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*LES VOIES DE DOUCEUR ET D'INSINUATION:*  
FRENCH-AMERINDIAN DIPLOMACY ON NEW FRANCE'S  
WESTERN FRONTIER, 1703-1725

by  
Peter Laurence Cook

Thesis submitted to  
the School of Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
M.A. degree in history

University of Ottawa/Université d'Ottawa

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UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA  
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## ABSTRACT

*LES VOYES DE DOUCEUR ET D'INSINUATION:*  
FRENCH-AMERINDIAN DIPLOMACY ON NEW FRANCE'S  
WESTERN FRONTIER, 1703-1725

Peter Laurence Cook,  
University of Ottawa, 1993

Supervisor:  
Professor C. J. Jaenen

During the term of Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil as governor of New France (1703-1725), diplomacy involving the French and the Amerindian nations to the west of Montreal was conducted in accordance with diplomatic protocols of Amerindian origin. Diplomatic relations between the Amerindians and the French were predicated on the basis of a fictive kinship relationship, wherein the French governor assumed the Amerindian title *Onontio* and the role of a "father" to his Amerindian "children." The forum for formal intercultural encounters was the council, an Amerindian institution that consisted of a structured dialogue between two parties, punctuated by the exchange of validating gifts. The diplomatic culture of the French made few inroads into the intercultural diplomacy of the period.

Neither the Amerindian nor the French diplomats of the period acted as comprehensive cultural mediators during diplomatic encounters. Vaudreuil's corps of diplomatic agents was largely made up of military officers, seconded by interpreters. All of these agents were ethnic Frenchmen, although many interpreters benefited from intermarriage with synethnic and Amerindian women. Few agents cultivated long-term ties with Amerindian groups, or mastered Amerindian languages; those that did were to be found in the lower ranks of colonial society. In general, French agents were primarily interested in exploiting diplomatic ties with Amerindians in order to advance both French interests and their personal careers.

French diplomatic agents adopted and learned to manipulate selected Amerindian diplomatic protocols in order to fulfill these goals. Although the French made extensive cultural adaptations in the realm of diplomacy, their motives were pragmatic, and their acculturation limited. The value and meaning with which they invested these alien diplomatic institutions were different from those the Amerindians accorded to the same forms. Despite this limited cultural understanding, these protocols provided a forum in which the paid servants of centralized states commanding the resources of large-scale societies met face to face with appointed speakers representing the consensus decisions of leaders within small-scale societies. As long as the balance of power between Amerindians and the French newcomers remained roughly equal, this forum was the key to achieving the basic goals of security and alliance which both types of society required.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## NOTE TO THE READER

With regard to the quotation of French sources, I have endeavoured to maintain as far as possible the flavour of early eighteenth-century French as evidenced in the administrative documents of the French regime in Canada. In quoting extracts of the French manuscript sources, I have therefore attempted to reproduce the original text as accurately as possible within the technical limits of a word processor. Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation thus reflect the original; where necessary, I have inserted explanations in square brackets. I have used the character *ø* to mimic the manner in which French scribes wrote the letter *u* above the letter *o* in order to represent certain vowel sounds in Amerindian words. The name of the Wabash river, for example, was written both as *Ouabache* and as *øabache*. Similarly, the name of the Odawa (an ethnic designation for four Algonkian nations) might be spelled *outtauois*, or *øtaøacs*. Finally, in citing French documents, I have again respected eighteenth-century French usage and reproduced the abbreviations *7bre*, *8bre*, etc., which stood for the words *septembre*, *octobre*, and so forth.

The names of Amerindian nations mentioned in this thesis are generally written in accordance with modern English designations, although contemporary ethnic distinctions have been respected when there is no satisfactory modern equivalent. Readers interested in synonymies should consult volume 15 of the *Handbook of North American Indians*, or volume 2 of the *Dictionnaire biographique du Canada*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 15: *Northeast*, ed. B. G. Trigger (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1978); "Glossaire des noms des tribus indiennes," *Dictionnaire biographique du Canada*, vol. 2: *1701 à 1740* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1969), xxv-xli.

## CHAPTER I

### A THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO INTERCULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN CANADA, 1703-1725

To a greater degree, perhaps, than most other fields of historical research, diplomatic history is concerned less with what men [*sic*] do than with what they think they are doing.

Simon Adams, "What is Diplomatic History?" in *What is History Today?* (1988)

#### 1.1 Diplomacy and culture

Diplomacy, like war and trade, is a sphere of human activity that reflects the cultural values of its participants. As such, it was an important nexus between French and Amerindian cultures in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Canada. This thesis is an inquiry into the structure and conduct of French-Amerindian diplomacy in Canada and the *pays d'en haut* during the term of Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil as governor of New France (1703 - 1725). The first quarter of the eighteenth century serves as a convenient laboratory in which to study the encounter of two different diplomatic cultures: one European, designed to smooth relations between competing monarchs at the head of coercive political structures; the other Amerindian, designed to meet the needs of small-scale societies and more egalitarian polities.

"A nation....," writes Akira Iriye, "is a 'cultural system,' and international relations are interactions among cultural systems."<sup>1</sup> Although Iriye was dealing with relations between modern nation-states, there is a happy congruence between the terms of his definition and the facts of French-Amerindian relations in the early eighteenth century. The

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<sup>1</sup>Akira Iriye, "Culture and Power: International Relations as Intercultural Relations," *Diplomatic History* 3, 2 (Spring 1979): 115. Denys Delâge has underlined the importance of studying Native societies as cultural systems rather than as foils to European civilization and values. "Major Paradigms in Amerindian History as Applied to the Study of the French-Amerindian Alliance during the 17th and 18th Centuries," paper read at the conference "Native Peoples and New France: Re-examining the Relationships 1663-1763," McGill University, 16 February 1992.

use of the term *nation* by both French and English colonials to describe Amerindian ethnic groups is a case in point:

[the term nation] often referred to a polity of sufficient integrity and importance, regardless of internal political structure, to warrant diplomatic recognition and negotiation. Thus the term at the time could be applied to kin-structured communities as well as to the impersonal bureaucratized structures of nation-states.<sup>2</sup>

The integrity of most of the Amerindian groups whom the French designated as nations was assured by social and cultural factors, including patterns of kinship, and by established political structures.<sup>3</sup> The French in Canada were themselves both a culturally distinct ethnic group and the colonial subjects of an absolute monarch—that is, their communities fell under the control of a centralized nation-state, an *état*. French officials glibly used the term *nation* to refer both to the French people and to much smaller, decentralized groups organized on the basis of kinship and locality, such as the Odawa du Sable.<sup>4</sup>

In the context of Iriye's dictum, diplomacy, "the peaceful management of international relations,"<sup>5</sup> may be regarded as one form of interaction between nations; war and trade are others. The challenge is to define such terms as objectively as possible, in order to avoid making culturally biased assumptions about these concepts. Applying the word diplomacy (from the French *diplomatie*) to French-Amerindian relations in the early eighteenth century would have puzzled both the French and Amerindians: the latter for obvious linguistic reasons, and the former because in Vaudreuil's time it was a didactic

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<sup>2</sup>Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), 36. See also Gilles Havard, *La grande paix de Montréal de 1701* (Montréal: Recherches amérindiennes au Québec, 1992), 1 n. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Cornelius J. Jaenen, "French Sovereignty and Native Nationhood during the French Regime," *Native Studies Review* 2, 1 (1986): 108.

<sup>4</sup>"Amerindian nations [in territory claimed by New France]... were not *états* because they were not believed to be organized under sovereign governments possessing coercive powers, and therefore they were not among the diplomatically recognized "family of nations." Cornelius J. Jaenen, "Characteristics of French-Amerindian Contact in New France," in Stanley H. Palmer and D. Reinhartz, eds. *Essays on the History of North American Discovery and Exploration* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1988), 90.

<sup>5</sup>Peter Barber, *Diplomacy* (London: British Library, 1979), 6.

term that referred to the pedantic science of studying diplomas, or official documents.<sup>6</sup> Yet its modern definition may nevertheless serve scholars usefully. Simon Adams' comment upon diplomatic history, quoted above, must be turned on its head: apart from the tricky matter of attempting to explain what contemporary French officials and Amerindians thought while they discussed matters of war and peace, it is important to study exactly what they did when they met. In this way, a characterization of French-Amerindian diplomacy can be developed from the ground up. This is the purpose of the second chapter, "The Shape of Intercultural Diplomacy."

It is nevertheless impossible to begin without a notion of what kind of events qualify as diplomatic encounters. Generally, two conditions apply. First, the encounter must be formal and deliberate; this in turn implies the existence of certain forms or rituals by which communication may be established and maintained, as well as mechanisms for validating proposals and proceedings. Second, its participants must be the legitimate representatives of larger groups. What defines the legitimacy, or accreditation, of diplomats may be particular to the group which they represent; yet logically the mutual recognition of legitimate representatives would help rather than hinder this kind of interaction. It is just as clear that successful diplomacy involves the attempt to master the formal elements of the encounter and, at the same time, to understand the other; and so participants in these encounters are often considered specialists among their own people.

This second condition underlines the interpersonal dimension of diplomatic encounters, and of intercultural encounters generally. As Kenneth Morrison has underlined for the benefit of historians of intercultural relations, "cultures do not meet, but people who are culture bearers do."<sup>7</sup> The agents of diplomacy, both French and Amerindian, are the focus of chapter three.

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<sup>6</sup>The modern meanings of *diplomatie*, *diplomate*, etc., date from the period of the French Revolution. *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française* (Paris: Le Robert, 1992), 608.

<sup>7</sup>Kenneth M. Morrison, *The Embattled Northeast: The Elusive Ideal of Alliance in Abenaki-European Relations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 4 (quotation); see also 193 n. 3.

The result of the approach described above is not a narrative history of diplomatic events but rather an analysis of forms and relationships of the past. (It is, however, essential to examine these forms in precise historical contexts in order to avoid the pitfalls of a purely synchronic investigation.) Faced with the problem of one-sided evidence—that is, the virtual lack of contemporary Amerindian sources appropriate to this kind of historical investigation—historians may benefit from such analyses. The results of an careful study of form may be compared to the subjective discourse of French officials whose writings represent the favoured source for historical inquiry. The fourth and concluding chapter evaluates French-Amerindian relations in the light of information on the forms that characterized intercultural diplomacy in the early eighteenth century.

This study is not based on new ethnohistorical research: it is neither ethnohistory nor a “new Indian history” which purports to capture the Native perspective. It is an inquiry into one aspect of the historical relationship between Amerindians and the French in Canada; ultimately, and perhaps inevitably as a result of its sources and perspectives, its conclusions are more relevant to the history of the French in Canada than to the experiences of Amerindians and their communities. It might more appropriately fit under the rubric of a new colonial history, one which accords due place to the highly significant role played by Amerindians in conditioning the experiences of Europeans in America.

## 1.2 The French conduct of intercultural diplomacy, 1703-1725

At the opening of the eighteenth century, the northeastern part of the Americas was populated by numerous indigenous nations and by European colonials clustered in coastal and riverine settlements. The French settlement at Quebec on the St. Lawrence was nearly one hundred years old, and was the principal town in a colony that a later visitor would describe as one extended village, spread out along the shore of the river east of the island of Montreal. Since its inception, the colony’s leaders had dealt continuously with the Amerindian nations that surrounded it; indeed, the colony’s economic *raison d’être*—the

profits to be made in the fur trade—depended entirely on the maintenance of good relations with Amerindian suppliers, particularly those living west of the colony in what the French called the *pays d'en haut*.<sup>8</sup> When Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil became governor of New France in 1703, French-Amerindian relations were entering a new and critical phase, in which diplomacy was paramount to the success and survival of all groups.

The geopolitical situation in North America during this period has frequently been described as the confrontation of two European empires and their corresponding alliance systems, organized around the fur trade. Hence the English colonies, their Iroquois allies, and the Iroquois' Amerindian satellite nations opposed the French and their predominantly Algonkian allies from the *pays d'en haut* in a battle for fur and empire. This perspective tends to ignore the priorities of the Amerindian participants, for whom European imperial interests had little meaning. As D. Peter MacLeod has pointed out, Anishnabeg oral traditions accord only a tiny place to the imperial purposes of the French-Amerindian alliance in the eighteenth century. Moreover, MacLeod's own historical research has demonstrated how, for the Amerindian allies of the French, cooperation resulted from the congruence of different interests rather than the subjection of Amerindian interests to French objectives.<sup>9</sup>

The commercial relationships engendered by the fur trade lay at the base of European-Amerindian alliances in the colonial period. Amerindians were interested in obtaining European goods—powder and lead, cloth and iron. In order to do so, they made

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<sup>8</sup>The *pays d'en haut*, or upper country, was the French designation for the land beyond Huronia. Generally, that meant the entire Great Lakes basin east of Lake Ontario, north of the Ohio, and west of the Mississippi. See the map in Richard White, *The Middle Ground* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), xii-xiii.

<sup>9</sup>D. Peter MacLeod, "The Anishnabeg Point of View: The History of the Great Lakes Region to 1800 in Nineteenth-Century Mississauga, Odawa, and Ojibway Historiography," *Canadian Historical Review* LXXIII, 2 (June 1992): 194-210; *idem*, "The Franco-Amerindian Expedition to the Great Carrying Place in 1756 and the Role of the Laurentian Iroquois in the Seven Years' War," paper read at the eighteenth annual meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society, McGill University, 23 May 1992. For a recent articulation of the classical view of the French-Amerindian alliance, see Denys Delâge, "L'alliance franco-amérindienne," *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* 19, 1 (printemps 1990): 4.

alliances with European groups with whom they hoped to engage in reciprocal gift exchanges. These exchanges were all the more felicitous given the Europeans' interest in acquiring the Amerindians' furs. And although they were not contractual obligations, as were European treaties, these alliances were not creatures of a day: they endured as each party found its needs fulfilled and were cemented by continued reciprocal giving.

The interests of Europeans involved in the fur trade might have varied according to their precise economic role and their social status, but the behaviour of most was determined largely by the demands of a protocapitalist, transatlantic market economy. For much of the colonial period, the state's monopolistic approach to the administration of the fur trade meant that for the French in Canada, profits resulted from acquiring furs through the barter of goods whose value was less than the price paid for furs by exporters.

According to anthropologist Bruce G. Trigger, Native alliances in the northeast did not necessarily require allies to aid their partners in war; however, in the case of the early French traders, the desire to secure such alliances against interference by competitors led to French participation in the conflicts of their Algonkin and Huron allies.<sup>10</sup> And so the commercial alliance was overlaid with common cause in warfare. But with the territorial and demographic expansion of the French agricultural settlement, and the imposition of royal rule in 1663, the French left off performing as auxiliaries in Native conflicts and became a potentially significant military force unto themselves. Nonetheless, for this fragile colony, security and economic survival—especially in the face of English expansionism—depended largely upon alliances and diplomacy with Amerindians.

When Vaudreuil acceded to the position of governor in 1703, the colony's situation was precarious. Renewed Anglo-French warfare in Europe (the War of the Spanish Succession, 1702 - 1713) meant that, in theory, the French in Canada and the English to the south in the colonies of New York and Massachusetts Bay must oppose each other. In

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<sup>10</sup>Bruce G. Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985), 175, 186-187.

fact, the war between Canada and New York was a cold one. This was because of the diplomatic position of the Iroquois Five Nations, the metaphorical brothers of the English governor of New York.<sup>11</sup> Vaudreuil could not risk open warfare against New York for fear of provoking Iroquois retaliation. “[L]es cinq villages Iroquois,” wrote Vaudreuil in 1711, “sont plus a craindre que toute la nouvelle angleterre.”<sup>12</sup> Therefore his diplomatic efforts were directed at maintaining peace with the Iroquois, without whom the English were unlikely to launch a successful campaign against Canada. This meant relying on French agents among the western Iroquois, especially the Seneca, and complying with Iroquois requests for mediation in disputes with Amerindians of the Great Lakes region.

The latter were traditional French allies and the key to preserving Iroquois neutrality. Their strikes against the western Iroquois in the final years of the seventeenth century had brought to an end the protracted struggle between New France and the Five Nations. From Vaudreuil’s perspective, the best means of protecting New France from Iroquois aggression was to wield the threat of unleashing the Algonkian nations of the *pays d’en haut* upon the Iroquois. Yet for this deterrent to be credible, Vaudreuil had to maintain his alliance with these nations while preventing a rapprochement between the latter and the Five Nations. For the western Iroquois, such a rapprochement was advantageous in that it secured the western borders of their country. But the means by which it could be accomplished directly threatened the economy and security of New France. By opening the road to Albany via the Iroquois villages, the Five Nations could allow western Amerindians to trade with the English, thus undermining the commercial bases of the French-Amerindian alliance. Unfortunately for Vaudreuil, the minister’s imperial plan to control

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<sup>11</sup> “[N]ous avons une espece de suspension d’armes, entre nous et le gouvernement d’orange [Albany], a la priere des Iroquois mais nous n’avons de part, n’y d’autres aucun traité particulier,” explained Vaudreuil to the minister in 1708. Vaudreuil au ministre, 28 juin 1708, *Rapport de l’Archiviste de la Province de Québec* [hereinafter *RAPQ*] (1939-40): 423-424.

<sup>12</sup> Vaudreuil au ministre, 8 9bre 1711, *RAPQ* (1946-47): 453. Yves F. Zoltvany has commented that “this theme [the preservation of peace with the Iroquois] runs like a *leitmotif* in [Vaudreuil’s] correspondence,” and may be linked to the governor’s experiences in the war against the Iroquois before 1701. *Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 46.

the American interior from Detroit only exacerbated the problem, since the new post's proximity to the western Iroquois facilitated this rapprochement with the Amerindians of the Great Lakes.<sup>13</sup>

Two other factors conditioned Vaudreuil's handling of French-Amerindian relations during the first decade of his government. The first was the problem of metropolitan policies which tended to limit the governor's means of exercising diplomatic influence. The official closure of many posts in the *pays d'en haut* by edict in 1696 resulted in a severe contraction of New France's diplomatic frontier—the zone in which French agents regularly met with Amerindians according to established diplomatic protocols. In 1703, at the beginning of the Vaudreuil's term, the French crown had few representatives in the west; its "remaining pockets of influence" were posts that survived the restrictive edict of 1696: Fort Frontenac, Henri de Tonty's post among the Illinois, and the Jesuit missions at Michilimakinac, Saint-Joseph-des-Miamis, Green Bay, and among the Illinois. Historian Yves F. Zoltvany has described the situation in terms of control and command, euphemisms for French diplomatic influence:

French control of the west had been dealt a crippling blow by the new restrictive system. The renegade *coureurs de bois* occasionally played a useful diplomatic role but most of the time were a cause of disorder among the tribes. The Jesuits alone could not control the native allies.... The surviving posts, finally, were negligible factors. They had no garrison, with the exception of Fort Frontenac, and did not command the key western points.<sup>14</sup>

The closure of the posts was accompanied by the prohibition of the *congé* system which had regulated trade in the upper country. *Congés*, or licenses to trade, were believed by Canadians to be "one of the foundation stones of Indian diplomacy."<sup>15</sup> Since Canadians were interested in making a profit rather than engaging in reciprocal gift-giving with Amerindians, these ministerial restrictions on the fur trade, designed to resolve the problem

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<sup>13</sup>The strategic situation from the French perspective is analyzed in Yves F. Zoltvany, "New France and the West, 1701-1713," *Canadian Historical Review* XLVI, 4 (December 1965): 301-322. See also Zoltvany, "The Problem of Western Policy under Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, 1703-1725," *Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers* (1964): 9-24.

<sup>14</sup>Zoltvany, *Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil*, 38.

<sup>15</sup>Zoltvany, *Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil*, 117.

of the glut of beaver on the French market, jeopardized the ability of the French to supply their Amerindian allies with sufficient goods at reasonable rates of exchange. Only the unlicensed traders, the *coureurs de bois*, continued to supply goods to Amerindians in areas where trading was officially prohibited. By 1714, perhaps 200 of these traders were active in the *pays d'en haut*.<sup>16</sup>

The diplomatic influence of the French governor was further weakened by the Crown's attempt to reduce the costs of maintaining Amerindian allies by giving fewer presents to the latter. "Sa Maj[esté] fait une despende excessive pour soutenir ce pays dont Elle ne tire rien," declared a royal dispatch of 1708. The Crown feared that the Amerindians would come to regard presents as their due and become complacent, exacting ever larger gifts from the French. But for the colonial administrators, the regular giving of gifts to Amerindians was "un mal nécessaire"—an expensive but ineluctable aspect of the French-Amerindian alliance.<sup>17</sup>

A second determining factor was the diplomatic settlement reached at Montreal in 1701. In order to preserve the peace achieved between the French, their Amerindian allies, and the Five Nations, the French governor (called *Onontio* by Amerindians) was accorded the role of mediator. This role was of singular significance, as Amerindians—the western Iroquois in particular—relied repeatedly on Onontio's mediation to resolve intertribal conflicts when their own diplomatic efforts came to naught. Amerindians sought out the

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<sup>16</sup>Vaudreuil estimated their numbers at 60 to 80 in 1713, and at over 200 the following year. Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 9bre 1713, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 231; Vaudreuil au ministre, 16 7bre 1714, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 264.

<sup>17</sup>Memoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Raudot, 6 juin 1708, *RAPQ* (1939-40): 413 (quotation); Le roi à Vaudreuil, 9 juin 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 129; Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 15 9bre 1707, *RAPQ* (1939-40): 389, 392-393; Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 14 9bre 1708, *RAPQ* (1939-40): 445. The phrase *un mal nécessaire* is repeated in the last two documents cited. For a more extensive discussion of metropolitan perspectives on such presents, see Cornelius J. Jaenen, "The Role of Presents in French-Amerindian Trade," in Duncan Cameron, ed. *Explorations in Canadian Economic History* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1985), 244-250.

French for this purpose because, as historian Richard White has pointed out, the French had the contacts and the wealth to mediate effectively in the *pays d'en haut*.<sup>18</sup>

The closure of many western posts meant, of course, that Onontio's mediating influence was severely circumscribed west of Montreal. Vaudreuil nevertheless worked to maintain a presence in the *pays d'en haut* by means of irregular diplomatic missions. The agents chosen for these missions were invariably military officers, most of whom had some previous diplomatic experience.

Alone and without the protection of a garrison and palisaded fort, the coercive ability of these agents was nil. (Even when a garrisoned fort existed, it often commanded little beyond the area immediately outside its walls, as the intendant Jean Bochart-Champigny remarked of Fort Frontenac.)<sup>19</sup> Their ability to promote French policies depended therefore upon whatever credit they possessed among Amerindian groups, and upon the prestige they acquired through mediation and gift-giving. The latter was particularly significant: even the ritual forms prescribed for intercultural diplomacy required a certain exchange of gifts. Because of the prohibitive cost of such missions, officers were often allowed to take merchandise with them, some of which no doubt was exchanged for furs (perhaps in narrow diplomatic settings), and some of which was offered as presents to acquire prestige.<sup>20</sup>

In the eyes of metropolitan administrators, these missions resembled illicit trading activities. Vaudreuil was asked to avoid such missions whenever possible and to make use

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<sup>18</sup>The French communication network and the ability to deliver goods and presents determined their ability to mediate conflicts and thereby acquire prestige. White, *The Middle Ground*, 35-36. See section 2.1, below, for a discussion of Onontio's role as mediator, as determined at Montreal in 1701.

<sup>19</sup>Champigny's remarks are quoted in W.J. Eccles, *Frontenac: The Courtier Governor* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1959), 207.

<sup>20</sup>Apparently it was even customary for common soldiers to be permitted to take trade goods in lieu of salary; those who carried the effects of the Jesuits into the upper country had similar privileges. Le Roy à Vaudreuil et Raudot, 9 juin 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 129; Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 3 9bre 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 153. While such trade had economic significance for both the French and Amerindians, it cannot be doubted that mutually beneficial exchanges contributed to smooth relations between the Amerindian hosts and their French visitors.

of the few remaining missionaries as envoys, "afin dempescher le commerce deffendu."<sup>21</sup> Yet in all likelihood—the cupidity of French officers notwithstanding—this informal system was a diplomatic necessity. Given the reticence of the Crown to supply funds for presents, how else could a French agent provide enough diplomatic presents without impoverishing himself? Despite ministerial disapproval, this manner of organizing French diplomatic activity reappeared several times during Vaudreuil's government.<sup>22</sup>

The incidents that marked intercultural diplomacy during the first decade of Vaudreuil's term were closely related to the new French policies in the west and the ramifications of the peace settlement of 1701. In a series of summer councils in 1703, various Amerindian delegations arrived at Montreal to mourn in ritual fashion the death of Vaudreuil's predecessor, Louis-Hector de Callière, and to recognize Vaudreuil as the new Onontio. Miami and Odawa speakers voiced concerns over the French attempt to concentrate Amerindian nations at Detroit, while Onondaga and Seneca diplomats reiterated the terms of the peace settlement and asked for Jesuits and French officers to come among them. The following year, violence marred the peaceful overtures as people from the four westernmost Iroquois nations were killed or captured by Miamis and Odawas in isolated incidents; as well, the Huron of Detroit came to Montreal to inform Onontio of more intertribal violence. Vaudreuil responded to Iroquois requests for mediation by sending officers into the *pays d'en haut* to arrange for the return of captives and compensation for the dead. In 1705 a series of councils at Montreal resolved most outstanding Amerindian

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<sup>21</sup>Le Roy à Vaudreuil et Raudot, 30 juin 1707, *RAPQ* (1939-40): 357.

<sup>22</sup>Examples of this system in operation are: Menthét's mission of 1703 (Vaudreuil au ministre, 3 9bre 1703, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 155); Vincennes' mission to the Miami in 1704 (Vaudreuil au ministre, 17 9bre 1704, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 59-60; Vaudreuil au ministre, 4 9bre 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 168); the dispatch of envoys to the nations of the Great Lakes in 1711 (Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 8bre 1711, *RAPQ* (1946-47): 428 [ministerial disapproval is noted in the margin, 448]); and the dispatch of officers to the west in 1715 (Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 20 7bre 1714, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 279-280). The last such mention was Dumont and Réaume's 1722 mission to the Miami. Vaudreuil au conseil, 20 8bre 1722, Archives des colonies (Paris), C11A, Correspondance générale, Canada, vol. 44, fol. 356-356v, National Archives of Canada, MG 1, microfilm, reel F-44. Subsequent references to documents in the Archives des colonies (Paris) will be by series, volume and folio number.

grievances, but the Iroquois continued to express concern over the renewal of Anglo-French conflict and Vaudreuil's willingness to involve his Amerindian allies in war against New England. The bellicosity of Europeans, noted several Iroquois speakers, endangered the peace achieved in 1701.

The following year, a burst of violence at Detroit resulted in the deaths of several Frenchmen and inaugurated another round of councils and diplomatic missions; this time, however, the need to preserve the French-Amerindian alliance at all costs was complicated by the insistence of the French that the demands of punitive European justice be met. The diplomatic solution to the problem of the murder of Frenchmen involved superficial displays of submission to French judicial forms—the arrest of the guilty party—and cautious treatment of the Amerindian nations who had lost kin during the bloodshed.<sup>23</sup>

Between 1708 and 1711, Canada lay under the threat of English invasion by land and sea. French diplomacy could not prevent many Iroquois warriors from joining English expeditions aimed against the French colony, but following the botched invasion attempts of 1709 and 1711, Iroquois delegates came to Montreal to re-establish good relations and to seek French mediation in disputes with the Potawatomi and Saulteur. One Onondaga neutralist even sent strings of wampum to Vaudreuil to warn him of the 1711 invasion.<sup>24</sup>

Although open French-Iroquois hostilities were avoided, the very real danger of a joint English-Iroquois attack on Montreal, combined with the numerical weakness of the French forces, only underlined the importance of Amerindian allies.<sup>25</sup> To Vaudreuil's consternation, the principal nations of the *pays d'en haut* —the Odawa, Potawatomi,

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<sup>23</sup>Richard White offers an analysis of this affair in the larger context of French-Amerindian relations in the *pays d'en haut* (*The Middle Ground*, 82-90).

<sup>24</sup>Parolles de Monsieur le Gouverneur general aux Onnontaguez et Sonnotouans qui s'en retournent le 31e aoust 1711, C11A 32: 101v; Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 8bre 1711, *RAPQ* (1946-47): 431.

<sup>25</sup>In 1706, Vaudreuil informed the minister of Marine that he could only put 1500 men in the field "sans me servir des sauvages." Vaudreuil au ministre, 4 9bre 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 173. In 1709, the total strength of the Canadian forces was estimated at about 4,000 French—predominantly militia—and 500 Amerindians—presumably those residing in the St. Lawrence valley (Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 9bre 1709, *RAPQ* (1942-43): 431-432).

Huron, Miami, Saulteur, Menominee, Sauk, Mascouten, Fox, Kikapoo, and Illinois—were each pursuing independent and occasionally conflictual policies, instead of mustering obediently to aid the beleaguered French colony. French officers were sent into the upper country in 1710 and 1711 to mediate disputes, bury hatchets, and invite Amerindian representatives to Montreal for a huge council in 1711—where, it was fervently hoped, the presence of 500 Amerindians would help to cement the alliance and overawe the Iroquois.<sup>26</sup> This assembly, though impressive in size and expenditure (700 to 800 Amerindians from 32 nations attended councils at Montreal over a span of two months, costing the Crown thousands of *livres*)<sup>27</sup> was a limited diplomatic success and provided the French with a taste of things to come. There was, most ominously, the hesitation of many nations to symbolically raise the hatchet against Albany, where some found good rates of exchange for their furs. As well, a group of Fox had recently established itself at Detroit, just as the French were seeking to undo the work of Lamothe Cadillac. Vaudreuil's suggestion that the Fox return to their former villages and no longer raise the hatchet against the Illinois, clearly intimates the governor's fear of further conflict in the region. Finally, Vaudreuil's closing speech to the Iroquois delegates foreshadowed the heightened Anglo-French rivalry that would test the policies of balance and neutrality: "il est meme de votre interest," he told them, "que L'anglois ny moy ne demeurions pas Seul Le Maistre de ce Continent, je ne cherche pas a le devenir, mais je n'aprehende pas que L'Anglois m'en chasse."<sup>28</sup>

The conclusion of peace in Europe in 1713 is commonly understood to have inaugurated three decades of peace and prosperity for New France. But demographic and economic growth in the colony, officially at peace with its English neighbours, was paralleled by increased violence and tension on the frontiers. In the east, Vaudreuil cynically encouraged ongoing warfare between the Abenaki and the English of

<sup>26</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 8bre 1711, *RAPQ* (1946-47): 428.

<sup>27</sup>Résumé de Vaudreuil au ministre, 7 9bre 1711, *RAPQ* (1946-47): 446.

<sup>28</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 8bre 1711, *RAPQ* (1946-47): 432; Parolles de Monsieur le Gouverneur general... le 31e Aoust 1711, C11A 32: 85-85v, 102 (quotation).

Massachusetts Bay; to the south, French and English encroached upon Iroquois lands in a mounting competition for control of the fur trade in the west. Finally, in the *pays d'en haut*, renewed French expansionism met with the resistance of the Fox, and involved the colony's forces once again in warfare directed against Amerindians and their settlements.<sup>29</sup>

French-Iroquois relations were strained during this period as violence erupted in the *pays d'en haut* and in Acadia. The involvement of the French in attacks by the Odawa on the Fox in the 1710s brought Iroquois warriors close to mounting a campaign against the French and the Odawa. In the east, continued French support of the Eastern Abenaki in their war with Massachusetts Bay after 1722 rendered it increasingly difficult for the Iroquois to refuse to help their English allies.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, in both cases, neutralist policies prevailed, and regular councils and condolence ceremonies—such as the one marking the death of the Louis XIV, *le grand Onontio*—continued to take place between the French and the Five Nations.

The last decade of Vaudreuil's term, however, indicated a shift in the governor's appreciation of North American geopolitics. In his thinking, the English replaced the Iroquois as New France's most formidable potential foe; at the same time, Vaudreuil began to link the outcome of intercolonial rivalry with French power in Europe.<sup>31</sup> Since the Iroquois no longer acted as a barrier protecting the French-Algonkian commercial alliance from the westward expansion of New York's fur trade, French decision-makers opted to establish a chain of posts in the Great Lakes region in order to keep the English out of the region. This policy reached its most audacious form in 1720 and in 1725 when the French respectively built and fortified a post at Niagara, in Iroquois hunting territory. Vaudreuil's

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<sup>29</sup>For a discussion of strategic issues following the treaty of Utrecht, see Zoltvany, "The Frontier Policy of Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, 1713-1725," *Canadian Historical Review* XLVIII, 3 (September 1967): 227-250.

<sup>30</sup>Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 234, 244-246.

<sup>31</sup>"On ne peut exprimer à quel point la puissance de l'Angleterre augmenteroit si elle s'emparait du reste de l'Amérique Septentrionale, & combien cette puissance deviendrait redoutable en Europe." *Memoire de Vaudreuil au duc d'Orléans, février 1716, RAPQ* (1947-48): 292.

biographer has called this “the most brilliant diplomatic and military coup of Vaudreuil’s career.”<sup>32</sup> But it also tarnished French-Iroquois relations considerably. In a 1725 council, both Charles Le Moyne de Longueuil and an Iroquois orator agreed that “le grand arbre de Montreal est tombé,” suggesting that the agreements of 1701 which had so marked the early part of Vaudreuil’s term, were no longer relevant to the new era of European imperial rivalry.<sup>33</sup>

Intercultural diplomacy on the western frontier between 1713 and 1725 changed in both form and content from the earlier period. With regard to form, it seems that fewer councils took place at Montreal as French posts in the *pays d’en haut* were gradually reoccupied. This is reflected in the steady decrease of recorded councils that took place at Montreal or Quebec (see Table 1 at the end of this chapter). In the fall of 1712, Vaudreuil—acting without ministerial approval—sent Le Marchand de Lignery to re-establish Michilimakinac, while other officers were sent among the Miami and Illinois. In 1716, the newly-formed *Conseil de la Marine* re-established the *congé* system, permitted the creation of new garrisoned posts in the west, and created an annual fund of 20,000 *livres* for diplomatic presents. The following year, Jean-Baptiste de Saint-Ours Deschaillons re-established the post of Saint-Joseph des Miamis, while Zacharie Robutel de La Noue and Jean-Daniel-Marie Viennay-Pachot were dispatched to Kaministiquia at the head of Lake Superior. In 1718, the governor sent Jean-Paul Legardeur de Saint-Pierre and René Godefroy de Linctot to Chequamegon, and established posts at La Baye (Green Bay) and Pimitoui in the Illinois country. Finally, in 1720 Louis-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire inveigled the Iroquois to permit the building of a French “house” at Niagara, and

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<sup>32</sup>Zoltvany, *Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil*, 161, 170 (quotation).

<sup>33</sup>Discours des Iroquois... le 10e 7bre [et] Reponse... par Mr le Baron de Longueuil, C11A 47: 443v. In earlier French-Iroquois councils, gifts were usually given to straighten and strengthen the tree of peace when it began to lean over, or when evil spirits had struck at it; here, nothing was done to raise the fallen tree.

A cursory examination of later French documents in the microfilm collection by Francis Jennings *et al.*, eds. *Iroquois Indians: A Documentary History* [microform collection] (Woodbridge, Conn.: Research Publications, 1984) [hereinafter IIDH] suggests that indeed the *grand arbre de paix planté à Montréal* ceased to figure in French-Iroquois relations, although the image of a tree remained as a general symbol of peace.

in 1721-1722, Jacques-Charles Renaud Dubuisson constructed a "fort de Pieux" among the Miami, "un des plus Beaux quil y ait dans les pays d'Enhaut."<sup>34</sup> Although the *congés* were revoked in 1719, Vaudreuil continued to issue *permissions* which authorized officers and interpreters serving in the posts to equip canoes for annual journeys from the colony to the upper country. With this expansion of the diplomatic and commercial frontiers, Montreal diminished as a forum for diplomatic encounters, while post commandants assumed more of Onontio's burdens of mediation and gift-giving.

The less abundant council record for the period also reveals a shift in the substantive issues that marked intercultural encounters. Following hostilities between the Fox and the nations of Detroit in 1712, the latter began to request French military assistance. "Nous te prions de Considerer que t'on corps et le nôtre ont Egalement tombé par la guerre que le Renard nous a fait et que ton sang a esté Egalement versé comme le nôtre ainsy nous te demandons du secours pour ayder a venger tes morts aussy bien que les notres." Odawa delegates told Vaudreuil in 1713.<sup>35</sup> The French, however, were determined to isolate the Fox diplomatically before undertaking military action. This meant, initially, resolving differences between such traditional French allies as the Illinois and the Miami.<sup>36</sup> Later, the French attempted to win over the allies of the Fox. Although the French launched military expeditions against the Fox in 1715 and 1716, French diplomatic efforts in the *pays d'en haut* overshadowed military endeavours throughout the remainder of Vaudreuil's term.

The mechanisms employed for strengthening the French-Amerindian alliance during the era of conflict with the Fox were the same as were used in the previous decade to maintain the tree of peace erected between the Five Nations and the French allies. If warring Amerindian nations were disposed to make peace, wrote Vaudreuil to the minister, "il ne sera plus question que de faire des présents pour couvrir les morts et de Retirer les

<sup>34</sup>Vaudreuil au conseil, 24 8bre 1722, C11A 44: 366v-367.

<sup>35</sup>Parolles de Saguima et de Miscouaky du 26e aoust 1713..., C11A 34: 70-70v.

<sup>36</sup>Vaudreuil's diplomatic strategy at this juncture is outlined in Vaudreuil au minister, 16 7bre 1714, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 264-267.

esclaves qui peuvent avoir esté faits de part et d'autre."<sup>37</sup> The governor reiterated this formulaic approach to his superiors a decade later in response to criticism that his policies regarding the Fox were suspiciously pusillanimous. Vaudreuil argued that the officers from Louisiana commanding posts in the Illinois country did not understand "les maximes et les coutumes des Sauvages." Had they employed diplomatic means (meaning the prestige acquired through gift-giving) to have the Illinois return Fox prisoners rather than burning them, the Fox would have reciprocated: "cette demarche Uzitée parmy toutes les Nations sauvages auroit ouvert le chemin a la paix."<sup>38</sup>

Vaudreuil's biographer has argued that the governor had a secret entente with the Fox that protected the Canadian fur trade, while allowing the Fox-Illinois war to disrupt Louisiana's. The case for this allegation is extremely circumstantial.<sup>39</sup> Its principal weakness lies in the assumption that the Canadian colony had the means to successfully project overwhelming military power into the upper country and impose diplomatic settlements on Amerindian nations. But the colony could not, and Vaudreuil's policy of diplomacy was largely pragmatic. Fox-French relations between 1717 and 1725 reveal the same diplomatic characteristics as French-Iroquois relations during an earlier period: regular councils, the covering of the dead, and French efforts to mediate conflicts between its allies and a powerful nation.<sup>40</sup> Vaudreuil's attitude toward the Fox, while possibly self-interested, was wholly in line with the logic of French-Amerindian diplomacy in the early eighteenth century. In defense of his policy, Vaudreuil wrote:

[J]e sçay trop combien les guerres avec les Sauvages sont opposées au bien de cette colonie pour ne pas prendre les plus justes mesures pour les faire cesser.... L'experience que j'ay m'a confirmé dans cette pensée, et [j]'ay crû qu'une paix stable et solide étoit preferable a une guerre incertaine dont les suites ne peuvent qu'estre tres facheuses a L'interest general de cette colonie; c'est dans cette veüe, Monseigneur, que j'ay toujours recommandé aux officiers que j'ay detachés pour

<sup>37</sup>Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 20 7bre 1714, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 280.

<sup>38</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 8bre 1724, C11A 46: 91.

<sup>39</sup>See Zoltvany, "The Frontier Policy," 243-244, 248.

<sup>40</sup>Following the campaign of 1716, Fox-French councils occurred at Montreal and in the upper country in 1717, 1718, 1719, 1721 and 1722 to resolve matters relating to the treaty of 1716 and the murder of Frenchmen. In 1724, Le Marchand de Lignery mediated between the Fox and the Ojibway.

ces postes de concillier les Esprits, et reünir les Nations divisées, afin de maintenir ces peuples en L'union.<sup>41</sup>

Louis de La Porte de Louvigny, the governor's senior aide in matters of Amerindian diplomacy, had advocated the same approach in his dispatches of 1717 and 1720. It was, he wrote, both impossible and ill-advised for Europeans to take sides in Amerindian conflicts which were often fought for reasons far different from the accepted European forms of *casus belli*. Instead,

nous reserv[ons] seulement la qualité de mediateurs, lors qu'ils [the Amerindians] auront recours a la médiation des François. Car quel qu'acord que les françois puissent faire entre les Nations pour les reunir ils ne s'y tiennent qu'autant qu'ils le veulent... et lorsqu'ils veulent entreux finir une guerre, ils savent mieux que Nous les moyens pour la terminer et si par hazard nous sommes obligez d'y entrer Combien de marchandises, de dépenses et de demarches ne faut il pas faire tres souvent inutilles par le peu d'assurance qu'il y a sur ces peuples.<sup>42</sup>

The preference of these officials for intercultural diplomacy and mediation over aggression and intervention did not stem from pacifism or any deep-rooted faith in Native political systems. Rather, it was a pragmatic response that took into account the colony's military and economic weaknesses. Both Vaudreuil and Louvigny laced their dispatches with culturally biased judgments on Amerindian leadership and reasons for making war. From the perspective of French leaders, the Amerindians' "ferocity," "vengefulness," "caprice," combined with their apparent lack of central authority, made them difficult if necessary allies.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 8bre 1724, C11A 46: 90-90v. Other students of the period have come to similar conclusions regarding Vaudreuil's attitude toward the Fox. See Richard Lortie, "La guerre des Renards, 1700-1740" (M.A. thesis, Université Laval, 1988), 99-100; Claiborne Skinner, "The Sinews of Empire: The Voyageurs and the Carrying Trade into the Pays d'en Haut, 1681-1754" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1991), 123.

