticate the texts they support and embody. Charles Sain, and other benefactors of the New France mission, could thus rest safe in the knowledge that their money was being put to good use, having received tangible proof of the 'successes' (i.e. conversions) achieved by New France missionaries.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, then, this chapter has argued for a 'rematerialisation' of the *Jesuit Relations* and other edited missionary correspondence. Seventeenth-century readers of the *Relations*, it has

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<sup>222</sup> Classen, "Museum Manners," 895-96; 900.

<sup>223</sup> Classen, "Museum Manners," 898.

<sup>224</sup> Classen, "Museum Manners," 900.

argued, would have been well aware of the difficulties of corresponding across the Atlantic Ocean. This rendered the letters that made up the *Relations* particularly significant. Furthermore, it has argued, historians must pay attention, both to the materiality of letters and to the bodies that carried them. Through their experiences of these letters and through interactions with letter bearers, correspondents and readers in France could ‘experience’ the mission terrain. What is more, their experiences of these letters could shape the mission, since they often prompted emotional – and financial responses.

## Conclusion

‘It is a fact’, wrote Jesuit Father Paul Le Jeune in the annual *Relation* of 1657-58,

that habit [*habitude*] causes the sense of touch to rebel against too great a softness, finding its pleasure in things harder and rougher. I have known fathers who could not take their sleep on a bed, because they had become accustomed to sleep like the natives [*Sauuages*]. If they were given, on returning from their Missions, a pallet or mattress, they were obliged, until they had regained their former habits [*leur premiere habitude*], to pass a portion of the night upon the paved floor of the room, in order to sleep for a little while more at their ease.<sup>225</sup>

This thesis began with these words and it will also end with them. Having examined the ways in which bodies moved from France across the Atlantic Ocean, through New France and – sometimes – back again, this excerpt can be read in a different light. Whilst my first reading focused on the malleability of bodies and the dangers of landscape, a re-reading of this source following the analysis presented in this thesis offers a somewhat different picture. As Le Jeune’s above words demonstrate, missionary bodies returned changed (sometimes visibly, as we saw with Isaac Jogues’s mutilated hands), but they did not suddenly *stop changing* when they returned to France. ‘Being’ or inhabiting the world is a complex and continuing process of correspondence with environment, which continues throughout an individual’s lifetime. Missionary bodies may have been re-transformed upon their return to France, but the journeys they had made would have left traces on their bodies and imaginations. The Jesuit bodies that returned to France were not the same ones that had left. Indeed, the ways in which these changed bodies ‘rediscovered’ France would likely have been framed in terms of their colonial experiences.

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<sup>225</sup> *JR*, 44: 281.

Drawing on Tim Ingold's theories of 'inhabiting' or 'being' in the world, this thesis has discussed the ways in which bodies and religious practices shaped and were *shaped by* the environments they moved – or *were moved*, sometimes forcibly – through. It has argued that while environment – such as the stormy Ocean Sea – could shape religious practices, practices could also shape spaces. Furthermore, these mutual entanglements were not limited to the physical world, but included imaginations and afterlives.

Neither were experiences of New France limited to those who travelled there. Missionary authors used their experiences to convey their authority, but they nonetheless sought creative means to 'share' the territory with people living in France itself. The birch bark letter sent to Charles Sain – this little piece of New France – is perhaps the most obvious embodiment of this phenomenon.

Whilst the focus here has been largely on the colonial landscape of New France, further investigation of returning missionaries – briefly examined in the final chapter of this thesis – could provide a fuller picture of missionary practices. Anthropological theories are useful in the examination of colonial contexts, but these same methods could also be fruitfully applied to returning missionaries. Like Paul Le Jeune, not all Jesuits lived out their days in New France, but instead used their vast experiences of the missionary environment to *shape* missions from positions of authority in France. There has been some historiographical discussion of migrants who returned to France from New France.<sup>226</sup> But little attention has been paid to returning missionaries, and this is an area which merits further study.

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<sup>226</sup> On the return of emigrants to France, see Peter N. Moogk, "Reluctant Exiles: Emigrants from France in Canada before 1760," *WMQ* 46, no.3 (1989), 463-64.

In conclusion, then, this thesis has argued that the 'sacred' was created by complex entanglements between bodies and practices. Environments – both constraining and freeing – could shape religious practices, but these practices could also shape environments.



## List of Abbreviations

<i>AHDQ</i>	<i>Annales de l'Hotel-Dieu de Québec</i>
<i>AHR</i>	<i>American Historical Review</i>
<i>AJC</i>	Archives des Jésuites au Canada
<i>BAnQ</i>	Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec
<i>BNF</i>	Bibliothèque nationale de France
<i>DAF</i>	<i>Le dictionnaire de l'Académie Française</i> (1694)
<i>HNF</i>	<i>Histoire de la Nouvelle-France</i>
<i>JJ</i>	<i>Journal des Jésuites</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents</i>
<i>MI, Corr.</i>	<i>Marie de l'Incarnation (1599-1672): Correspondance</i>
<i>MNF</i>	<i>Monumenta Novae Franciae</i>
<i>RAQ</i>	<i>Recherches Américaines au Québec</i>
<i>RHAF</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique Française</i>
<i>SCH</i>	<i>Studies in Church History</i>
<i>Vie</i>	<i>La Vie de la Venerable de la Mère Marie de l'Incarnation</i>
<i>WMQ</i>	<i>William and Mary Quarterly</i>

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Fonds Rochemonteix  
4013

MS 1652

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12 A, Registres des insinuations ecclésiastiques  
Registre A

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Pièces judiciaires et notariales

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