<sup>42</sup>Louvigny au conseil, 15 8bre 1720, C11A (transcriptions) 42: 177. Louvigny had put forth the same argument in a memoir of 1717 (Louvigny au conseil, 21 7bre 1717, C11A 38: 198).

<sup>43</sup>Louvigny au conseil, 15 8bre 1720, C11A (transcriptions) 42: 177; Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 13 9bre 1708, *RAPQ* (1939-40): 444; Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 14 9bre 1708, *RAPQ* (1939-40): 445.

Denys Delâge has remarked that the official correspondence of New France's governors in the late seventeenth century reveals the coexistence of two modes of discourse on Amerindian allies:

Soit qu'ils présentent les Amérindiens alliés venant respectueusement écouter les ordres pour ensuite les retransmettre partout dans les Pays d'en-haut, étant tenus «dans l'obéissance qu'ils doivent à sa majesté», soit qu'ils les présentent comme des nations barbares brutales et difficiles à contenir, risquant à tout moment d'égorger les Français si ceux-ci n'achètent pas leur fourrures et ne leur font pas des présents.<sup>44</sup>

Vaudreuil's correspondence exhibits similar, if less extreme, tendencies. In a single memoir of 1716, the governor evoked a gamut of approaches to French-Amerindian diplomacy. First, an increase in the number of colonial troops (the *troupes de la Marine*) would achieve a useful diplomatic goal: "se faire craindre des sauvages." But other phrases suggest more subtle alternatives: "attirer l'amitié des Sauvages;" "insinuer aux Sauvages;" "nous attacher... ces Sauvages"—all of which indicate that French hopes for influencing their Amerindian neighbours and allies lay more in the realm of diplomacy than coercion.<sup>45</sup>

Although the French had pressing strategic reasons to engage in diplomacy with Amerindians, their actions embraced a cultural goal as well, which was to "reduce" their allies to civility and obedience.<sup>46</sup> One series of phrases that appear in the correspondence between Vaudreuil and the court described the range of approaches to intercultural relations

<sup>44</sup>Delâge, "L'alliance franco-amérindienne," 11-12.

<sup>45</sup>Memoire de Vaudreuil au duc d'Orléans, février 1716, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 293-295 *passim*. Vaudreuil once remarked that more troops were necessary, "Tant pour tenir l'habitant dans le Respect, que pour y Tenir aussy les Sauvages qui scavent bien dire que nos soldats ne sont plus que des enfans ou des vieillards" (Vaudreuil au ministre, 16 7bre 1714, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 270). Early in his career, he also argued that French policy was to keep Amerindians "dans une espece de soumission, et de ne Leur jamais faire connoitre qu'ils peuvent estre nos maitres" (Vaudreuil au ministre, 16 9bre 1704, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 46). The phrase is at once an expression of the will to power and an admission of weakness.

<sup>46</sup>Louvigny wrote of that the end of diplomatic (as opposed to coercive) action was to reduce the Amerindians to a state of subordination "doucement par nos exemples" (Louvigny au conseil, 15 8bre 1720, C11A [transcriptions] 42: 176). Vaudreuil's dispatches reflected his confidence that proper diplomatic action would render Amerindians "plus dociles qu'il[s] netoient" (Vaudreuil au conseil, 24 8bre 1722, C11A 44: 366v). The words *subordination* and *docile* are significant in that they expressed a social ideal of the *ancien régime*, implying "spirited obedience to an authority that of its nature ought to be obeyed." D. Miquelon, *New France 1701-1744* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1987) 236.

as conceptualized by the elites of the *ancien régime*. There was, first of all, “les voyes de douceur.” This meant, in effect, conceding to Amerindian requests in order to achieve larger strategic ends; for example, offering brandy to Amerindians at Montreal to prevent them from going to Albany.<sup>47</sup> Diametrically opposed to such policies of concession were “les voyes de la severité,” where the French assumed the right to act unilaterally and coercively.<sup>48</sup> In between the two was “la voye d’insinuation,” by means of which colonial officials, faced with the impossibility of forcibly altering Amerindian behaviour, brought diplomatic pressure to bear.<sup>49</sup> Intercultural diplomacy from 1703 to 1725 was characterized principally by the first and the last of these means.

### 1.3 Amerindian participation in intercultural alliances

Given the lack of Amerindian sources analogous to the ones which document French decision-making, historians are hard put to produce a similarly detailed account of Amerindian perspectives on intercultural diplomacy and geopolitics. Such an account would have to consider the ways in which tribal, village and personal identities, in addition to ecological and political factors, combined to influence the diplomacy of a score of Amerindian nations in the early eighteenth century. Rather than attempting a generalized analysis of Amerindian motives and attitudes regarding intercultural alliances, what follows is instead a brief investigation of Amerindian participation and motivation in councils with the French, based upon the French documentary record between 1703 and 1725.<sup>50</sup>

French council records of the early eighteenth century are significant in that they record valuable evidence of Amerindian participation and motivations in maintaining

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<sup>47</sup>Pontchartrain à Vaudreuil, 9 juin 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 118.

<sup>48</sup>Memoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 15 juin 1712, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 139. Here, the phrase is used in the context of internal colonial matters. Louvigny evoked the *douceur/severité* dichotomy in the context of intercultural relations in his memoir of 1720 (Louvigny au conseil, 15 8bre 1720, C11A [transcriptions] 42: 172).

<sup>49</sup>Vaudreuil au conseil, 14 8bre 1716, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 332.

<sup>50</sup>For discussions of Amerindian perspectives and policies, see Richard White, *The Middle Ground*, chapters 2 to 4; Gilles Havard, *La grande paix de Montréal de 1701*. For a history of the Iroquois during this period, see D. K. Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*.

diplomatic relations with the French. This evidence is obtainable by charting the involvement of Amerindians in diplomatic encounters with the French, and by studying the speeches of Amerindian orators. The latter represent a unique source for the period, for although they have been translated, transcribed and quite possibly recopied and edited in some cases, they record actual Amerindian discourse. These records were made for largely administrative purposes, as opposed to being written for a large metropolitan audience as propaganda, as a travelogue, or as a philosophical treatise; thus, they deserve great attention as the most reliable written source of Amerindian speeches for the period.

Table 2 (at the end of this chapter) charts the participation of Amerindian nations at recorded councils at Montreal and Quebec between 1703 and 1725. The groups with the highest apparent rates of participation in councils with Onontio are the Onondaga, Seneca, Odawa and Potawatomi. Part of the explanation for these numbers arises from matters of distance and transportation. The relative proximity of the Onondaga to Canada may explain their frequent presence at councils there, while the Odawa and Potawatomi were, to paraphrase a contemporary French ethnographic designation, “gens du canot”—that is, their birch-bark canoe technology made the long voyage from the *pays d'en haut* more practicable than for groups which lacked the resources or the ability to produce equally suitable craft.<sup>51</sup> This does not explain, however, why other nearby groups (like the other Iroquois nations) or experienced canoeists (such as the Saulteur) did not make the journey to Montreal more often.

The Onondaga and the Seneca were, along the Mohawk, the elder brothers of the Iroquois League. Removed from the direct influence of the Dutch and English at Albany, and exposed to the attacks of French allies in the upper country, these two nations had every reason to maintain good relations with the French. Alliance with the English did not guarantee protection and military assistance in case of war with the French or their allies; moreover, trade with the French was an alternative to overdependency on Albany. Finally,

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<sup>51</sup>Paroles de Mr le gouverneur general..., C11A 31: 86v-87;  
*Relation par lettres de l'Amérique septentrionale* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1904), 98-100.

several influential Frenchmen such as Paul Le Moyne de Maricourt, Charles Le Moyne de Longueuil, and Louis-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire, nourished important kinship ties with these nations. Although this explanation is overly brief and partial, it does underline three factors that help to explain the numbers in Table 1: geopolitics, trade, and kinship. These same factors might help explain, for example, why the Mohawk were less visible at councils with the French but maintained close ties with their French-allied kin in the St. Lawrence valley.

The Odawa and Potawatomi, along with the Huron, have been named individually by various contemporaries and historians as New France's most faithful allies.<sup>52</sup> We must assume that members of these nations had personal and collective reasons for desiring alliance with the French, beyond what one anonymous French memorialist suggested as the principal motive: "De toutes les nations qu'ils frequentent ou dont ils ont connoissance, C'est Le françois qu'ils aiment Et Craignent Le plus."<sup>53</sup> The Odawa and Huron had well-developed trade networks in the upper country through which French goods flowed, benefiting both French traders and the Odawa. The words of the Odawa Outoutagan, as recorded by a French observer in 1707, reveal something of the importance he ascribed to this alliance:

Je suis le Fils du Premier des Sauvages de toutes les nations d'en haut, qui soit venu trouver les François au travers des Bois. Mr de Courcelles [governor of New France from 1665 to 1672] lui avoit donné la clef de la Colonie, & l'avoit invité à y venir souvent: c'est le plus cher heritage, que j'aye reçu de celui à qui je dois le jour.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Zoltvany, and perhaps Vaudreuil himself, considered the Odawa "the most faithful of the Canadian allies" ("New France and the West," 319); Jacques-Charles de Sabrevois, French commandant at Detroit, believed the Huron to be "la nation la plus fidelle aux françois," (*Memoire sur les sauvages du Canada...* [1718], C11A [transcriptions] 39: 375); and historian R. D. Edmunds clearly feels the Potawatomi to be deserving of this distinction. *The Potawatomis: Keepers of the Fire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978). The Eurocentric concern with Amerindian "loyalty" (more understandable for contemporary Frenchmen, whose lives depended on it) obscures the fact that most Amerindians had the interests of their own communities at heart when cooperating with or resisting Europeans.

<sup>53</sup>*Abrege de la vie et coutume des Sauvages du Canada* [1723], C11A 45: 173-173v.

<sup>54</sup>F.-X. de Charlevoix, *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle-France*, 6 vols. (Paris: Nyon, 1744), 2: 312 in IIDH, reel 7.

Perhaps even more importantly, these Amerindians had their own geopolitical situation to consider, and alliance with the French was thus also a means of achieving security for Odawa and Huron communities. As Richard White has shown, the Odawa and Huron virtually monopolized contacts with the French in the *pays d'en haut* and at Montreal. After the establishment of a French post at Detroit in 1701, the Huron and Miami, who relocated there, had ready access to French officers and French goods. The Odawa of Michilimakinac did not, and therefore came regularly to Montreal.<sup>55</sup>

The Potawatomi on the Saint-Joseph River, on the other hand, told Vaudreuil that they felt greatly disadvantaged by the French withdrawal from the west: "ceux du Destroit ont un chef françois..., ceux de Michilimakina envoient de tems en tems, mais pour nous autres nous ne voyons personne.... [I]l est de valeur de venir par terre des miamis au Destroit, Ce qui nous rend tous malades par la fatigue et la misere que nous souffrons en chemin." To meet this challenge, they may have taken advantage of their position in the French alliance to enhance their status as mediators in the Great Lakes region.<sup>56</sup> This could explain why their involvement in councils at Montreal rose sharply during the early period of French-Fox conflict.

Factors such as geopolitics, trade, the search for security, and the importance of kinship ties explain why distinct Amerindian groups sought good relations with the French.

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<sup>55</sup>White, *The Middle Ground*, 153 (table 4.1). White purports to have counted "chiefs representing tribes," but with respect to the council record between 1703 and 1708, this is scarcely possible since the size and composition of Amerindian delegations at Montreal were frequently unspecified.

William Newbigging has argued that the behaviour of the Odawa is insufficiently explained by the notion that they acted as profit-motivated middlemen in the French-controlled fur trade, and that the protection of precious ecological resources was a more important consideration for the Odawa. "Ottawa Culture and the Middleman Construct," paper read at a public lecture at the University of Ottawa, 11 February 1993.

<sup>56</sup>Paroles de Bilamek chef Poutouatamy... du 4e aoust 1705, C11A 22: 262v-263 (quotation); Nicolas Perrot reported in the late seventeenth century that the Potawatomi were the "dominant tribe of the Green Bay region, [and] that they arbitrated intertribal disputes among their neighbours" (Edmunds, *The Potawatomis*, 6). During Vaudreuil's term, the Potawatomi chief Ouilamek advanced French interests through his relations with both the Fox and the Dakota. Parolles de Mr Le Gouverneur general... du 28e juillet 1712, C11A 33: 82; Vaudreuil au ministre, 16 7bre 1714, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 265; Marest à Vaudreuil, 19 juin 1713, C11A 34: 81 (Ouilamek to the "Scioux").

In councils with the French, these general factors were manifested in the substantive issues which Amerindians raised. The French council record allows the identification of at least five items which commonly appeared on the diplomatic agenda: requests for or offers of mediation; requests for military assistance; ceremonies of condolence; matters relating to trade; and finally, requests for French services and personnel. Examples of the first two have been given above.

The ritualized expression of condolence following a death marked many French-Amerindian councils, especially those involving the Iroquois. The Onondaga and Seneca, among whom French officers had kinship ties, were particularly observant of this custom: beyond the usual condolences exchanged at councils to recognize all deaths in the others' land, the Iroquois made the condolence of a particular individual a priority in eight councils between 1703 and 1727.<sup>57</sup> No other nation, including the French, was quite as assiduous as this. Such ceremonies were nevertheless instrumental in cementing good relations.

For the Amerindians of the Great Lakes, the commercial basis of their alliance with the French was often an issue in councils. Amerindians regularly asked for goods à *bon marché* in trade; that is, for the rate of exchange between Europeans and Amerindians to be stable and generous. The Odawa chief Koutaouiliboé expressed this ideal in council with Vaudreuil in 1710:

Faite en sorte quil[s] [les marchands] nous fassent bon marché, vous le pouvez, nous Sçavons bien que vous estes le maistre quoy que quelques [uns] [d]es marchands nous disent que vous ne l'estes [pas] de leur marchandises, nous sçavons bien quil[s] vous obeissent.... nous ne demandons pas qu[ils] nous donnent les marchandises comme on [nous] les a donné cy devant; nous Sçavons bien que [cela] ne se peut; nous ne demandons pas mesme [quil[s]] nous fassent un prix fixe a leurs marchandises, nous demandons Seulement que l'on nous rabatte quelque chose, principalement Sur la poudre, Sur les chaudieres, et Sur les fusils, comme estant les choses que nous Sont les plus necessaires.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup>They came to Montreal to mourn Callière in 1703, Le Moyne de Maricourt in 1704, Jacques Le Ber in 1707, the Jesuit Lamberville in 1710, female family members of Chabert de Joncaire and Maray de La Chauvignerie in 1712, Louis XIV in 1717, Claude de Ramezay in 1725, and Vaudreuil in 1727.

<sup>58</sup>Parolles des Sauvages de Michilimakinac Outtauois... le 29e juillet 1710, C11A 31: 116v-117; similar sentiments are expressed in Parolles du Pesant a Monsieur le Gouverneur general du 24e aoust 1705, C11A 22: 258. Vaudreuil, on the other hand, denied any such obligation and instead blamed high prices on impersonal market forces,

Such council proposals were aimed at stabilizing the terms of the intercultural alliance, which was in turn a component of Amerindian societies' search for security—not an end in itself.

In addition to seeking reasonable conditions of exchange for European goods, Amerindians used councils to request French services and personnel. Most requests were for French officers, missionaries, and blacksmiths. During the early years of Vaudreuil's term, the Seneca and Onondaga made repeated requests for the services of smiths and less frequently, for missionaries. Pro-French Iroquois considered the Jesuit missionaries a "symbol of close relations with New France," while neutralist and pro-English Iroquois might view them as either "a guarantee of safety from French and western Indian attack or spies for the enemy."<sup>59</sup> Amerindians from the upper country, on the other hand, asked exclusively for French officers—knowing, perhaps, that a garrison, a smith, and traders would inevitably follow. They apparently found missionaries less important than officers as symbols of the French alliance and as resident diplomats. In asking that a French commandant come among his people, a Miami orator explained to Vaudreuil: "il n'y a que le Pere qui est occupé a la priere."<sup>60</sup> The Iroquois also asked for French officers, although not in the hope of seeing a fort established in their midst. Instead, the officers they requested (always by name) were already bound to them by kinship ties and their value lay in their role as semi-resident diplomats.

The blacksmith is often credited by historians with having a diplomatic role as well, although in formal encounters it was negligible. The blacksmith did not speak in councils, act as a mediator or give presents in the name of Onontio. What the blacksmith could do

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such as the scarcity of French goods (Reponces de Monsr le Gouverneur..., C11A 22: 258). The Amerindians' expectation that Onontio command French traders to lower prices can be compared to French expectations that young Amerindian warriors obey the elders and civil chiefs.

Richard White has analyzed the Algonkian concept of intersocietal trade in *The Middle Ground*, 115ff; Koutaouliboé's speech, however, suggests that Amerindians were more tolerant of rising prices than White implies.

<sup>59</sup>For blacksmiths and missionaries among the Five Nations after 1701, see Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 220-221; 218 (quotation).

<sup>60</sup>Parolles des Miamis du 5e aoust 1703, C11A 21: 68v.

was raise the prestige and value of the French alliance by providing an essential service to Amerindians: the repair of metal goods and guns. The smith Pierre Gauvereau, "le seul bon armurier qui soit a Quebec," in the intendant's opinion, was retained by the Crown to repair Amerindian weapons according to a fixed tariff that was considerably lower than the colonial market value of his services. The commandant at Detroit was required to maintain a smith at his own expense, in addition to an interpreter and chaplain. And when Vaudreuil ordered the withdrawal of all Frenchmen (including the interpreter Pierre Roy) from the Miami villages in 1720, exception was made for the blacksmith.<sup>61</sup>

Amerindians of different nations thus had a variety of reasons for seeking alliance with the French, just as the French had many reasons for seeking alliance with Amerindians. The congruence of French and Amerindian interests provided the basis for cooperation and ultimately, alliance, both at a national level and at the level of limited groups and individuals. Diplomacy was essential to the maintenance of such alliances as well as to the peaceful resolution of disputes between groups in conflict.

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<sup>61</sup>Bégon au conseil, 13 9bre 1717, C11A 37: 64; Vaudreuil et Bégon au conseil, 26 8bre 1719, C11A 40: 58v-59; Extrait du memoire de Mr le Marquis de Vaudreuil... pour servir d'instruction au Sr Dumont..., 26 aoust 1720, C11A 42: 159v.

TABLE 1  
RECORDED COUNCILS HELD AT MONTREAL AND  
QUEBEC, 1703-1725

| Year  | Number of recorded councils |
|-------|-----------------------------|
| 1703  | 8                           |
| 1704  | 7                           |
| 1705  | 6                           |
| 1706  | 3                           |
| 1707  | 3                           |
| 1708  | 5                           |
| 1710  | 4                           |
| 1711  | 2                           |
| 1712  | 4                           |
| 1713  | 4                           |
| 1714  | 2                           |
| 1717  | 4                           |
| 1718  | 2                           |
| 1720  | 1                           |
| 1725  | 1                           |
| total | 56                          |

Sources: Archives des colonies (Paris), C11A, Correspondance générale, Canada, vols. 21 to 47, National Archives of Canada, MG 1, microfilm, reels F-21 to F-47; Francis Jennings *et al.*, eds. *Iroquois Indians: A Documentary History of the Diplomacy of the Six Nations and Their League* [microform collection] (Woodbridge, Conn.: Research Publications, 1984), reels 6 to 9.

Note: Many other councils undoubtedly took place, but were not documented. I have retained only those councils that are either recorded in whole or in part, or for which clear details were given, e.g. the time of the council, the nations involved, the substantive proposals. That many incidental references to councils were thus ignored in this enumeration, attests to the holding of an indeterminate number of unrecorded diplomatic events at Montreal. The data for the year 1711 is especially misleading, since nearly 800 Amerindians from 32 nations were at Montreal for a period of two months during the summer; although numerous discrete intercultural councils undoubtedly took place, only two were documented by the French.

Years for which no council records remain have been excluded.

TABLE 2  
PARTICIPATION OF AMERINDIAN NATIONS IN FIFTY-SIX  
COUNCILS AT MONTREAL AND QUEBEC, 1703-1725

| Nation          | 1703-1705 | 1706-1710 | 1711-1715 | 1716-1725 | total |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Huron           | 2         | -         | 2         | -         | 4     |
| Illinois        | -         | -         | 1         | -         | 1     |
| Iroquois        | 1         | 1         | 3         | 2         | 7     |
| <i>Cayuga</i>   | 2         | -         | -         | -         | 2     |
| <i>Mohawk</i>   | 1         | 1         | -         | -         | 2     |
| <i>Oneida</i>   | 1         | -         | -         | -         | 1     |
| <i>Onondaga</i> | 4         | 5         | 1         | 1         | 11    |
| <i>Seneca</i>   | 4         | 2         | 3         | 1         | 10    |
| Kickapoo        | -         | -         | 1         | 1         | 2     |
| Menominee       | -         | 2         | 1         | -         | 3     |
| Miami           | 2         | -         | 1         | 1         | 4     |
| Odawa (De)      | 2         | 1         | 1         | -         | 4     |
| Odawa (Mi)      | 2         | 4         | 3         | 1         | 10    |
| Potawatomi      | 1         | 1         | 5         | 2         | 9     |
| Sauk/Fox        | -         | 1/0       | 2/1       | 1/2       | 4/3   |
| Saulteur        | -         | 1         | 1         | 1         | 3     |

Sources: Archives des colonies (Paris), C11A, Correspondance générale, Canada, vols. 21 to 47, National Archives of Canada, MG 1, microfilm, reels F-21 to F-47; Francis Jennings *et al.*, eds. *Iroquois Indians: A Documentary History of the Diplomacy of the Six Nations and Their League* [microform collection] (Woodbridge, Conn.: Research Publications, 1984), reels 6 to 9.

Note: Amerindian council participants have been classified by nation according to French usage. Thus groups like the Odawa who were subdivided into four nations were usually only identified by the French according to their place of residence—Detroit (De), Michilimakinac (Mi), or Saginaw Bay. The data for the "Iroquois" includes instances where all five Iroquois nations were indeed present, as well as councils where only the term "Iroquois" was used to identify participants.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE SHAPE OF INTERCULTURAL DIPLOMACY

Il faut convenir qu'on procède dans ces Assemblées [of Amerindian elders] avec une sagesse, une maturité, une habileté, je dirai même, communément une probité, qui auroient fait honneur à l'Aréopage d'Athènes, & au Sénat de Rome dans les plus beaux jours de ces Républiques. C'est qu'on n'y conclut rien avec précipitation, & que les grandes passions, qui ont si fort altéré la politique, même parmi les Chrétiens, n'ont point encore prévalu dans ces Sauvages sur le bien public.

F.-X. de Charlevoix, *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle-France* (1744)

[J]e fit tenir plusieurs conseils [with Amerindians], ou asseûrement il fault la patience d'un ange, pour venir a bout de concilier tous ces esprits.

Governor Vaudreuil to minister Ponchartrain, 5 November 1708

#### 2.1 The Onontio structure

The fundamental diplomatic link between the French as a nation and the various Amerindian nations with whom they dealt was the fictive kinship tie between French governors at Quebec and their Native “children.” The French governor, termed Onontio by both Iroquoians and Algonkians, was the metaphorical father of nations allied to the French. In the French record of councils involving the French and Amerindians between 1703 and 1725, Onontio is addressed as “mon père” or “notre père”, and, interestingly enough, both the *tu* and the more respectful *vous* forms of address are used.<sup>1</sup>

Despite its fictive nature, the relationship was an important institution in French-Amerindian relations. The title itself was accepted fully by both Amerindians and

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<sup>1</sup>See for example a council of Senecas and Onondagas with Vaudreuil, 12 June 1703, Moreau St. Méry—Memorials 1540-1759, fol. 281, in Francis Jennings *et al.*, eds. *Iroquois Indians: A Documentary History* [microform collection] (Woodbridge, Conn.: Research Publications, 1984) [hereinafter IIDH], microfilm, reel 6; Parolles de la grand terre..., 18 octobre 1704, Moreau St. Méry—Memorials 1540-1759, fol. 317-317v., in IIDH reel 7. How accurately did French interpreters and scribes translate the tone of an address? The French record of a council involving several Fox delegates and Monsieur de Montigny in 1722 has the conciliatory Ouchala using *vous*, while the proud brother of Elica8as addresses Montigny with *tu*. Parolles des Renards dans un Conseil tenu chez M de Montigny..., 7 septembre 1722, Archives des colonies (Paris), C11A, Correspondance générale, Canada, vol. 44, fol. 441-446, National Archives of Canada, MG 1, microfilm, reel F-44. Subsequent references to documents in the Archives des colonies (Paris) will be by series, volume and folio number.

Europeans. Mohawk in origin, Onontio meant “great mountain”—a reference to New France’s first governor, Charles Huault de Montmagny. It passed from governor to governor, and, superficially at least, echoed the transference of proper names of leaders among Amerindians—in particular, the transference of chief or sachem names in the league of the Iroquois. However, as Mary Druke has pointed out, “Iroquois use of proper names for Euro-Americans differed from Iroquois use of Iroquoian proper names for Iroquois leaders in that the proper names given to Euro-Americans, once given, were transferable from individual to individual without ritual. There was no comparable transference of proper names in addressing Iroquois leaders.”<sup>2</sup>

In other words, unlike a chief of the Iroquois League, Onontio was not ritually installed in office; his legitimacy in the eyes of Amerindians derived from his appointment by the king of France, termed *grand Onontio*, who made the appointee solely responsible for the colony’s military and foreign affairs. That the governor was in fact the real leader of the French by virtue of his military and civilian titles and the hierarchical nature of French society, may have precluded the need for Amerindian recognition of his status: there was no contender for the position.

Nevertheless, Vaudreuil’s appointment was strongly marked by Amerindian diplomatic rituals. In 1703, after the death of governor Callière, a group of Senecas and Onondagas was the first of the Amerindian delegations which came to Montreal to mourn his passing—“pour... pleurer Votre pere et vous marquer a toute la nation Suivant nos Coûtumes ordinaires le Regret que nous en avons”—and to recognize Vaudreuil’s assumption of the title. Callière had become in death Vaudreuil’s metaphorical father, and the metaphorical grandfather of the Seneca and Onondaga.<sup>3</sup> The envoys gave Vaudreuil a

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<sup>2</sup>Mary Druke, “Structure and Meaning of Leadership among the Mohawk and Oneida during the mid-eighteenth century” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1982), 86-87.

<sup>3</sup>The anonymous orator also referred to “vôtre grandpere Onontio [qui] avoit planté a CataraK8i un grand arbre”—thus pushing Onontio’s genealogy back still further, to Louis de Buade de Frontenac, founder of the French post at Cataraqui (Fort Frontenac) and Callière’s predecessor. *Parolles des Sonnantouans Et Onontagues... [et] Reponses de...*

belt of wampum “[qui] le dira le joye que nos Anciens, nos considerables. et nos Jeunes guerriers ont que le grand Onontio t'aye mis a la place du deffunt.” Vaudreuil's reply reiterated the legitimacy of his status and elaborated on his responsibilities toward the Iroquois: “Comme le grand Onontio ma mis icy a la place de feu monsieur de Calliere Je suis bien aise de vous dire par ce collier que vous aurés toujours En moy un bon pere qui Vous aymera...” Elsewhere, Vaudreuil's response makes clear that the aforementioned “Coutûmes ordinaires” involved the presentation of gifts in order to dissipate the grief of the French: “Mes Enfants vous avez Couvert le Corps de monsieur de Callieres...”<sup>4</sup> The following month, Le Pesant, an Odawa leader, expressed grief on behalf of his nation for the death of Callière, but rejoiced that Vaudreuil had *raised his name* (Onontio)—a reference to the ritual by which Amerindian titles were perpetuated.<sup>5</sup> Clearly, Amerindians took the institution seriously, and adapted protocols designed to install Native leaders for the purpose of recognizing a French official's credentials.

Vaudreuil took the title seriously as well, perhaps because its singularity recalled the absolute authority of a monarch. He complained to the minister in 1707 when the French commandant at Detroit dared style himself Onontio of the west:

Je prens aussy la liberté de vous dire qu'il ne convient au Caractère que j'ay l'honneur d'avoir, que le sieur de lamothe se mette en parallele avec moy... disant Onontio, et moy ne sommes qu'un....

[M de Ramezay] ne parle jamais aux sauvages qu'il ne leur fasse voir que le gouverneur general est seûl le maistre, c'est une coutume de tous têmes establee, et quy engage mesme les sauvages a avoir un grand respect pour le gouverneur general.<sup>6</sup>

More interesting than this quarrel over rank—so typical of the *ancien régime*—is Vaudreuil's staunch defence of a title that was essentially Amerindian in origin.

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Vaudreuil, 12 juin 1703, Moreau St. Méry—Memorials 1540-1759, fol. 281v in IIDH reel 6.

<sup>4</sup>Parolles des Sonnantouans Et Onontagues... [et] Reponses de Monsieur de Vaudreuil, 12 juin 1703, Moreau St. Méry—Memorials 1540-1759, fol. 281-282v, in IIDH reel 6.

<sup>5</sup>Parolles du Pezant outtaoûois a monsieur Le marquis de Vaudreuil Le 14e Juillet 1703, C11A 21: 66.

<sup>6</sup>Observations de... Vaudreuil sur la lettre de... lamothe du 1er octobre 1707, C11A 26: 104v-105, 105v. See also Yves F. Zoltvany, *Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 86.

Onontio occupied a central position in a wide network of intercultural relationships. On one level, he was the link between the French nation and each of the Amerindian nations who treated with them. The annual councils held at Montreal underscored this central position. Vaudreuil repeatedly referred in his correspondence to his presence at Montreal between the thaw of the St. Lawrence in spring and mid-autumn, when he hurried back to Quebec to prepare dispatches for the court: "les affaires des pays d'en haut m'appellent [à Montréal] dès le printemps Il est même arrivé que Jay esté obligé de le faire sur les glaces pour donner les ordres necessaires aux Commandants des postes." In another document, Vaudreuil mentioned incidentally the need he had of an interpreter of the Odawa language nearly every day for a period of a month in the summer at Montreal. Mme de Vaudreuil's correspondence with the minister provides more intimate details of the annual round of intercultural conferences: "dieu mercy Mr de Vaudreuil est dans la plus parfaittes sante du monde malgre toute la painne quil a eu de puis le mois de mars iusques au mois daous quil a esté a montreal ou tous les iours depuis quatre heure du matin iusqu'a neuf du soir il a esté ocupe a des conference continuelle avec des sauvages..."<sup>7</sup> Finally, the long list of recorded councils held at Montreal involving Vaudreuil reveals Onontio's personal and prominent role in French-Amerindian diplomacy. Onontio was not a remote father, but a very present one.

The use of the term father by Amerindians was a reflection of political and economic relationships. Francis Jennings—studying the relationship between the Iroquois and the Dutch, English and French—has described the terms "father," "uncle," and "brother" as indicating degrees of parity and subordination. Seventeenth-century Iroquois called the English brothers as a measure of equality in that alliance; the French were

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<sup>7</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 octobre 1724, C11A 46: 94; Vaudreuil au conseil, 20 octobre 1722, C11A 44: 359v; Mme de Vaudreuil au ministre, 29 octobre 1724, C11A 46: 108.

nevertheless addressed as fathers because “the French governors would not treat at all without [the term].”<sup>8</sup>

The Algonkians of the Great Lakes region understood French fatherhood as a “paternal obligation” to supply quality trade goods at customary prices—*à bon marché*. A good father was one who supplied his children with reasonably-priced trade goods and regular presents; a negligent father could well lose his status and be replaced by another—English—father. This economic arrangement had its basis in Algonkian conceptions of fatherhood and gift-giving. Within communities, kinship ties served as channels for the distribution of goods and services. The important act of gift-giving reaffirmed these ties, while creating bonds of loyalty between the giver and the recipient. Outside the family, fictive kinship ties could be established to serve the same function. In this context, the Algonkians’ use of the term *père* implied the role of a provider, or *pourvoyeur*, and did not represent a declaration of submission. At annual councils at Montreal, Onontio distributed gifts to his children as a symbol of their close relationship; in return, Algonkians returned gifts as a proof of loyalty.<sup>9</sup>

Although Onontio’s paternal status was subjected to various cultural interpretations by Europeans, Iroquoians and Algonkians, it was also, by the early eighteenth century, an entrenched diplomatic fiction which transcended both its basis in intercultural exchange and political reality. It had a life of its own, and depended upon the ability of the French to impose themselves as such, or on the willingness of Amerindians to use the term. During the siege of the Fox near Detroit in 1712, French participants recorded the defiant speech of a Fox leader, in which the attacking French commander was nevertheless addressed as

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<sup>8</sup>Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), 44-46, 45 (quotation).

<sup>9</sup>White, *The Middle Ground*, 115-119; Gilles Havard, *La grande paix de Montréal de 1701* (Montreal: Recherches amérindiennes au Québec, 1992), 30-31; Bruce W. White, “‘Give Us a Little Milk’: Economics and Ceremony in the Ojibway Fur Trade” (M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1985), 19-30.

*father*<sup>10</sup>—not because fathers usually attacked or punished their children, but because it was the established manner of addressing Onontio or his agent.

The singularity of Onontio's position was emphasized by the inability of Amerindians to maintain direct relations with the French sovereign, *grand Onontio*, and the latter's unwillingness to allow them to do so. On at least two occasions between 1703 and 1725, Amerindians petitioned the king directly by means of gifts and letters.<sup>11</sup> In 1713, the Nipissing sent a belt of wampum to Louis XIV along with a letter presented by the Sulpician missionary de Breslay. The Sun King's favourable reply was sent via Vaudreuil, and it gently admonished the Nipissings to observe conventional channels of communication in the future:

Le grand Onontio a reçu le collier de ses enfants les Nepissiriens.... Le grand Onontio donne ses ordres... a M. le Marquis de Vaudreuil dont il souhaite que tout les Sauvages écoutent la parole parce qu'il ne leur parle qu'en son nom.... [Q]ue les Nepissiriens et autres Sauvages du Continent tous enfants du grand Onontio se souviennent que la Cabanne de Conseil est a Montreal que le feu y est toujours allumé et que c'est la ou doivent se traiter toutes les affaires. C'est aussi la ou tous les enfants du grand Onontio doivent écouter sa parole qui leur est portée par M. le Marquis de Vaudreuil.<sup>12</sup>

In the fall of 1717, Vaudreuil sent a belt of wampum to Louis XV on behalf of the Senecas. The following year, the young monarch replied by sending a gift to the Iroquois, but

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<sup>10</sup>Louise Phelps Kellogg, *The French Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest* (New York: Cooper Square, 1968 [1925]), 280-281. Both the governor and the French commandants in the *pays d'en haut* were called fathers. One has the sense that the post commandants in the upper country served in some sense as surrogate fathers, given the distance between Montreal and the Great Lakes. In his speech to Vaudreuil at Montreal in 1717, Shamg8eschi, an Odawa from Saginaw Bay, criticized the behaviour of Jacques-Charles de Sabrevois, ex-commandant at Detroit, in these terms:

Mon Pere je vous prie de m'écouter.... Le mauvais traitement que nous avons reçu de la part de M. de Sabrevois que nous regardions comme notre pere au detroit mais qui ne nous a point regardez comme ses enfans a Extremement choqué nos anciens.... Nous avons rencontré M. Detonti qui va au detroit pour y être notre Pere, Il nous a detourné du dessein que nous avions d'aller chez l'Anglois. (Parolles des outa8as du Saguinan..., 24 juin 1717, C11A 38: 172-172v)

While Shamg8eschi acknowledged Vaudreuil as his father, he also applied the term to Sabrevois and Tonty—although in both cases, he specified Detroit as the place where these officers functioned as fathers.

<sup>11</sup>A third occasion was a 1705 letter from the Abenaki to the king, printed in *Collection des manuscrits relatifs à la Nouvelle-France* (Quebec: A. Côté, 1883-1885), 2: 433-435.

<sup>12</sup>Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 7 mai 1714, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 257.

Vaudreuil was ordered to disallow this practice. "Je ne me serois pas avisé," wrote Vaudreuil in defense, "d'envoyer au Conseil le Collier que les cinq Nations Iroquoises ont donné en 1717 pour Sa Majesté, s'il n'avoit été présenté a l'occasion de son heureux avènement a la Couronne ainsy je me conformerai a l'ordre du Conseil pour ne plus envoyer ces sortes de Colliers."<sup>13</sup> Thus gubernatorial mandate, royal will, and Amerindian metaphor all made of Onontio the singular link between Amerindians and the French on a national level.<sup>14</sup>

Contemporary European diplomatic theory would not have countenanced such a statement. The governors of New France were clearly not national representatives: rather, they represented the French Crown and acted as the agent of the king. But in Native America, international relations were not relations between states, but between peoples. The role of Onontio was essentially a New World institution which made diplomatic relations possible between the stateless societies of Amerindians on the one hand, and New France, a fragment of the French state, on the other. Amerindians made such an interpretation of Onontio's role clear by improvising on the theme of French fatherhood when defining Vaudreuil's links to members of his own nation.

Several recorded councils between Vaudreuil and the Iroquois show that Onontio was regarded as being as much a father to the French as to the Iroquois. The death in 1704

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<sup>13</sup>Vaudreuil et Bégon au conseil, 26 octobre 1719, C11A 40: 44v.; Vaudreuil au conseil, 28 octobre 1719, C11A 40: 182v.

<sup>14</sup>Cornelius J. Jaenen has indicated the extent to which the "consistent, unitary, and centralized" nature of French policy regarding Amerindians was a stabilizing factor in French-Amerindian relations: "Generally, the tribes knew where they stood in their trade and warfare arrangements, and when there were shifts in French tactics and local practice, Canadian officers who commanded the scattered posts were instructed to explain how long-term strategy and alliances remained unchanged;" by contrast, the English colonies to the south demonstrated "ineffectiveness, chaotic disunity, and inconsistency in dealing with the native people." "Characteristics of French-Amerindian Contact in New France," in S. H. Palmer and D. Reinhartz, eds. *Essays on the History of North American Discovery and Exploration* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1987), 85-86. The desire to centralize Indian affairs in the hands of the governor was reflected in the eighteenth-century discouragement of "casual and unauthorized visits of native chieftains" to the French court. *Idem*, "The Role of Presents in French-Amerindian Trade," in Duncan Cameron, ed. *Explorations in Canadian Economic History* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1985), 234.

of Paul Le Moyne de Maricourt, a long-time French agent among the Onondaga, brought a delegation of Onondagas to Canada to mourn his passing. Ohonsiowanne, who spoke for the delegation, referred to Maricourt as Vaudreuil's son—"votre fils Maricourt;" the governor's reply confirmed this relationship.<sup>15</sup> In May of the same year, Louis-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire brought a message from the Senecas to Vaudreuil in which he referred to himself as the governor's son, and Vaudreuil's reply, dated June 20, 1704, reiterated the fact.<sup>16</sup>

A 1703 council involving both Senecas and Onondagas elaborated on the kinship ties between Onontio and other members of the French nation. Presenting a belt of wampum to Vaudreuil, the speaker asked him to guarantee a lasting peace: "Nous le prions par Ce Collier que les nepveux [*sic*] et les Guerriers conservant toujours un bon Esprit, regarde Ce Collier Comme une medecine pour leur faire vomir ce qu'ils pourroient avoir de mauvais sur le Coeur et pour fortifier les parolles de la paix que nous avons fait avec vos predécesseurs." The governor's answer explains the meaning of the term *neveu*, or nephew: "Vous m'exhortés de faire En sorte que mes nepveux mes Soldats ne perdent pas l'esprit.... Je suis dans le Dessein... de maintenir l'union quy doit estre entre nous, et mes nepveux les Soldats ne perdent point l'esprit, faites Ensorte que les Vôtres ne le perdent pas."<sup>17</sup> For the Iroquois, the relationship between an uncle and his nephew (particularly his sister's son) implied the obligation of the latter to obey the former, and more nearly approximated the European notion of paternal authority. This particular use of kinship terminology reflects the expression of a European form of leadership in Iroquoian terms.

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<sup>15</sup>Parolles de la grande terre..., 18 octobre 1704, Moreau St. Méry—Memorials 1540-1759, fol. 317 in IIDH, reel 7.

<sup>16</sup>Parolles des Sonnot8ans... Reponses de Mons[ieu]r le Gouverneur, 30 mai et 20 juin 1704, C11A 22: 54-54v. Two decades later, the aged Baron de Longueuil, the brother and successor of Maricourt, still referred to himself as the Iroquois' son; see Discours de... Longueuil [et] Reponses des [Iroquois], [1725], C11A 47: 200-204v.

<sup>17</sup>Document about a conference of Senecas and Onondagas with Vaudreuil, 12 June 1703, Moreau St. Méry—Memorials 1540-1759, fol. 281, in IIDH reel 6.

In this case, the anonymous Iroquois orator used a particular kinship term to describe the centralized and hierarchical nature of leadership in the *troupes de la Marine*.<sup>18</sup>

The diplomatic agreements of 1701 reserved a special role for Onontio in the early period of Vaudreuil's term: that of mediator. Seventeenth-century attempts by the French to mediate conflicts involving Amerindian nations were frequent; this mediation represented attempts to regulate violence and smooth the operation of the fur trade. At the turn of the century, however, the Iroquois nations agreed to make peace jointly with the French and the western nations. In doing so, all Amerindian nations in attendance—both the Algonkians of the Great Lakes and the Five Nations—became metaphorical brothers, all children of Onontio, who was cast in the role of an international mediator. This was made explicit in the treaty of 1701 by Callière's speech of August 4:

S'il arrivoit que quelqu'un de mes enfans en frapast un autre... celui qui aura esté frapé ne se vengera point, ny par luy ny par aucun de sa part, mais il viendra me trouver pour que je luy en fasse raison.... [S]i l'offensant refusait d'en faire une satisfaction raisonnable, je me joins avec mes autre alliez à l'offensé pour l'y Contraindre, ce que je ne croit pas qui puisse arriver, par l'obeissance que me doivent mes enfans...<sup>19</sup>

Callière's somewhat parenthetical reference to Amerindian *obéissance* underlined the paternalism inherent in the French conception of the alliance. As mediators, however, the French could not impose their will upon Amerindians; the success of the mediation process depended heavily upon the willingness of Amerindian participants to accept French mediation. In arbitrating disputes between Amerindian nations, Onontio exercised a limited

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<sup>18</sup>Following La Potherie, Gilles Havard has pointed to the Iroquois' use in 1695 of the term nephew to refer to New France's allies—specifically, the Huron and Abenaki. However, Havard states that these groups were also identified as the children of the French: "on ne peut donc rien conclure de sûr" (*La grande paix de Montréal*, 31 n. 21). After the peace of Montreal, the Iroquois referred to the French allies as their brothers, presumably because all, as children of Onontio, were siblings. See for example *Parolles des sauvages du Detroit hurons, outa8as et Miamis aux Iroquois Sonnantouans le 30e Juillet 1704*, C11A 22: 47.

<sup>19</sup>Quoted in Havard, *La Grande Paix de Montréal*, 167.

form of leadership in the alliance. His role recalled the ideal of the Amerindian headman whose influence was based on mediation and gift-giving, rather than on coercive force.<sup>20</sup>

Vaudreuil was fully prepared to pursue mediation, especially in order to dissuade the Iroquois from targeting the Laurentian colony and its western allies. When the Senecas sent word via Joncaire that a combined group of Miamis, Illinois, Mascoutens and Ouyatanons had killed or taken at least nine of their nation, Vaudreuil was quick to accept the responsibility of mediating:

vous m'avez fait plainte de vous estre laissée fraper sans vous deffendre, et de vous estre Contenté de m'en donner advis suivant les conventions de la paix, je ne m'enquerray [manquerais] pas de mon Costé a ce que je vous ay promis... je remedieray a ce mal le plus efficacement et le plus promptement quil me sera possible.<sup>21</sup>

This focus on mediation was significant diplomatically and historically, in that it committed the French to the further use of Native forms and protocols.

## 2.2 The council: an Amerindian form, an intercultural forum

Relations between Europeans and Amerindians in the colonial period were punctuated by frequent diplomatic encounters, that is, by formal meetings involving representatives who spoke for larger groups. These diplomatic events—as opposed to events of a military, commercial, or religious nature—are recognizable in the historical record for two reasons: first, because the French implicitly categorized them as such, employing terms such as *député*, *message*, *envoyer*, *conseil*, *assemblée*, etc.; and secondly, because these events were characterized by formal and deliberate encounters between Frenchmen and Amerindians. In the context of French-Amerindian relations, these encounters, repeated over and over, take on the character of a structure, according to

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<sup>20</sup>“The underlying premise of the [French-Amerindian] alliance—mediation as a source of influence—was essentially Algonquian.” White, *The Middle Ground*, 33 (quotation), 35-39.

<sup>21</sup>Parolles des Sonnot8ans... [et] Reponses de [Vaudreuil], 30 mai et 20 juin 1704, C11A 22: 54-54v. Mediation was Vaudreuil's preferred course because the alternative, as stipulated by the peace of Montreal—joining with the Iroquois to punish the Algonkian transgressors—was unthinkable.

Fernand Braudel's definition.<sup>22</sup> The recurring elements of this structure, which we shall call a council, are abundantly preserved in the documents created by French colonial officials between 1703 and 1725.

French council records highlight several facets of French-Amerindian relations during the colonial period. When interpreted in the light of ethnographic data on Amerindian diplomatic culture, they reveal both that councils were held according to Amerindian protocols, and that there were limits to the French appreciation of these same protocols. The diplomatic record thus underlines the fact of French dependency on alien cultural forms: in order to preserve stable relations with their Amerindian allies and neighbours, the French were obliged to observe rituals and forms not of their own making, and quite foreign to their own culture. As ethnologist M. Foster has noted, intercultural diplomacy in the colonial period challenges the assumption that acculturation was heavily one-sided, with Amerindians being influenced by Europeans rather than vice versa.<sup>23</sup> The literature on Amerindian culture suggests that the council was an unmistakable event, quite distinguishable from other encounters between French and Amerindians: indeed, the very formal aspects of the council that are under study here are also the elements which permit its identification as such. To call such events councils is not a case of misapplying a European rubric to a Native reality. This structure was a central institution in "diplomatic" relations between Amerindians and Europeans, and among Amerindians themselves.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>"[T]he more often [the event] is repeated the more likely it is to become a generality or rather a structure." *Civilization and Capitalism 15th-18th Century*, vol. 1: *The Structure of Everyday Life*, rev. ed. (London: Collins/Fontana, 1981), 29.

<sup>23</sup>Michael K. Foster, "On Who Spoke First at Iroquois-European Councils," in M. K. Foster, J. Campisi, and M. Mithun, ed. *Extending the Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquoian Studies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 183.

<sup>24</sup> Although its diplomatic significance is being emphasized here, it is important to remember that scholars have also approached the council as a trade ritual. Neither of these approaches can, however, afford to exclude the other wholly without ignoring the relationship between trade and politics in northeastern Amerindian cultures. The formal elements of historical Iroquois diplomacy are the subject of F. Jennings *et al.*, eds. *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985) [hereafter *HCID*]; Algonkian diplomatic forms are discussed in D. J. Blakeslee, "The Calumet Ceremony and the Origin of Fur Trade Rituals," *Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 7, 2 (1977): 78-88; and in A. Rotstein, "Trade and Politics: An Institutional

In saying that Amerindian diplomatic protocols dominated French-Amerindian relations, we are saying that Amerindians met the French in council much as they would other Amerindians. For the French, however, meeting Amerindians in council meant using forms that they would not generally use with other Europeans. Contemporary accounts by soldiers, missionaries and travelers emphasized the exotic aspects of Amerindian diplomacy—in particular, the manipulation of wampum and calumet; the rhetoric and rich metaphor of Amerindian speeches; the artful performances of orators; the lengthy and sober deliberations. All this seemed at variance with European diplomatic and political practice. The council itself—with its “republican” trappings and flavour of solemn democracy—was arguably an exotic form for Europeans of the age of absolutism, as the observation of an early eighteenth-century observer suggests:

Le gouvernement des sauvages est un gouvernement republicain. Ce sont les anciens qui reglent toutes les affaires et les jeunes gens qui ne sont que pour l'exécution.... Sur les plus petites choses ces anciens s'assemblent et en fumant raisonnent des affaires sans se mettre jamais en colere les uns contre les autres. Quoy qu'ils soient d'un sentiment contraire, ils se parlent toujours doucement et ne concluent rien qu'après une meure et longue deliberation.<sup>25</sup>

A decade later, the Jesuit Charlevoix recorded a similar impression:

Ce qui est certain, c'est que nos Sauvages négocient sans cesse, & qu'ils ont toujours quelque affaire sur le tapis. Ce sont des Traités à conclure, ou à renouveler, des ofres [*sic*] de service, des civilités réciproques, des alliances, qu'on ménage des invitations à la Guerre, des compliments sur la mort d'un Chef, ou d'une Personne considérable. Tout cela se fait avec une dignité, une attention, j'ose même dire, une capacité digne des affaires les plus importantes...<sup>26</sup>

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Approach,” *Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 3, 1 (1972): 1-28. See the latter for a discussion of the council as a fur trade ritual which evolved from Amerindian intertribal political institutions.

<sup>25</sup>Camille de Rochemonteix, ed. *Relations par lettres de l'Amérique septentrionale (années 1709 et 1710)* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1904), 82-83. Of the Iroquois, the writer remarked that they were “les sauvages les plus politiques de ce continent, ils ne résolvent rien sans une mure deliberation” (*ibid.*, 186). Although Rochemonteix attributed these letters to the Jesuit Antoine Silvy, the latter's authorship has been called into question. See Victor Tremblay, “Antoine Silvy,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 2: 607-609. It would seem that the real author was Antoine-Denis Raudot, *intendant adjoint* of New France (1705 - 1710).

<sup>26</sup>F.-X. de Charlevoix, *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle-France* 3 vols. (Paris: Nyon et P.-F. Giffard, 1744; reprint ed., Ottawa: Élysée, 1976), vol. 3: *Journal d'un voyage fait par ordre du roi*, lettre XVIII: 269-270.

Both impressions convey a sense of admiration and surprise, possibly grounded in racist assumptions about Amerindian “savagery”; indeed, Charlevoix referred pointedly to the contrast between the dignity of council proceedings (which he lauded) and the nudity and “ridiculous” appearance of the delegates (which he found unbecoming).<sup>27</sup> Yet there is nonetheless the recognition that Amerindians had well-developed political and diplomatic systems that differed considerably from the European norm, and thus warranted comment.

That these “exotic” forms came to characterize intercultural diplomacy in the colonial period underlines the status of the French as newcomers in a Native world. Amerindians had developed, in response to their own needs for peace, security, and exchange, diplomatic protocols for handling relations between nations, some of which had spiritual significance. Over the course of the seventeenth century, when the French moved beyond regions where they had already established diplomatic relations, they were greeted by Amerindians who adapted old diplomatic forms or adopted new ones in order establish ties with the newcomers. The visiting French were innovators as well, attempting to adapt recently acquired cultural knowledge to new situations. But the respective roles of host and petitioner explain why Amerindians generally took the initiative in defining the structures that would mark their formal relations with the visiting French.<sup>28</sup>

The experiences of Nicolas Perrot are instructive in this regard. Invited to Green Bay by the Potawatomi in 1668, he was greeted upon arrival with a calumet ceremony which, according to anthropologist James Clifton, the Potawatomi had adopted the year previous at Chequamegon Bay. Perrot went on to mediate a dispute between the

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<sup>27</sup>Charlevoix, *Histoire*, vol. 3: *Journal*, lettre XVII: 258.

<sup>28</sup>The French were hampered in any attempt to introduce European diplomatic forms by two considerations. First, the French state under Louis XIV, and indeed much of the rest of Europe, was only in the process of developing deliberate policies with regard to its proper diplomatic representation abroad, and in any event, in the minds of Europeans, *l'Amérique septentrionale* was so far beyond even the “diplomatic periphery” of Europe that no attention was paid to its diplomatic situation. Secondly, for Europeans, diplomatic relations were not established between nations, but between princes, or rulers of states (W. J. Roosen, *The Age of Louis XIV: The Rise of Modern Diplomacy* [Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman, 1976], 5, 9-11). Amerindian polities did not provide such monarchs. For French agents in America, it was no doubt preferable to use Native protocols than to struggle with the question of how to apply European diplomatic norms.

Potawatomi and their Menominee neighbours, who likewise presented him with a calumet. Perrot, however, appropriated an Iroquoian diplomatic form to propose an alliance: “Voilà un Colier de Porcelaine par lequel je vous lie à mon corps, qu’aprenez vous?” The French had learned Iroquoian political rhetoric during councils of the 1640s and 1650s, and were perhaps tutored by their allies, the Huron. Thus at La Baye in 1668, both Perrot and his Potawatomi and Menominee hosts were improvising on borrowed diplomatic forms. Both forms, however, were of Amerindian origin, and the one favoured by Perrot’s hosts—the calumet—predominated in future relations.<sup>29</sup>

### 2.3 The French council record

In the early eighteenth century, French-Amerindian diplomacy was largely a matter of managing relations among groups between whom diplomatic relations had already been established, rather than of creating new formal ties.<sup>30</sup> Since councils were often held at designated locales (the location of metaphorical council fires), a distinction may be made between councils held at Montreal and those held in the *pays d’en haut*. Forty-six of the former have been recorded in some detail, with some indication of the persons involved, as well as their words and actions. In addition, numerous councils took place outside the colony: of these, fifteen councils at Detroit, Onondaga, and La Baye have been recorded in some form.<sup>31</sup> Altogether, then, information concerning approximately sixty recorded

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<sup>29</sup>J. A. Clifton, *The Prairie People: Continuity and Change in Potawatomi Indian Culture 1665-1965* (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1977), 124; Claude Le Roy [Bacqueville de La Potherie], *Histoire de l’Amérique septentrionale*, 4 vols. (Paris: Nion, Didot, 1722), 2: 93 (quotation). See M. Druke, “Linking Arms: The Structure of Iroquois Intertribal Diplomacy,” in D. K. Richter and J. H. Merrell, eds. *Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbours in Indian North America* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 29-39, for the “imagery of interlinking parts” in Iroquois diplomacy.

<sup>30</sup>The French expansion westward at the end of the period only re-established ties with groups like the Dakota, who had first been contacted at the end of the seventeenth century.

<sup>31</sup>As with the case of councils at Montreal, it is difficult to estimate the ratio of recorded and unrecorded councils. Since commandants did not produce detailed annual reports like Vaudreuil’s, the exact schedule of diplomatic events is virtually impossible to reconstruct.

diplomatic events gives some insight into the nature of French-Amerindian diplomacy during Vaudreuil's term.

Besides revealing the frequency, location, and agents of diplomacy, these records also preserve the language of diplomacy. Although Amerindian speeches were interpreted and translated, written and recopied by French scribes, these documents constitute a unique record of Amerindian discourse from this period. Altogether there are fifty-two recorded councils from the period which may be considered to directly report Amerindian oration. Several record more than one orator. These documents are of varying reliability; some are in the form of council minutes—transcripts of speeches made at the time of a council—whereas others are dispatches containing summaries of Amerindian speeches written months after the actual speech event. Fifty individual Amerindian speeches have been retained from New France; two others come from the Illinois country after 1717, when the French considered it to fall under the jurisdiction of the government of Louisiana. Thus a total of fifty-two Amerindian speeches have been studied.

A typical French council record of the period was a written document that the French created to preserve the propositions and agreements reached at a council. Appended to the governor's fall dispatches, these documents were sent to the minister of Marine in France, and subsequently preserved in the *archives des colonies*. They informed metropolitan decision-makers of the state of affairs in New France and of Amerindian sentiments or positions; they also introduced metropolitan officials to the culture of Amerindian diplomacy. Such documents, titled "Paroles [of an orator or more commonly, of a nation]," and "Reponses du gouverneur general," were typically arranged in two columns, the left column giving the speeches of the Amerindian orator, and the right, Vaudreuil's corresponding answers. Frequently, and invariably with the Iroquois, each proposition and corresponding answer was associated with the gift that accompanied it.

The content of such documents indicates that they do, in fact, reflect council proceedings rather than private conversations, since frequent reference is made to other

delegates in attendance, and the protocol of gift exchange is quite rigourously observed.<sup>32</sup> From the French perspective, such records were important, as they could be used as evidence of Amerindian loyalties, most likely against other European powers. For example, Iroquois protestations of sovereignty could be used to undermine British claims that the Iroquois were British subjects.<sup>33</sup> No doubt such documents could also be used to give credence to the governor's own testimony. In this connection, it is possible that some elements of a council record were suppressed while others were distorted to some end. But while council records had important political purposes, they also had the simple administrative purpose of informing metropolitan decision-makers of French-Amerindian agreements, and preserving a permanent record of these agreements for colonial officials.

Like many historical records used to describe the relationship between Europeans and non-literate peoples, their value is determined largely by the anthropological depth that is brought to the analysis. Traditional histories of New France and of Native peoples have found only a limited interest in these "Paroles"; most have retained only fragments: declarations of loyalty or animosity, complaints about the price of goods, accounts of migrations, battles and alliances. They are almost never used for ethnological purposes, despite the fact that the Amerindian speeches contain evidence regarding subsistence patterns, cultural values, leadership, and conflict. Their value for this study lies in their record of council behaviour and diplomatic forms. The other important source is the official correspondence, which contains information on councils and related subjects, including the use of interpreters, the significance of rhetorical phrases, and the nature of intercultural diplomacy—as perceived by colonial officials. Unfortunately, Native records of diplomacy, such as wampum belts and calumets, have in many cases fallen silent after having been removed from the oral tradition that preserved their meaning. In any event,

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<sup>32</sup>In Iroquois diplomatic culture, the distinction is made between private conversations "in the bushes" and full councils. See "bushes" in the glossary in *HCID*, 116. Only proposals and agreements made in full council and validated by an exchange of wampum or other item were considered binding.

<sup>33</sup>Cornelius J. Jaenen, "French Sovereignty and Native Nationhood during the French Régime," *Native Studies Review* 2, 1 (1986): 96.

there are few extant wampum belts that can be traced reliably to the early eighteenth century.<sup>34</sup>

The French council record is dominated by councils held at Montreal. The presence of the governor or another high-ranking official, the availability of clerks to take notes, and the problem of losing documents in transit between a western post and the colony may explain this bias. But, as the words of an early eighteenth-century observer indicate, the town of Montreal had a special significance in intercultural diplomacy and commerce:

C'est en cette ville [Montreal] que se fait le plus grand commerce des sauvages, tant avec trois missions qui en sont proches qu'avec les sauvages des terres et des lacs qui y descendent pour traiter. Le gouverneur et le lieutenant general y passent la plus grande partie de l'été pour les affaires de ces sauvages.<sup>35</sup>

Montreal was a significant location since it was considered to be the location of a fire, that is, "a formally designated location for treaty councils."<sup>36</sup> It was there, in 1701, that the Five Nations, the Amerindian allies of Canada, and the French had metaphorically planted a great tree of peace, and it was therefore the natural place for Amerindians to seek French mediation in intertribal conflicts.<sup>37</sup> For the mainly Algonkian allies of the French, it was historically the site of intersocietal trade—the fur fairs of the seventeenth century. Finally,

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<sup>34</sup>The collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization (Hull, Canada) contains several Iroquois wampum belts on which source information is extremely limited. One belt (III-I-1333) allegedly dates back to the early eighteenth century, while others are merely said to be "very old" (III-I-929 and III-I-930) or "200 years old" when collected in 1908 (III-I-419). Since the French council records do not describe individual wampum belts, it is impossible to identify extant belts using such documentary sources. None of the calumets preserved in the same institution has been dated to the early eighteenth century.

Although it has thus proved difficult to incorporate Amerindian oral traditions and artifacts directly, this study is informed in large part by the study of these same sources by anthropologists.

<sup>35</sup>Rochemonteix, ed. *Relation par lettres*, 37.

<sup>36</sup>See "fire" in the glossary of *HCID*, 118; Foster, "On Who Spoke First," 183.

<sup>37</sup>Cataraqui (Fort Frontenac) was also the site of a tree of peace planted by Frontenac and the Five Nations, as the Onondaga orator Otreouti (Garangula or La Grande Gueule) reminded governor La Barre in 1684 at La Famine. It was apparently on this basis that the Onondaga demanded councils with the French on two separate occasions in 1708 and 1712 (see *Parolles des Deputés Donnontagués prononcées par garagonthié au fort de frontenac le dernier decembre 1708*, C11A 28: 227; *Vaudreuil au ministre*, 6 9bre 1712, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 165). Interestingly enough, the Garakontié who spoke at Fort Frontenac in 1708 had been with Otreouti at La Famine in 1684.

it was the seat of Onontio, the metaphorical father of his Amerindian allies and a central institution in French-Amerindians diplomacy.

For geographical reasons, Montreal was a natural site for such encounters. Situated at the confluence of the *grande rivière des outaouais* and the St. Lawrence, it was Canada's window on the west, whence canoes could leave for the upper country earlier in the year than Quebec, and where fall departures could be similarly delayed: the governor could thus react more swiftly to crises in the upper country from Montreal than from Quebec.<sup>38</sup> Although smaller than Quebec, it was nevertheless a town with several impressive stone edifices and public works (including stone fortifications after 1717) where the governor could muster a certain splendour and supply presents from the king's storehouse, or at times from local merchants.

It is not always clear where exactly councils were held at Montreal. Some incidental references indicate that the governor held some at his residence in that town, the Chateau Vaudreuil.<sup>39</sup> Lodgings for the ambassadors were also required; Amerindian diplomatic protocol called for a cabin to be set aside for visiting diplomats, and food prepared for them.<sup>40</sup> Onondaga (and perhaps all Iroquois) delegations stayed at Charles Le Moyne de Longueuil's Montreal residence; it is not clear where other nations were housed.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Montreal was as well easily accessible from Mohawk country via the Lake Champlain corridor (see plate 42 of R. Cole Harris, ed. *Historical Atlas of Canada*, vol. 1: *The Beginning to 1800* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987]). However, given the rarity of Mohawk embassies to Montreal, it was not a key route for French-Amerindian diplomacy in this period. The western Iroquois apparently traveled by Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence to reach Montreal. For the Amerindians at Kahnawake and other missions near Montreal, the route was important for trade as well as diplomacy.

<sup>39</sup>Vaudreuil au conseil, 20 8bre 1722, C11A 44: 359v; Mme Vaudreuil à Maurepas, 29 8bre 1724, C11A (transcriptions) 46: 108. This gubernatorial mansion "dwarfed" the residence of the governor of Montreal, Claude de Ramezay (Zoltvany, *Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil*, 176). However, only Ramezay's house still stands today; Vaudreuil's stood a few blocks away, at the corner of rue St-Paul and rue St-Charles (near the modern Place Jacques-Cartier).

<sup>40</sup>J.-F. Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times* [1724], trans. and ed. W. N. Fenton and E. C. Moore, 2 vols. (Toronto: Champlain Society), 2: 174.

<sup>41</sup>The summer councils of 1701 at Montreal involved over thirteen hundred Amerindian delegates; La Potherie reported that they were advised by the French to bring

In addition to providing a locale for the council and lodgings for the delegates, Vaudreuil was obliged by Amerindian protocol to offer goods and provisions for the return journey of Amerindian diplomats. The giving of such presents was often incorporated into the council itself—invariably at the very end, and was in addition to any goods presented to validate proposals or answers. The recorded speeches mention presents of blankets, clothing, powder, ammunition, food, and tobacco. The significance of these gifts was partly metaphorical: tobacco was given in order that the recipients might smoke peacefully on their mats (i.e., not go to war). Alternatively, the ritual obligation to give could be turned to pragmatic purposes, as when blankets were given to Onondaga orators who had arrived late in the year.<sup>42</sup> The records of this period do not permit a detailed assessment of the value of particular gifts by the French, nor their value to the Amerindian recipients. It is worth noting, however, that these parting gifts mirrored the inventory of trade goods that were in demand by Amerindians in the *pays d'en haut*.<sup>43</sup>

Most Montreal councils were held in the summer and early fall, usually during the months of July, August, and September. This window of diplomatic activity at Montreal reflected both the length of time required to travel to Montreal from the Great Lakes as well as the annual round of diplomatic activity in the *pays d'en haut*. Montreal was the usual point of departure for Vaudreuil's agents, who set out for western sites in the spring.

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"quantité de branches d'arbres pour les mettre à l'abri du Soleil." Their shelters were constructed between the town and the river on land used for the fur trade (Havard, *La grand paix de Montréal de 1701*, 141). This was presumably the case in 1711 when approximately 800 Amerindian delegates came to Montreal for councils.

<sup>42</sup>Reponces de monsieur le marquis de Vaudreuil aux quatre nations iroquoises du 25 aoust 1706, C11A 24: 253; Parolles de la grande terre Chef Onontagué a Monsieur le Gouverneur General du 18e octobre 1704, C11A 22: 52v.

<sup>43</sup>By value (in French monetary terms), textiles, arms and ammunition, and tobacco made up the bulk of trade goods. White, *The Middle Ground*, 138. Following a council at Detroit in 1717, the gifts given "pour donner moyen aux chefs Miamis et a leurs gens de subsister dans leur route sen retournant a leurs villages"—powder, lead and tobacco—was valued at 46 *livres*, or approximately one fifteenth the value of goods distributed during the council proper. The French hosts paid a similar sum to repair the canoes of the visiting ambassadors. This suggests that these parting gifts were of far less importance than the gifts exchanged in council. See *Estat de la depense qui a esté faite pour accomoder l'affaire des Outa8as du Saguanan qui avoient tuez des Miamis*, Detroit, 15 7bre 1717, C11A 39: 30-31.

Travel times no doubt varied widely, but posts like Detroit and Michilimakinac could not easily be reached in less than a month. French agents attended councils with Amerindians and issued invitations to councils at Montreal; at the same time, Amerindians conducted their own diplomacy with neighbours and allies, and participated in summer warfare. The results of this midsummer activity sent delegations of Amerindians to Montreal, sometimes accompanied by a French officer. Thus a successful French envoy could expect to find himself at Montreal again in August.<sup>44</sup> Following a council with Onontio, Amerindians were then faced with the prospect of a return voyage during uncertain fall weather. There are several references in the council records to the necessity of an imminent departure due to advancing cold.<sup>45</sup> As well, Amerindians were likely anxious to return to their villages in order to undertake autumn and winter subsistence activities such as fishing and hunting, or to carry out autumn raids.<sup>46</sup> The results of a council at Montreal were awaited back in the

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<sup>44</sup>In the spring of 1710, d'Argenteuil was sent to Michilimakinac to mediate between the Potawatomi and the Saulteur; he was back in Montreal on the 29th of July with delegations of Amerindians from Michilimakinac. Vaudreuil au ministre, 3 9bre 1710, *RAPQ* (1946-47): 397. Louvigny's 1717 voyage to Michilimakinac was similarly fortunate: "[il] ne fut que trente deux jours a se rendre a Missilimakina, y etant arrivé le 29e de Juin, nonobstant les grandes difficultés qu'il a eu a Surmonter dans sa Route, les Eaux etant extrêmement hautes et rapides a cause de la prodigieuse quantité de neige qu'il y a eu pendant l'hyver dernier en ce païs, son voyage a été prompt; Car il etoit de retour a Montreal le 21e d'août" (Vaudreuil au ministre, 12 octobre 1717, C11A 38: 103v).

<sup>45</sup>Paroles du chef nommé Teganissorens... le 24e 8bre 1703, C11A 21: 73; Parolles de Miscoaky... le 26 Septembre 1706, C11A 24: 243-243v; Parolles de Monsieur Le gouverneur general aux Sauvages... [1711], C11A 31: 81. The November coldness also provided the rationale for a Huron request for brandy (Parolles des sauvages hurons... le 7e novembre 1713, C11A 34: 67v). Note that the alleged fortifying quality of alcohol was also the rationale put forward by Vaudreuil to justify the policy of allowing voyageurs to carry personal supplies of brandy into the upper country. Vaudreuil et Bégon au conseil, 26 8bre 1719, C11A 40: 55v-56. The Odawa Koutaouliboé had requested brandy for the same purpose in 1708. Parolles des outtaois de michilimakina... le 23e juillet 178, C11A 28: 210v.

<sup>46</sup>See plate 34 of the *Historical Atlas of Canada*, vol. 1: *From the Beginning to 1800*, for a graphic representation of northeast Native economies in the seventeenth century. In the early eighteenth century Algonkians of the Great Lakes, such as the Potawatomi at Detroit, continued to disperse during the winter to hunt, according to Sabrevois' 1718 memoir: "Quand cette nation vont en chasse quy est tous les automnes [ils] porte[nt] leur apaquois avec [eux] pour ce cabanner tous les soirs, tous le Monde y vat hommes, famme et enfans et passe liver dans les bois et le printems revienne." By contrast, many Huron remained on guard in their fort at Detroit during the winter hunting season. *Memoire sur les sauvages du Canada* [1718], C11A (transcriptions) 39: 374-375. Both nations cultivated crops at Detroit during spring and summer.

villages and might influence these activities. For these reasons, most Amerindian delegations could stay at Montreal no later than early September. The Five Nations provide something of an exception to this rule. By virtue of their relative proximity to the colony, and because winter was not marked by the dispersal of entire village populations, the Iroquois had a larger window of opportunity in which to conduct business with the French: their delegates appeared at Montreal between March and October, and occasionally in the winter months. But overall, Onontio's councils with Amerindians were primarily summer affairs.

The rhythm of the colonial administration further discouraged diplomatic activities outside of this period. Come October, Onontio was caught up in a flurry of activity with the arrival of the *vaisseau du Roy* carrying ministerial dispatches, and with the preparation of his own dispatches for the minister, all of which required his presence at Quebec. Amerindian delegations arriving late in the year were obliged either to continue their journey to Quebec—which only further delayed the return to their villages—or to pronounce their words at Montreal and have them taken to Quebec in written form.<sup>47</sup> And on at least one occasion, Vaudreuil terminated council proceedings at Quebec with the comment that he was hard pressed to finish his dispatches.<sup>48</sup>

Yet Onontio could ill afford to ignore Amerindian embassies, regardless of the inconvenience of the season. Longueuil underlined this fact to his metropolitan superiors, and commented revealingly upon the etiquette which Europeans were obliged to observe in relations with Amerindians:

Il est descendu a Montreal dans le mois dernier [September 1725] 60 deputés des cinq villages Iroquois pour pleurer suivant leur usage la mort de M. de Ramezay et de Madame de Longueuil, ils y sont resté un mois, ils y reviendront encore sur la mort de M. de Vaudreuil aussy bien que tous les Sauvages domiciliés et autres ce

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<sup>47</sup>For an example of the former, see Parrolles de Miscouaky... le 26 Septembre 1706, C11A 24: 243v; for the latter, Paroles du chef nommé Teganissorens... 13 24e 8bre 1703, C11A 21: 72-73.

<sup>48</sup>Reponses de Monsieur le Gouverneur general aux hurons descendus Du Detroit le 7e novembre 1713, C11A 34: 90v.

qui causera un depense considerable[;] on ne pourroit cependant l'éviter sans les mecontenter et sans s'exposer a se broüiller avec Eux.<sup>49</sup>

Amerindians priorities, and to a lesser extent, those of the French, dictated the schedule of Montreal councils.

#### 2.4 Council participants

The council records, organized as proposals and responses, imply a bipartite division of council participants. Iroquoianist W. N. Fenton has linked this aspect of the intercultural council to the division of Iroquois communities and tribes into moieties, or halves, for ceremonial purposes. At condolence councils, which are understood by Fenton to have provided the basic paradigm for historic English- and French-Iroquois councils, the participants were divided into the Clearminded and the Mourners. At intercultural councils, the same roles were filled, not by moieties within the same ethnic or residential group, but by Europeans and Amerindians who faced each other across the council fire.<sup>50</sup> On occasion the ethnic divisions were not so clear. When more than one Amerindian group was present, the proceedings became more complex; in other cases, Amerindians might speak with the French in council with another Amerindian embassy, or else Amerindians might convey Onontio's message to another nation, serving temporarily as French diplomatic agents.

Thus, while councils involving the French and Amerindians were by definition intercultural, they did not always reflect clear ethnic divisions. A better means of conceptualizing the organization of council participants is found in ethnologist Michael Foster's work on Iroquois diplomacy, which builds on Fenton's analysis of the condolence council. According to Foster, there are two sets of paired roles in an ideal council. The first pair is that of host and visitor; the second, petitioner and respondent. Foster suggests that different criteria determine these roles. The host is ideally the one to receive the visitor

<sup>49</sup>Longueuil et Bégon au conseil, 31 8bre 1725, C11A 47: 133-133v.

<sup>50</sup>W. N. Fenton, "Structure, Continuity and Change," in *HCID*, 10, 18-19. See also Foster, "On Who Spoke First," 183.

to an established council fire; the ceremonial welcome “at the wood’s edge” is thus the identifying characteristic of the host. The petitioner is the one who sets the council agenda by issuing invitations and speaking first—they “kindle the fire.” It is important to note that the Iroquois conception of council protocol involves several stages, including a lengthy invitation phase during which messengers deliver invitation strings (of wampum) to a foreign council fire. Thus, while the roles of petitioner and respondent were decided early, during the invitation phase, the roles of host and visitor might switch back and forth as embassies traveled back and forth between nations.<sup>51</sup>

Algonkian nations organized councils in a similar fashion in the early eighteenth century. It must be remembered that the Amerindian nations of the northeast conducted diplomacy quite independently of the French, and we must presume they possessed extensive experience of the diplomatic protocols of their allies and enemies. French-Algonkian diplomacy, as it appears in the eighteenth century council record, may well have been conditioned by the historical experiences of both these peoples with the Huron and the Five Nations in the seventeenth century, through a process by which rituals alien to both peoples contributed to the creation of new but authentic diplomatic protocols.<sup>52</sup> While Algonkian diplomacy differed in some respects from that of Iroquoian groups, participation at intercultural councils was similarly organized. The roles of host and visitor were respected, and generally corresponded to those of respondent and petitioner respectively. Thus, Algonkians spoke first when meeting Onontio at Montreal, whereas the French, represented by an Amerindian orator, spoke first during a council at a Fox village in 1717.<sup>53</sup> The French generally acted as hosts and respondents when councils were held at

<sup>51</sup>Foster, “On Who Spoke First,” 192-202.

<sup>52</sup>This is a speculative application of R. White’s notion of a “cultural fiction”; that is, a new ritual or ceremony that emerges from the often crude attempts of two groups to manipulate the other’s cultural forms. *The Middle Ground*, 55-56, 80-82, 87, 90, 93.

<sup>53</sup>Louvigny’s report of the council with the Fox is in Louvigny au comte de Toulouse, 18bre 1717, C11A (transcriptions) 37: 388-389. It is a rare source that provides information on diplomacy outside of French posts or settlements. Alphonse de Tonty’s report of a hastily-convened council with some Odawa and Potawatomi in the same year suggests that the French were, again, both visitors and petitioners. Vaudreuil au ministre, 12 octobre 1717, C11A 38: 109v-111v.

their posts in the upper country. There is, however, an indication that these roles could be separated. Vaudreuil's account of a council at Detroit in 1717 reveals the commandant's role as host and *petitioner*. Having invited Miami delegates to Detroit to cover their dead, killed by Odawa from Saginaw Bay, and to present them with the guilty parties (an important consideration in terms of French justice), Alphonse de Tonty and his Odawa, Potawatomi, and Huron allies addressed the Miami chiefs first.<sup>54</sup>

Students of Iroquois diplomacy have noted that English council records tend to pass over the details of the opening phases of a council, and dwell instead on the last phase, where substantive proposals were made and agreements, or treaties, reached.<sup>55</sup> The same is true of the French sources of the early eighteenth century. French council records invariably omit the invitation phase entirely.<sup>56</sup> The majority of these records put Amerindians in the role of visitor/petitioner, and the French in the role of host/respondent, even when Amerindians were invited to Montreal, and thus presumably might have acted as visiting respondents. There are important exceptions: two records of councils at Onondaga involving Longueuil in 1711 and 1725 indicate that the French agent is in the position of visitor/petitioner, underlining his presence at a foreign council fire. And in 1711, when Vaudreuil hosted approximately 500 Amerindian allies at Montreal, the council record preserved only Onontio's harangues—presumably because, as petitioner, Vaudreuil spoke first. The responses of his allies were not recorded.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Vaudreuil au conseil, 30 8bre 1718, C11A 39: 152-155.

<sup>55</sup>Mary Druke, "Iroquois Treaties," in *HCID*, 87-88; Michael K. Foster, "Another Look at the Function of Wampum," in *ibid.*, 103.

<sup>56</sup>The "prospective" function of wampum is significant here; that is, the use of wampum "as a device for organizing future events." The invitation strings and answering strings provided a physical and mnemonic link between the opening phases of a council, where the participants' roles, the agenda, and the place and time were determined, and the business phase (which might occur much later), where substantive proposals were discussed. Foster, "The Function of Wampum," in *HCID*, 104-108. Although they used wampum, the French placed greater reliance on the written word—their minutes of the "business phase". Compared to such written records, wampum displayed a superior ability to organize and unify events separated in time and place but linked in purpose.

<sup>57</sup>Meeting of the Commissioner for Indian Affairs on the propositions of the French at Onondaga, 7 May 1711, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York* 3: 243-244 in IIDH reel 7; Discours de M. de Longueuil [et] Repponses des [Iroquois]

For the French, the role of respondent (and host) must have seemed preferable to that of petitioner. Did fathers petition their children? Did kings answer to their subjects? The privilege of speaking last would indeed seem to confer a certain authority on the respondent. Yet this power was largely illusory. Because council protocol required that the respondent provide satisfactory answers to each of the petitioner's proposals before introducing new business, the petitioner had the advantage of setting the council's agenda. Moreover, the respondent could ill afford to treat the petitions lightly, since to accept the gift accompanying the proposal signified acquiescence and carried the reciprocal obligation to give, such an exchange being the Amerindian equivalent of a signed treaty.<sup>58</sup>

Aside from the collective roles of visitor and host, petitioner and respondent, councils were characterized by two important individual roles: speaker and interpreter. The former was the delegate who publicly articulated the proposals or responses of one side, and was a central figure in the council. Amerindian speakers were not plenipotentiaries or ambassadors in the European sense; rather, they served as conduits for the messages sent by village and tribal councils. Lafitau noted that speakers were carefully briefed as to the messages they were to deliver: "they are given instructions by their wampum belts or with little sticks of different designs which have different meanings, so that, on the one hand, they will forget nothing and, on the other, they will not exceed their orders."<sup>59</sup> Anthropologist James Clifton has outlined the role and qualities of the speaker in Potawatomi society:

At least one of the elders, at one time or another, might take the role the French and English called "speaker." The Potawatomi phrasing for this—"man who impersonates"—is better, because it specifically indicates what they had in mind. The kiktowenene was a mature man selected on the basis of two qualities. One of these consisted of a very high order of skill on public oratory, which the French quite clearly appreciated. But the second was equally important to the Potawatomi.

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[1725], C11A 47: 200-204v; Parolles de Mr le gouverneur general aux Sauvages descendus d'en hault [1711], C11A 31: 81-87v.

<sup>58</sup>As M. Foster has pointed out, the petitioner had the privilege, not only of setting the agenda, but of setting the form of the respondent's replies. Foster, "On Who Spoke First," 184-185. For the importance of the process of exchange in diplomacy, see Druke, "Iroquois Treaties," in *HCID*, 88-89.

<sup>59</sup>Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians*, 2: 173.

The man who was kiktowenene had also to be unusually capable in listening to the joint deliberations of everyone, and skilled enough to state in public a position which represented the consensus of all, inoffensive to the sentiments of anyone. That is, he impersonated others by stating their views for them. The kiktowenene was always prominent at tribal and intertribal councils, and often enough the French, English or Americans confused him with a chief. But he was no chief—he was a master spokesman.<sup>60</sup>

In Iroquois society, speakers played similar roles.<sup>61</sup> At intercultural councils, then, Amerindian groups were represented by male speakers who spoke, not as chiefs, but as representatives of absent decision makers. More importantly, they ideally articulated a consensus opinion.

French council records illustrate the workings of this system. Frequently, the speaker began his oration with a statement explaining the source of his message, or indicating that he spoke for all present. This was not an affirmation of personal authority, but a statement of limited representation: the speaker implicitly reminded the French of the existence of factions and of the absence of central authority in Amerindian societies. Many of the Amerindian groups for which the French employed collective designations—"Iroquois", "Outaouais"—were composed of distinct nations, each capable of sending its own speaker; yet this is only occasionally reflected in French council records.<sup>62</sup>

Most French council records refer to speakers as chiefs (*chefs*), a term to which no scientific meaning can be attached. No doubt the French were anxious to assure themselves that they were indeed speaking to leading individuals during councils. When a group of Odawa and Potawatomi were intercepted on their way to Albany and sent instead

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<sup>60</sup>Clifton, *The Prairie People*, 58.

<sup>61</sup>Foster, "On Who Spoke First," 183. W. Fenton has pointed out that a third essential quality of the speaker was "retentive memory in a society in which most men and women were walking archives." "Structure, Continuity and Change," in *HCID*, 13.

<sup>62</sup>In the case of the Iroquois, the French tended to distinguish between the Five Nations; in the case of the Odawa, the most frequent distinction was by locale—Michilimakinac, Detroit, Saginaw, etc. One of the few councils that recognizes finer ethnic distinctions suggests an explanation for the European tendency to generalize: at Montreal in 1710, the Kiskakon speaker K8ta8lib8a spoke first in the name of his own nation, but then effectively represented the three other Odawa groups present. The co-opting of talented orators by other groups could easily create the impression that civil authority was more centralized than it actually was. *Parolles des Sauvages de Michilimakinac et autres...* le 29e juillet 1710, C11A 31: 114-120v.

to Montreal to see Onontio, the speakers for both nations prefaced their speeches with indications that they were neither important leaders nor accustomed speakers: "Que pourrais je vous dire a present," said Shamg8eschi, "nous n'avons plus de chef parmi nous, tous ceux qui avoient de l'esprit sont morts." The Potawatomi speaker Otchik was similarly forthright about his lack of authority to speak for his nation: "Mon Pere Je vous prie de m'Ecouter, je suis un homme de neant et incapable de porter des paroles."<sup>63</sup> On other occasions, the French preferred to cast doubt on the speaker's legitimacy as a representative of his nation.<sup>64</sup> Generally, however, both Amerindians and the French understood speakers to legitimately represent politically significant groups of people.

A striking example of the speaker's solemn duty to speak with the voice of his sender arose in 1717, when Louvigny returned to the upper country to remind the Fox of their treaty obligations of the year previous. From Michilimakinac, Louvigny sent a delegation to the Fox village near La Baye with two French interpreters "pour estre tant la nuit que le jour l'un ou l'autre temoin de ce que se diroit dans les conseils."<sup>65</sup> The speaker for the French delegation, however, was not a Frenchman, but Okima8asen, a one-eyed Fox hostage who was accompanied by his wife and child. Okima8asen and his family were among several hostages kept at Montreal over the winter of 1716 - 1717. They were, moreover, among the lucky survivors of a smallpox epidemic that swept through the colony that winter, costing Okima8asen an eye and carrying off two or three of the principal Fox hostages—including the war chief Pemoussa, "un homme d'un bon esprit,"

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<sup>63</sup>Paroles des Outa8as du Saguinan et des poute8atamis... le 24e Juin 1717..., C11A 38: 172, 174.

<sup>64</sup>In 1706, Vaudreuil said to the Odawa Miscouaky, "Je ne puis pas te repondre par ce qu'il ne me parroise [sic] pas que tu Sois Envoyé par toutes les Nations comme tu dis, mais seulement par ton Frere jean le Blanc pour pressentir ma pensée." Miscouaky had said as much anyway, although at the end of his speech had also claimed to be speaking for several Odawa and Ojibway nations. Parolles de Miscouaky... le 26 Septembre 1706 [et] Reponces..., C11A 24: 244-244v, 250, 255.

<sup>65</sup>Neither of these interpreters, Maurice Ménard and one of the Réaume brothers, were fluent in the Fox tongue; Ménard was an interpreter of Odawa. They may well have been capable of understanding proceedings, but were apparently incapable of speaking in council. As Sabrevois wrote in his memoir of 1718, "un interprete des outaouacs ne pourroit servir aux renards." *Memoire sur les sauvages du Canada* [1718], C11A (transcriptions) 39: 381.

upon whom Vaudreuil had placed his hopes for a peaceful diplomatic solution. Okima8asen might have been excused for harbouring a grudge against the French, for—as Vaudreuil complained with unconscious irony—“ces Sauvages... sont assez sujets a s’imaginer que, quand il meurt de leurs gens parmi nous, c’est nous qui les donnons la maladie.”<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, Okima8asen, according to French reports, played the role of speaker to the hilt, representing the French point of view favourably in council:

Après avoir fait cesser les pleurs qui ont coutume de se repandre dans de pareilles nouvelles [la mort des otages], [les Renards] écouterent l’otage [Okima8asen] que Mr de Vaudreuil leur envoyait qui parlait tres avantageusement et conformement a ce qu’il luy avoit été dit et a la verité.<sup>67</sup>

Vaudreuil’s own report to the minister—no doubt based on Louvigny’s testimony—emphasized further the extent to which Okima8asen, as speaker, seemed to embrace the interests of the French:

[Okima8asen] leur temoigna Sa surprise de ne les avoir pas trouves en chemin d’aller satisfaire a la parole qu’ils avoient donnée. Ingrats que vous êtes, ajoutatil, Vous ne Vous êtes guere Souvenus de la grace que Notre Pere vous a fait en vous donnant la vie. Vous me couvrez de honte aujourd’hui, parce que vous me faites mentir[;] qu’irai-je faire la bas, puisque Je ne vois rien de ce que Vous avez promis.<sup>68</sup>

It is highly improbable that Okima8asen was truly surprised that his people had failed to appear at Montreal that year; both colonial administrators and Amerindians identified the threat of smallpox as the major factor which kept Amerindians from councils at Montreal in the summer of 1717.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, the claim that Louvigny, after besieging the fortified

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<sup>66</sup>For Okima8asen’s eye, see Louvigny au comte de Toulouse, 1 8bre 1717, C11A (transcriptions) 37: 388; Vaudreuil au ministre, 12 octobre 1717, C11A 38: 104v (quotation).

<sup>67</sup>Louvigny au comte de Toulouse, 1 8bre 1717, C11A (transcriptions) 37: 390.

<sup>68</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 12 8bre 1717, C11A 38: 105v-106.

<sup>69</sup>Both Vaudreuil and Louvigny ridiculed Amerindian wariness of smallpox and the tendency to blame outbreaks on the French. For threat of smallpox, see Vaudreuil au conseil, 12 8bre 1717, C11A 38: 104; Louvigny au conseil, 21 7bre 1717, C11A 38: 196v-197; Vaudreuil au conseil, 30 8bre 1718, C11A 39: 145; Paroles des Outa8as du Saguinan et des poute8atamis... le 24e Juin 1717, C11A 38: 173v. For an analysis of Amerindian reactions to smallpox outbreaks in the colony at a later period, see D. Peter MacLeod, “Microbes and Muskets: Smallpox and the Participation of the Amerindian Allies of New France in the Seven Years’ War,” *Ethnohistory* 39, 1 (Winter 1992): 42-64. Smallpox was not endemic in North America until after the colonial period; as a result, every new epidemic was the consequence of ongoing contact with the Atlantic world of the

Fox village in 1716, had granted the Fox clemency—"given them life"—represented the French perspective only: the short siege of 1716 seems to have done little to subdue the Fox, who maintained years later that they were capable of evacuating their fort at will.<sup>70</sup> Okima8asen's recorded behaviour at this council can best be explained by a speaker's obligation to represent the interests of the decision-maker for whom he spoke—in this case, Onontio.

When in council, the French generally spoke for themselves, with the senior officer—the local decision-maker, according to French theory—speaking. As leaders, French speakers consistently used the first person singular to express their sentiments and intentions. This reflected their ability to impose decisions on their subordinates. The French-language record of Amerindian speakers, even those that are chiefs, reveals the almost uniform use of the first person *plural*, reflecting the political process by which an individual speaker came to articulate a consensus decision of many others. In a council with the Odawa at Montreal in 1705, the Iroquois speaker acknowledged the pledge of their Odawa "brothers" to replace Iroquois casualties with slaves, adding that their words would be repeated to the elders of the Five Nations, "Car quoy que Nous Soyons des Envoyéz, Nous ne sommes pas des deputéz."<sup>71</sup> Lacking the original words of the Iroquois speaker, the precise significance of this distinction remains elusive, but the broad meaning of the French rendering seems clear: the speaker and his fellow delegates were not decision-makers.

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Europeans. A. W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 283.

<sup>70</sup>Louvigny's two-day siege of the Fox village was followed by peace negotiations, the terms of which the French claimed to have dictated. Nevertheless, the Fox resumed raids on the French and their allies in the Illinois country. Clearly, the Fox did not feel threatened by the display of Canadian force in 1716. Vaudreuil au conseil, 30 8bre 1716, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 329. See also Joseph Peyser, "The Fate of the Fox Survivors," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 73, 2 (Winter 1989-90): 85-87. For Fox perspective on the siege of 1716, see Parolles des Renards dans un Conseil... le 6 Septembre 1722, C11A 44: 441v.

<sup>71</sup>Parolles des outaouais aux Iroquois de 23e aoust 1705 [et] Reponces des Iroquois, C11A 22: 255.

Although the French commandants, and Onontio in particular, spoke as leaders, their role in council approached that of the Amerindian speaker. Post commandants were, in a sense, speakers for Onontio. One of the ways in which Amerindians described such commandants was as “un chef françois qui explique [la] parole [d’Onontio] dans les villages.”<sup>72</sup> The French communication network in the *pays d’en haut*—of which Amerindians were often an integral component—channeled the written dispatches of the governor to the scattered posts, where commandants transformed their contents into council oratory. Thus did the governor’s orders become the *paroles d’Onontio*. F.-X. de Charlevoix observed a council at Detroit in 1721 at which Alphonse de Tonty communicated Vaudreuil’s newly-arrived “orders” to the Amerindians of Detroit. The latter, however, found the *parole* of their father somewhat disappointing; Charlevoix recorded his surprise at the Huron orator’s reply, which included “certaines choses, qui ne devoient pas plaire au Commandant.”<sup>73</sup> Since the commandants lacked the means to coerce the Amerindians residing near their posts, their authority in council was limited to the ability of a speaker to sway his listeners. Admittedly, this influence was potentially great, and oratory is deservedly recognized as a form of leadership in Amerindian societies. But it was this form of limited leadership to which French commandants were obliged to conform during councils with Amerindians.

Speakers generally delivered their speeches in their own languages, and thus interpreters were a practical necessity during most French-Amerindian councils. But interpreters were also a part of Amerindian council protocol, for ideally, every statement had to be translated into the language of each group present, even if the members of that group were capable of understanding the proceedings without translation.<sup>74</sup> As

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<sup>72</sup>Paroles de Silamek chef Poutouatamy... du 4e aoust 1705, C11A 22: 262v;

<sup>73</sup>Charlevoix, *Histoire*, vol. 3: *Journal*, lettre XVII: 259. No doubt the displeasing elements of the Huron oration included the threat of going to Albany to trade, as reported by the governor. Vaudreuil et Bégon au conseil, 8 8bre 1721, C11A 43: 13v-14.

<sup>74</sup>Nancy L. Hagedorn, “‘A Friend to Go Between Them’: The Interpreter as Cultural Broker during Anglo-Iroquois Councils” *Ethnohistory* 35, 1 (Winter 1988): 63-64.

Vaudreuil's correspondence with the minister suggests, the prescribed roles of speaker and interpreter made intercultural councils very public affairs:

Il [Vaudreuil] assure cependant quil ne fera rien de honteux pour la gloire de la nation et qu'il ny a ny bassesse ny mollesse dans toute la conduite quil tient pour le service de Sa M[ajesté]te puisqu'il parle aux Sauvages qui luy sont envoyez par les differentes nations, en presence de tout le monde, et par la voix des Interpretes....

Vaudreuil even assured the minister that the public nature of councils and the mediation of interpreters guaranteed of the truthfulness of the proceedings:

C'est que je parle devant le monde j'ay plusieurs interpretes, et je ne sçay point alterer la verité, n'y faire des parolles propres a mon sujet, afin de vous en imposer.<sup>75</sup>

On a more subtle level, interpreters were public mediators of culture as well as of language. French records of council proceedings are generally limited to the speeches of Amerindian orators and Onontio's reply. Direct evidence regarding the presence and function of interpreters on these occasions is exceedingly rare. However, English sources concerning Anglo-Amerindian councils illustrate the complex role of the council interpreter. He or she had to "adapt disparate speech patterns and forms to rough equivalency;" act as speaker for one or both sides; observe the high standards of fluency and eloquence expected by Amerindians; correctly manipulate wampum (and calumet, if need be); advise, consult, and negotiate during the private deliberations which inevitably accompanied public sessions; and generally steer the council smoothly, avoiding jarring misunderstandings if at all possible. In order to achieve this last end, interpreters wielded the discretionary power to subtly modify the tone or content of a speech. One well-known cultural broker, Sir William Johnson (who was not himself an interpreter), once explained to his superior the need to "soften" Amerindian speeches in translation: "[their meanings] might be liable to misconstruction unless due allowance be made for them as Savages who have the most extravagant notions of Freedom, property, and independence."<sup>76</sup> Here, the European

<sup>75</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 28 avril, 30 octobre, 1 et 4 novembre 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 107; Vaudreuil au ministre, 4 9bre 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 160.

<sup>76</sup>William Johnson to Lord Hillsborough [1757], quoted in Hagedorn, "'A Friend To Go Between Them,'" 65; see 63-70 for the author's characterization of the interpreter's role in intercultural councils. Michael Foster has pointed out that "the Iroquois distinguish

interpreter sought to downplay disturbing elements of a alien mentality, in order to avoid challenging the cultural assumptions of his fellow Englishmen. In all likelihood, the reverse occurred when interpreters were obliged to translate European speeches articulating pretensions of sovereignty and authority over Amerindians.

Such comprehensive cultural mediation by interpreters at French-Amerindians councils was probably uncommon during Vaudreuil's term as governor. There is no evidence of French interpreters acting as speakers, and a significant minority of French officers had considerable experience with Amerindian diplomatic protocol: if they could not forego the services of a translator, they could at least perform well as speakers. Several officers were even fluent in Amerindian languages. As Vaudreuil remarked of La Fresnière when the latter took command of Fort Frontenac: "Le Sieur de la fresniere hertel lieutenant reformé... entend fort bien l'iroquois, et l'alkonkin [*sic*] et mesme l'abenaky, c'est un avantage pour un commandant que de n'estre pas exposé souvent aux beveties que fait un interprete...."<sup>77</sup> The linguistic competence of the interpreter might not extend to the mastery of council oratory. Charlevoix's descriptive account of a council at Fort Pontchartrain (Detroit) in 1721 gave little credit to the anonymous interpreter who translated the responses to French proposals:

[L]'Orateur Huron répondit au nom des trois villages [Hurons, Odawas, Potawatomis]. Il ne fit point d'Exorde, & alla droit au fait. Il parla longtems, & posément, s'arrêtant à chaque Article, pour donner moyen à l'Interprete, d'expliquer en François, ce qu'il venoit de dire en sa Langue.

Son air, le son de sa voix, & son action, quoiqu'il ne fit aucun geste, me parurent avoir quelque chose de noble & d'imposant, & il falloit que ce qu'il disoit, fût bien éloquent, puisque dépouillé dans la bouche de l'Interprete, qui étoit un Homme ordinaire, de tous les ornemens du Langage, nous en fûmes tous charmés [...] Une autre preuve, que les beautés de son Discours ne venoient point de l'Interprete, c'est que jamais cet Homme n'eût osé prendre sur soi, tout ce qu'il nous dit.<sup>78</sup>

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'interpreter' [he puts up the word(s)] from 'translator' (... he changes the words).... The interpreter at Indian-white councils had considerably more latitude to summarize the gist of the speaker's remarks" ("On Who Spoke First," 203 n. 5).

<sup>77</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 5 9bre 1708, *RAPQ* (1939-40): 434.

<sup>78</sup>Charlevoix, *Histoire*, vol. 3: *Journal*, lettre XVII: 258-259

Evidently, the adeptness of interpreters at linguistic and cultural mediation sometimes fell short of the ideal. In some cases, it was non-existent, as in 1708, when Vaudreuil asked an Odawa delegation to communicate his message to the Menominees present at the council: “vous entendez leur langue mieux que nous ne pouvons.”<sup>79</sup>

Although speakers and interpreters were the most visible participants in council, their very functions imply the presence of the third and most numerous kind of participant. These were delegates who were appointed to accompany the speaker as a mark of honour, but who did not themselves speak in full council. In addition to attending council sessions, their functions apparently included the carrying of gifts and wampum, and the skilful advocacy of their group's interests in private negotiations.<sup>80</sup> As witnesses, they could ensure the accurate transmission of the speaker's message and verify that the words from the other side of the council fire were faithfully reported back in their villages.

In the French council records of the period, these anonymous delegates are very much in the background. However, the records do confirm the existence of relatively large Amerindian delegations. In most cases, the delegations are referred to only by nation, invariably in the plural: *les Miamis*, *les Iroquois*, etc. In cases where numbers are given, the French may only have counted those they believed to be leaders, or chiefs. A delegation of Odawas in 1707 included twelve “chefs ou principaux d'entre eux;” a delegation of Senecas in 1712 was 45 in number.<sup>81</sup> The great council of August 1711 involved 700 to 800 representatives of 32 nations with whom the French had diplomatic ties, suggesting that on average, the delegations were large indeed.<sup>82</sup> Often, the presence of other delegates may also be inferred from the speeches of both Amerindians and French orators, who referred to their presence or pointed them out by name.

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<sup>79</sup>Reponce de [Vaudreuil] aux parolles des outtauois de Michilimakina [1708], C11A 28: 215v.

<sup>80</sup>Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians*, 2: 173-174.

<sup>81</sup>Vaudreuil et Raudot à Pontchartrain, 24 juillet 1707, *RAPQ* (1939-40): 381; Vaudreuil au ministre, 6 9bre 1712, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 165.

<sup>82</sup>Resumé de Vaudreuil à Pontchartrain, 7 9bre 1711, *RAPQ* (1946-47): 446; Vaudreuil à Pontchartrain, 25 8bre 1711, *RAPQ* (1946-47): 432.

Several reasons explain the lack of attention accorded to these delegates in the council record. The French tendency to seek leaders led them to ignore the presence of certain types of delegates, and to emphasize the participation of others. The terms *chef*, *considerable*, and *ancien* were used frequently to describe Amerindian men with apparent leadership roles. For instance, Vaudreuil mentioned expressly in his correspondence that the Seneca "chief" Tatacout was present at the council referred to above, in 1712. Tatacout was not the speaker and had no visible role in the council record, but the French recognized him as a chief and as the adoptive father of Louis-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire, a French interpreter and envoy.

However, the speech of the anonymous orator referred to another decision-making group which the governor neglected to mention in his report of this council: "[l]es femmes considerables du pays qui sont icy presentes et qui entrent dans nos conseils." While the role of Iroquois women in councils was remarked upon by several French writers of the period, it was utterly obscured in the official correspondence. Vaudreuil mistakenly inferred that the presence of women delegates diminished the importance of the council: "Vous dites mesmes que les femmes qui Sont icy presentes entrent dans Vos conseils, qu'avez vous donc de si caché pour dire a mes enfans [Longueuil, Joncaire and La Chauvignerie] que Je ne dois pas scavoir moy mesme [?]"<sup>83</sup> The governor's apparent belief that female participation was somehow incompatible with diplomatic business requiring great discretion is an example of the kind of bias that complicates the interpretation of the French council record.

A final word must be said about the status of council participants. Educated eighteenth-century Europeans cherished a notion of the "Law of Nations" according to which a nation's ambassadors enjoyed a kind of diplomatic immunity which preserved

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<sup>83</sup>Parolles des Sonnot8ans a Monsieur le Gouverneur general le 10e 7bre 1712, C11A 33: 96. See also Discours des Iroquois... le 10e 7bre 1725, C11A 47: 447, where Iroquois women and warriors present a belt asking for the return of Joncaire. For French recognition of women's role in councils, see Rochemonteix, ed. *Relation par lettres*, 186; Charlevoix, *Histoire*, vol. 3: *Journal*, lettre XVIII: 270.

them from harm when on embassies. The same Europeans were in some doubt as to Amerindian observance of this Law. Lafitau and Charlevoix, for example, were both convinced that Amerindians were inclined to assassinate diplomatic envoys if negotiations proved unsatisfactory. "Their role [as ambassador] is respected only while the matter is undecided," wrote Lafitau; if warlike counsels prevailed among their hosts, the ambassadors risked immediate death or ambush on the way home. According to Charlevoix,

si ses Propositions ne sont pas agréées, il faut qu'il [le Plénipotentaire] se tienne bien sur ses gardes. Il n'est point rare qu'un coup de Hache, soit l'unique Réponse, qu'on lui fait. Il n'est même pas hors de danger, quand il a évité la première surprise, il doit s'attendre à être poursuivi, & à être brûlé, s'il est pris.

Modern students of Amerindian politics and diplomacy in the northeast have generally accepted these early ethnographic accounts.<sup>84</sup>

Political assassination was not a prominent feature in early eighteenth-century council diplomacy. No French agent died violently in the course of diplomatic duties during Vaudreuil's term, even during periods of tension and intercolonial warfare. With respect to intra-Amerindian diplomacy, a similar affirmation cannot be made with certainty; however, no such account emerges from the French records. Amerindian diplomats at Montreal risked death from illness rather than assassination.<sup>85</sup> It was during the journey

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<sup>84</sup>Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians*, 2: 174; Charlevoix, *Histoire*, vol. 3: *Journal*, lettre XVI: 251-252. W. N. Fenton has accepted Lafitau's account of the danger of assassination ("Structure, Continuity and Change," in *HCID*, 23) apparently without reserve, as has Gilles Therrien (*Parole et pouvoir : figure du chef amérindien en Nouvelle-France* [Montreal: Hexagone, 1986], 139-140).

Early modern diplomatic theory in Europe did not extend unconditional diplomatic immunity to ambassadors; rather, so long as their conduct was congruent with their credentials and the interests of peace, they were considered immune from molestation. It seems that the increased involvement of resident ambassadors in espionage and treasonous plots necessitated a revision of the rules: in order that contacts between nations not suffer, diplomatic immunity was extended in theory to protect even agents who engaged in this type of conduct. In practice, ambassadorial immunity was regularly violated when deemed necessary. Garret Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971 [1955]), 269-277.

<sup>85</sup>The Potawatomi Makisabé died at Montreal in 1712 without completing his speech (Parolles De Makisabé chef P8t8atamis du 17 août 1712, C11A 33: 90v). Pemoussa, the prominent Fox diplomat-hostage, expired at Montreal during the winter of 1716-1717 (see above). The Huron Kondiaronk had the distinction of being the first Amerindian diplomat to die of illness at Montreal in the eighteenth century.

from village to host that ambassadors feared assassination by third parties with whom they were at war.<sup>86</sup>

The sole piece of evidence cited by Lafitau in support of his assertion is the “embassy” of the Chevalier d’Aux in the spring of 1690. Wrote Lafitau,

It is not customary to have ambassadors burned or to treat them as captives. The Iroquois, however, did burn some of the retinue of the Chevalier d’O, whom the Count of Frontenac had sent them as an ambassador and would, perhaps, have burned the latter himself, had he not escaped among the English.

Charlevoix’s mention of the incident is far more brief: “Cela [death by burning] est arrivé à quelques François, chez les Iroquois, où ils avoient été envoyés de la part du Gouverneur general.” Charlevoix may have had his information from Lafitau’s published work, or from French colonials, for whom the event was seemingly part of their collective memory. In 1710, Madame de Vaudreuil penned a letter to the minister of Marine wherein she lauded the bravery of Charles Le Moyne de Longueuil (whom Charlevoix accompanied to Niagara in 1721 while writing his letter on Iroquois diplomacy). Longueuil had accepted an Iroquois belt asking him to come to Onondaga during a period of heightened tension between the French and the English colonies, the latter having enlisted the aid of many pro-English Iroquois for their attempted invasion of New France. “Quoyque Mr de Vaudreuil peut esperer que ce voyage pourroit faire un bon effet il n’auroit osé commander le Sr de Longueuil pour le faire dans la gravité qu’il ne luy arriva ce qui étoit arrivé autrefois au Sr Chevalier Daux,” wrote the governor’s wife.<sup>87</sup> Madame de Vaudreuil did not bother to explain this ominous and oblique reference, presumably because the marquise was certain that the minister would recall the details.

It is worth noting that Lafitau’s treatment of the affair is erroneous in several respects. According to contemporary French sources, d’Aux did not escape to the English;

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<sup>86</sup>Parolles des Sauvages de Michilimakinac... le 29e juillet 1710, C11A 31: 119v. An early and unique work of comparative ethnography argued that ambassadorial immunity was a widespread characteristic of diplomacy in small-scale, stateless societies. Ragnar Numelin, *Les origines de la diplomatie* (Paris: Flammarion, 1942), chapter five.

<sup>87</sup>Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians*, 2: 174-175; Charlevoix, *Histoire*, vol. 3: *Journal*, lettre XVI: 252; Memoire de la Marquise de Vaudreuil à Monseigneur le comte de Pontchartrain [1710], C11A 31: 67.

rather, the Iroquois sent him to the English themselves, after having made him run a gauntlet. In other words, d'Aux was treated as a captive. The other Frenchmen accompanying d'Aux were also treated as captives. They were distributed among the Iroquois villages, where some were burned and others adopted. This would indeed constitute a serious breach of custom, as Lafitau implied. However, Lafitau's reference to d'Aux occurs in the context of his discussion of Amerindian embassies, the implication being that d'Aux was a bona fide ambassador. But was he?

The central figures of the embassy that traveled from Canada to the Iroquois Confederacy Council in the spring of 1690 were not d'Aux and his retinue, but rather four Iroquois captives who had previously visited Onondaga on behalf of the governor in late 1689. They carried eight wampum belts whose messages had been spoken by Auriouaé, a Cayuga sachem recently returned from forced exile in France. According to Bacqueville de La Potherie,

Le Chevalier d'O n'étoit chargé d'aucun parole pour les Iroquois, il n'avoit ordre que de se trouver aux Délibérations que l'on prendroit sur ce qu'Auriouaé leur mandoit, appuyer la négociation de ces gens ci sans y entrer lui même, & être témoin de tout pour en faire un fidel raport.<sup>88</sup>

Thus d'Aux, although accompanied by an interpreter, was not destined to be a speaker; he bore no wampum, and his group was not intended to take part in negotiations. As a result, their status as unwelcome observers (or spies) may not have protected them from the Five Nations' belligerent attitude toward New France in early 1690.<sup>89</sup> Clarifying this distinction neither disproves Lafitau's ethnography, nor provides an explanation for the treatment of d'Aux. However, it disqualifies the incident as proof of Lafitau's assertion that the

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<sup>88</sup>Auriouaé (Orehaoué, Ourehouaré) was one of the Iroquois ambassadors deported to Marseille by Denonville in 1687. Havard, *La grande paix de Montréal*, 58-59. Le Roy, *Histoire*, 3: 74 (quotation).

<sup>89</sup>According to W. N. Fenton, the capture of d'Aux "was in revenge of the conspiracy of the Rat (Kondiaronk) who had induced the Iroquois to sack Lachine" (Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians*, 175 n. 1). The Huron Kondiaronk had indeed ambushed Iroquois ambassadors in 1688, pretending to act on French orders, in order to forestall a French-Iroquois rapprochement. In 1690, however, it would seem that recent French raid on Schenectady was the principal factor behind the burst of anti-French sentiment. Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 159, 172-173.

assassination of diplomats was an occasional element in Amerindian diplomacy. The weight of the evidence from the early eighteenth century suggests that neither French nor Amerindian diplomats expected to meet sudden death when engaged in diplomatic business; rather, they expected to use well-established diplomatic protocols to resolve disputes peacefully.

## 2.5 The event sequence

Once the roles of the various council participants had been determined, the session proceeded according to established protocols. In the French council record of the early eighteenth century, obvious variations in form occur, although they do not obscure the essential structure of the council. French-Iroquois councils of the period display a striking regularity of form, while French-Algonkian councils exhibit more variation.

The sequence of events that characterize Iroquois council protocol has been dealt with at length by Iroquoianists who have used both field data and historical accounts as sources for their investigations.<sup>90</sup> The Iroquois condolence council provided the model for Iroquois-European councils in the colonial period. The essential elements of this form, as adapted for use in an intercultural context, are as follows. The petitioners, on one side of the council fire, set the council agenda by stating first their substantive proposals. This was accomplished by their appointed speaker, who marked each such proposal with a gift, usually a string or belt of wampum. Between proposals, the speaker paused to allow for the translation of his speech by an interpreter. No other interruptions were admitted. Following this speech, the session was habitually adjourned while the respondents formulated their answers. These were presented in another session by the respondents' speaker, who first reiterated the petitioner's proposals, and presented gifts of comparable value to the petitioners' to "document" each answer. Having replied satisfactorily to the petitioners' agenda of issues, the respondents were then free to propose new business—but

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<sup>90</sup>The eighteenth-century French council records have, however, been underexploited for this purpose.

since councils were not “summit” meetings between principal decision-makers, there was no certainty that the petitioners would be capable of providing definitive responses.<sup>91</sup>

The French record of councils with the Iroquois conforms with the ideal council sequence outlined above. Indeed, the typical French council record is interesting in itself, insofar as it represented the attempt by literate Frenchmen to come to terms with the diplomatic culture of a non-literate society. The text of the speeches was organized by gifts of wampum: *premier collier, deuxième collier, par trois branches de porcelaine*, etc. Often, the writer placed the proposals and replies in columns side-by-side—a practical means of juxtaposing related fragments of two speeches, but one which also created an unintentional symbolic representation of the two sides facing each other across the council fire. In this way, the writer overcame a limiting characteristic of the written record (but one cherished by historians): the linking of a document to a specific date. Since a respondents’ answers were often given several days after the articulation of the original proposals, the French council record was essentially a composite document bearing two dates and likely compiled from several sets of notes.<sup>92</sup> It was perhaps the closest the French could come to the wampum record of a council, which had the virtue of allowing one to easily juxtapose events and speeches that occurred apart from each other in time and space.

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<sup>91</sup>Foster, “On Who Spoke First,” 184-185; Fenton, “Structure, Continuity, and Change,” in *HCID*, 24-25.

<sup>92</sup>Several good examples of this are: Parolles du chef nommé Oronyatek Sonnontouan a monsieur de Vaudreuil le 25e 8bre 1703 [et] Reponces de monsieur de Vaudreuil aux parolles du chef nommé Orontyatek... le 27e 8bre 1703, C11A 21: 60-61; Parolles du chef nommé Teganissorens... a Montreal le 24e 8bre 1703 [35] Reponce de Monsieur de Vaudreuil... a Quebec le 31 8bre 1703, C11A 21: 72-73; Parolles des Sonnont8ans a Monsieur le gouverneur general le 10e 7bre 1712 [et] Reponce de Monsieur le Gouverneur general..., C11A 33: 95-99 (fol. 97 indicates that Vaudreuil’s reply was made the following day).

The inference that the French council records were composite documents is based on several considerations: proposals and answers spoken days apart (and sometimes in different places) are organized and aligned neatly, which supposes that the writer was recopying other texts, rather than recording speech directly. The second council record cited in the previous paragraph is an example. In other cases, proposals and answers are written in different hands or different styles, suggesting that the document was created over a period of time by different writers (see the series of councils from 1704 recorded in C11A 22: 47-58v). In both cases, the resulting record, rather than being a strict *procès-verbal*, brings together discrete speech events.

The content of the records of French-Iroquois councils also reflect the protocols described above. As respondents, the French seemed to have the last word. However, in order to avail themselves of this privilege, they had to respond to each of the petitioners' proposals, and return a similar amount of wampum. This they invariably did. The French frequently recorded the exact number of strings or belts exchanged in council, and even observed a number of fine points of council etiquette.<sup>93</sup>

French-Algonkian councils were similar to French-Iroquois councils, although they seem to have been less rigorously structured. Petitioners and respondents spoke in turn, without interruption, and the latter (usually the French) gave their replies after an interval of deliberation. As with the Iroquois, expressions of condolence often marked the opening statements of the council. The major differences are evident in connection with the use of metaphor and the exchange of gifts.

These two factors may be related. Wampum was generally associated with Iroquois diplomacy in the colonial period, and its use in council was related to certain metaphors which turned up repeatedly in Iroquois oration. In councils with the French in the early eighteenth century, some of the most ubiquitous symbolic functions of wampum were: to act as "une medecine pour faire vomir ce qu'on peut avoir de mauvais sur le coeur;"<sup>94</sup> to "attacher un soleil pour eclairer de ses rayons la paix," or to enlighten the minds of diplomats;<sup>95</sup> to clear the throat, wipe away tears and unblock ears;<sup>96</sup> to summon

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<sup>93</sup>For example, it was customary to give no gift in return for a present which had served to cover the dead. In 1705, the Iroquois thanked Vaudreuil for covering the dead of their villages, but added: "nous ne vous donnons point de colliers puis ce n'est point nôtre coutume" (*Paroles des Iroquois... du 16e aoust 1705...*, C11A 22: 268). Two years later, Vaudreuil acted likewise when the Onondaga covered the body of a Frenchman (*Reponce de Monsieur le Gouverneur... du 17e aoust 1707*, C11A 26: 86).

<sup>94</sup>*Parolles des Sonontouans et Onontaguez a Monsieur de Vaudreuil le 12 Juin [1703]*, C11A 21: 62v.

<sup>95</sup>*Parolles des Agniers a Monsieur le Gouverneur general du 11e Juillet 1704*, C11A 22: 58.

<sup>96</sup>*Parolles des Sauvages Onontaguez a Monsieur le Marquis de Vaudreuil... le 28e janvier 1710*, C11A 31: 89. These were the "three rare words" of the condolence council. See "Words," in the glossary of *HCID*, 124.

someone to a council ("l'attirer par le bras");<sup>97</sup> or to kindle a council fire "pour regler les affaires paisiblement."<sup>98</sup>

Algonkian speakers did not use wampum and wampum-related metaphor in such a systematic manner. The Iroquois relied on the ability of wampum to perform certain ritual obligations and to create (by the symbolic means mentioned above) what ethnologist M. Foster has called a "channel of communication." The Iroquois had a culturally entrenched means of establishing and maintaining contact between council participants.<sup>99</sup> But while Algonkian speeches lacked much of this metaphor linked to wampum use, there were certain common rhetorical phrases. An expression of the desire for good relations was to clear away brush from the paths between nations: "Je vous prie mon Pere," said the Potawatomi Ouilamek, "de faire en sorte que tous ces chemins ne soient plus plains de fredoche et que la terre soit unie." These obstructive *fardoche*s and *mauvaises herbes* were the consequence of "mauvaises affaires," or evil actions; to make peace was to "rendre la terre unie."<sup>100</sup> Those Amerindian nations who desired the presence of a French post and commandant in their vicinity employed a standard phrase of need: "[nous sommes] comme fols n'ayant point de commandant," "nous n'avons plus personne pour nous donner de l'esprit."<sup>101</sup> Finally, Algonkians, like the Iroquois, conjugated the

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<sup>97</sup>Parolles des la grande terre Chef Onontagué a Monsieur le Gouverneur General du 18e octobre 1704, C11A 22: 52.

<sup>98</sup>Parolles des sauvages Onontagués a Monsieur le gouverneur general Le 16e aoust 1707, C11A 26: 86v. This last speech contains most of the rhetorical devices mentioned above as well.

<sup>99</sup>Foster, "Another Look at the Function of Wampum," in *HCID*, 103.

<sup>100</sup>Parolles de Silamek chef Poutouatamy... du 4e aoust 1705, C11A 22: 263v; see also Parolles des outtauois de michilimakina... le 23e juillet 1708, C11A 28: 208v. "FARDOCHES n. f. pl. Au Canada, synonyme de 'broussailles'." Marie-Éva De Villiers, *Multi dictionnaire des difficultés de la langue française* (Montreal: Editions Quebec/Amérique, 1988), 423. This was also an Iroquois metaphor, although in the French records of the period under study, it is most commonly found in French-Algonkian councils.

<sup>101</sup>Parolles des Sauvages outta8ois de missilimakina a monsieur de Vaudreuil le 2e 7bre 1703, C11A 21: 70v; Parolles des outtauois de michilimakina a Monsieur le Gouverneur general du 22e aoust 1705, C11A 22: 260v; Parolles des Miamis du 5e aoust 1703..., C11A 21: 68-68v; Parolles des Sauvages de Michilimakina... le 29e juillet 1710, C11A 31: 115, 117v. The latter phrase also applied to the lack of elders or leadership in the villages. See Delâge, "L'alliance franco-amérindienne," 10.

symbols of the hatchet and the kettle in various ways to express conditions of war and peace.<sup>102</sup>

The most pervasive metaphor employed by Amerindians, and by Algonkians especially, was that of their kinship relationship to the French governor, Onontio. To describe oneself, or more precisely, one's nation as the children of Onontio was the basic metaphor of alliance in the early eighteenth century. Among themselves, Amerindians ranked themselves as elder and younger siblings according to the history of their alliance with the French. In council with the Abenaki, the predominantly Mohawk Amerindians of Sault St. Louis reminded the Abenaki of their status as youngsters in the alliance:

Il y a longtemps que tu dois me connoître, Tu n'as pas oublié qu'avant que tu arrives a Quebec on te disoit a Laccadie qu'il y avoit de veritables chrestiens au sault, tu â suivy mon exemple, et a cause de cela tu me regardes comme ton aîné.<sup>103</sup>

Similarly, the Odawa delegation which came to Montreal in 1705 to declare their chagrin at having killed several Iroquois near Fort Frontenac referred to the Iroquois as their younger brothers (*nos Cadets*). Three years later, having exhausted his resources in order to compensate the Iroquois with captives, the Odawa Koutaouiliboé underlined the seniority of his people in the alliance: "l'Iroquois n'a pas toujours esté votre enfan Comme nous."<sup>104</sup>

The Algonkian nations of the Great Lakes expected that the fictive kinship relationship between themselves and Onontio would oblige the French governor to use his influence to improve the terms of exchange between his French children and his Amerindian children: "Traittés nous Comme vous faites vos veritables enfans, faites nous ouvrir vos magasins, que rien ne nous so[it] Caché."<sup>105</sup> When Amerindians who were traditionally French allies and trading partners traveled to Albany in search of more

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<sup>102</sup>Parolles des Folles Avoines..., 23 juillet 1708, C11A 28: 211. European and Euramerican writers have compiled several glossaries of Amerindian diplomatic metaphor. See Le Roy, *Histoire*; 3: [6 unnumbered pages following the preface]; John Francis McDermott, *A Glossary of Mississippi Valley French 1673-1850* (St. Louis: Washington University Studies no. 12, 1941); "Glossary," in *HCID*, 115-124.

<sup>103</sup>Parolles des sauvages du Sault St Louis... aux Abenakis du 13e aoust 1705, C11A 22: 264v.

<sup>104</sup>Parolles des outaouois de michilimakina... du 22e aoust 1705, C11A 22: 260, 261; Parolles des outaouois de michilimakina... le 23e juillet 1708, C11A 28: 207.

<sup>105</sup>Parolles des outaouois de michilimakina... le 23e juillet 1708, C11A 28: 206.

satisfying exchanges, the French—fearful that intensified trade would lead to a change of alliance—rebuked them, arguing on the basis of their singular status as father: “Scachez bien que Vous alles contre la volonté de Votre Pere et que vous ne pouvez faire cette demarche sans luy deplaire. Il faut absolument que Vous changiez de pensée car Vous ne pouvez pas avoir deux Peres.” “Nous ne voulons point d’autre pere,” was the Algonkians’ reply.<sup>106</sup> The French claimed, as good fathers, to have provided long-standing economic and military support: “Votre Pere vous soutient depuis plus de cent ans, Vous a toujours fait fournir vos besoins et deffendu contre vos Ennemis.”<sup>107</sup> This expression of the terms of the alliance was spoken by a Frenchman, but represented an Algonkian perspective. Rather than owing unquestioning obedience to their metaphorical father, the Algonkians interpreted the metaphor of fatherhood to signify obligation and responsibility. Accordingly, the metaphor was employed frequently in diplomacy to express Algonkian expectations.

The first difference, then, between Iroquois and Algonkian councils with the French in this period is related in part to different diplomatic cultures, and in part to different political relationships with the French. The neutralist policies of the Iroquois in the early eighteenth century ensured that the concern for good relations and for a clear channel of communication—realized symbolically by the extensive use of wampum—was preeminent. When Algonkians met the French, the terms of the alliance were at issue most often, and thus the metaphor of fatherhood came to the fore in council. Although the Iroquois also called Onontio father in council, they did not expand upon the obligations of fatherhood, nor did they dwell upon their status as children.

The second major difference between Iroquois and Algonkian council diplomacy was related to gift-giving. In Iroquois diplomacy, wampum predominated in diplomatic exchanges, and it helped to organize and record the proceedings of a council. The French

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<sup>106</sup>What the Amerindians wanted was a more favourable rate of exchange for their furs. Vaudreuil au ministre, 12 octobre 1717, C11A 38: 111; Paroles des Outa8as du Saguinan et des poute8atamis... le 24e Juin 1717..., C11A 38: 174.

<sup>107</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 12 octobre 1717, C11A 38: 111.

record of councils with the Iroquois reveals the strict observance of wampum exchange, whereby each proposal was accompanied by a belt or string, and the related response by a similar quantity of wampum. The Algonkians used wampum with much less regularity, and often in addition to other gifts, such as bundles of beaver pelts or hides, trade goods, or the calumet. In many councils with Algonkians, the French did not record any exchange of gifts, and the speeches of Algonkian delegates lacked the constant references to validating gifts that characterized those of Iroquois orators.<sup>108</sup>

However, the same body of council records provides firm evidence for the use of gifts in Algonkian diplomacy, and although the French sometimes neglected to record such exchanges, they must be presumed to have taken place. The Odawa chief Miscouaky's account of intertribal conflict at Detroit in 1706 included detailed accounts of the type and quantity of gifts that were exchanged as the nations living near Detroit sought to end the bloodshed that had engulfed them. The Huron began by offering the Odawa a belt of wampum carrying an ambiguous message, which the Odawa determined to be a trap. The Odawa then took "dix beaux Colliers de porcelaine, Vingt chaudieres, [et] deux paquets de Castor" to a parley which dissolved into conflict. In desperation, the Odawa sent to the Wea their chief Onabemaniton for whom the Wea had once danced the calumet, judging that he had the best chance of effecting some kind of peace.<sup>109</sup>

Onabemaniton's embassy was apparently inconclusive, since the Odawa were obliged to decamp to Michilimakinac. But the details of the incident underline Detroit's intercultural nature. It was the meeting place of several diplomatic cultures: that of the Iroquoians, marked by the use of wampum; that of the northern Algonkians, marked by beaver and trade goods; and that of Miami-Illinois, in which the calumet figured prominently. The French were familiar with most of the elements of this diplomatic potpourri, and when Vaudreuil met Miscouaky at Montreal, he refused the latter's belt of

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<sup>108</sup> A rare example of Iroquois-like protocol in a French-Algonkian council is recorded in *Parolles des outaouois de michilimakina a Monsieur le Gouverneur du 22e aoust 1705 [et] Reponce... du 23e aoust 1705*, C11A 22: 260-261.

<sup>109</sup> *Parolles de Miscouaky... le 26 Septembre 1706*, C11A 24: 246-249.

wampum in order to signal his intention to dictate terms to the Odawa, who had killed several Frenchmen during the conflagration. But the governor also injected a typically European element into the talks: he demanded that the guilty party be delivered up to French justice. Accordingly, he rejected Odawa attempts to cover the dead. “Le Sang du françois ne se paye [pas] par du Castor,” said Vaudreuil in council. The blood of Amerindians, however, was regularly compensated for in this way when the French mediated conflicts.<sup>110</sup>

Another Amerindian account of intertribal conflict at Detroit, that of the Potawatomi Makisabé in 1712, reveals a similar mix of elements. Arriving among the Illinois, some of whom were responsible for the death of a Potawatomi, Makisabé was approached by the nephew of an Illinois headman and given “cinq Calumets de paix, trois esclaves pour [couv]rir le mort, dix barres de Plomb pour qu’on n’entende plus parler de luy, deux pendants d’oreille et plusieurs peaux afin que la paix soit stable entre nous.” Later, as the Odawa, Potawatomi and newly reconciled Illinois debated the wisdom of attacking the Fox at Detroit, wampum (reddened with vermilion), muskets, ammunition, and “Cent Calumets rouges” changed hands as alliances were sealed.<sup>111</sup>

These accounts illustrate—although they do not, unfortunately, explain—the workings of Algonkian diplomatic culture. Clearly, gifts had a validating function, like wampum, and diplomats were accustomed to associating certain gifts with certain proposals, to the point of keeping a detailed mental tally of the kind and quantity of gifts. The value of the gift reflected the intentions of the group. In a 1717 council at Detroit, where Odawa and Potawatomi delegates lavished trade goods and wampum on the Miami

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<sup>110</sup>Reponses de monsieur le Marquis de Vaudreuil a Miscouaky..., C11A 22: 255v-256. While the French encouraged Amerindians to cover each others’ dead and exchange gifts in order to allay the problem of vengeance, they balked at applying the same diplomatic standards to themselves. When French lives were lost, the French generally insisted instead on bringing those responsible to [European] justice—where capital punishment was the norm. R. White, *The Middle Ground*, 75-93. As Vaudreuil pointed out to an Onondaga delegation in 1708, “le sang parmy nous ne se paye que par le sang” (Parolles des Onnontagués et Reponce... 12 août 1708, C11A 28: 220.

<sup>111</sup>Parolles de Makisabé chef P8t8atamis du 17 août 1712, C11A 33: 86v-88v.

envoys in order secure a peace, the Huron orator "parlant par une seule couverte blanche fit connoître qu'il n'Etoit pas content de cet accomodement." Like wampum, such gifts were probably perceived as objects that facilitated, even created, the means of communication between parties. "J'ayde un peu a la parole de mon Pere," said the Potawatomi orator as he offered "cinq Chaudieres, trois couvertes trois paires de Mitasses, une paire de Manche et une Chemise" to the Miami, who had just heard the French commandant plead for reconciliation by presenting the calumet.<sup>112</sup>

Despite the frequent lack of direct references to gift-giving in French council records, it clearly was an expected and integral part of French-Algonkian diplomacy. In 1713 the Odawa chief Saguima expressed his chagrin at having no gifts to present in council: "sy quelque chose nous fait aujourd'huy du Chagrin c'est d'estre obligé de te parler les mains vides ce n'est point nôtre Coutume."<sup>113</sup> Several years earlier, Vaudreuil had responded to ministerial concern about the gifts that he received in council. His defence deserves to be quoted at length, for it provides a rare glimpse of the details of intercultural diplomacy:

Jay vêu Monseigneur par la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'escire les deffenses que vous me faites de recevoir des presens des Sauvages, il me paroist quil fault qu'on vous ayt mandé que jen tirois un grand profit, je me conformeray sans peine aux ôrdres que vous me donnés, je vous suplie cependant de me permettre de vous êxpliquer ce que cest que ces sortes de presens. . .

Depuis que jay l'honneur de commander en ce pays, je ne reste d'ordinaire que trois mois ou trois mois et demie a montreal, les sauvages domiciliées ne donnent rien, les iroquois n'ont jamais rien donné, et quand ils parlent d'affaires cest par Colliers, les sauvages du detroit ne viennent plus a montreal, et prennent tous la plupart le chemin d'orange, aussy bien que les mississaguez[;] il n'y a dont que quelques canots outtavois; têtes de boules, et gens des terres qui y viennent, la plus forte année ils n'ont jamais donné a eux tous plus de cent ou 150 ecus en Castor, et depuis un an ou deux cela ne va pas a la moitié..., ainsy Monseigneur, je ne vous dis que la pure verité, et ce quil y a de certain cest que pour le peu de castor que des sauvages donnent quand ils arrivent, je suis obligé de leur faire d'autres presens, qui quoy que ce ne soit qu'en pain, vin, et tabac, ne laissent pas que d'égaler ce quilz mont donné, sy cela ne va pas a davantage, il est tres seûr, que ceux qui vous ont informé que je faisois un profit considerable sur ces presens se trompent, ou n'ont cherché qu'a me faire de la peine, car du tems mesme de Mr de frontenac, que toutes les nations descendoient, le Sr de monseignat son secretaire

<sup>112</sup> Vaudreuil au conseil, 30 8bre 1718, C11A 39: 152v-153v.

<sup>113</sup> Parolles de sauvages de missilimakina... des 23, 26 et 28 aoust 1713, C11A 34: 69v.

ma assuré, que jamais son Maitre n'a eû plus de deux cens ecus, quoy quil en soit Monseigneur, jexecuteray vos ordres mais comme cest une coutume etablie depuis que le Canada est Canada que les Sauvages des nations d'en hault, et les gens des terres quand ils arrivent a montreal font des presens. et quils [en] font mesme quand ils passent les uns chez les autres, prevenus que ces presens les empeschent de contracter la maladie du pays ou ils passent, ce seroit un affront de ne les pas recevoir.<sup>114</sup>

The amply documented flow of presents from the French to the Amerindians tends to obscure the fact that the giving was reciprocated. In economic terms, the exchange was unequal, but material benefit was secondary to the symbolic affirmation of ties between father and children. The same passage underlines various aspects of French-Amerindian diplomacy that have been discussed above: the three-month period of annual diplomatic activity at Montreal; the differences between Iroquois and Algonkian council behaviour; Onontio's obligation to provide for visiting Amerindian delegates; and the ubiquity of reciprocal gift-giving in French-Amerindian and intra-Amerindian relations.

The French record of formal meetings with Amerindians, although inevitably one-sided and incomplete, permits nevertheless the formulation of a basic definition of a council. An intercultural council in the colonial period was essentially a structured dialogue, punctuated by the exchange of gifts, between two delegations facing each other across a council fire, each side being composed of legitimate representatives of definable groups. The content of the dialogue itself was intimately linked to the framework in which it took place: the frequent and systematic use of metaphor related to objects and relationships permeated the language of the diplomats. This diplomatic vocabulary was adopted by the French (in translation) for use in council records and even in official dispatches to France. Quite simply, it represented the best means of expressing the political realities of French-Amerindian relations.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>114</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 9bre 1709, RAPQ (1942-43): 438-439. Vaudreuil's reference to illness complements rather than contradicts the notion that gift giving was an important diplomatic mechanism: since illness was frequently understood to be the result of witchcraft, the careful observance of diplomatic forms represented a good means of dissipating the hostility or anxiety of strangers.

<sup>115</sup>Cornelius J. Jaenen has similarly noted that "the adoption of native expressions [related to diplomatic gift-giving] is remarkable" in French documents. "The Role of Presents in French-Amerindian Trade," 238. The literal interpretation of this vocabulary

## 2.6 The material culture of French-Amerindian diplomacy

The diplomatic acculturation of the French extended beyond the council and its metaphorical vocabulary to material objects. Two objects in particular retained the interest of European observers because of their exotic nature: the wampum belt or string, and the calumet. Both figured in the encounters characterized here as intercultural councils, and both were associated by contemporary Frenchmen with Amerindian diplomacy—although discussions of wampum often strayed into matters of personal ornamentation, while those dealing with the calumet inevitably commented upon the dance and music sometimes associated with it. Both objects were manipulated by the French in their dealings with Amerindians, and wampum in particular was the essential marker of diplomatic activity in the early eighteenth century.

*Calumet* is a Norman word of latin origin that the French used regularly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to designate Amerindian pipes. The early seventeenth-century missionary Gabriel Sagard apparently used the term to refer to what modern archaeologists call a chillium—a “laterally flattened smoking implement which [was] essentially a bowl with a mouthpiece.”<sup>116</sup> By the end of that century, the term referred not just to any kind of pipe, but to a particular kind of long-stemmed pipe whose bowl was traditionally made of red stone (catlinite), and whose stem was decorated with feathers.<sup>117</sup>

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may represent a danger for modern scholars who wish to take Amerindian discourse seriously. For example, A. Rotstein has surmised that the “trees of peace” planted between the Iroquois and the Miami-Illinois constituted the physical demarcation of a political boundary (“Trade and Politics,” 3). A better symbolic interpretation of this imagery would view these “trees” as peace accords.

<sup>116</sup>“Calumet,” in Louise Côté, Louis Tardivel, and Denis Vaugeois, *L’Indien généreux: ce que le monde doit aux Amériques* (Montreal: Boréal, 1992), 74; William R. Fitzgerald, *Lest the Beaver Run Loose: The Early 17th Century Christianson Site and Trends in Historic Neutral Archaeology* (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1982), 163.

<sup>117</sup>For contemporary French descriptions of the calumet, see Pierre-Esprit Radisson’s account, quoted in Blakeslee, “The Calumet Ceremony,” 81; Lahontan’s description, quoted in Rotstein, “Trade and Politics,” 10; de Liette’s in “Memoir of De Gannes concerning the Illinois Country,” in *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library* vol. XXIII: *The French Foundations 1680-1693*, eds. T. C. Pease and R. C. Werner (Springfield, Ill.: Illinois State Historical Society, 1934), 391; Pierre Boucher, *Histoire véritable et naturelle des moeurs & productions du Pays de la Nouvelle-France*,

Amerindian oral traditions and archaeological evidence suggest that the calumet originated on the western plains. According to Donald Blakeslee, the calumet and its associated rituals emerged from the Plains Interband Trade System after A.D. 1250. The latter was a regional trade network, part of a larger pan-continental whole, and the groups involved had developed particular means of establishing and maintaining trade relationships. French observers of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries encountered the calumet as they moved west and south of the Laurentian colony, but before they reached the Great Plains. The calumet was moving east, "spread[ing] out of the plains in response to the developing interregional trade in European goods."<sup>118</sup>

Contemporary French sources hint at this movement. Pierre-Charles de Liette, one of Vaudreuil's key diplomatic agents in the Illinois country, witnessed the calumet ceremony when the Osage and Missouri of the upper Mississippi came to trade with the Illinois: "ils ne manquent donc pas presque tous les ans d'y aller et de leur porter le Calumet, qui est Le Simbole de la paix, Parmi toutes Les Nations du sud."<sup>119</sup> Liette and his contemporaries, like Pierre Boucher a generation earlier, knew that the red stone used to make the bowl of the calumet came from the west, *vers les Scioux*, in the region of Lake Superior. Charlevoix, who was interested in proving that the calumet was in no way related to the caduceus of Greek and Roman mythology, opined that since Amerindians pretended that the *Panis* (Pawnee) had received it from the Sun, the *Panis* were undoubtedly the true authors of the ritual, and had merely fabricated a divine origin for it.<sup>120</sup> Charlevoix himself traveled through much of the country where calumet diplomacy was firmly established, along Lake Michigan (where Perrot and La Salle were greeted with

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*vulgairement dite Le Canada* [1664] (Société historique de Boucherville, 1964), 167; Le Roy, *Histoire*, 2: 16-17; Rochemonteix, ed. *Relation par lettres*, 69; Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians*, 2: 176ff [based on Father Marquette's published account]; Charlevoix, *Histoire*, vol. 3: *Journal*, lettre XIII: 211. R. White quotes Fathers Hennepin and Gravier and Nicolas Perrot on the calumet in *The Middle Ground*, 20-21.

<sup>118</sup>Blakeslee, "The Calumet Ceremony," 80, 86 n. 3, 86 n. 2 (quotation).

<sup>119</sup>Memoir of De Gannes, 389.

<sup>120</sup>Memoir of De Gannes, 391; Boucher, *Histoire véritable*, 167; Rochemonteix, ed. *Relation par lettres*, 127; Charlevoix, *Histoire*, vol. 3: *Journal*, lettre XIII: 211, 212-213.

the calumet in the 1670s and 1680s), through the Illinois country (where Marquette and, later, de Liette witnessed its use) and down the Mississippi to the land of the Natchez.

As de Liette's testimony demonstrates, the calumet appeared to the newcomers to be fully integrated into the diplomatic culture of certain Siouan and Illinois nations. For the nations of the upper Great Lakes—the Potawatomi, Menominee, Odawa, and Ojibway—it was perhaps a more recent innovation, occurring in some cases at virtually the same time as the first recorded European contact—quite likely, a result of the need for new ways of interacting with new peoples.<sup>121</sup> Whatever the case, the visiting French were obliged to conform to the diplomatic rituals of their hosts, whether these rituals were new or ancient, and thus the French learned to use the calumet, at first as a kind of passport.<sup>122</sup> By the early eighteenth century, the calumet figured in intercultural councils in the upper Great Lakes, at Detroit and La Baye, in the Illinois country, and upon occasion in the Laurentian colony itself.<sup>123</sup>

In early published accounts and in the official correspondence, the calumet was often associated with a lengthy ceremony characterized by dancing and singing.<sup>124</sup> A visiting chief, or ambassador, was the focus of this ceremony, following which a fictive kinship relationship existed between the host nation and the visitor.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>121</sup> F. Keesing, *The Menominee Indians of Wisconsin* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987 [1939]), 51 n. 24; Clifton, *The Prairie People*, 124.

<sup>122</sup> The experiences of La Salle are instructive in this regard. The Potawatomi leader Onangicé presented La Salle with a calumet at La Baye in 1679, which the French trader then used to pass by other Potawatomi groups as he proceeded southward along the western shore of Lake Michigan. R. D. Edmunds, *The Potawatomis* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 10.

<sup>123</sup> The calumet figured in the councils at Montreal in 1701, and again when Vaudreuil mediated between the Odawa and the Iroquois in 1705 (discussed below). There are no other examples of the use of the calumet at Montreal between 1703 and 1725, although during the councils of 1711, involving three dozen Amerindian nations, it was likely very prominent.

<sup>124</sup> Le Roy, *Histoire*, 2: 16-21; Rochemonteix, ed. *Relation par lettres*, 68-69; Memoir of De Gannes, 389-390; Charlevoix, *Histoire*, vol. 3: *Journal*, lettre XX: 295-298; *Abrege de la vie et coutumes des Sauvages du Canada* [1723], C11A 45: 169; see below for further references to singing and dancing in the French records.

<sup>125</sup> Blakeslee, "The Calumet Ceremony," 81. During the intertribal conflict and diplomacy at Detroit in 1706, discussed above, the man whom the Odawa selected to visit the Miami fort had once been the recipient of this honour; in his address to the Miami, he said: "Louiatanon [Miami-Wea] nous avoit traité de Fils, en dansant le Calumet, mon pere

In other cases, the calumet was like wampum, serving as a means of exchanging messages or as validation of peaceful intentions. To refuse the calumet was like refusing wampum: it indicated the complete rejection of the proposal. The report of a council between Illinois delegates and the French in 1723 underlined this for the benefit of metropolitan officials: "Refuser a nos sauvages de fumer ou du moins de mettre a la bouche le Calumet quilz presentent, c'est les mepriser et leurs faire perdre tout d'un coup toute esperance.... c'est pourquoy tous [les officiers] ont fumé dans le Calumet de paix."<sup>126</sup> The sun or sky, to which the smoke rose, also figured in the sacred traditions surrounding the calumet.<sup>127</sup> French observers even made attempts to codify the meanings of different forms of calumet decoration. Altogether, contemporary French accounts underlined the diversity of ways in which the calumet was manipulated by Amerindians, without offering any comprehensive explanation of its significance. The use of the calumet by the French themselves was quite limited.

W. N. Fenton has asserted that the French had "adapted the Calumet ritual to commerce and exploration, facilitating its spread from the Great Lakes to Louisiana" while English colonials learned to exploit the Iroquois condolence ceremony in their dealings with Amerindians.<sup>128</sup> This assertion—presumably relevant to the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries—has been challenged elsewhere, on the basis of evidence of the eastward spread of the ritual between Amerindian groups.<sup>129</sup> The French council record of the early eighteenth century offers a similar conclusion: the French were not active agents in the spread of the calumet ritual.

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je m'étonne que tu demeures Sy longtêms a nous Tuer autour de Nostre pallissade." Evidently, the calumet ceremony had made the Odawa the fictive children of the Miami. Parrolles de Miscouaky... le 25 Septembre 1706, C11A 24: 249.

<sup>126</sup> Les Chefs du Village des KasKaKias... sont venus ce jourdhuy 29 avril 1723 au fort de Chartres... C11A.45: 174v.

<sup>127</sup> Nicolas Perrot noted this in his early encounters with calumet-bearing Amerindians at La Baye. Le Roy, *Histoire*, 2: 94, 104-105.

<sup>128</sup> Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians*, 185 n. 1.

<sup>129</sup> Blakeslee, "The Calumet Ceremony," 86 n. 2.

Wampum, rather than the calumet, dominated Canada's relations with Amerindians in the early eighteenth century. The experiences of Nicolas Perrot, and Cavalier de La Salle, discussed above, show the French responding to Amerindian initiatives in the use of the calumet. Apparently the French could only use the calumet once it had been presented to them. During Vaudreuil's term, the calumet only passed through Onontio's hands once, and then because Odawa of the Kiskakon nation had asked him to present it to the Iroquois.<sup>130</sup> At Detroit, Alphonse de Tonty, an experienced officer, presented the calumet to the Miami in 1717.<sup>131</sup> In 1725, Longueuil gave a calumet to the Iroquois in return for a gift of deerskins.<sup>132</sup> These, however, are isolated instances in which the French seem to have initiated its use as a gift accompanying a proposal, much as wampum was exchanged in council. The associated ceremony was not performed, and the French did not sing and dance.<sup>133</sup>

What the official correspondence and council records reveal is the extensive use of the calumet by Amerindians in their dealings with the French and with each other. In 1710 the Mississauga gave the Iroquois two large calumets and other presents to cover Iroquois dead during a council which the French witnessed.<sup>134</sup> The Fox received French envoys in 1717 "aux chants des calumets et avec toutes leurs marques de ceremonies accoutumées," which suggests that a full calumet ceremony was performed.<sup>135</sup> The newly appointed commandant at La Baye, Jacques Testard de Montigny, was similarly received by the Sauk in 1721. Charlevoix, who was present at this ceremony, noted the absence of certain

<sup>130</sup> Vaudreuil added a gift of tobacco "afin que... je puisse voir mes Enfants fumer ensemble d'une Union stable et sincere." Parolles de Monsr le gouverneur aux Iroquois, [22 August 1705], C11A 22: 272-272v. Similarly, at Montreal in 1701, governor Callière had been given the calumet by the Odawa Kiskakon so that he could pass it in turn to the Iroquois (Havard, *La grande paix de Montréal*, 150).

<sup>131</sup> Vaudreuil au conseil, 30 8bre 1718, C11A 39: 152-155.

<sup>132</sup> Discours des Iroquois qui sont venus pleurer la mort de Mr de Ramezay... le 10e 7bre 1725 [et] Reponse... par Mr le Baron de Longueuil, C11A 47: 443.

<sup>133</sup> Governor Frontenac would seem to merit the distinction of being the sole Onontio to have engaged in ceremonial dancing and singing: in August 1690, hatchet in hand, he sang a war song during an important intercultural council (Havard, *La grande paix de Montréal*, 25).

<sup>134</sup> Vaudreuil au ministre, 3 9bre 1710, *RAPQ* (1946-47): 397-398.

<sup>135</sup> Louvigny au comte de Toulouse, 1 8bre 1717, C11A (transcriptions) 37: 388.

exotic elements of the ceremony recorded by earlier observers—the naked dancers wearing body paint, adorned with feathers and beads—and wondered: “Peut-être que ce n’est point l’usage de ces Peuples, ou que M. de Montigny les avoit exemptés de ce cérémonial.”<sup>136</sup> The year previous, the outgoing commandant, Philippe d’Amours de La Morandière, had received a wampum belt and calumet from the Fox, who were concerned about the murder of three Frenchmen among their allies, the Kikapoo. The Fox made this presentation during an intertribal council at La Baye, where the Saulteur had come “[pour] parler a ces nations et danser le Calumet avec elles.”<sup>137</sup> And in 1722, the Sauk chief Pemetacoton sent twenty-four calumets to the Amerindians of Detroit to invite them to war against the Fox.<sup>138</sup> The list could go on, but it is clear that if calumet-related diplomacy was alive and well in the Great Lakes region, it had little to do with the French.

If, by comparison with the English, the French appeared to be masters of calumet protocol, it was only by virtue of long exposure to that particular diplomatic culture. The English would become initiated in turn, as they moved into the Ohio valley in the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>139</sup> The New York Commissioners of Indian Affairs were likely among the earliest English officials to experience the calumet. During a visit by some “Far Indians” (in this case, Odawas from Michilimakinac), they heard the speaker Saguima explain the significance of the calumet:

A Calumet Pipe amongst our nations is esteemed very valuable & is the greatest token of Peace and friendship we can express. A Calumet Pipe & Tobacco is used when Brethren come to visit one another and we hope to receive such kind and civil

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<sup>136</sup> Charlevoix, *Histoire*, vol. 3: *Journal*, lettre XX: 297.

<sup>137</sup> As was customary for the French when confronted with this kind of situation, La Morandière, instead of accepting compensation, demanded the surrender of the guilty parties. The departing Fox told the Sauk “que ce qu’on leur demandoit estoit impossible, par ce que le meurtrier ayans grand nombre de parens tous gens considérés il faudroit que la moitié du village perit si on vouloit en venir a l’exécution.” Vaudreuil au conseil, 6 8bre 1721, C11A 44: 157v-158.

<sup>138</sup> The Detroit Amerindians informed the French that they did not trust Pemetacoton’s words, and that in any event they would not march against the Fox without Onontio in the vanguard. Accordingly, they dispatched a large delegation—thirty-six men—to return the calumets, much as one might return unacceptable wampum belts. Vaudreuil au conseil, 11 8bre 1723, C11A 45: 147.

<sup>139</sup> Michael N. McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 73.

treatment from you in our Trade that we may with joy smoke with our Neighbours when we return & tell them how Goods are sold here.<sup>140</sup>

The Iroquois attending this council were already familiar with the calumet; indeed, Iroquois council protocol included smoking as a means of clearing the minds of delegates. In councils with Algonkian groups, the Iroquois used the calumet as they would wampum.<sup>141</sup> Moreover, Amerindians acknowledged among themselves differences in diplomatic culture. Meeting with a delegation of Seneca at Detroit in 1704, the speaker for the Amerindians of Detroit began with such an acknowledgment : “Notre coutume mes freres. Vous le scavez est de porter des Calumets Ainsy nous vous le presentons nous vous invitons a le recevoir avec des yeux d’amitié et de bienveillance.” “[N]ous recevons avec confiance le Calumet que vous nous apportéz,” replied the Seneca, “Nous Scavons vos Coutumes et les Suivons aussy, Nos guerriers Sont tous munis de Calumets pour chanter la guerre, et Escouter la paix.”<sup>142</sup>

At this same council, the Detroit Amerindians supported each proposal with a gift; of eleven such gifts, five were wampum belts and one a string. In so doing, they were conforming to a diplomatic form that had its origins in the east. *Wampum* is an anglicized word of Algonkian origin which refers to “the small, polished, tubular shell bead, either white or black, drilled along the longitudinal axis.” This modern, limited definition of wampum—which deliberately excludes other forms of shell beads (discoidal, for example) and imitation wampum of glass and wood—is particularly valid for the period under study here, since contemporary French sources, which used the term *porcelaine*, all give the same

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<sup>140</sup>Meeting of commissioners with the Far Indians, 30 May 1723, National Archives of Canada, Indian Records, RG 10, vol. 1819, fol. 26-26v, in IIDH reel 9.

<sup>141</sup>“Smoking,” in *HCID*, 121; George S. Snyderman, “The Functions of Wampum,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 98, 6 (December 1954): 491; W. R. Jacobs, *Wilderness Politics and Indian Gifts* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966 [1950]), 24. The latter source denies any sacred quality to the Iroquois’ use of tobacco, but it is perhaps more accurate to distinguish between different Iroquois and Algonkian sacred traditions related to tobacco.

<sup>142</sup>Parolles des sauvages du Detroit... aux Iroquois Sonnantouans le 30e Juillet 1704 [et] Reponses des Sonnantouans... le 31 Juillet 1704, C11A 22: 47.

narrow definition of the word.<sup>143</sup> These beads were manufactured from shells found on the Atlantic coast between New England and Florida, whence they were traded to the interior of the continent. This meant that the majority of Amerindian nations with whom the French dealt, as well as the French themselves, had no direct source of wampum in the colonial period.

The origin of wampum belts and strings and their diplomatic use is vague. Iroquois tradition credits Deganawidah and Hiawatha with the innovative use of wampum in the affairs of the League, which would suggest an origin correspondent with the creation of the League of Five Nations, between A.D. 1400 and 1600. There is little archaeological evidence of tubular beads among the marine shell artifacts found in sixteenth-century Iroquois sites.<sup>144</sup> Further north, the St. Lawrence Iroquoians left virtually no trace of such beads, and to the west, marine shell artifacts of any kind are not prominent in Ontario Iroquoian sites until the early seventeenth century.<sup>145</sup>

However tardy the diffusion of wampum in the northeast may have been, its eventual spread pre-dated European intrusion into the interior of the continent. Historian André Vachon's careful examination of early French sources has demonstrated that the working of marine shells into wampum beads and belts was not an invention of the Dutch, but an older Amerindian technique. Moreover, these sixteenth- and seventeenth-century belts and strings (often likened to rosaries by the first French observers) were employed in classic diplomatic contexts by the St. Lawrence Iroquoians encountered by Jacques Cartier, and by the Huron and Algonkins encountered by Samuel de Champlain.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup>U. Vincent Wilcox, "The Manufacture and Use of Wampum in the Northeast," *The Bead Journal* 3, 1 (1976): 10 (quotation); Le Roy, *Histoire*, 3: 34-35; Rochemonteix, ed. *Relation par lettres*, 75-76; Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians*, 1: 308-310; Charlevoix, *Histoire*, vol. 3: *Journal*, lettre XIII: 210.

<sup>144</sup>Elizabeth Tooker, "The League of the Iroquois: Its History, Politics, and Ritual," in Bruce Trigger, ed. *Northeast*, vol. 15 of *Handbook of North American Indians* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1978), 418-424.

<sup>145</sup>James F. Pendergast, *The Beckstead Site — 1977* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1984), 49; Fitzgerald, *The Christianson Site*, 212-213.

<sup>146</sup>"Colliers et ceintures de porcelaine chez les Indiens de la Nouvelle-France," *Cahiers des Dix* 35 (1970): 252-259.

The supply of wampum beads in the northeast was limited in the early seventeenth century, but production expanded as metal tools made the process of drilling faster and the Dutch and English took up the manufacture of the beads. Despite the existence of European substitutes of polished glass, Amerindians continued to use marine shell beads as wampum in diplomacy well into the eighteenth century. The French in Canada, however, faced the same problem as their Amerindian neighbours: the lack of a source of wampum. It was scarce in the colony at the end of the seventeenth century, and in the following century much of it was probably imported in the course of the contraband trade between Montreal and Albany.<sup>147</sup>

Joseph-François Lafitau, whose knowledge of wampum was probably acquired in part during his residence among the Mohawks of Sault Saint Louis between 1712 and 1717, commented upon the changes wrought in Amerindian diplomatic culture as a result of European influence:

The Indians think that no matter of business can be concluded without [wampum] belts of this sort.... The Europeans, knowing or caring little about their practices, have upset them somewhat in this respect, by keeping their belts without responding with similar ones. To avoid the inconveniences arising from this, they have adopted the fashion of no longer giving any more than a very small number of the belts, excusing themselves on the grounds that their wampum supply is exhausted. They make up the rest by bundles of buck and deerskin in exchange for which they are given merchandise of little value so that negotiations between the Europeans and them have become a trade.<sup>148</sup>

This provocative thesis is difficult either to defend or challenge, particularly because the groups involved are not specified. Which Europeans? Which Amerindians? Lafitau's remarks seem to support the affirmation by more recent historians that the use and manufacture of wampum in the northeast was in decline in the early eighteenth century; however, such views tend to reflect the experience of the coastal English colonies, where Native populations and the fur trade declined in tandem.<sup>149</sup> In Canada, the supply of

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<sup>147</sup> Vachon, "Colliers et ceintures de porcelaine chez les Indiens de la Nouvelle-France," 270-273, 276; Alice Jean Lunn, "The Illegal Fur Trade Out of New France, 1713-60," Canadian Historical Association *Historical Papers* (1939): 63.

<sup>148</sup> Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians*, 1: 311.

<sup>149</sup> "Wampum," *HCID*, 123; Wilcox, "The Manufacture and Use of Wampum," 13-14.

wampum seems to have increased slowly throughout the eighteenth century until, at mid-century, the “entire financial structure of Detroit was dependent on wampum,” and the governor, during the Seven Years’ War, could sell it to the King at a fixed price.<sup>150</sup>

No comprehensive history of wampum in the Canadian context exists. The best work so far, that of André Vachon, displays a noticeable gap between the end of the seventeenth century, where the Jesuit *Relations* end, and the middle of the eighteenth century, where the printed accounts from the 1740s and 1750s begin. What do the official correspondence and French council records reveal about wampum in the early years of the eighteenth century?

During Vaudreuil’s term as governor, the French used wampum belts and strings regularly in councils, and invariably when dealing with any of the Five Nations. There is but slight evidence that the exchange of wampum was uneven—with the French receiving more than they returned<sup>151</sup>—and that Amerindians responded by reducing their use of wampum. In 1725, an Onondaga delegation presented Longueuil with “un paquet de peaux razées,” saying: “nous vous prions de recevoir ce paquet que nous etendons a vos pieds faute de porcelaine.” During the same council, the French returned powder, lead, and brandy for pelts. Yet eleven belts and several strings of wampum were also exchanged (a relatively high number for a single council). “Trade” of this kind, in the guise of diplomacy, was very rare in recorded French-Iroquois councils of the period.<sup>152</sup> Generally, the exchange of wampum was equal, with strings returned for strings and belts for belts. The French exchanged 84 belts or groups of strings with the Five Nations in 17

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<sup>150</sup>Snyderman, “The Functions of Wampum,” 471; Vachon, “Colliers et ceintures de porcelaine chez les Indiens de la Nouvelle-France,” 277.

<sup>151</sup>In 1706, the French gave four belts after having received five (Parolles des Sonnontaouns a monsieur le marquis de Vaudreuil du 23 aoust 1706... C11A 24: 251-253v); again, in 1707, Vaudreuil did not return a belt for the Onondaga’s seventh proposal, which he did not answer either. Parolles des sauvages Onnontagués a Monsieur le gouverneur general Le 16e aoust 1707..., C11A 26: 86-92v.

<sup>152</sup>Discours des Iroquois qui sont venus pleurer la mort de Mr de Ramezay a Montreal le 10e 7bre 1725 [et] Reponse... par Mr le Baron de Longueuil, C11A 47: 442-448.

councils held at Montreal between 1703 and 1725.<sup>153</sup> Given that many councils went unrecorded, and that the French also used wampum when dealing with Algonkians, the total number of belts exchanged in French-Amerindian councils must have been much higher. Moreover, the French used wampum outside of councils to invite Amerindians to Montreal, to cover the dead in the villages, to bear messages to distant peoples, and even on an impromptu basis to handle conflicts in the *pays d'en haut*.<sup>154</sup>

Obviously, the diplomatic use of wampum by the French was extensive in the early eighteenth century. Yet the official correspondence is silent as to its source, and more importantly, its makers. For belts were woven of many beads, often to exhibit specific patterns or designs, and were intended to bear specific messages. This would tend to preclude the re-use of wampum belts, although the wampum of old belts may have been recycled. If the French needed “fresh” belts for their councils, what was their source?

One obvious solution is that they obtained them from closely allied Amerindians. There is, unfortunately, little direct evidence of this. Details regarding the Native manufacture of wampum from the colonial period are frustratingly scarce, and the early French accounts of Marc Lescarbot and Gabriel Sagard are so vague as to suggest that neither had actually witnessed the process.<sup>155</sup> By the mid-seventeenth century, wampum belts were well known to the French, mostly through diplomacy, and yet contemporary accounts are generally silent as to their means of production. In the opinion of one author, “Apparently the [Native wampum] industry was such an integral part of early colonial existence that the manufacturing techniques were taken for granted.”<sup>156</sup> Even if the

<sup>153</sup>The mean, median and mode of the data set are, respectively, 5, 5 and 3.

<sup>154</sup>For instance, in 1718 Vaudreuil, addressing a group of Fox delegates, called La Robe Blanche to Montreal by means of a belt of wampum. Vaudreuil au conseil, 30 8bre 1718, C11A 39: 146-146v. In 1719, Vaudreuil sent three belts to Detroit have the chiefs prevent the young men from trading at Albany (Vaudreuil et Bégon au conseil, 26 8bre 1719, C11A 40: 62v). When the sieur d'Aigremont undertook a fact-finding mission to Detroit in 1708, Vaudreuil suggested he supply himself with several wampum belts, “affin [*sic*] d'apaiser les mauvaises affaires.” Reponce... aux parolles des outtauois de Michilimakina [1708], C11A 28: 215.

<sup>155</sup>Vachon, “Colliers et ceintures de porcelaine chez les Indiens de la Nouvelle-France,” 262.

<sup>156</sup>Wilcox, “The Manufacture and Use of Wampum,” 10.

Amerindians of Canada did not manufacture the beads themselves, but imported the finished beads from nations further south, they almost certainly wove belts for their own diplomatic purposes. Yet little is known about this activity and its relation to French diplomacy. Even Lafitau, who commented upon the function of wampum in diplomacy, government, personal adornment, decoration, games, spiritualism and burials, offered few details about the manufacture of the beads or the weaving of belts.

An educated guess is that the French relied upon the Iroquois women of Sault Saint Louis (Kahnawake) and other nearby mission communities to supply them with wampum belts. From the end of the seventeenth century onward, the Iroquois living near the town of Montreal could have provided the French with wampum belts for diplomatic use. Since Kahnawakes (of both sexes) were involved in trade between Montreal and Albany—both as intermediaries for French merchants and on their own account—they were in a good position to obtain the scarce beads, which women then wove into belts.<sup>157</sup> That women were likely the actual producers of these belts, and that the Montreal-Albany trade was officially prohibited, may help to explain why Vaudreuil and others neglected to discuss the manufacture of diplomatic wampum belts in their dispatches.

Wampum was employed so extensively in intercultural relations that it appeared as the essential indicator of diplomacy in the northeast. The politics of Anglo-French rivalry in the *pays d'en haut* was almost entirely mediated by wampum protocol: the French policy of preventing the English from trading with their allies was manifested by French commandants chasing English wampum belts delivered by the Iroquois. The mechanism for this kind of diplomatic intrigue was the *collier sous terre*, a wampum belt containing a secret proposal.<sup>158</sup> The *collier sous terre* is a fascinating piece of wampum protocol that has gone unnoticed in virtually every general treatment of wampum and Amerindian

<sup>157</sup>Lunn, "The Illegal Fur Trade," 62-63; Vachon, "Colliers et ceintures de porcelaine chez les Indiens de la Nouvelle-France," 264; Wilcox, "The Manufacture and Use of Wampum," 12.

<sup>158</sup>"Les Iroquois ont fait tenir a cette nation [Ouyatanon] des colliers sous terre, c'est adire des parolles secretes..." (Vaudreuil au conseil, 14 8bre 1706, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 330); see also Longueuil et Bégon au conseil, 31 8bre 1725, *C11A* 47: 68-68v.

diplomacy, despite being abundantly documented in the official correspondence of the early eighteenth century. The term itself was probably a French rendering of Amerindian rhetoric.<sup>159</sup> It is not clear why Amerindians considered certain belts to be *sous terre*; quite likely, it was because their messages were not meant to be revealed in public council where unwelcome observers—often Europeans—might be present.

“Pour empescher que ces Colliers n’ayent leur Effet il est necessaire de beaucoup de vigilance de la part d’un Commandant pour les decouvrir et quand il les a decouvert, il a besoin de beaucoup d’adresse pour les rendre inutiles,” wrote Vaudreuil: “ces colliers s[ous] terre [sont] d’autant plus dangereux que les Sauvages entre eux se font un honneur de ne nous les point reveler.”<sup>160</sup> Vaudreuil had himself been presented a *collier sous terre* in 1703 by the Seneca orator Oronyatek:

[N]ous n’avons jamais dit ce que nous te disons aujourd’huy a toy mon Pere ayant toujours estés maistres de nostre terre par la Nutralité que nous avons Conservé jusqu’a present, Aujourd’huy je te presente Ce collier sous terre pour te dire que nous te faisons Maistre de nostre terre.<sup>161</sup>

This kind of declaration—quite unique in the French-Iroquois relations of the period—was obviously meant to be kept secret from the officials of New York and probably even from pro-English Iroquois. This may explain why it was contained in a *collier sous terre*. In 1725, the Onondaga, caught between the demands of rival European empires, made no response to Longueuil’s fourth belt which contained a message berating them for allowing

<sup>159</sup> A French clerk in the ministry of Marine once glossed it as *collier souterrain* [sic] (Vaudreuil au conseil, 14 8bre 1706, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 330). According to *Le Petit Robert*, *souterrain* has a literary sense meaning hidden or obscure in use since the sixteenth century. That colonial officials so often felt obliged to explain the term to their metropolitan superiors is sufficient proof that it was a Canadian neologism borrowed from Amerindians. In council with Amerindians from Detroit, a Seneca orator told them not to believe “les discours Sous terre qui se glissent comme des Serpents, qui vous donnent de l’aprehension de nous” (Reponces des Sonnotouans... le 31 Juillet 1704, C11A 22: 47v). Given that the Iroquois of Sault Saint Louis were often the recipients of *colliers sous terre* from the English and Five Nations, it is interesting that the Abenaki referred to them in council as “le centre ou aboutissent par dessous terre et d’ou sortent ensuite toutes les nouvelles tant du costé d’orange [Albany] et des Iroquois, que du costé des Nations les plus esloignés” (Parolles des trois nations Abenakises par cinq colliers..., C11A 22: 265v).

<sup>160</sup> Vaudreuil au conseil, 28 8bre 1719, C11A 40: 186-186v; Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 8bre 1711, *RAPQ* (1946-47): 433.

<sup>161</sup> Parolles du chef nommé Oronyatek Sonnotouan a monsieur de Vaudreuil le 25e 8bre 1703, C11A 21: 60.

the English to assume a kind of sovereignty over their territory. In response to a fifth belt, given after the conference, the Onondaga returned a *collier sous terre* bearing a more favourable reply: "Je t'assure, mon fils, par ce Collier que je te donne Sous terre, que S'il t[']arrive des affaires avec les Anglois nous demeurerons tranqu[illes] et ne nous en meslerons point comme tu le Souhaite."<sup>162</sup>

The French reacted vigorously whenever they learned of the English or League Iroquois sending such belts to their allies in the *pays d'en haut*, but they remained within the bounds of diplomatic protocol. Although Vaudreuil once wrote of destroying such belts, in most instances the French were obliged to use diplomatic means to counter the belt's message, hoping to convince the recipients to return the belt unanswered, or bearing answers formulated by the French.<sup>163</sup>

The material culture of French-Amerindian diplomacy was essentially Amerindian in origin, but the French conditioned the shape of intercultural diplomacy by actively rejecting certain Amerindian practices. For example, the record of intercultural diplomacy in the early eighteenth century shows that the French did not perform the ceremonies associated with the calumet. As well, they tended to refuse the power of gifts to cover murdered Frenchmen, insisting instead that such deaths could only be forgotten through the punishment of the guilty parties. In this they were not always successful, and on occasion the demands of French justice bowed to political expediency.<sup>164</sup>

The French made few attempts to introduce distinctly European elements into diplomatic proceedings. In 1708, Vaudreuil wrote to the minister of the usefulness of distributing medals to particularly loyal Amerindian allies:

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<sup>162</sup>Discours de M. de Longueuil [et] Reponses des [Iroquois], C11A 47: 204v.

<sup>163</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 8bre 1711, *RAPQ* (1946-47): 433; Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 17 9bre 1704, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 57; Vaudreuil au ministre, 4 9bre 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 170; Vaudreuil au ministre, 3 9bre 1710 *RAPQ* (1940-41): 400; Vaudreuil au conseil, 14 8bre 1716, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 330.

<sup>164</sup>In 1708, when New France counted heavily on Iroquois neutrality, Vaudreuil accepted wampum belts and a slave as compensation for the murder of a French soldier. That the man was a deserter permitted the governor to de-emphasize the importance of this murder while protesting loudly about the killing of one of "his" men. Parolles des Iroquois donnontagués a Monsieur le gouverneur general le 12e aoust 1708... C11A 28: 217-224.

une douzaine de medailles de vermeil, ou le Portrait de Sa Majesté fût, est une forte petite depense, je les distribuerois a propos, et je suis tres sur que cela feroit un effet merveillex, les Sauvages conservant ces marques d'honneur avec la derniere estime.<sup>165</sup>

This was the beginning of a important facet of the French-Amerindian alliance of later decades. Throughout Vaudreuil's term, the delivery of medals was irregular: 40 were sent from France in 1710, all of which had been given out by 1719 when Vaudreuil asked for more. Thirty-six arrived the following year, a dozen in 1722, and ten more in 1724. The Crown was anxious that as few as possible be produced, for fear that this mark of royal favour would become too common. Vaudreuil, on the other hand, was interested in using the demand for these medals as a lever of diplomatic influence:

Je continuerai d'avoir attention a ne point prodiguer cette grâce parmi les sauvages et a ne les donner qu'a ceux qui les auroit meritez par leur attachement et leurs services pour la Nation et a ceux que je croirai necessaire d'attacher a nos Interests par Cette marque dhonneur.<sup>166</sup>

European in origin, these medals were designed to be given to decision-makers and war chiefs in order to bolster French influence in Algonkian villages; yet this practice did not significantly influence council diplomacy in the early eighteenth century. There is no record of the giving of such medals in documented French-Amerindian councils. In other words, they had no place in the formal setting of intercultural diplomacy.

Discussions of intercultural diplomacy based on English sources often tackle the issue of Euramerican-Amerindian treaties, especially those involving land surrenders, and the problem of interpreting them. It is held that for Europeans, the written, signed treaty was paramount in establishing legal claims to land, and more generally, represented the

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<sup>165</sup> Vaudreuil au ministre, 5 9bre 1708, *RAPQ* (1939-40): 440.

<sup>166</sup> Memoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Raudot, 10 mai 1710, *RAPQ* (1946-47): 376; Vaudreuil et Bégon au conseil, 26 8bre 1719, C11A 40: 62v-63; Vaudreuil et Bégon au conseil, 26 8bre 1720, C11A 42: 23v; Vaudreuil au conseil, 21 8bre 1722, C11A 44: 364 (quotation); Vaudreuil et Bégon au conseil, 2 9bre 1724, C11A 46: 38v. R. White has been misled by a mistake in the dispatch of 1719, which states that no medals have been received since 1705 (*The Middle Ground*, 179 n. 54). For concerns of the Crown, see Memoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 15 juin 1712, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 139. This was the same problem the Crown had with distinctions awarded to Frenchmen—the coveted *croix de Saint Louis* being a case in point. M. Trudel, *Initiation à la Nouvelle-France* (Montreal: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), 181.

“ultimate source for information about their subject negotiations.” Amerindian oral accounts of the same negotiations, often supported by mnemonic devices such as wampum belts and strings, were considered less important by Europeans. As a result, “after some experience, the Indians sometimes requested and preserved duplicate copies of the agreements written by colonial scribes.” Europeans, on the other hand, “never developed a system for transmitting oral tradition associated with wampum belts, so the specific meanings of belts were lost to them.”<sup>167</sup>

In New France, intercultural diplomacy was much less frequently concerned with land transactions than with matters of peace and exchange. Following a council, both French and Amerindians were interested in preserving an account of the proceedings. The French almost uniformly relied upon their written records, and the Amerindians upon their memories. On occasion, however, the French, who were obliged to conform to Amerindian protocols regarding gift-giving and wampum, also attempted to have their Amerindian counterparts validate European council records by signing them. Prouville de Tracy had this done by the Iroquois in 1666, and Callière asked Amerindian delegates at the peace of Montreal in 1701 to place clan and village symbols on the French text of the agreements.<sup>168</sup>

During Vaudreuil’s term, this practice was not continued with any consistency. Following a council in 1717 at Detroit, the French commandant was reported to have asked Amerindian delegates to sign a text of the agreements.<sup>169</sup> However, none of the French council records from the period exhibit any Amerindian symbols or signatures, and no other references were made to this kind of ratification.

Yet Amerindians on occasion availed themselves of written documents in diplomatic contexts. In 1717, it was the Fox, not the French, who insisted that council speeches be

<sup>167</sup> Druke, “Iroquois Treaties,” in *HCID*, 88, 87, 89-90.

<sup>168</sup> A French copy of the treaty of 25 May 1666 and its ratification by the Oneida and Seneca on 12 July 1666 is in C11A 2: 232-235, in IIDH reel 2; Ratification de la paix, faite... entre la Colonie du Canada Les Sauvages ses alliés et les iroquois..., C11A 19: 41-44 (reproduced in Havard, *La grand paix de Montréal*, 189-195).

<sup>169</sup> Vaudreuil au conseil, 30 8bre 1718, C11A 39: 154v-155.

recorded in writing: "pour preuve de leurs parolles ils firent escrire tout le discours par un interprete Disant que les parolles peuvent changer mais que l'Escrit ne Change Jamais."<sup>170</sup>

Why should the Fox have shown such confidence in a medium over which they had little control? Perhaps because they realized its significance to the French. The previous year, Louvigny had left the besieged Fox a written copy of the terms of their surrender. "pour etre un Temoignage autentique de nos conventions et de la prise de possession d'une Terre conquise par les Armes du Roy que pouroient par la suite nous disputer les anglois toujours jaloux de la prosperité des armes de france." As Louvigny's own words attest, the drafting of a treaty was more for the benefit of metropolitan superiors and other European powers than for the Fox themselves, who might have been surprised to learn of the territorial conquest that had allegedly taken place in 1716.<sup>171</sup> However, recognizing the import of such documents for the French, the Fox elected to ensure that their own words of 1717 were accurately recorded for the benefit of absent Europeans.

In 1715, the Huron sent a letter to Vaudreuil via a French officer, by means of which they bridged the geographical distance between themselves and their listener, a function usually accomplished by messengers bearing wampum: "Mon pere nous vous escrivons pour vous faire scavoir lestat ou nous sommes.... nous vous prions de regarder cette lettre comme Si nous y estions nous mesme."<sup>172</sup> Yet other Amerindians were less interested in allowing the medium of writing to replace the interpersonal relationships that were central in Amerindian diplomacy. The Illinois speaker Chachagouesse informed Vaudreuil in 1712 that his people preferred to receive French agents rather than letters addressed to the missionaries: "tous les ecrits que Je pourois porter ne Serviront de rien, Si

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<sup>170</sup>Louvigny au conseil, 21 7bre 1717, C11A 38: 197v.

<sup>171</sup>Louvigny au comte de Toulouse, 1 8bre 1717, C11A 37: 324 (quotation); Jaenen, "French Sovereignty and Native Nationhood during the French Regime," 96-97. The terms of the treaty of 1716 as reported by Vaudreuil did not involve any cession of territory or recognition of military conquest. Vaudreuil au conseil, 14 8bre 1716, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 329.

<sup>172</sup>Parolles que les hurons ont prié mr Dubuisson d'envoyer a mr le gouverneur general..., C11A 22: 62.

tu n'envoye pas avec moy les françois que Je te demande. Les Sauvages ne sont pas comme les françois...."<sup>173</sup>

On the whole, the literate culture of the French made few inroads into the diplomacy of the period. The exchange of wampum and gifts, rather than the drafting of treaties and accords, remained the central features of council diplomacy. This was not a recipe for chaos, since Amerindian oral traditions and mnemonic devices were quite capable of preserving the meaning and intent of council proceedings for years after the event. For a decade after the peace of Montreal in 1701, the agreements concerning French mediation and Iroquois neutrality were consistently reiterated in council by Amerindians, and especially by the western Iroquois, who found their position most uncomfortable in the wake of renewed French-English warfare in 1702. In 1705, an Iroquois orator recalled the exact number of wampum belts given to the French two years earlier to cover the late governor Callière.<sup>174</sup> And at the end of the French regime, the Iroquois, in council with the French, presented wampum belts to recall the words of Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, spoken decades before.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>173</sup>Parolles de Chachagouesse... du 20s aoust 1712, C11A 33: 94. Cf. Delâge, "L'alliance franco-amérindienne," 12-13. The author seems to have exaggerated the use of writing by Amerindians and accordingly overstates his conclusions: "Dès lors [the beginning of the eighteenth century] ce sont les Français qui gèrent le médium de la communication."

<sup>174</sup>Paroles des Iroquois a Monsieur le Gouverneur general du 16e aoust 1705, C11A 22: 269; see Parolles des Sonontouans et Onontagués a Monsieur de Vaudreuil le 12 Juin [1703], C11A 21: 62-62v for confirmation that seven belts were indeed given on that occasion.

<sup>175</sup>H.-R. Casgrain, ed. *Journal du Marquis de Montcalm durant ses campagnes en Canada de 1756 à 1759*, quoted in André Vachon, "Colliers et ceintures de porcelaine dans la diplomatie indienne," *Cahiers des Dix*, 36 (1971): 186. This speech clearly refers to Vaudreuil *père*, rather than to his son, who governed New France during the Seven Years' War. On this occasion, the Iroquois recalled three metaphorical gifts made by the dead governor. He had given them "une grande gamelle" from which they and their brothers (the French allies) should eat together in peace; he had given them tobacco to smoke in order to clear their minds when the tree of peace began to list; and he had offered a bow for war against the *Têtes-Plates* and the Cherokee. The French council record from Vaudreuil's term as governor largely substantiates the Iroquois oral tradition. The first gift was the great bowl or kettle used at the peace of Montreal in 1701 to represent the hunting territories shared by the Iroquois and the Algonkians; "quand vous vous rencontrerez ensemble," said Vaudreuil, "il faut que celui qui aura sa chaudiere preste en fasse part a son frere qui arrive." Reponse de Mr le Marquis de Vaudreuil aux colliers des Sauvages Onnontaguez... le 29e janvier 1708..., C11A 31: 96; see also Reponse de Monsieur Le

## 2.7 Conclusion

In August 1707, a delegation of Onondaga arrived at Montreal for a council with Vaudreuil. The conjuncture was important: three years before, Odawa from Michilimakinac had captured several Iroquois near Fort Frontenac. Both the Seneca and the Onondaga had asked Onontio to act on their behalf, on the basis of the agreements reached at Montreal in 1701. "Nous nous resouvenons cependant notre Pere de ce qui a esté dit a la paix generale, que vous teniez tous vos enfans sous vos Esselles, et que le premier qui se trouveroit offensé, ne se vangeroit pas par ses mains, mais qu'il viendrait s'en plaindre a vous, C'est ce que nous sommes venus faire par ce Collier," said the Onondaga orator Ohonsiowanne in 1704.<sup>176</sup> The Odawa accepted Onontio's mediation during a series of councils at Montreal in 1705, and by 1707 had returned the captive Iroquois and all but one of the slaves they had promised to give as compensation for their *coup*.<sup>177</sup> While the French were relieved to have helped prevent further hostilities between their allies and the Five Nations, this diplomatic reconciliation made possible once again the travel of western Amerindians through Iroquoia to Albany.<sup>178</sup> Accordingly, the Onondaga

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gouverneur general aux sauvages onnontagués... le 12e aoust 1708, C11A 28: 224 for a similar pronouncement. The second gift was commonplace in French-Iroquois councils during Vaudreuil's term (Parolles de Monsr le gouverneur aux Iroquois [1705], C11A 22: 272-272v; Reponces de monsieur le marquis de Vaudreuil aux quatre Nations iroquoises du 25 aoust 1706, C11A 24: 253). The third gift—the bow—has no parallel in the French record; but it was certainly in French interests to have Iroquois war parties diverted to the south rather than the west in the early eighteenth century.

<sup>176</sup>Parolles de la grande terre Chef Onontagué... du 18e octobre 1704, C11A 22: 52.

<sup>177</sup>Note that after separate councils with Vaudreuil, the Iroquois and Odawa met together to arrange the reparations. Parolles des outaouais aux Iroquois du 23e aoust 1705 [et] Reponces des Iroquois, C11A 22: 255-255v. Vaudreuil had served as the mediator who allowed for the opening of a channel of communication between the groups in dispute. The Odawa had expressly asked Vaudreuil to give the Iroquois a parcel of beaver pelts, a belt of wampum, and a red calumet for that purpose. Parolles des outaouais de michilimakina... du 22e aoust 1705, C11A 22: 261.

<sup>178</sup>Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 223. Richter has emphasized the Iroquois' skepticism regarding the ability of the French to control their western allies (219). But it is possible to view the whole affair as a successful attempt by the Iroquois to re-establish profitable economic patterns by manipulating the terms of French mediation, without which conflict might have endured.

in 1707 were interested in renewing their ties to the French, and ensuring that good relations would prevail—despite the ongoing imperial conflict (the War of the Spanish Succession) that opposed the French and their English allies. Moreover, they had a pressing duty of condolence to fulfill: Jacques Le Ber, Longueuil's uncle, had recently died.<sup>179</sup>

In opening the council, the orator evoked the purpose of the condolence ceremony they were to conduct: "Mon pere nostre coutume est de pleurer quand nous faisons une perte considerable, ne soyés pas surpris si vous nous voyez pleurer comme nous faisons, *Cest la coutume de nostre pays que vos predecesseurs ont toujours pratiqués aussy bien que nos anciens.*"<sup>180</sup> The Onondaga proceeded to articulate seven proposals, giving wampum to cover Le Ber, to mourn the land of the French and all those who had died upon it, to banish sorrow, gloom and melancholy, and to kindle a council fire. Lastly, they asked that the French smiths repair their arms.

Vaudreuil's reply the following day approved the conduct of the Onondaga. Repeating all their proposals, Onontio gave gifts of wampum to accompany his responses, and only after reciprocating most of the symbolic gifts of the Onondaga did he introduce new business regarding the violence at Detroit the year previous.

While this council might usefully serve as an example of a typical council of the early eighteenth century, it is especially interesting for Vaudreuil's first response, which could stand as a capsule history of the diplomatic acculturation of the French:

Vous m'avez dit bien mes enfans que vostre coutume Estoit de plûrer quand vous faisiez quelque perte Considerable, et que je ne devois pas estre surpris de vous voir plurer comme vous faisiez parce que *cestoit une Coutume de vostre pays, que mes predecesseurs avoient mesme autorisée autrefois, afin d'entretenir par cette façon de pleurer les morts, l'union parmy les nations En prenant part aux pertes que*

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<sup>179</sup>Jacques Le Ber (ca. 1633 - 1706) arrived in Canada in 1657 and married the sister of Charles Le Moyne de Longueuil (the father of the Baron) the following year. He had no apparent link with the Iroquois other than as lessee of Fort Frontenac after 1682 and participant in the 1693 campaign against the Mohawk. However, he was one of the wealthier members of the Canadian elite, having purchased the title of *écuyer* in 1696 from Louis XIV. Yves F. Zoltvany, "Jacques Le Ber," *DBC* 2: 389-391.

<sup>180</sup>Parolles des Sauvages Onnontagués a Monsieur le gouverneur general Le 16e aoust 1707, C11A 26: 86. Italics mine.

*l'on fait les uns, et les autres, Je suis bien aise de vous voir dans les sentiments si conformes au bien de la paix, et a la bonne intelligence que je veux tousjours entretenir avec vous, Je vous Remercie d'avoir couvert le corps de Mr Lebert.*<sup>181</sup>

In effect, Vaudreuil recognized that the pattern of ritualized mourning which characterized Iroquois society was, as the Onondaga orator suggested, surprising and alien to the French, but important in that it fostered the structures that made intercultural cooperation possible. He acknowledged the precedent of his predecessors' participation in intercultural councils patterned after the condolence ceremony of the Iroquois—a ceremony which, between tribes and between peoples, dissipated grief and created union. Moreover, in acting as speaker for the French, in manipulating wampum according to protocol, and in appropriating the metaphor and imagery of Iroquois diplomacy, Vaudreuil only reiterated tacitly what he said explicitly: the forms which characterized diplomatic encounters between Amerindians and the French were essentially of Amerindian origin.

As governor of New France, Vaudreuil did not have to elaborate a diplomatic system *ex nihilo*. Instead, he inherited the role of Onontio and a place in an already existing diplomatic system from his predecessors. Continuity was provided in large part by the Amerindians themselves, who acted in 1703 to recognize the transmission of Onontio's role to Vaudreuil and to continue the precedents set by earlier generations. Although the substantive issues and positions of power would change, the stage upon which intercultural diplomacy would take place was in place at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The shape of intercultural diplomacy between 1703 and 1725 would change only slightly as the French in Canada recovered from the restrictive edict of 1696 and eventually re-expanded into the interior. Written treaties and silver medals took second place in formal encounters to the protocols of the council, the calumet, and the wampum belt. If anything, the French who expanded New France's diplomatic frontier in the west probably furthered their diplomatic acculturation by accommodating and adapting to the diplomatic cultures of distant peoples.

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<sup>181</sup> Reponce De Monsieur le Gouverneur general aux Sauvages Onnontagués du 17e aoust 1707, C11A 26: 87v. Italics mine.

Acculturation may seem a strong word for a process by which the French learned to use Amerindian forms for securing peace, alliance and security. Was it not mere pragmatism to make cultural concessions the means of achieving an imperial end? Perhaps: but when Vaudreuil wrote glibly of the message "contained" in a belt of wampum, or laced his dispatches with fragments of Amerindian rhetoric, one may easily suspect a more subtle influence.<sup>182</sup> This is not to say that French diplomatic agents came very close to understanding or becoming like Amerindians. However, they did adopt selected formal elements of an alien diplomatic culture and came to manipulate these elements repeatedly and deliberately.

In addition to underlining the position of the French as students of Amerindian diplomatic forms, eighteenth-century councils between Amerindians and the French may be conceptualized generally as the formal peaceful encounter between the pre-modern, territorial nation-state (France) and the Amerindian kinship state,<sup>183</sup> and between their respective diplomatic cultures. Political scientist R. L. Barsh has broadly laid out the terms of this encounter:

Diplomatic relations among North America's original nations were established according to the norms of kinship, with each nation assuming the role of kinsmen within a confederation.... The real work of foreign affairs took place at annual ceremonies of renewal at which confederated nations identified and reconciled their grievances, confessed their sins, paid their debts, enlisted one another's aid, and reaffirmed their kinship.

When Europeans first encountered indigenous Americans, they respected indigenous American diplomatic protocols. On the whole they did not make formal contractual obligations (except for land deeds), but instead established national kinship relations and participated in annual ceremonies of renewal.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>182</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 9bre 1709, *RAPQ* (1942-43): 433. Although they refrained from applying Amerindian metaphor to European realities, New France's officials often paraphrased, and in some cases even imitated, the diplomatic discourse of Amerindians.

<sup>183</sup>The distinction between the territorial nation-state, defined on the basis of territorial jurisdiction or sovereignty, and the kinship state, which is potentially universal in scope, is laid out in R. L. Barsh, "The Nature and Spirit of North American Political Systems," *American Indian Quarterly* 10, 3 (1986): 187. F. Jennings has similarly described relations between Europeans and Amerindians in the northeast as the encounter between governments in the state form and governments in the tribal form; the former are characterized by a political organization based on hierarchy and coercion, while the latter are founded on kinship and locality (Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire*, 7).

<sup>184</sup>Barsh, "American Political Systems," 194.

Barsh's sketch largely confirms the picture of eighteenth-century French-Amerindian diplomacy presented here. In the course of the expansion of New France's diplomatic frontiers, the French became enmeshed in a network of national kinship ties which they were obliged to treat seriously and which they cemented by means of Amerindian protocols. These protocols provided a forum in which the paid servants of centralized states commanding the resources of large-scale societies met face to face with appointed speakers representing the consensus decisions of leaders within small-scale societies. As long as the balance of power (as determined by such factors as demography, economy and technology) between Amerindians and the newcomers remained roughly equal, this forum was the key to achieving the basic goals of security and alliance which both types of society required.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE AGENTS OF DIPLOMACY

[T]he warr which Christians have is different with the war the Indians have, for Christians make peace when they have slain one another, but the Indians are so violent when they Loose [*sic*] men they will not Leave off.

Longueuil's speech to the Iroquois, 11 May 1711

J'embrasse la paix de mes deux mains pour la retenir et ne la laisser echapper, Ce ne sera pas nous autres Sauvages quy gâterons les affaires... ce sera vous autres quy les broüillerés, Car vous autres Europ[éens] vous estes de méshants esprits, vous vous fachés pour rien et vous prenés la hache pour des bagatelles.

Teganissorens' speech to Vaudreuil, 24 October 1703

Ethnocentrism is the most widely shared thing in the world.

Pierre Clastres, *Society Against the State* (1977)

#### 3.1 Amerindian diplomatic principals

Historians of Canada's French colonial period have generally been more interested in the Amerindian as ally and warrior or as hunter and trader, than in the Amerindian as diplomat. This reflects perhaps the historian's dependence on the written sources left by French colonial officials, who considered these roles to be the ultimate vocations of Amerindians. Both the military and economic security of New France depended in large part on Amerindians acting in these capacities, in cooperation with French colonials. But Amerindians were of course much more: agriculturalists, explorers, spiritual leaders, and, among other things, diplomats.

Amerindian diplomats were not the representatives of a sovereign, or prince, as European theorists described state rulers. Rather, in the role of speaker their function was to act as the voice of absent principals. In the French council records, the term *anciens* was used most frequently to translate whatever expressions Amerindians used to designate these apparent decision-makers, whose constituencies ranged from an entire village (or more rarely, a group of villages) to a small faction within a nation.

Because of the organization of Amerindian diplomatic activity, senior French officials like Vaudreuil and the town governors, who rarely ventured beyond the confines of colonial settlement (unless it was to return to France) were more familiar with

Amerindian diplomats than with the people the latter represented. The world of early eighteenth-century intercultural diplomacy was probably a small one, where most of the principal actors knew each other. Vaudreuil's address to the Amerindian nations gathered at Montreal in 1711 is remarkable among council records for the naming of more than a score of Amerindians, most of whom appear for the first (and only) time in the official correspondence.<sup>1</sup> In general, however, French officials only infrequently recorded the names of Amerindian diplomats attending councils, perhaps because such details were deemed irrelevant in the dispatches intended for the minister. As a result of this bias, the names of only a few Amerindian diplomats can be recovered from the written record; consequently these actors have received the most attention from historians.

The names of twenty-four Amerindian diplomats who appeared at councils at Montreal or Quebec between 1703 and 1725 are listed in Appendix 1. Of these, only seven were identified at two or more councils (this figure rises to eleven if French-Amerindian councils that took place before Vaudreuil's term are counted as well). And only two diplomats—the Odawa Koutaouiliboé and the Potawatomi Ouilamek—emerge as frequent envoys to Onontio at Montreal.

Although the French used the term *chef* to describe Amerindian speakers at Montreal, the actual role these diplomats played in village and tribal politics is often unclear. Historical evidence is rare and interpretations are occasionally contradictory.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Parolles de Mr le gouverneur general aux Sauvages descendues d'en hault [1711], Archives des colonies (Paris), C11A, Correspondance générale, Canada, vol. 31, fol. 81-87v, National Archives of Canada, MG 1, microfilm, reel F-31. Subsequent references to documents in the Archives des colonies (Paris) will be by series, volume and folio number.

<sup>2</sup>For example, historian R. D. Edmunds has claimed that the Potawatomi Makisabé was a war chief whose name meant "Eagle;" anthropologist J. Clifton interprets the same name as "Bad River" and identifies its bearer as an *okama* (clan leader), not a war chief. R. D. Edmunds, *The Potawatomis* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 28; J. F. Clifton, *The Prairie People* (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1977), 88.

Sketches of Amerindian diplomats in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* / *Dictionnaire biographique du Canada* are rife with terms such as *sous-chef*, "chief of old men and warriors," *chef suprême*, and so on—vague and probably inaccurate terms which reveal nothing about how leadership was exercised by these Amerindians. While the majority of Amerindian diplomats who participated in councils at Montreal are obscure figures, the handful of better-known participants owe their recognition to their role as diplomats. Perhaps historians should replace the ambiguous term "chief" with the term

However, given the power of the word in oral societies, speakers may be presumed to have exercised some form of leadership based upon their oratorical skills. In addition, some Amerindians appear to have combined various forms of leadership. The Potawatomi Onanguicé, for example, was a clan leader, as well as an active mediator between his people at La Baye and French traders and officers. At Montreal in 1701, he acted as a speaker for the Potawatomi, Odawa, Menominee, Sauk and Miami, and in 1715, he, or perhaps a successor, led a party of warriors against the Kikapoo, Mascouten and Fox.<sup>3</sup>

A handful of identifiable Amerindians like Onanguicé stand out in the French records because of their continued involvement in intercultural relations. Some of these Amerindians—Ouilamek and Pilemont are examples—have been called “French-appointed chiefs” or “alliance chiefs;” their prestige was apparently derived from their role in maintaining advantageous relations with the French newcomers, who, through the distribution of medals and gifts, hoped to maintain Amerindian nations in the French interest.<sup>4</sup> But the role of these chiefs was conditioned in the long term by Amerindian cultural interpretations of the nature and quality of leadership. In order to retain leading positions among their own people, Amerindian leaders had to conform to Amerindian, not French, expectations.

Although the historical Amerindian societies of the northeast presented a multiplicity of political systems and types of leadership, there were elements of commonality that permit a general treatment of the subject. Europeans of the colonial period commented frequently upon Native political systems, or indeed upon what they felt to be the lack of such. The following brief characterization is typical:

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“diplomat” in cases where Amerindian leadership was manifested exclusively in a diplomatic context.

<sup>3</sup>Clifton, *The Prairie People*, 61, 76, 86; Vaudreuil au conseil, 14 8bre 1716, *Rapport de l'Archiviste de la Province de Québec* [hereinafter *RAPQ*] (1947-48): 327.

<sup>4</sup>For a discussion of pro-French chiefs, see Clifton, *The Prairie People*, 119-121; Richard White, *The Middle Ground* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1991), 38-40, 178-180; D. Peter MacLeod, “‘Une conspiration générale:’ The Exercise of Power by the Amerindians of the Great Lakes during the War of the Austrian Succession, 1744-1748” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1992), 26-30.

Le gouvernement des sauvages est un gouvernement republicain; ce sont les anciens qui reglent toutes les affaires et les jeunes gens qui ne sont que pour l'execution: parmy ces anciens sont les chefs de guerre, ils le deviennent par les belles actions qu'ils font, par l'amitié de la jeunesse qu'ils s'attirent par les présents qu'ils leur font; car ordinairement ces chefs sont le plus mal vêtus de la nation donnant tout pour se faire aimer.<sup>5</sup>

This account jumbles together a number of elements which later scholars have isolated as characteristics of Amerindian leadership: the apparent dichotomy of elders and young men; the separation of war and civil chiefs; and the importance of gift-giving in assuring status. Pierre Clastres' study of Amerindian leadership adopted the following "necessary conditions of power in [the Americas]:"

- (1.) The chief is a "peacemaker"; he is the group's moderating agency, a fact borne out by the frequent division of power into civil and military.
- (2.) He must be generous with his possessions, and cannot allow himself, without betraying his office, to reject the incessant demands of those under his "administration."
- (3.) Only a good orator can become chief.<sup>6</sup>

The general nature of Amerindian diplomacy, with its exchange of wampum and gifts, displays of eloquence, and metaphors of unity and peace, suggests how such ideals found wide resonance in Amerindian societies. The essential qualities of a leader were also the qualities of a good diplomat.

Amerindian leadership also had a spiritual dimension which was not fully appreciated by the French:

The [Algonkian] leader... was the man who through a visionary dream had acquired supernatural power directed toward practical everyday skills, resourcefulness in hunting, success in warfare, or discernment in healing the sick. The same qualities of leadership existed in Iroquoian societies.<sup>7</sup>

"Political" and "religious" leadership were not necessarily separate domains; in their early alliances with Europeans, Amerindians sought not only "economic" and "political"

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<sup>5</sup>Camille de Rochemonteix, ed. *Relation par lettres de l'Amerique septentrionale (années 1709 et 1710)* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1904), 82. See also the *Abrege de la vie et Coutumes des Sauvages du Canada* [1723], C11A 45: 172v.

<sup>6</sup>R. Lowie quoted in Pierre Clastres, *Society Against the State: The Leader as Servant and the Humane Uses of Power Among the Indians of the Americas*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Mole Editions, 1977), 21.

<sup>7</sup>Cornelius J. Jaenen, *Friend and Foe: Aspects of French-Amerindian Cultural Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 89.

advantages, but access to the spiritual knowledge of the Other.<sup>8</sup> But in the early eighteenth century, the French-Amerindian alliance was not a channel for the exchange of spiritual knowledge: quite likely, long experience with French governors, officers and missionaries and their pretensions to hold universal religious truths lowered Amerindians' expectations with respect to the spiritual benefits of intercultural alliances. With the exception of the Potawatomi Pilemont, none of the Amerindian diplomats who appeared at Montreal were described as Christian converts, and none were identified as important spiritual leaders by the French (who would have used the disparaging term *jongleur*).

Anthropologist Mary Druke has used historical sources and Euro-American classifications to describe Mohawk and Oneida expectations of leaders in the colonial period: the attitude of humility (as opposed to one of authority), the role of advisor (as opposed to that of commander), the assumption of responsibility toward followers (rather than toward higher authority), experience, patience, and the reciprocal redistribution of material goods were the essential marks of a leader. The last trait was particularly important as a concrete demonstration of leadership:

Leaders probably signalled their statuses as much by redistributing material goods presented to them as by exhibition of concrete signs that marked their physical appearance. Lafitau provided insight into this when he explained that leaders had little or no marks of distinction but still were given a great deal of respect.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, leadership was founded upon personal, rather than institutional, links between leaders and their followers:

The close personal relationships between leaders and followers, often expressed in kinship terms, encompassed many facets of everyday life, including the direction of ritual, the holding of councils, the heading of war parties, the provision of advice and arbitration..., and the distribution of goods and supplies.<sup>10</sup>

The most prominent Amerindian diplomats in the early eighteenth century engaged in at least three of these activities: councils, mediation, and gift-giving. Although requests

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<sup>8</sup>Mary Druke, "Structure and Meaning of Leadership among the Mohawk and Oneida during the Mid-Eighteenth Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1982), 6; Denys Delâge, "La religion dans l'alliance franco-amérindienne" *Anthropologie et sociétés* 15, 1 (1991): 62.

<sup>9</sup>Druke, "Structure and Meaning," 132-141 *passim*, 121 (quotation).

<sup>10</sup>Druke, "Structure and Meaning," 266.

for military assistance were common, Amerindian diplomats never identified themselves as warriors. Some, like Onanguicé, Ouachala, and Saguima, led war parties, but few others were recorded as doing so. Rather, their diplomatic efforts were aimed primarily at advancing the interests of their own communities, chiefly through the preservation of good relations with the French, who provided goods (arms, powder) and services (blacksmiths, arbitration). Koutaouiliboé, an Odawa Kiskakon speaker who regularly spoke for the four Odawa nations, exemplified the role of the alliance diplomat when he appeared at Montreal in 1708 to replace the Iroquois victims of an Odawa attack with captives:

c'est moy qui me suis attiré mon malheur, en attaquant l'iroquois, contre la parole que j'avois donné quand on fit la paix generale [at Montreal in 1701], j'ay fait mes efforts a la verité pour satisfaire mon frere l'iroquois, il n'aura plus rien a dire, je me suis ruiné pour avoir des esclaves... ils m'ont coutés Beaucoup, et plus que je ne puis vous dire, jay voulu en cela vous donner des preuves de mon obeissance.<sup>11</sup>

Koutaouiliboé completed his oration by affirming his people's senior status in the French alliance, informing Onontio of injuries they had suffered, and requesting arms and munitions for a counterstrike on the Miami. Beneath the diplomatic rhetoric of abject submission lies the evidence of Koutaouiliboé's attempt to maintain the diplomatic status quo of 1701, and to secure his nation's defense. Having apparently strained his resources to acquire captives—perhaps by organizing raids or “buying” captives with gifts—he brought them to Onontio so that they could be presented to the Iroquois, thereby extinguishing the need for retaliation. Koutaouiliboé's mission was the culmination of a diplomatic effort that had begun in 1705, when his nation, the Kiskakon, had met with Onontio and an Iroquois delegation to arrange reparations.<sup>12</sup> Vaudreuil was happy to mediate the Odawa-Iroquois peace, since it coincided neatly with French aims; the Odawa-Miami conflict, however, did not. For the Odawa of Michilimakinac, peace with the Five Nations offered the advantage of renewed access to English traders, and also served to detach a potential ally from the Miami. Historians may dispute the motives guiding this

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<sup>11</sup>Parolles des outtauois de michilimakina... le 23e juillet 1708, C11A 28: 206-206v.

<sup>12</sup>Parolles des outtauois de michilimakina... du 22e aoust 1705, C11A 22: 260-261.

policy, but the evidence remains of a concerted diplomatic effort to *rendre la terre unie* on one front—that is, to smooth over the fissures that threatened to destroy peace between peoples—while pursuing different objectives on another.

Part of the role of Amerindian diplomats was to mediate between their own culture and that of the French. Their cultural understanding of the newcomers was probably based on practical experience rather than on formal instruction. Amerindian diplomats were not the products of New France's occasional efforts toward the evangelization and cultural assimilation of Amerindians. It is unlikely that any spoke French, and few seem to have been catechumens; in any event, their speeches never evoked Christianity as a bond between their peoples and the French.<sup>13</sup> Instead, their knowledge of Europeans was doubtless acquired in the normal course of activities reserved for Amerindian men: war, trade, and diplomacy.

From the perspective of French officials, Amerindian diplomats were influential individuals who needed to be carefully managed—*menagé*—in order to keep them in the French interest. This attitude underlines the fact that such leaders were independent of French control, as were the nations they represented. But the French relied on these same diplomats as well as on other Amerindians to serve French policy more directly by acting as messengers and informants, particularly in Albany. However, the tendency of the French to distrust Native testimony (unless it was confirmed by a European) probably limited the benefits of this intelligence-gathering system.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Amerindians in mission communities near Montreal were more apt to refer to Christianity in their speeches. See *Discours des sauvages Nipissingues et Algonquins...* [1704], C11A 22: 60-60v; *Paroles des sauvages du Saut St Louis... du premier aoust 1705*, C11A 22: 264-264v. During the 1750s, the Laurentian Iroquois referred on several occasions to Catholic ritual (especially baptism) as a special bond between themselves and the French. D. Peter MacLeod "'Our New Brothers:' The Laurentian Iroquois and the Beginning of the British Era, 1759-1763," manuscript submitted to *Journal of Canadian Studies*.

<sup>14</sup>Ouilamek and Koutaouiliboé carried letters from missionaries in the upper country to the governor at Montreal. Vaudreuil au ministre, 19 8bre 1705, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 92; D. Chaput, "Koutaouiliboé," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* [hereinafter *DCB*] vol. 2: *1701 to 1740* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 338. For Amerindian spies at Albany, see Vaudreuil au ministre, 12 9bre 1708, *RAPQ* (1939-40): 443; Vaudreuil au ministre, 3 9bre 1710, *RAPQ* (1946-47): 399. For Vaudreuil's rooted distrust of

The view from the Chateau Vaudreuil in Montreal overlooks the workings of intercultural diplomacy in the villages of the upper country. It is possible, even likely, that other Amerindians—not necessarily male speakers and chiefs—played important roles in maintaining the alliance with the French. The contemporary example of the Ojibway woman Thanadelthur suggests how this might work. Called “Slave Woman” by the English at York Fort on Hudson Bay, Thanadelthur acted as a comprehensive cultural mediator among the HBC men, the Cree, and the Ojibway further inland during the 1710s. As guide, interpreter, diplomat and trade commissioner, she proved indispensable to her employer, who expressed his grief openly upon her death. Thanadelthur was not unique; Amerindian women continued to fill these and other roles throughout the Americas, wherever Amerindian peoples and Europeans came into contact.<sup>15</sup>

The relationships established between Amerindian women and French traders and *coureurs de bois* could have provided the context for this kind of diplomacy. Indeed, for most Amerindian groups, intermarriage was an important mechanism for creating and strengthening alliances.<sup>16</sup> An intriguing number of French interpreters and agents married Amerindian women or *métisses* (see section 3.4, below), thus creating interpersonal and intercultural ties that paralleled the diplomatic kinship ties that involved Onontio at Montreal. It is even possible that some of the Amerindian diplomats who came to Montreal were related to women who had formed such ties with French traders in the *pays d'en haut*. But at the level of formal encounters between French and Amerindian diplomats, the role of Amerindian women was diminished—no doubt in part because the French were not prepared to receive women as diplomats.

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Amerindian testimony, see Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 3 9bre 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 157; Vaudreuil au ministre, 28 juin 1708, *RAPQ* (1939-40): 424; Vaudreuil au ministre, 27 avril 1709, *RAPQ* (1942-43): 399.

<sup>15</sup>J. S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), 64-65, 126-127; S. Van Kirk, “*Many Tender Ties*” (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer, 1980), 64-71; Clara Sue Kidwell, “Indian Women as Cultural Mediators,” *Ethnohistory* 39, 2 (Spring 1992): 97-107.

<sup>16</sup>As it was for European dynasts of the period. Bruce White, “‘Give Us a little Milk:’ Economic and Ceremony in the Ojibway Fur Trade,” 25-27; J. A. Clifton, *The Prairie People*, 64.

The council between the Illinois diplomat Chachagouesse and Vaudreuil in 1712 illustrated the problem of Amerindian nations who contemplated intermarriage as a diplomatic bond: Onontio might repudiate the ethnic Frenchman who had married into the group. According to Chachagouesse, Michel Bisaillon, a *coureur de bois* whom Vaudreuil distrusted, had come to the Illinois village "nous demander a faire alliance en Epousant Une de nos filles des plus considerables," and claiming to be a French representative. Chachagouesse reported his people's eagerness to accept Bisaillon's offer, although his legitimacy was suspect—"Ce qu'il nous disoit de Sa bouche n'estoit soutenu de rien." In all likelihood, the Illinois were well aware that Bisaillon acted as a commercial agent for Pennsylvania. At Montreal, Vaudreuil advised Chachagouesse that he considered Bisaillon a "mauvais esprit" and, at the Amerindian diplomat's request, dispatched a French officer—an accredited French agent who was to be considered the true bearer of Onontio's words.<sup>17</sup>

Amerindian diplomats exercised a recognized form of non-coercive leadership in their own societies and represented clans, factions, villages and coalitions in councils with the French. The institution of speaker provided the basic framework in which they exercised their diplomatic functions. Although a handful of Amerindian diplomats stand out in the historical record for their continued involvement with the French, the majority identified in the French council record appeared only once or twice. The typical diplomat, then, was not an alliance chief and even less a French-appointee. Instead, he represented the views of decision-making groups back in his own village to French officials in

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<sup>17</sup>Parolles de Chachagouesse... du 20e aoust 1712, C11A 33: 92v-93v; Reponses de Monsieur Le Gouverneur..., C11A 33: 101v-102. Chachagouesse's daughter was, incidentally, the only female diplomat identified at Montreal between 1703 and 1725. See Francis Jennings, "Peter Bisaillon," *Dictionnaire biographique du Canada* [hereinafter *DBC*] vol. 3: 1741 à 1770 (Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1969), 70.

The process by which French traders and officers married Amerindian women *à la façon du pays* in order to form a kinship alliance with a local band is discussed in Jacqueline Peterson, "Prelude to Red River: A Social Portrait of the Great Lakes Métis" *Ethnohistory* 25, 1 (Winter 1978): 57-58.

accordance with Amerindian diplomatic customs and the established framework of intercultural diplomacy.

### 3.2 French diplomatic agents: myth and reality

If Onontio, the French governor, was the essential diplomatic link between Amerindian nations and the French, it follows that his actions and the actions of his appointed agents are the most significant for understanding the international and intercultural relations of the period. Although the intercultural ties formed by *voyageurs* and the like in the *pays d'en haut* are important in understanding contact on a societal level, such relationships are secondary for the study of formal international, or diplomatic, relations. Instead, those individuals who were understood by the French and Amerindians alike to be legitimate “national” representatives must necessarily remain the focus of this inquiry.

The fundamental reality of Canada's diplomatic network in the first quarter of the eighteenth century was the overwhelming involvement of both French and Canadian-born military officers. Under Vaudreuil the officer corps of the *troupes de la Marine* provided the essential framework for an efficient corps of diplomatic agents, to the point of excluding missionaries and *coureurs de bois*. In 1707, during a council with a deputation of Onondagas, Vaudreuil appropriated the oft-used Iroquois metaphor of the deep-rooted tree of peace to describe the far-flung diplomatic system which linked French and Amerindians over vast stretches of territory, and Onontio's central role therein: “Je suis un grand arbre, mes enfans dont les racines sont bien proffondes, J'estens mes branches de toutes parts, Et quoy que j'en aye desloignés de moy, quelque vent qu'il fasse, Estant toujours ferme sur mon pied rien [ne] peut mesbranler.” Each branch of this tree, as Vaudreuil made clear, represented a French agent “[qui] tire sa nourriture de moy, il ne fait

rien que par mes ordres, et suivant ma volonté.” These branches, then, are the subject of this study.<sup>18</sup>

The principal sources for identifying French agents of diplomacy in the west are Vaudreuil's correspondence with the minister of Marine, in which the governor explained his actions to his superiors with an eye to justifying himself, and the French record of councils involving French and Amerindians. There are also documents listing, for example, the expense of an expedition which included interpreters. Most of these documents are of an administrative nature, and thus reflect day-to-day policy and practice. In the official correspondence and administrative documents of the period, French agents visibly fulfilled three diplomatic roles—envoy, post commandant, and interpreter—with the sanction of Onontio.

The envoy was an individual sent by Onontio to make contact with a specific group, or in rare cases, another individual. The purpose of such missions was to deliver messages, especially council invitations, to solicit military aid, or to communicate French policy. Envoys did not generally reside among the nations to whom they were sent, although a handful of French agents did so for extended periods of time. Metropolitan pretences aside, these envoys had little authority over the nations among whom they were sent. Vaudreuil was quite frank about the failure of the Eustache Lambert *dit* Dumont's 1720 mission to effect the relocation of two important allies: “les Esperances que J'avois eu d'attirer les Miamis a la Riviere St. Joseph et les ouyatanons [Weas] sur les Bords du Teatiky [Kankakee River] se sont entierement evanouies,” he reported the following year. Vaudreuil then dispatched Jacques-Charles Renaud Dubuisson, *capitaine*, to establish and command a post among the Miamis in order to curb the effects of Iroquois-English solicitations.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Reponce De Monsieur le Gouverneur general aux Sauvages Onnontagués du 17e aoust 1707, C11A 26: 89v-90.

<sup>19</sup>Vaudreuil au conseil, 6 octobre 1721, C11A 44: 162v-163v.

Post commandants such as Dubuisson were generally senior officers (usually *capitaines*) who combined public service and private commerce: their position entailed an ongoing diplomatic role as well as ample opportunities for lucrative trading. The practice of dispatching officers to commands in the *pays d'en haut* was inaugurated as a military necessity during Joseph-Antoine Lefebvre de La Barre's term as governor (1682 - 1685); it blossomed several decades later under Charles de La Boische de Beauharnois (Vaudreuil's successor) as a system of trading permits granted to military commandants. During most of Vaudreuil's term, military officers were prohibited from combining commerce with service to the Crown.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, his correspondence makes clear the variety of informal and largely customary practices which characterized the commercial dimension of western posts and garrisons: "Il est vray qu'outre ces congés il [Vaudreuil] donne permission aux officiers qui Commandent dans les postes de faire monter un Canot le printems et un autre l'automne pour leur porter leurs besoins, et aux subalternes un Canot seulement chaque année."<sup>21</sup> Lists of such *permissions* illustrate the process by which officers transported goods, included a limited amount of brandy, to their distant posts. The multiple contracts they signed with Laurentian merchants are further evidence of their commercial activities.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, interpreters were key diplomatic agents in maintaining ties between the French and Amerindian groups. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the position of interpreter at the western posts, Montreal, and Quebec was an established form of gubernatorial patronage. Like commandants, interpreters were permitted to transport goods annually to posts in the upper country, and like envoys and commandants, were suspected

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<sup>20</sup>W. J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier, 1534-1760*, rev. ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983 [1969]), 93,116; D. Miquelon, *New France 1701-1744* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), 161-162. There were exceptions, of course; the isolated "safe" post of Temiskaming "for many years given to Vaudreuil in lieu of back pay" (Miquelon, 161).

<sup>21</sup>Vaudreuil et Bégon au conseil, 11 novembre 1718, C11A 39: 113v.

<sup>22</sup>Estat des permissions accordée par... Vaudreuil..., 23 septembre 1722, C11A 45: 351ff.; contracts for the fur trade signed by Amariton, Robutel de La Noue, Godefroy de Linctot, and Legardeur de St. Pierre are among those in the Schmidt Coll. of the Chicago Historical Society. Louise Phelps Kellogg, *The French Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest* (New York: Cooper Square, 1968 [1925]), 294-295, 301 n. 21, 305 n. 32; Nive Voisine, "Zacharie Robutel de La Noue," *DBC* 2: 607.

by the Crown of engaging in the illegal fur and brandy trade. The salary seems to have been between 300 and 800 *livres*.<sup>23</sup> The role of the interpreter, discussed in more detail below, occasionally went beyond that of translation in the narrow sense; interpreters were “cultural brokers” who “mediated an exchange of cultures beyond the domain of words and promises.”<sup>24</sup>

Study of the official correspondence between Vaudreuil and the minister or council of Marine, as well as other correspondence and administrative documents (such as the dispatches of the intendants and members of the *état-major*) permits the identification of some forty-two individuals who visibly served as Onontio’s legitimate representatives on the western frontier between 1703 and 1725 (see appendix 2). Some of these agents came from the highest echelons of colonial society and served under Vaudreuil while owing their positions to influence and status in the *métropole*. Others were more truly the creatures of the governor in that they owed their positions to his protection and patronage. The majority seem to have cultivated only occasional ties to Amerindians, but a significant minority—a half-dozen individuals—maintained long-term relationships with specific Native groups. All, however, at some point sought to create and maintain ties to Amerindians in the interests of the French state.

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<sup>23</sup>By comparison, Vaudreuil’s 1687 commission as *commandant des troupes* brought him about 1500 *livres* annually—a “small” salary for a noble. Miquelon, *New France 1701-1744*, 248; *Estat des permissions accordée par... Vaudreuil...*, 27 septembre 1722, C11A 45: 351v-354v (interpreters were allowed only 10 to 16 *pots* of brandy, compared to 30 for officers and 60 to 75 for commandants). For illegal trading by interpreters, see Pontchartrain à Vaudreuil, 10 mai 1710, *RAPQ* (1947-47): 372; Pontchartrain à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 4 juillet 1713, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 222. Maurice Ménard made 300 *livres* as an interpreter during the Fox campaigns of 1715-1716 and the negotiations of 1717 (*Estat de la dépense... à l’occasion de la guerre des Renards*, 10 novembre 1721, C11A 38: 189), while Joncaire was paid 400 as an interpreter (Raudot [fils] à Pontchartrain, 1 novembre 1709, C11G 4: 187v); Sabrevois claimed that he was obliged to pay the interpreter 800 *livres* per annum (*Deliberation du conseil sur la declaration du Sr de Sabrevois...*, 14 mai 1720, C11A 41: 299v); Zoltvany, *Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil*, 14.

<sup>24</sup>Nancy L. Hagedorn, “‘A Friend To Go Between Them:’ The Interpreter as Cultural Broker in Anglo-Iroquois Councils,” *Ethnohistory* 35, 1 (Winter 1988): 60 (quotation).

This list cannot pretend to be exhaustive; it is quite possible that some French agents, especially the less visible ones, went undetected. As well, this compilation deliberately excluded some individuals, particularly those whose roles were exclusively military in nature.<sup>25</sup> In sum, the list of Vaudreuil's agents is perhaps best characterized as functional and representative: it includes individuals whose service was clearly documented, while defining such service in flexible terms, to include a variety of roles.

This systematic approach to the study of diplomatic agents seeks to correct and contextualize earlier impressionistic descriptions of the conduct of French diplomacy. Historians have recognized the importance of certain individuals in maintaining ties between Amerindians and the French, but naturally only the most influential and colourful appear in the historical literature.<sup>26</sup> Behind the likes of Chabert de Joncaire and Le Moyne de Longueuil, however, stand a host of others—many of whom are still passed over in even recent literature on French-Amerindian relations—whose actions contributed to the creation and maintenance of intercultural ties in the first quarter of the eighteenth century.

All in all, generalizations about the agents of French diplomacy fail to take into account the fact that the forms of French interaction with Amerindian nations evolved over the course of a century-and-a-half of contact; often, they reflect the all-too-common error of describing eighteenth-century New France by extrapolating from elements of the so-called

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<sup>25</sup>Jean-Baptiste Hertel de Rouville, for example, commanded several campaigns involving Amerindian allies in 1708 and 1709; "nos sauvages," wrote Vaudreuil in 1709, "demandent... pour les commander les S[ieu]rs de Rouville et de la periere [René Boucher de La Perrière]" (Vaudreuil à Pontchartrain, 14 novembre 1709, *RAPQ* (1942-43): 429). Seven years later, Rouville was serving at Louisbourg, but Vaudreuil asked the council to return him to Canada "pour le detacher dans des postes éloignés pour maintenir la paix avec les sauvages"—the rationale being the "ascendant qu'il a sur ces nations" (Vaudreuil et Bégon au conseil, 14 octobre 1716, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 327; Raymond Douville, "Jean-Baptiste Hertel de Rouville, *DBC* 2: 296). Clearly, Rouville was identified by Onontio as a valuable diplomatic agent; however, Rouville never returned to Canada, and thus never fulfilled his diplomatic potential.

<sup>26</sup>Vaudreuil's biographer, Yves F. Zoltvany, described Vaudreuil's corps of agents as Joncaire, Louvigny, Longueuil, and Vincennes, who worked among the Senecas, Ottawas, Onondagas and Miamis respectively. *Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 52. Miquelon, following Zoltvany, identified a very limited group of emissaries: "Vaudreuil had a staff of four agents among the tribes to carry out his western diplomacy" (*New France, 1701-1744*, 39).

Heroic Age and early period of royal rule. Louise Phelps Kellogg, for instance, asserted that the Jesuits were instrumental agents in the French diplomatic system:

At the time of treaty or council with the Indians [Jesuit missionaries] were frequently utilized as interpreters, and often ambassadors from the governor [of New France] to the tribesmen. The governors of the eighteenth century considered it good policy to maintain missionaries at these distant posts. They sometimes detected and reported incipient conspiracies against French sovereignty. In a few cases their influence was sufficient to counteract these movements and to restrain the tribes within the French alliance.<sup>27</sup>

Unfortunately, Kellogg did not go to any length to substantiate this characterization of the missionaries' diplomatic role, which might better describe the middle of the seventeenth century. Vaudreuil considered Jesuits useful in the *pays d'en haut*, but when he asked that several be sent from France in 1718, it was because of their long-term role in "reducing" Amerindians to civility, not because of their utility in intercultural diplomacy.<sup>28</sup> During the term of Louis-Hector de Callière, Vaudreuil's predecessor, Jean Enjalran, Julien Garnier, and Jacques Bruyas, all Jesuits, were instrumental in the negotiations leading up to the Grand Settlement of 1701, serving as envoys and interpreters of Algonkian and Iroquois languages. Bruyas was particularly valuable to Callière as a specialist in Iroquois affairs, and even acted as his representative at Boston in 1699.<sup>29</sup> But after 1703, neither these

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<sup>27</sup>Kellogg, *The French Regime*, 177.

<sup>28</sup>"Of all the means that can be used to keep the Indian on our side there is none more effective than giving them Missionaries because these missionaries, by teaching them the principles of Religion hold them by the influence they acquire over their minds and render them more peaceful." Minutes of Council of Marine, 5 janvier 1718, quoted in Joseph L. Peyser, ed. *Letters from New France: The Upper Country, 1686-1783* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 92. Given the Jesuits' general lack of success in the *pays d'en haut*, this policy was highly optimistic, to say the least.

In 1706, the interpreter Maurice Ménard was accompanied by Father Gabriel Marest to Michilimakinac; Vaudreuil hoped that the latter might aid in the release of some prisoners to the French. Ménard seems, however, to have been the principal envoy in this matter. Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 30 avril 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 114; Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 3 9bre 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 142. The French agent sent among the Iroquois in the same year was to be "secondé" in his efforts by missionaries. Vaudreuil au ministre, 28 avril 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 101.

<sup>29</sup>Gilles Havard, *La grande paix de Montréal de 1701* (Montreal: Recherches amérindiennes au Québec, 1992), 200, 204, 205.

Jesuits nor others of their order appeared to play prominent roles in French-Amerindian diplomacy on the western frontier.<sup>30</sup>

*Coueurs de bois*—Frenchmen who traded without licence in the upper country—are often pointed out as another type of French diplomatic agent. Their liaisons with Amerindian women and Amerindian male traders presumably supplied them with linguistic and cultural knowledge at least as important as that of the “learned fathers,” the Jesuits.<sup>31</sup> Logically, these intercultural ties could lead to the creation of a specialized corps of cultural mediators who might act as the pillars of the French diplomatic organization. Francis Jennings has argued that

with a very small resource of ethnically French population, the French colonies amplified their manpower by tolerating and assimilating the children of intersocietal liaisons. These offspring of mixed unions became especially valuable in the basic French strategy of controlling large native populations by planting a network of forts and trading posts among them. By the end of the seventeenth century the French had created and mastered a politico-economic empire extending over the vast regions of the Mississippi Valley and the Great Lakes environs....<sup>32</sup>

This affirmation is logical but indefensible in the light of historical evidence. Synethnic diplomats were simply not central to French-Amerindian diplomacy in the early eighteenth century.

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<sup>30</sup>Daniel Richter has called the early eighteenth-century Jesuits in Iroquoia “passive symbols rather than active participants” in French-Iroquois relations: “Neither [Lamberville or Garnier] played an active role in French or English accounts of Iroquois politics during the period, and each was, like most missionaries in New France during the first years of the eighteenth century, an elderly man long past his prime.” *Ordeal of the Longhouse* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 218.

The number of missionaries in the *pays d'en haut* declined toward the end of the seventeenth century, and soon after 1711 there were apparently no more than five missionaries in the west (Kellogg, *The French Regime*, 169). Many explanations have been advanced to account for the decline, from Native resistance to Versailles' narrow strategic interest in the colony after 1701, but the waning of piety and missionary zeal in the metropole and the resulting attrition of missionaries in Canada are sufficient causes. For the Society of Jesus, greater interest and success in the Oriental missions led to a redeployment of missionary forces, away from Canadian missions. See Kellogg, *The French Regime*, 173-175; J. H. Kennedy, *Jesuit and Savage in New France* (Yale University Press, 1950; reprint ed., Hamden CT: Archon, 1971), 51.

<sup>31</sup>W. N. Fenton, “Structure, Continuity, and Change,” in F. Jennings *et al.*, eds. *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy* [hereinafter *HCID*] (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 25.

<sup>32</sup>F. Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), 79.

Even specialized studies of diplomats in the colonial period fail to take into account the evolution of intercultural diplomacy. In an article entitled "Forest Diplomats," Yasuhide Kawashima writes:

The French were usually well provided with interpreters, who were chosen from those countrymen living among the Indians.... Before they started their careers as interpreters, these Frenchmen had usually been in the service of a mission and had lived among the Indians and thus were well familiar with the languages and the culture of the natives.<sup>33</sup>

Such a statement may be accurate for the mid-seventeenth century, from which Kawashima draws such examples as Jean Nicolet and Olivier Le Tardif, but not for the eighteenth century. As a type, Nicolas Perrot, the archetypical explorer-*voyageur* whose abilities as a diplomat and interpreter stemmed from his early experience as a *donné* with the Jesuits, conforms to the image of the French diplomat-interpreter outlined by Kawashima above. But after 1701, Perrot retired to his estate at Bécancour, served as a *capitaine de milice* after 1708, and died in 1717.<sup>34</sup> No other such man achieved the same degree of importance in Canadian diplomatic circles under Vaudreuil.

The diplomatic situation on the eastern frontier of New France offers a further corrective to the urge to generalize about the nature of diplomatic agents. In relations with the Abenaki of western Acadia (present-day Maine and New Brunswick), Vaudreuil relied heavily on such men as the Jesuit Sébastien Rasle, and the noble officer Bernard-Anselme d'Abbadie de Saint-Castin, whose name belied his Abenaki ancestry. Saint-Castin's father, Jean-Vincent, was notable for becoming an adoptive Abenaki chief and for marrying a chief's daughter (Marie-Mathilde, daughter of Madokawando).<sup>35</sup> Here indeed the influence of linguistically skilled missionaries and synethnic agents tolerated by the French seems paramount. A comparative study of diplomacy and geopolitics on the western and eastern frontiers of New France could well elucidate the existence of two quite different

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<sup>33</sup>Y. Kawashima, "Forest Diplomats: The Role of Interpreters in Indian-European Relations on the Early American Frontiers," *American Indian Quarterly* 13, 1 (Winter, 1989): 67.

<sup>34</sup>Havard, *La grande paix de Montréal de 1701*, 213-214.

<sup>35</sup>G. C. Salagnac, "Bernard-Anselme d'Abbadie de Saint-Castin" and "Jean Vincent d'Abbadie de Saint-Castin," *DBC* 2: 3-6.

intercultural diplomatic systems. Certainly, in the period under consideration, near-continual warfare—intercultural, intercolonial, or both—on the eastern frontier and the relative proximity of European agricultural settlements to Amerindian lands in Acadia conditioned the ways in which the French and the Abenaki handled intercultural relations.<sup>36</sup> Amerindian nations on Canada's western frontier were not subjected to the same pressures, and for many, imperial conflict was a distant matter.

### 3.3 Characteristics of French agents

The criteria that determined an officer's usefulness as a diplomatic agent were frequently addressed by French officials in their dispatches. Officers who acted as envoys and post commandants were routinely characterized as having *crédit* or being *accrédité parmi les sauvages*; they apparently knew how to *mesnager l'esprit des Sauvages* and understood *la manière d'ont il faut se gouverner avec les Sauvages*. Such vague expressions suggest two obvious qualities: a good reputation among Amerindians, and experience with Amerindian political culture. A less frequently-mentioned quality was that of *libéralité*.<sup>37</sup> Given the importance of gift-giving in Amerindian society and diplomacy, this quality may well have been more significant than Vaudreuil's dispatches suggest.

Some of the French agents were clearly the governor's creatures, and were accorded diplomatic credentials mainly to facilitate trade.<sup>38</sup> The assiduity with which

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<sup>36</sup>Saint-Castin and Rasle both apparently adapted to Abenaki social norms and came to identify personally with their Amerindian hosts. Kenneth M. Morrison, *The Embattled Northeast: The Elusive Ideal of Alliance in Abenaki-Euramerican Relations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 120, 177ff.

<sup>37</sup>Jacques-Charles Renaud Dubuisson and Louis-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire were important agents who were reputed to have this quality: see Vaudreuil au conseil, 28 octobre 1719, C11A 40: 186v; F.-X. de Charlevoix, *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle-France*, 6 vols. (Paris: Nyon, 1744), 2: 324, in Francis Jennings et al., eds. *Iroquois Indians: A Documentary History* [microform collection] (Woodbridge, Conn.: Research Publications, 1984) [hereinafter IIDH], reel 7. Vaudreuil himself on occasion invited his Native "children" to receive "les effets de ma libéralité" (Reponce De Monsieur le Gouverneur general aux Sauvages Onnontagués du 17e aoust 1707, C11A 26: 91).

<sup>38</sup>Pierre You de La Découverte, sent on a diplomatic mission to the *pays d'en haut* early in Vaudreuil's term as governor, also farmed out his superior's trading post above Montreal, l'Île-aux-Tourtres (Albertine Ferland-Angers, "Pierre You de La Découverte,"

Vaudreuil's enemies in the colony pointed out such abuses is laudable; yet the abundant record of this colonial bickering tends to obscure the important fact that Amerindians themselves played a significant role in determining the usefulness of the agents sent among them.

For example, in 1717, the Odawa speaker Shamgoueschi complained of Jacques-Charles de Sabrevois' policies and conduct as commandant of Detroit:

Depuis que M de Sabrevois est arrivé au détroit les affaires ont bien changé de face, il n'a point imité son predecesseur, il en a mal usé avec nous, il nous a traité durement, n'a jamais Sçu regaler un seul chef ni leur donner un bout de tabac, c'est ce qui nous a un peu choquez.... [I] nous a traité les couvertes jusqu'à quinze castors et nous a refusé de nous donner a teter, c'est a dire a boire de l'eaudevie.

On the same occasion, the Potawatomi Otchik further emphasized Sabrevois' failure to ensure favourable rates of exchange:

[I] nous a pris jusqu'a trois peaux d'ours, pour la valeur d'un castor....  
Nous vous prions d'avoir pitié de vos enfans...; nous esperons que vous voudrez bien faire de la sorte que nous trouvions de la douceur dans la traite que nous avons a faire qu'elle nous donne de quoy nous habiller, et des couvertes a trois castors...<sup>39</sup>

From the perspective of the Odawas and Potawatomis, Sabrevois lacked the graciousness, generosity, and hospitality of his predecessor, Dubuisson, in addition to running roughshod over their expectations of obtaining goods *à bon marché* from the French—all of which motivated these allies to trade their furs at Albany instead. Sabrevois was removed from this post, and in later correspondence with the council of Marine, Vaudreuil pointed out his unsuitability for western commands: "Le S[ieu]r de Vaudreuil croit qu'il [Sabrevois] ne convient nullement pour le Commandement du Detroit et qu'il n'est pas aysés au fait du menagement qu'on doit avoir pour les Sauvages." Despite having previously lauded Sabrevois as a good military officer, Vaudreuil identified his *intéressment*, *avarice* and *dureté* as qualities which proved his inaptitude for intercultural

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*DBC* 2: 703). Alphonse de Tonty was another of Vaudreuil's protégés (C. J. Russ, "Alphonse de Tonty," *DBC* 2: 632).

<sup>39</sup>Paroles des outa8as du Saguinan et des poute8atamis..., 24 juin 1717, C11A 38: 172-172v, 174-174v.

relations.<sup>40</sup> In this case, both Onontio's and the Amerindians' related but quite different expectations combined to force Sabrevois' removal.

Amerindian insistence could also both preclude or necessitate the use of certain agents. Zacharie Robutel de La Noue was a senior Canadian officer who, between 1717 and 1721, had commanded the sensitive post at Kaministiquia, where he was occupied with mediating relations between the Dakota and the Cree.<sup>41</sup> In 1724, in order to settle relations between the Fox and the Illinois, Vaudreuil informed the minister that he could not send La Noue to La Baye "ou il devenu suspect aux Nations;" Constant Le Marchand de Lignery was dispatched in his stead. Marginal notes on Vaudreuil's letter reveal official concern: "[Vaudreuil] a eu raison de ne point envoyer le S[ieur] la noüe a la Baye sil est suspect aux nations mais il devoit en mander les raisons, le Roy souhaite le scavoir."<sup>42</sup>

Conversely, a 1712 council invitation by the Onondagas comprised three strings of wampum, the first of which requested the presence of certain officers: "[Par ce collier] ils attiroient par le bras leurs trois enfans Monsieur De Longueuil Les Sieurs De Joncaire et La Chauvignerie, et qu'ils les apelloient au fort de frontenac pour y tenir un conseil general." Vaudreuil immediately dispatched Longueuil and La Chauvignerie to join Joncaire at Fort Frontenac.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, the Odawa of Michilimakinac persistently requested in councils that Louis de La Porte de Louvigny be re-appointed commandant at Michilimakinac. Both the Odawa and Father Gabriel Marest considered Louvigny an ideal candidate, "par ce qu'il avoit plus de connoissances de nos coutumes que Mr daigremond [another French official] et quil avoit longtems demeuré parmy nous."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Vaudreuil et Bégon au conseil, 14 octobre 1723, C11A 45: 43v-44 (quotation); see also Nive Voisine, "Jacques-Charles de Sabrevois," *DBC* 2: 614-615.

<sup>41</sup>Délibération du conseil au sujet du poste de Camanstiguya..., 14 janvier 1721, C11A 43: 99-102.

<sup>42</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 octobre 1724, C11A 46: 93v. For a legible version of the scrawled marginal notes, see C11A (transcriptions) 46: 90.

<sup>43</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 6 novembre 1712, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 165.

<sup>44</sup>Parolles des Sauvages de Michilimakina... le 29e juillet 1710, C11A 31: 115v (quotation); Parolles des sauvages de missilimakina... des 23, 26 et 28 aoust 1713, C11A 34: 68.

Apart from their acceptability to Amerindians, French agents were occasionally noted for their ability to speak Amerindian languages. Yet such ability was far from being a prerequisite for envoys and post commandants: among those officers who served as commandants, only the venerable Joseph-François Hertel de La Fresnière and Jean-Paul Legardeur de Saint-Pierre were credited with any linguistic competence.<sup>45</sup>

*Crédit, libéralité*, and linguistic skill were the qualities of the best diplomatic agents. French agents, however, were not all ideal diplomats. The first two qualities are difficult to document with the sources available, and the last was far from universal among French officers. The handful of well-known “Indian agents” from the period operated in the midst of many lesser fellows. Taken individually, Vaudreuil’s agents form a rather disparate group; but the diversity of their profiles reveals the variety of means by which Frenchmen could function successfully as diplomats. The majority were career officers who functioned as Onontio’s speakers in the *pays d’en haut* and served as conduits for the flow of gifts from the French to Amerindian nations. Those officers who had extensive experience with Amerindian political culture were fewer in number, but some of these maintained close personal relationships with Amerindians, becoming adoptive kin, forming intimate personal ties, or residing among a nation for extended periods of time. (In general, such agents were not found in the highest officer ranks.) Some individuals inherited a role in intercultural diplomacy from a father, uncle or brother, while others were selected and trained by Amerindians themselves. Even the most qualified diplomats, however, fell short of being true cultural middlemen. They did not straddle a cultural divide; rather, they deliberately learned and manipulated selected aspects of Amerindian diplomatic culture in order to advance French interests. Like their Amerindian

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<sup>45</sup>La Fresnière, who replaced Alphonse de Tonty as commandant at Fort Frontenac in 1708, was described by Vaudreuil as understanding “fort bien l’iroquois, et l’algonkin et mesme l’abenaky” (Vaudreuil à Pontchartrain, 5 novembre 1708, *RAPQ* (1939-40): 434); St-Pierre was identified as having served as interpreter at Montreal in 1707 (Vaudreuil et Raudot à Pontchartrain, 15 novembre 1707, *RAPQ* (1939-40): 389) and in the west during the 1716 Fox campaign (*DBC* 2: 402).

counterparts, French diplomats in the early eighteenth century were rooted in their own culture and were not assimilated by the Other.

Although the information available on French agents precludes a sophisticated prosopography, it nonetheless permits an investigation of several factors which elucidate the nature of the French-Amerindian diplomatic relations. The following questions provide a starting point for the dissection of Vaudreuil's diplomatic corps: Were they mostly Canadian-born, or recent European emigrants? How old were they? Where did they fit in colonial society? What kind of careers were typical for these agents?

The factor of "nationality" is an interesting one, for it raises questions about divergences in *mentalités* and experience between colonials and metropolitans. Were Canadians more disposed to act as diplomatic specialists as a result of their upbringing in a society surrounded and permeated by Amerindians?<sup>46</sup> Of forty-two French agents, twenty-five are of Canadian extraction, fifteen are French, and two are of unknown origin. While the Canadian group includes such illustrious names as Longueuil, Vincennes, and La Fresniere, important agents like Joncaire, Louvigny, and Liette were French; Canadians clearly had no monopoly on intercultural ties. Introducing other factors clarifies some of the differences that did exist between Canadians and Frenchmen. All the French held commissions in the *troupes de la Marine*; about a fifth of the Canadians did not. More Canadians served as interpreters than did French, and more Canadians can be attributed some ability to speak one or more Amerindian languages. Yet Frenchmen such as La Chauvignerie and Joncaire became prominent in French-Iroquois relations during Vaudreuil's term, at least in part because of their linguistic abilities; other Frenchmen, like Étienne de Véniard de Bourgmond—commandant at Detroit for a brief and unfortunate time—outdid Canadians in the *course des bois* and acquired valuable linguistic and

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<sup>46</sup>Besides the fur fairs at Montreal—in decline in the eighteenth century—the French inhabitants of the Laurentian valley could encounter Amerindians on missions near Trois-Rivières, Québec and Montréal; in all three towns themselves, as traders, visitors, or guests of the governor; as spouses (mostly wives) of their neighbours; as allies during military expeditions; as diplomatic envoys; and in firsthand accounts by Frenchmen returning from the upper country.

diplomatic skills along the way.<sup>47</sup> Clearly, no large gulf existed between French- and Canadian-born agents in the realm of diplomatic aptitude.

Age is a second interesting factor. Cultural mediators presumably function best when they have some measure of status or influence in the cultures between which they mediate. A constant in northeastern Amerindian cultures is the respect accorded to the elderly and the leadership roles assumed by those whom the French called *les anciens*. Mary Druke's analysis of the structure of leadership among the Mohawks and Oneidas in the mid-eighteenth century points to two significant semantic distinctions that characterized the verbal classification of leaders: young/old and war/peace. While Europeans commonly (and incorrectly) assumed that Amerindian societies were governed by a gerontocracy, they nevertheless appreciated the status of the elders who seemed to form the locus of civil authority among Amerindians.<sup>48</sup> Both the writings of contemporary Europeans and the recorded speeches of Amerindians refer frequently to these *anciens*; hence it is appropriate to investigate the influence that might accrue to French diplomats by virtue of their age.

Earlier French-Amerindian alliances, such as those with the Algonkin and Huron, were characterized by the exchange of young men, such as Étienne Brûlé. While this practice was akin to an exchange of hostages, it represented certain benefits for both parties. From the French perspective, these men were useful as interpreters—*truchements*—and intermediaries. For Amerindians, these Frenchmen and their guns provided a certain protection; moreover, unlike missionaries or colonizers, such men were uninterested in disrupting Native cultures or lifestyles. Influential marriages, the generous

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<sup>47</sup>Bourgmont deserted his post at Detroit in 1706 only months after a spate of intertribal violence marred his short term as commandant; after eight years as a *coureur de bois*, he became Louisiana's principal agent among the nations of the Missouri River, and accompanied delegates from these nations to Paris as an interpreter in 1725. He was ennobled the same year for his achievements. Louise Dechêne, "Étienne de Véniard de Bourgmont," *DBC* 2: 673-675.

<sup>48</sup>Druke, "Structure and Meaning of Leadership," 80.

distribution of European goods, and skill in hunting could increase the personal prestige and influence of these early cultural mediators.<sup>49</sup>

By the early eighteenth century, the exchange of young men was no longer a prominent feature of French-Amerindian relations, which was now characterized by the Onontio structure. Its French participants had in general been integrated into the colonial military and civil hierarchy. The diplomatic functions of seventeenth-century trading company employees such as Marsolet and Brûlé had been largely taken over by military officers and official interpreters. These men were not young. Vaudreuil, a sexagenarian at the time of his commission as governor general, directed for two decades a corps of diplomatic agents who for the most part were already in the prime of their life. Between the extremes of the venerable Hertel de La Fresnière, born in 1642, and the youthful Jean-Daniel-Marie Viennay-Pachot, born over a half-century later, was a group of middle-aged men, many of whom were born in the 1660s, and a minority of whom were born after 1680. Influential agents like Joncaire, Longueuil, Louvigny, Vincennes, Linctot, and Lignery—whose diplomatic careers spanned most of Vaudreuil's twenty-three-year term—were all born before 1670. Even among the official interpreters such as Maurice Menard, the Réaumes, Pierre Roy and La Chauvignerie, maturity rather than youth was the norm. The brothers Jean-Baptiste and Simon Réaume, who emerge as official interpreters after 1717, were already in their forties at the time; by 1730 they were still active as interpreters and soldiers during the last major campaign against the Fox.<sup>50</sup> The career of the venerable Maurice Ménard, longtime interpreter at Michilimakinac, spanned at least three decades.

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<sup>49</sup>B. G. Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985), 194-196.

<sup>50</sup>A Réaume accompanied Louvigny on his return to the upper country in 1717. Simon was identified as Dumont's interpreter on the 1720 embassy to the Miamis, and in 1722 Jean-Baptiste was the official interpreter at La Baye. Vaudreuil au conseil, 12 octobre 1717, C11A 38: 105-106; Vaudreuil au conseil, 20 8bre 1720, C11A 44: 356-359v; Estat des permissions... (1722), C11A 45: 354.

Born in 1664, he was still active throughout the 1710s and '20s as an interpreter and emissary.<sup>51</sup>

In the absence of direct evidence pointing to maturity as a factor in determining the usefulness of French agents, its importance can only be inferred from the data presented above. It is clear that most of the French who represented their nation and Onontio in dealings with Amerindians were rather mature; it is less clear why this should be so. The need for experience may provide a partial answer: the length of time required to learn Amerindian languages and customs, and to succeed former agents. The youthful *truchements* of Champlain and the Jesuits of the "heroic age" characterized that formative era of French-Amerindian diplomacy; by 1700, agents like Nicolas Perrot had spent a lifetime serving French interests in the upper country. The adaptability of youth yielded to the experience of seasoned interpreters and senior military officers. (Champlain might have preferred older, experienced men, but none were available to him at the time.) Moreover, given that the vast majority of French agents in the early eighteenth century were incorporated into a military hierarchy in which the highest value was the *service du Roy*, it is understandable that experience and seniority should come to characterize New France's diplomatic corps.<sup>52</sup> There is, however, no clear indication that Amerindians preferred to deal with aged Frenchmen rather than young ones. To the extent that intercultural diplomacy required the mastery of speech and ritual, oratorical skill and a respect for diplomatic forms probably counted more in Amerindians' appreciation of French agents. Finally, a cultural mediator's status in his or her society of origin was of clear significance; Amerindians can be expected to have made some sense of the hierarchical nature of

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<sup>51</sup>Ménard was apparently already serving as interpreter at Michilimakinac by 1695; Vaudreuil mentioned in 1706 "l'Intrepidité de Maurice Menard homme fort considéré aux outaouis;" in 1717 he accompanied Réaume to the Fox villages, and in 1722 was still official interpreter at Michilimakinac. William A. Hunter, "Elizabeth Couc," *DBC* 3: 157; Vaudreuil au ministre, 3 novembre 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 142; Vaudreuil au conseil, 12 octobre 1717, C11A 38: 105-106; *Estat des permissions...* (1722), C11A 45: 354.

<sup>52</sup>Commissions and promotion in the Canadian *troupes de la Marine*, in which most agents and some interpreters served, depended in theory on merit and could not be purchased.

leadership in French colonial society, and this in turn influenced their perspectives on French agents.

### 3.4 The colonial nobility and intercultural diplomacy

Vaudreuil's agents were notable as a group for their membership in the officer corps of the *troupes de la Marine*, and secondly for their noble status. As Lorraine Gadoury has pointed out in her demographic study of the nobility of New France, military officers were not necessarily nobles, although at the time of the creation of the military order of Saint-Louis (*l'Ordre royal et militaire de Saint-Louis*) in 1693, most officers were.<sup>53</sup> Gadoury's classification of New France's nobles into distinct sub-groups permits an identical classification of noble diplomatic agents, with interesting results.<sup>54</sup>

Among Vaudreuil's agents, the largest single group of nobles (twelve in all) are Canadian-born and owe their noble status to descent from a noble ancestor. About half are descended from ennobled Canadians; the rest from the earliest noble families to arrive in the seventeenth century. Only two are descended from noble officers from the Carignan regiment, and neither were important agents.<sup>55</sup>

The largest sub-group of Canadian nobles, those descended from ennobled Canadians, is also qualitatively significant, for it contains such figures as Hertel de La Fresnière, Le Moyne de Longueuil, Le Moyne de Maricourt, Godefroy de Linctot, and Boucher de La Perrière. La Fresnière, Longueuil and Maricourt are especially notable for their linguistic skills and ties to the Iroquois nations; in fact, these nobles owed their rank to

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<sup>53</sup>L. Gadoury, *La noblesse de Nouvelle-France* (Ville La Salle: Hurtubise HMH, 1992), 14-15. As the eighteenth century wore on, however, increasing numbers of *roturiers* made successful careers in the military and achieved high social status by attaining the coveted *croix de Saint-Louis*.

<sup>54</sup>See appendices 1 to 4 in Gadoury, *La noblesse de la Nouvelle-France*, 161-172, as well as chapters one to three *passim*.

<sup>55</sup>Descended from ennobled Canadians: La Fresniere, La Perrière, Linctot, Longueuil, and Maricourt. Descended from seventeenth-century noble immigrants: Argenteuil, Saint-Pierre, Mentheth, and La Morandière. Descended from officers in the Carignan regiment: Deschaillons and Dupuy. François-Marie Bissot de Vincennes was descended from a Canadian *noble agrégé*. See appendix 2 for details.

some degree to the ties their ancestors had formed with Amerindians, for their ancestors were Canadians rewarded during a spate of ennoblements in 1668. The new nobles received form letters from the king which read in part:

[N]ous sommes informéz des bonnes actions que font journellement les Peuples du Canada, soit en réduisant ou disciplinant les Sauvages soit en se défendant contre leurs fréquents insultes et celles des Iroquois; aussi nous avons estimé qu'il estoit de Notre Justice de distinguer par des récompenses d'honneur ceux qui se sont le plus signaléz...<sup>56</sup>

Gadoury's commentary on these *lettres de noblesse* underlines the extent to which diplomacy, rather than valour, was the truly significant factor behind these early ennoblements:

On peut se demander maintenant ce qui distingue Denis, Godefroy et Lemoyne de l'ensemble des Canadiens, et leur a permis de recevoir en 1668 les faveurs du roi et de se les faire reconnaître dans la colonie. Mention est faite dans le texte même des lettres de nobless, de la lutte contre les Indiens. *De fait, la valeur de Jean Godefroy et de Charles Lemoyne semble bien résider surtout dans leur connaissance des nations indiennes et de leurs langues; la situation précaire de la colonie face aux Iroquois donne à la fonction d'interprète un rôle important dans les négociations et les affrontements.*<sup>57</sup>

Godefroy and Hertel had arrived with Champlain in 1626; during the English occupation of Quebec (1629-1632), "les Godefroys, comme plusieurs autres interprètes de Champlain [including Jacques Hertel], passaient quatre ans chez les Algonquins ou les Hurons jusqu'au retour des Français."<sup>58</sup> These early colonists' usefulness as interpreters contributed toward a climb in social status.<sup>59</sup> More significantly, their ties with Amerindians were bequeathed to successive generations.

The latter point is most evident in the case of the Le Moyne family. Paul Le Moyne de Maricourt apparently inherited the reputation his father had enjoyed among the Iroquois, especially the Onondagas, and possessed "his own understanding of their language and

<sup>56</sup>Quoted in Gadoury, *La noblesse de Nouvelle-France*, 31.

<sup>57</sup>Gadoury, *La noblesse de Nouvelle-France*, 32. Italics mine.

<sup>58</sup>S. Vincens, *Madame Montour et son temps* (Montréal: Québec/Amérique, 1979), 48. The Jacques Hertel mentioned here was the father of the Canadian-born François Hertel, ennobled in 1716, although promised ennoblement in 1692 (Gadoury, *La noblesse de Nouvelle-France*, 167).

<sup>59</sup>Bruce Trigger has indicated how the interpreters of the heroic age—Marsolet, Godefroy de Lintot, and Brûlé—were acutely aware of the potential for social betterment afforded by maintaining ties to Amerindians (*Native and Newcomers*, 197).

mentality.... His fearless bearing and gift for symbolic oratory were much to the Iroquois taste."<sup>60</sup> Maricourt was but the fourth of twelve sons, and appears to have had little formal education. Charles Le Moyne de Longueuil, his eldest brother, was brought up a page in a noble household in France and returned to New France in 1683 with a lieutenant's commission to serve as town major of Montreal; Maricourt would only become a *sous-lieutenant* in 1687 after participating in a harrowing expedition to James Bay. Primogeniture ensured Longueuil a higher status in French society, but Maricourt had the greater status among the Onondagas. In 1694, both brothers were adopted as children of the Onondagas by Teganissorens, a leading Onondaga diplomat, but Maricourt had the greater linguistic ability and the greater diplomatic role in the years leading up to the treaty of 1701, serving as French plenipotentiary and "parry[ing] Albany's intrigues."<sup>61</sup>

In 1704, Maricourt died at Montreal, and Vaudreuil wrote to the minister:

Le Sr. de Maricourt est mort c'est une perte tres grande Il avoit beaucoup de credit et d'autorité parmy les Iroquois et je comptois de l'y envoyer ce printemps, je ne vois que le Sr. de Longueuil son frere qui puisse prendre sa place... c'est une famille Monseigneur que les Iroquois regardent comme estant entièrement dans leurs interests...<sup>62</sup>

Years later, Vaudreuil reiterated his praise for Longueuil, but added an interesting detail:

Je me serviray toujours Monseigneur du Sieur Baron de Longueuil quand j'auray quelque chose a traiter avec Les iroquois, Comme il entend mieux Leur langue qu'il ne la parle il ne peut se passer quand il va chez ces nations du Sieur De Joncaire ou du Sieur De La Chauvignerie, et quelque fois de tous deux suivant les affaires.<sup>63</sup>

These observations indicate that Longueuil was less skilled in Iroquois languages than Maricourt, Joncaire and La Chauvignerie, all of whom were his social inferiors. Nevertheless, Longueuil inherited from his father and then from his brother personal ties to the Onondaga nation which underlay his importance in diplomatic relations between the

<sup>60</sup>Donald J. Horton, "Paul Le Moyne de Maricourt," *DCB* 2: 404.

<sup>61</sup>Céline Dupré, "Charles Le Moyne de Longueuil," *DBC* 2: 418. While Maricourt and, later, Joncaire had adoptive names, it is not clear that Longueuil had one. See Horton, "Paul Le Moyne de Maricourt," *DCB* 2: 405; Document about a conference of Senecas and Onondagas with M. de Vaudreuil, 12 June 1703, Moreau St. Méry—Memorials 1540-1759. fol. 282v, in IIDH reel 6.

<sup>62</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 3 avril 1704, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 25.

<sup>63</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 6 novembre 1712, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 167.

Iroquois and the French. A symbol of this personal tie was the fact that ambassadors of the Five Nations stayed at Longueuil's residence at Montreal while seeking an audience with Onontio, as they had stayed with Maricourt before his death. In 1717 Vaudreuil and Bégon thanked the council for "la gratification de 200 [livres] quil a accordé au Sr de Longueuil en consideration de la depense qu'il fait pour recevoir chés luy les Sauvages Iroquois, et comme il continue de le faire annuellement, nous supliions le Conseil d'y avoir Egard en luy continuant la mesme grace." This annual bonus was indeed continued, although after 1720, it was Longueuil's son who received the Iroquois at Montreal while his father was governor of Trois-Rivières.<sup>64</sup> At about the same time, Longueuil announced to the Onondagas that because of his age, he would no longer visit the Iroquois in their villages, but would send his son in his place.<sup>65</sup> Longueuil *fils* was already known to the Five Nations, for at a 1717 council at Montreal, the speaker for a large Iroquois delegation declared him welcome among the Iroquois.<sup>66</sup>

This pattern of perpetuating intercultural ties intergenerationally was not unique to the Canadian nobility. The second largest group of nobles who served as diplomatic agents comprises Frenchmen who arrived between 1683 and 1700 and who made their careers in Canada as officers in the *troupes de la Marine*.<sup>67</sup> The majority crossed the ocean in the 1680s and participated in Denonville's war against the Iroquois; this was how Vaudreuil,

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<sup>64</sup>Horton, "Paul Le Moyne de Maricourt," *DCB* 2: 604; Vaudreuil et Bégon au conseil, 6 novembre 1717, C11A 38: 42v (quotation); Vaudreuil et Bégon au conseil, 26 octobre 1720, C11A 42: 21; Vaudreuil et Bégon au conseil, 8 octobre 1721, C11A 44: 15v-16.

<sup>65</sup>"Mes peres quoyque je vous aye préparés il y a quatre ans de ne me plus revoir dans vos villages, àcause de mon âge avancé et de la difficulté des voyages, et que je vous eusse [dit] qu'a ma place mon fils continueroit à vous aller voir par la suite, cependant l'amitié que j'ay pour vous et l'esprit de paix que je conserve toujours m'a déterminé a vous visiter encor aujourd'hui" (Discours de Mr. de Longueuil aux Iroquois... [mai 1725], C11A 47: 200). Actually, Longueuil was among the Onondagas to obtain permission to build two barques on Lake Ontario and to fortify the French "house" at Niagara.

<sup>66</sup>Vaudreuil au conseil, 24 8bre 1717, C11A 38: 129v.

<sup>67</sup>French-born noble diplomats in the officer corps of the *troupes de la Marine*: Beaujeu, Dubuisson, Joncaire, La Chauvignerie, de Liette, Lignery, Louvigny, Sabrevois, and Tonty. See appendix 2 for details. Claude de Ramezay, governor of Montreal (1703 - 1725) and Antoine Laumet de La Mothe Cadillac, commandant at Detroit (1701 - 1710), also came to Canada as officers in the *troupes de la Marine*.

Ramezay and Louvigny began their Canadian careers. They founded noble families in Canada, and were imitated by their sons in the pursuit of positions in the civil and especially the military hierarchy, and of the coveted *croix de Saint-Louis*. Many of them became post commandants and acceded to positions in the *état-major* of the colony. Several, however, were distinguished primarily by their close ties to various Amerindian groups: these include Pierre-Charles de Liette, Louis-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire, and Louis Maray de La Chauvignerie. Compared to individuals like Louvigny and Dubuisson, their ascent in colonial society was limited: they never became *lieutenants du roi* or town majors. But Joncaire and La Chauvignerie, interpreters and emissaries to the Seneca and Onondaga respectively, were succeeded by their sons, Philippe-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire—presented to the Senecas by his father at the age of ten—and Michel Maray de La Chauvignerie. Both of the latter played important diplomatic roles in the period of Anglo-French conflict at mid-century.<sup>68</sup> As in the case of Maricourt and Longueuil, linguistic ability and familiarity with Amerindian groups, rather than rank in the colonial nobility, seems to have characterized those agents who bequeathed some measure of their intercultural ties to their sons.

The colonial military elite, however, were very much aware of the benefits to be derived from convincing the metropolitan authorities of their influence among Amerindians. In petitioning the minister Maurepas on behalf of his fourth son, Pierre de Rigaud de Cavagnal (the future governor of Louisiana and Canada), Vaudreuil emphasized his son's relationship with Amerindians: "Il est d'ailleurs fort connu des Sauvages chés lesquels il a desja beaucoup de credit." Mme de Vaudreuil wrote Maurepas as well to announce that Pierre was sending him "un canot de corce... a la maniere sauvage avec les avirons et deux arque et deux carquois... comme il est fort aimé il espere l'annee prochaine les engager a lui a mener des bestes rare de ce pays." As Pierre's biographer has explained: "Si l'on s'arrête à réfléchir qu'un gouverneur décrira bientôt la politique indigène comme la partie la

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<sup>68</sup>Y. Zoltvany, "Louis-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire," *DCB* 2: 127; see vol. 3 of the *DCB* for entries concerning Philippe-Thomas Chabert and Michel Maray.

plus importante de son oeuvre, on comprend que Vaudreuil mette une certaine instance à déclarer que son fils obtient du succès des Indiens."<sup>69</sup> A decade later, Vaudreuil's successor explained to the minister that commandants of western posts invariably took their sons with them, "to learn to languages and customs of the savages[:] this is good training for the young men who afterward become good officers."<sup>70</sup>

Clearly, the colonial nobility, aspiring to high positions, were prepared to exploit even superficial ties with Canada's Amerindian allies in order to advance in rank and prestige in colonial society. This pattern extended even to the petitions of French officers aspiring to receive the most coveted of royal graces, the *croix de Saint-Louis*. Vaudreuil made his first (unsuccessful) request for one in 1708:

c'est seulement pour imprimer plus de respect aux peuples, et principalement aux sauvages, qui ne jugeant les choses que par l'exterieur, se figurent que tout ceux que Sa Majesté a honoré en ce pays d'une croix de St louis, sont tous des gouverneurs generaux, cette marque de distinction, que je supplie Sa Majesté de vouloir bien m'accorder, leur donnera plus de respect pour moy, et plus de confiance quand je leur diray quelque chose.<sup>71</sup>

The apparent high esteem of Amerindians for this mark of distinction was again the principal justification Vaudreuil put forward when asking that Chabert de Joncaire be admitted into the order of Saint-Louis in 1722.<sup>72</sup> These examples illustrate two related points: the influence of Amerindian perceptions on the organization of French diplomatic activity, and the determination of French officers to seek advancement and honours by any means possible.

It is worthwhile noting that the highest colonial authorities were not unaware of the significance of intergenerational ties and the importance of officers experienced in Amerindian customs; there is, however, no evidence that any deliberate attempt was made

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<sup>69</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 8bre 1724, C11A 46: 88v; Mme de Vaudreuil au ministre, 29 8bre 1724, C11A (transcriptions) 46: 113; Guy Frégault, *Le grand marquis*, 2e éd. (Montréal/Paris: Fides, 1952), 93-94.

<sup>70</sup>Quoted in Claiborne Skinner, "The Sinews of Empire: The Voyageurs and the Carrying Trade of the Pays d'en haut, 1681-1754" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1991), 118.

<sup>71</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 5 9bre 1708, *RAPQ* (1939-40): 440.

<sup>72</sup>Vaudreuil au conseil, 27 8bre 1722, C11A 44: 373.

to cultivate an “aristocracy” of intercultural diplomats. Only the intendant Antoine-Denis Raudot, in his letters to Pontchartrain, pointed out the wisdom of such a policy. Raudot explained Longueuil’s usefulness as emissary to the Onondaga:

[O]n ne peut choisir pour envoyer ches ces premiers [the Onondaga] un homme plus aimé et plus considéré que le Sr de Longueuil, qui est frere du Sr Maricourt et fils du Sr le Moyne qui a été adopté par ces peuples, c’est un homme sage, honnête homme, vivant bien avec droiture sur lequel on peut compter.

Raudot’s glowing phrases contrasted sharply with his condemnation of Joncaire in the same letter: he found the latter arrogant, insubordinate, cowardly and dishonest: “pour honnête homme je ne puis croire qu’il le soit.” Hoping perhaps to counterbalance Joncaire’s influence in diplomacy with the Iroquois, and to perpetuate intercultural ties in a noble family of which he approved, Raudot counselled that steps be taken to ensure that Longueuil’s son succeed his father:

Il sera necessaire que le Sr de Longueuil le mene avec luy ches les onontagués pour l’instruire des manieres iroquoises, le faire connoître d’eux et y acquerir leur amitié afin de pouvoir y aller a la place de son pere *et qu’on eut toujours des personnes en cette colonie aimés et considérés de ces Sauvages et propres a aller ches eux quand on voudroit, il faut pour cela, Mgr, elever des sujets.*<sup>73</sup>

Written in a year when New France had been threatened by an English invasion with Iroquois support, Raudot no doubt had the colony’s security foremost in mind. Given the strategic situation of the French colony and its dependence upon Amerindian allies in times of conflict, it would have been logical to purposefully “raise” subjects who could be expected to maintain close personal relationships with Amerindians and become, in effect, diplomatic specialists.

That this never happened is a telling comment upon the persistence of French attitudes of paternalism in relations with Amerindians. The cultural and political goal of ultimately “reducing” Amerindians to obedient subjects of the French sovereign clearly precluded the need to maintain such specialists, since the French hoped at times to command, rather than negotiate with, their Amerindian allies. The training of skilled diplomats was left to experienced officers who hoped that by exposing their sons to

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<sup>73</sup>Raudot à Pontchartrain, 1 novembre 1709, C11G 4: 188v, 186v. Italics mine.

Amerindian customs, their progeny might aspire to higher positions in the colony. The failure to cultivate skilled diplomats who combined acceptability among Amerindians with high colonial social status may be regarded as a major flaw in French policy regarding Amerindians.

There existed one other group of nobles whose ties with Amerindians were significant during Vaudreuil's term. Lorraine Gadoury has used the term *noble agrégé* to describe those individuals who lacked proof of nobility—*lettres de noblesse*, or failing such documentary proof, clear evidence of a long history of "noble living"—but who were nevertheless successful in integrating themselves into the ranks of the nobility in Canada and in having their heirs accepted as such.<sup>74</sup> This small group, comprised mostly of Canadians, includes several commandants and important envoys, among them Jean-Baptiste Bissot de Vincennes and Zacharie Robutel de La Noue. Pierre You de La Découverte and François Dauphin de La Forest—both cronies of Cavelier de La Salle and Henri de Tonty—may also included be numbered among them; the former was the son of a tanner, and the latter's nobility was contested by his contemporaries.<sup>75</sup> Of such men, Gadoury writes: "Explorateurs et découvreurs, compagnons de Cavelier de La Salle qui sera anobli en 1675, ces aventuriers ont passé plus de temps dans l'Ouest avec les Indiens que sur les bords de la colonie avec les autres Canadiens."<sup>76</sup> Like those officers with an established noble pedigree, however, they found that diplomatic careers paved the way to social advancement in the colony.

For these men, integration into the ranks of the colonial nobility depended upon their military careers, which in turn depended upon their ability to execute official policy

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<sup>74</sup>Advantageous marriages and successful military and civil careers were the primary characteristics of the *noble agrégé*: "C'est ce mimétisme de la condition des nobles qui leur permet de se distinguer du reste de leur famille et de se dire *écuyers*, ainsi que leurs descendants." Gadoury, *La noblesse de Nouvelle-France*, 44-45.

<sup>75</sup>Albertine Ferland-Angers, "Pierre You de La Découverte," *DBC* 2: 702; George F. G. Stanley, "François Dauphin de La Forest," *DBC* 2: 176.

<sup>76</sup>Gadoury, *La noblesse de Nouvelle-France*, 29. The French agents who became *nobles agrégés* were: Dumont, La Découverte, La Forest, La Noue, Montigny, and Jean-Baptiste Bissot de Vincennes. Of these six, only La Découverte and La Forest were not born in Canada. See appendix 2 for details.

with regard to Amerindians. The case of the Bissot de Vincennes family is instructive in this regard. Jean-Baptiste Bissot de Vincennes's rise into the nobility, unlike that of others in his position, was not accomplished through marriage to the daughter of a colonial noble;<sup>77</sup> instead, his military and diplomatic career constituted the prime vehicle for his ascension. From 1695 on, Vincennes, after leaving the seminary of Quebec—"being unfit for the ecclesiastical state"—acted as Onontio's principal emissary to the Miamis. Early in Vaudreuil's term, Vincennes was implicated in illegal trading activities while on a diplomatic mission; this cost him a promotion, but despite the minister's displeasure, Vaudreuil continued to employ him—indeed, found him indispensable in arranging the return of Iroquois prisoners from the Miami in 1704.<sup>78</sup>

Vincennes' son, François-Marie, became indispensable in turn after his father's death in 1719. Vaudreuil sought an officer's commission for the youthful Vincennes, who remained among the Wea (one of several Miami nations), gradually shifting his loyalties to Louisiana and the *Compagnie des Indes*. The Wea and Vincennes relocated southward in 1730, where, as a half-pay lieutenant in the troops of Louisiana, Vincennes settled, married a *métisse* from Kaskaskia, and died in the struggle with the Chickasaw, all while retaining the noble title he had inherited from his father.<sup>79</sup> The careers of the Vincennes, with their longstanding ties to the Miamis, illustrate another hue in the spectrum of French-Amerindian relationships during Vaudreuil's term as governor. That they managed to impose themselves as nobility in the highly stratified society of New France indicates that, like the ennobled Canadians of the previous century, the cultivation of personal ties to Amerindians provided a path of advancement for common Frenchmen.

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<sup>77</sup>Gadoury, *La noblesse de Nouvelle-France*, 45. Vincennes married Marguerite Forestier, the daughter of a surgeon (Yves F. Zoltvany, "Jean-Baptiste Bissot de Vincennes," *DCB* 2: 68).

<sup>78</sup>Zoltvany, *Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil*, 52 (quotation); Vaudreuil au ministre, 4 novembre 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 161.

<sup>79</sup>Vaudreuil au conseil, 24 8bre 1722, C11A 44: 368-368v (Vincennes' commission); Zoltvany, "François-Marie Bissot de Vincennes," *DCB* 2: 67.

### 3.5 French interpreters

Most French interpreters were not nobles, although a handful of noble officers did function as interpreters during their careers.<sup>80</sup> French speakers of Amerindian languages were the most skilled of diplomatic agents, yet as a group they were far from occupying elevated military or civil positions. Early eighteenth-century interpreters merit special attention as the diplomats who presumably achieved the highest degrees of cultural understanding in their relations with Amerindians.

It is precisely this role as cultural mediator which has retained the interest of recent researchers. "Interpreters," writes Nancy Hagedorn, "mediated the interchange of [European and Amerindian] cultures as they facilitated the exchange of words and promises.... As interpreters translated and explained disparate languages and rituals infused with culturally based meanings and values, they mediated the exchange of English and Iroquois culture across the council fire." This view emphasizes the "cultural sensitivity" of these individuals: "Without exception, these people demonstrated a command not only of English and one or more Indian languages, but also of European and Iroquois 'Methods of Business'."<sup>81</sup> Presumably the same qualities would apply to individuals interpreting at French-Amerindian councils. Historian Yasuhide Kawashima has also underlined the "*mastery of languages and full understanding* of both white and Indian traditions and cultures" as a characteristic of English "forest diplomats." French interpreters, according to Kawashima, were less influential than the interpreters serving the English colonies, who held extensive diplomatic powers:

No [French] interpreter was given, as far as the evidence indicates, any political and diplomatic authority in dealing with the Indians. Throughout the French activities in Canada, the function of the interpreter was likely to be confined to the translation of languages.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>French interpreters: Joncaire, La Chauvignerie, Ladouceur, La Fresniere, Loranger, Ménard, Morisseau, Pachot, Jean-Baptiste Réaume, Pierre Réaume, Simon Réaume, Richard, Roy, and Saint-Pierre. This list includes officers who were active under Vaudreuil but whose service as interpreters preceded Vaudreuil's term as governor. See appendix 2 for details.

<sup>81</sup>Hagedorn, "'A Friend To Go Between Them,'" 61, 62.

<sup>82</sup>Kawashima, "Forest diplomats," 7, 8. Italics mine.

None of these characterizations explain satisfactorily the role of French interpreters in the early eighteenth century. First, the ability to translate languages was in itself a form of power. In councils at Montreal involving Onontio, the interpreter's role was most likely to be limited to translation; yet even this duty was crucial. Onontio and his commandants at isolated posts could not expect to maintain or strengthen alliances, or to influence Amerindians, without the ability to communicate. In 1706 Cadillac asked for funds to pay two interpreters at Detroit, threatening that things might go awry in the *pays d'en haut* if he were unable to retain their services.<sup>83</sup>

A striking illustration of the interpreter's importance occurred in 1717 when Sabrevois, commandant at Detroit, complained to Vaudreuil that Louis de La Porte de Louvigny, on his way to attack the Fox the year previous, had taken away his interpreter, despite having already in his train the interpreters "Morisse" and "Mr de St Pierre, qui soient habiles gens." Sabrevois pointed out "le besoin que j'en avois icy ce que tous les jours il arrivoit quelque chose;" as a result, he was unable to prevent a certain 8yta8kigik from presenting a belt of wampum from the English to the Amerindians at Detroit as an invitation to trade.<sup>84</sup>

Other events that summer illustrated how interpreters might go where commandants feared to tread: when Louvigny returned to the upper country to constrain the Fox to observe the treaty of 1716, he tarried cautiously at Michilimakinac and sent the interpreters Ménard and Réaume to the Fox village along with the speaker Okima8asen to cover the Fox dead.<sup>85</sup> Through such delegation of authority, interpreters of lower-class origin could become legitimate representatives of Onontio in the upper country; in effect, they became Kawashima's "forest diplomats."

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<sup>83</sup>Vaudreuil at Raudot au ministre, 30 avril 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 116.

<sup>84</sup>Extrait de la lettre de M<sup>r</sup> de Sabrevois à... Vaudreuil Du Detroit le 8 avril 1717, C11A 38: 166. It is not clear whether "Morisse" was meant to refer to Maurice Ménard or to Morisseau, a little-known interpreter of Iroquois languages.

<sup>85</sup>Vaudreuil au conseil, 12 Octobre 1717, C11A 38: 105; Louvigny au comte de Toulouse, 1 8bre 1717, C11A (transcriptions) 37: 388.

In junior officers like Joncaire and La Chauvignerie, the functions of interpreter and envoy merged; after Maricourt's death, Joncaire, a former interpreter, replaced him and eventually became something close to a plenipotentiary among the Seneca. The strategic importance of Iroquois neutrality during the War of the Spanish Succession heightened the significance of his position immeasurably. The intendant Raudot wanted to cut Joncaire's expense account and reduce his diplomatic status considerably, but found it inadvisable to do so because of the political situation. "Je ne vois pas d'apparence, Mgr, de se dispenser de l'envoyer encore dans l'occurrence presente chez les Sonontouans qui l'aiment," confessed the intendant Raudot to the minister in 1709.<sup>86</sup> Joncaire owed his position as envoy and promotion to *lieutenant* to his services as a diplomat, although, despite the governor's support, he failed to receive a *croix de Saint-Louis*.

The political role of interpreters was thus a continuum that included both the circumscribed duties of translation and greater diplomatic responsibilities. Equally noteworthy, however, is the extent to which Amerindians themselves determined their success and influence, by rejecting or insisting upon the presence of certain interpreters. Thus, Joncaire and La Chauvignerie owed their careers in part to Amerindian approval of their roles as translators and mediators. Vaudreuil indicated the role of Amerindian opinion in the choice of interpreters when he wrote to the minister in 1722 that "[Simon Réaume] venoit chez moy presque tous les jours par raport aux Sauvages Outa8acs qui le prennent souvent pour interprete."<sup>87</sup>

The sources of experience and cultural knowledge of French interpreters were varied. First, it should be noted that synethnic interpreters were not prominent in the early eighteenth-century French diplomatic system; the knowledge of Amerindian languages and dialects cannot thus be conveniently attributed to the influence of Amerindian parents or relatives. This statement does not apply to New France generally, but only to the

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<sup>86</sup>Raudot à Pontchartrain, 19bre 1709, C11G 4: 189.

<sup>87</sup>Vaudreuil au conseil, 20 8bre 1722, C11A 44: 359v. See also Kawashima, "Forest Diplomats," 5.

interpreters who served the French Crown. The Canadian colony did in fact produce at least two remarkable synethnic interpreters who were active in the early eighteenth century: ironically, both wound up in the service of the English colonies. Despite different career paths, these synethnic interpreters and Canada's French interpreters shared a similar background. Élizabeth Couc (Madame Montour) and her older brother Louis Couc (Montour) were the children of the French immigrant Pierre Couc and his Algonkin wife, Marie Metiameg8k8e. Their neighbours at Trois-Rivières in the 1650s included the wheelwright Jacques Ménard—the father of Maurice Ménard the interpreter—as well as François Fafard, whose son Jean would distinguish himself first as Duluth's interpreter and later an indispensable agent in the diplomatic missions of the late seventeenth century. Both Maurice Ménard and Jean Fafard would marry the synethnic daughters of Pierre and Marie, and both would serve the king of France.<sup>88</sup> Several other ethnic French agents and interpreters took Amerindian or synethnic wives; none, however, were themselves *métis*.<sup>89</sup>

For Canadian interpreters of Algonkian languages, many such marriages reflected the fact that these men were part of the tiny ethnically French population of the upper country. Marriage and baptismal records for these individuals and their families indicate a continued presence in the west, and a tenuous process of setting down roots.<sup>90</sup> The

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<sup>88</sup>Madame Montour functioned as an interpreter for New York and Pennsylvania; her brother, Louis, was murdered by Joncaire in 1709 while guiding western Amerindians to trade at Albany. William A. Hunter, "Élizabeth Couc (La Chenette, Techenet, Montour)," *DBC* 3: 157-158; Vincens, *Madame Montour et son temps*, 57-60, 95-96.

Vaudreuil expressed a dislike for Montour and synethnics in general: "Vous verés Monseigneur, par la lettre particuliere du Sr de Vaudreuil quil a esté obligé d'ordonner au Sr de joncaire de se deffaire du nommé montour qui provenoit d'un pareil mariage [between Frenchmen and Amerindian women], il semble que tous les enfans qui en naissent cherchent a faire toutes les peines possibles aux françois." Vaudreuil et Raudot à Ponchartrain, 14 9bre 1709, *RAPQ* (1942-43): 420.

<sup>89</sup>Other French agents known to have had Amerindian wives were: Jean-Baptiste Réaume, Pierre Roy, François-Marie Bissot de Vincennes, and Pierre You de La Découverte. The interpreter Jean-Baptiste Richard married La Découverte's synethnic daughter. See appendix 2 for biographical sources.

<sup>90</sup>The period 1702 to 1714 marked the foundation of several Great Lakes settlements by Canadian traders, many of whom were *coureurs de bois*. They inaugurated a pattern of intersocietal trade and intermarriage with Amerindian women which formed the basis for the emergence of *métis* communities. The French interpreters of the early

interpreter Pierre Roy married Marie Oubankekoué at Detroit, and their children, born over the decade after 1703, were baptized there. Jean-Baptiste Réaume married Symphorose Ouauagoukoué in the upper country in 1720; at least one of their children was baptised at Michilimakinac. The wife of Jean-Baptiste's younger brother Pierre was not Amerindian, but she married and bore children at Detroit. Simon, the eldest Réaume, did not fit this pattern: he married at Québec, but rose from his humble beginnings as the son of a carpenter to become a fur merchant and bourgeois of Montreal, according to the intendant Bégon's description. Bégon also noted that it was his wife, Thérèse Catin, who ran the *magasin de détail* in Montreal; Réaume apparently was frequently in the west. Maurice Ménard married the half-Algonkin daughter of Pierre Couc at Michilimakinac in 1692; their first son was baptised there as well, although later children were born at Boucherville. All these men were at one time *engagés* and/or *engageurs* in the western fur trade. Their lives, in terms at least of their careers and marriages, were intimately tied to the upper country and its Amerindian population.<sup>91</sup> The *métisses* and Amerindian women whom they married before the Catholic church were doubtless instrumental in their success as interpreters, as were their ties with Amerindian trading partners.

For interpreters of Iroquois languages, captivity often provided the necessary close exposure to Amerindian speech and customs. A captive who returned from Iroquoia after a period of several years might well have acquired close personal ties to his adoptive family members, as well as a certain fluency; the most successful adoptees might even have acquired considerable status among their hosts. These qualities were at the root of an individual's success as an interpreter.

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eighteenth century, rather than being synethnic themselves, were on the cusp of a new era in which the progeny of intercultural unions would serve as cultural brokers in the *pays d'en haut*. Jacqueline Peterson, "Many Roads to Red River: Métis genesis in the Great Lakes Region, 1681-1815," in J. Peterson and J. S. H. Brown, eds. *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America* (n.p.: University of Winnipeg Press, 1985), 42-43.

<sup>91</sup>René Jetté, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles du Québec* (Montreal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1983), 794-795, 970-971, 1022; Bégon au ministre, 2 9bre 1724, C11A 46: 236. The entries in Jetté provide information on fur trade contracts.

Louis-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire was captured by the Iroquois shortly after his arrival in New France around 1690. Information about his experience among the Senecas in the 1690s comes from two sources: a 1709 dispatch by the intendant Raudot, and a memoir by Joncaire's son, Daniel, written after 1760. According to Raudot, Joncaire

a été soldat en ce pais, [et] il fut pris des iroquois sonontouans, et comme on allait l'attacher au poteau pour le faire bruler, sans scavoir ce qu'il faisait il donna un coup de point [*sic*] dans le nés de celuy qui le tenoit... il fut aussitot adopté, les sauvages admirans qu'un homme seul eut voulu se deffendre parmi eux tous.<sup>92</sup>

Raudot doubted the veracity of this story. Daniel's memoir indicates merely that his father was adopted by a Seneca woman.<sup>93</sup> Whatever the accuracy of the former account, Daniel's is in accordance with the general pattern of prisoner adoption among the Iroquois, insofar as it reflects the prominent roles played by the clan matrons and kinswomen of dead warriors.<sup>94</sup> Upon his return to the colony, Joncaire served both Frontenac and Callière as interpreter and accompanied Maricourt "qui demeuroit ches les Onontagués pend<sup>t</sup> qu'il l'envoyoit [Joncaire] ches les Sononoutans avec quelques presens."<sup>95</sup> French records are silent as to the identity of the Seneca woman mentioned by Daniel, but recognize Tatacout or Tonatakout as his adoptive father. Joncaire bore the name Sononchiez among the Seneca, and may temporarily have born a hereditary title as well.<sup>96</sup>

Joseph-François Hertel de La Fresnière was another noble who owed his linguistic ability to a period of captivity. Taken by the Iroquois near Trois-Rivières in 1661, La

<sup>92</sup>Raudot à Pontchartrain, 19bre 1709, C11G 4: 186v.

<sup>93</sup>Zoltvany, "Louis-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire," *DCB* 2: 125.

<sup>94</sup>Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 35, 68.

<sup>95</sup>Raudot à Pontchartrain, 19bre 1709, C11G 4: 187.

<sup>96</sup>Vaudreuil mentioned Tatacout in this respect in a dispatch to Pontchartrain, 14 9bre 1713, *RAPQ* (1947-48): 231. In 1704, Joncaire brought Vaudreuil a message from the Seneca which said in part: "Nous avons choisy votre fils Joncaire pour le metre au rang des Anciens, et luy avons donné tout pouvoir chez Nous, le regardant presentement comme un veritable Sonnontouan... et pour cet effet il ne se nommera plus Sonnonchiés, mais Barietoton [?] qui est le nom d'un des plus considerables anciens de Nôtre Nation" (Parolles des Sonnon8ans... 30e May 1704, C11A 22: 54). There are no later references to Joncaire having achieved such a status; this may have represented an attempt at self-aggrandizement on Joncaire's part. The title itself is odd in that it contains the labial *b* sound; moreover, there is no obvious correspondence to any Confederacy chief's title. See B. G. Trigger, ed. *Northeast*, vol. 15 of *Handbook of North American Indians* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1978), 337, 425.

Fresnière was adopted by an elderly woman who was credited with teaching him one or more Iroquois languages; in 1663 he escaped during her absence and made his way back to the colony. The following year his career as an interpreter began at Trois-Rivières, although his principal value to the French authorities emerged later as he assumed the “command” of Amerindian allies under La Barre and Denonville. Under Frontenac, La Fresnière became associated with the tactics of *la petite guerre*; by the 1710s, he was a commandant and senior military officer.<sup>97</sup> Unlike Maricourt, Joncaire, Longueuil and La Chauvignerie, La Fresnière did not incarnate a personal link with any Iroquois nation, and military exploits rather than diplomacy characterized his career. Nevertheless, his experience in the 1660s illustrates the process by which a former captive became an interpreter.

Many historians have perpetuated a misconception concerning the Chevalier d’Aux’s ill-fated embassy to the Iroquois in 1690. This event has in fact furnished the material for “one of the oldest puns in American historiography”—the one about d’Aux’s *warm* reception by the Five Nations: “all but the leader, who was sent a prisoner to Manhattan and thence to Boston and home, were tortured and burned to death.”<sup>98</sup> The truth is more complex and far more interesting. A memoir of 1690 revealed the fates of the five members of the diplomatic party: the first, d’Aux, was removed by the *flamands* (the Dutch); the second was given to the Oneida; the third and fourth were burnt; and the last died of smallpox.<sup>99</sup> It is the second and apparently most fortunate emissary who is significant for this study. His name was Louis Maray de La Chauvignerie, and he was a French-born officer in the *troupes de la Marine*. Although scant information exists on La Chauvignerie’s stay among the Iroquois, his fate probably resembled that of other

<sup>97</sup>Raymond Douville, “Joseph-François Hertel de La Fresnière,” *DBC* 2: 292-294. Interestingly enough, La Fresnière’s son Zacharie also spent three years in captivity among the Iroquois between 1691 and 1694.

<sup>98</sup>Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 173, 350 n. 25. Eccles has also described d’Aux as the sole survivor of the embassy. *Frontenac: The Courtier Governor* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1959), 230.

<sup>99</sup>Mémoire pour 1690, *Collection de manuscrits relatifs à la Nouvelle-France*, 4 vols. (Quebec: A. Côté, 1883-1885), 1: 573.

prisoners: having escaped torture and death, he was adopted into an Iroquois community—apparently an Oneida village.<sup>100</sup> Returned to New France in 1692 by an Iroquois deputation headed by the Onondaga neutralist Teganissorens, La Chauvignerie immediately embarked upon a diplomatic career: the Iroquois insisted that he be the one to take supplies to the Jesuit Pierre Millet, still resident among the Oneida. Fourteen years later, La Chauvignerie was a *petit enseigne* and an established interpreter at Montreal; after Joncaire and Longueuil, he was the most prominent Frenchman to have personal ties to the western Iroquois.<sup>101</sup>

This process by which captives became first adoptees and, later, interpreters, was not unique to French-Iroquois relations. New York also came to employ a number of interpreters whose fluency stemmed from a forced immersion in Iroquois cultures: they were prisoners brought to Canada by parties of *sauvages domiciliés*—the largely Iroquois communities of Sault Saint-Louis, de la Montagne, Sault au Récollet and later the Lac des Deux Montagnes. Daniel Richter has remarked that the 1690 raid on Schenectady “inaugurated a veritable Berlitz school for young boys:” among those captured were the Dutchmen Lawrence Claessen and Jan Baptist van Eps, both of whom would become interpreters and agents among the Five Nations. Unlike their French counterparts, however, these interpreters, as captives of Canadian Iroquois, did not enjoy the kinship ties among the League Iroquois that men such as Joncaire developed.<sup>102</sup>

Obviously not all captive or adopted Europeans became cultural mediators or even developed any fluency in the languages of their hosts. Étienne de Villedonné, a French-born noble officer in the *troupes de la Marine*, was captured by the Iroquois in 1689 and escaped three years later; his captivity was marked by the usual non-fatal torture which

<sup>100</sup>See Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 33-37, 65-74 for a discussion of prisoners and adoption among the Iroquois.

<sup>101</sup>Mémoire pour 1692, *Collection de manuscrits relatifs à la Nouvelle-France*, 1: 594-595; Vaudreuil à Pontchartrain, les 28 avril, 30 octobre, 1 et 4 novembre 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 111. Another of Vaudreuil's dispatches suggests that Joncaire and La Chauvignerie were in captivity together, probably among the Onondaga: Vaudreuil à Pontchartrain, 4 novembre 1706, *RAPQ* (1938-39): 174.

<sup>102</sup>Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 364 n. 15.

centered on extremities such as hands and feet.<sup>103</sup> His career afterward was marked by military campaigns against the League under Frontenac, and by a steady rise in rank and position; by 1713 he was *aide-major* at Québec and promoted to the rank of *capitaine*. In 1722, at around 56 years of age, he was appointed commandant at Fort Saint-Joseph, where experience with Algonkian nations such as the Potawatomi, Fox, and Illinois would have been most valuable.<sup>104</sup> Despite his relatively long period of captivity, Villedonné did not assume any prominent role in French-Iroquois relations. This may be related to the fact that he escaped from his captors, much as La Fresnière had done thirty years before, and was not returned willingly to his people, as were Joncaire and La Chauvignerie. The divergent experiences of Hertel de La Fresnière on the one hand, and Joncaire and La Chauvignerie on the other, outline a process whereby the Five Nations selected particular adoptees for diplomatic roles, afterward releasing them for service as go-betweens.

Clearly, Europeans were chosen by Amerindians as much as they themselves chose to serve as living ties between nations. Yet the factors which persuaded Amerindians to nominate certain adopted Europeans to mediating roles, or to acquiesce in their functioning as such, remain somewhat obscure. Mary Druke has outlined the problem with reference to identity and adoption among the Mohawk and Oneida:

Euro-Americans tended to define identity on the basis of heredity, or naturalization. Mohawk and Oneida defined it in terms of kinship ties acquired by birth or through adoption. It can be said that it is unclear from evidence available, however, to what extent particular adoptions represented formal extensions of kinship terminology to allies, and to what extent they were actual incorporations of individuals within Mohawk and Oneida culture. It is highly likely that such a distinction was not relevant to Mohawk and Oneida... [and] that some "cross-cultural" alliances were viewed by Mohawk and Oneida not as cross-cultural or cross-national alliances as much as alliances based on kinship rites and duties.<sup>105</sup>

Despite this likelihood, Amerindians cannot be considered as lacking a sense of cultural differences with respect to the French. In light of repeated statements by Amerindians

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<sup>103</sup>Thomas Abler, "Scalping, Torture, Cannibalism and Rape: An Ethnohistorical Analysis of Conflicting Cultural Values in War," *Anthropologica* 34 (1992): 9; Richter, *Ordreal of the Longhouse*, 56, 69-70.

<sup>104</sup>Zoltvary, "Étienne de Villedonné," *DBC* 2: 681.

<sup>105</sup>Druke, "Structure and Meaning of Leadership," 44.

recognizing such differences, in matters as diverse as diplomacy and spirituality, it may be presumed that Amerindians appreciated both the intercultural dimension of such adoptions, and the potential usefulness of a French adoptee as cultural mediator.<sup>106</sup>

### 3.6 The limits of cultural understanding

To what extent did adopted Europeans come to understand and share, and ultimately identify with, the alien customs—diplomatic and otherwise—of their Amerindian kin? The question could be extended to all Frenchmen who played important roles as cultural mediators during Vaudreuil's term. A sense of cultural superiority always pervaded French attitudes toward Amerindians; it has often been presumed, however, that during the French regime certain individuals—such the *coureurs de bois*—were “assimilated” by Amerindians; such, at least, was the frequent concern of administrators and missionaries. Some of the early cultural middlemen in New France, the interpreters and traders employed by trading companies, were likewise seen as readily adopting the lifestyles and values of the Amerindians among whom they lived. Bruce Trigger has called into question the degree to which men such as Brûlé, Marsolet and Lintot identified with Native society:

It is tempting to believe that young Europeans of low social status would respond warmly to egalitarian native societies and in due course identify with them. Yet this did not happen in early New France.... [W]hatever passing attractions native life held for them were outweighed by the chances for social advancement within the emerging status-conscious society of New France. These employees of the trading company never came close to identifying their interests with those of the Indians, partly because of European ethnocentricity but mainly because their careers were based on exploiting them.<sup>107</sup>

Trigger indicates furthermore that such men “were nevertheless sufficiently trusted and accepted” as members of Amerindian societies to be allowed the same freedoms and rights

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<sup>106</sup>For studies of Amerindian perspectives on French culture during the French regime, see the works by Cornelius J. Jaenen: “Amerindian Perspectives on French Culture in the Seventeenth Century,” *Canadian Historical Review* (1974): 261-291; *Friend and Foe*; “L'Autre en Nouvelle-France/The Other in Early Canada,” *Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers* (1989): 1-12.

<sup>107</sup>Trigger, *Native and Newcomers*, 196-197.

as their kin. Mary Druke has similarly concluded, with regard to cultural middlemen in the mid-eighteenth century, that acculturation was rather limited. Men such as Sir William Johnson, Samuel Kirkland, Tyendinega, Tyanoga and Shikellamy

made conscious efforts to adopt some of the ways of the other people with whom they came in contact, and thus to advance their position of importance to both Indians and Euro-Americans.... Johnson... never truly became a Mohawk or Oneida. He always considered himself to be a Euro-American.

The same scholar makes the crucial observation that the value of cultural mediators depends on their ability to remain members of their own cultural group.<sup>108</sup>

These limitations on the acculturation of Euro-Americans may have prevented French agents and interpreters from acquiring the full understanding of Native cultures and traditions with which they have been credited by contemporaries and historians. In any event, such understanding may have been unnecessary, insofar as trust existed between Amerindians and Frenchmen. A distinction may be made “between knowing *about* a tradition and... knowing how to actually *perform* according to the tradition’s norms.”<sup>109</sup> In observing, adopting, adapting, and manipulating diplomatic practices of Amerindian origin, the French came to know much about their forms; a deep understanding of these customs—what students of religion call the *emic* (inside) meaning of a tradition—likely eluded them.

Vaudreuil’s corps of agents has not left behind a documentary corpus that would permit an extensive analysis of their understanding of Amerindian traditions. Such documents as remain demonstrate a certain respect for and knowledge about Amerindian customs; but, although useful for ethnographic detail, their prevalent ethnocentrism and incidental remarks do not suggest that their authors identified strongly with Amerindians.<sup>110</sup> Given this dearth of sources, data about agents’ career paths and life

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<sup>108</sup>Druke, “Structure and Meaning of Leadership,” 46 (quotation), 47.

<sup>109</sup>Foster, “Another Look at the Function of Wampum,” in *HCID*, 112 n. 11.

<sup>110</sup>Among the principal documents written by Vaudreuil’s agents are Louvigny’s memoirs on imperial policy to the conseil de Marine, Sabrevois’ memoir of 1718, and the De Gannes memoir attributed to Pierre-Charles de Liette. The last two are general descriptions of the nations of the *pays d’en haut* and the Illinois country respectively. For the agents among the Iroquois, Joncaire and La Chauvignerie, dispatches remain from the term of Vaudreuil’s successor, Beauharnois. Extrait d’une lettre écrite par Monsr de

decisions indirectly provide some indication of their attitude toward Native cultures, or indeed the distance they moved from European cultural norms.

As indicated above, French agents, even those with the strongest ties to Amerindians, generally demonstrated an abiding interest in social advancement in colonial society: the commercial or imperial exploitation of links to Amerindians provided a definite means of doing so. In pursuing French interests during the War of the Spanish Succession, Joncaire sought to use his status among the Seneca to influence League politics more directly: he “blasphemously proposed that the Confederacy’s council fire should be transferred from Onondaga to the Seneca country”—much as one might remove the Pope from Rome to Avignon. According to Raudot, this attempt resulted in the hostility of the other four Iroquois nations in 1709.<sup>111</sup> Other agents decried the pattern of mourning and vengeance in Native warfare in the northeast, but rejoiced when it served imperial ends—*le bien du service*.<sup>112</sup> This attitude was characteristic of the half-dozen officers who cultivated long-term ties with particular nations: Vincennes (with the Miamis), Liette (with the Illinois), La Chauvignerie, Joncaire, and Longueuil (among the Iroquois), and Louvigny (with the Odawa).

The rewards of success in influencing New France’s Amerindian allies came in the form of promotions, appointments and bonuses—most of which could only be appreciated in colonial society, and all of which required constant proof of devotion to the kings of France. The cases of Louvigny and Longueuil illustrate the primacy of such goals over the cultivation of intercultural ties. The pursuit of colonial military careers and the demands of empire kept Louvigny and Longueuil from maintaining close contact with the nations to whom they had personal ties. Despite numerous requests from the Odawas of

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Joncaire..., 26 Xbre 1726, in IIDH reel 9; *Precis du voyage de Monsr La Chauvignerie officier Interprete des Cinq Nations* [1728], C11A 50: 405-407v, in IIDH reel 10.

<sup>111</sup> Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 225 (quotation); Raudot à Pontchartrain, 1 9bre 1709, C11G 4: 187.

<sup>112</sup> See for example the memoir of De Gannes, in T. C. Pease and R. C. Werner, eds. *The French Foundations*, vol. XXIII of *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Society* (Springfield, Ill.: Illinois State Historical Society, 1934), 326.

Michilimakinac in the early 1710s that Louvigny return among them and restore their village to its former prominence. Louvigny did not again travel west of Montreal, with the exception of the summer expeditions of 1716 and 1717. In 1720 he was nevertheless appointed to the itinerant position of *commandant général des pays d'en haut*, a function never exercised. Four years later he was named governor of Trois-Rivières, a position that would certainly have kept him from western diplomacy had he lived to fill it.<sup>113</sup> Louvigny has been lauded by historians for his insight in French-Amerindian relations,<sup>114</sup> but his role in personal diplomacy was eclipsed after 1708 by his career in the colonial administration.

Longueuil, who owed his *croix de Saint-Louis* in part to his service as ambassador to the Onondagas, likewise pursued a career that ultimately distanced him from that nation. In 1707 Onondaga deputies, who opened a council by condoling the French on the death of Longueuil's uncle Jacques Le Ber, were told by Vaudreuil that Longueuil would no longer stay among them, as had his brother Le Moyne de Maricourt: "le grand Onontio le Roy luy ayant donné la charge de Major, sa presence est toujours nécessaire en ville, cependant je vous donne ce collier pour vous dire que je le regarde toujours comme vôtre homme d'affaires."<sup>115</sup> Iroquois ambassadors continued to stay at Longueuil's residence when at Montreal, and in 1711, 1721 and again in 1725 Longueuil was obliged to return to Onondaga; yet he was clearly no longer filling the role that Maricourt had played at the end of the previous century.

Status in colonial society was also influenced by marriage, and marriage with Amerindians, while potentially advantageous in cementing intercultural ties, was not so attractive for the colonial elite. While interpreters wed Amerindian and synethnic women

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<sup>113</sup>For Odawas demanding Louvigny, see Parolles du Brochet... du 23e Aoust 1713, C11A 34: 68-68v; Marest à Vaudreuil, 19 juin 1713, C11A 34: 82v. Confirmation of Louvigny's appointment is in Vaudreuil et Bégon au conseil, 26 8bre 1720, C11A 42: 29. See also Zoltvany, "Louis de La Porte de Louvigny," *DCB* 2: 345-347.

<sup>114</sup>Zoltvany, Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, 142; White, *The Middle Ground*, 161, 177.

<sup>115</sup>C. Dupré, "Charles Le Moyne de Longueuil," *DBC* 2: 419; Reponce De Monsieur le Gouverneur general aux Sauvages Onnontagués du 17e aoust 1707, C11A 26:91v-92 (quotation).

according to Catholic rites, only two officers—Vincennes *fils* and La Découverte, both *nobles agrégés*—did the same. Maricourt and Joncaire had concurrent French and Iroquois wives during the 1690s, but after 1706 it was Joncaire's French wife who bore his children, including the future interpreter Philippe-Thomas.<sup>116</sup> Similarly, Pierre You de La Découverte married Élisabeth, a Miami woman, at Chicago in 1693, but his successful bid to become a *noble agrégé* was likely secured by his second marriage to a Frenchwoman in 1697.<sup>117</sup> Vaudreuil's own views on cross-cultural marriages were expressed to the minister in response to Cadillac's stated intention to promote such unions at Detroit:

[I]l ne faut jamais mêler un mauvais sang avec un bon, l'expérience que lon a en ce pays, que tous les françois qui ont epousé des sauvagesses sont devenus libertins feneans, et d'une independence insupportable, et que les enfans qu'ils ont ont esté d'une feneantise aussy grande que les sauvages mesmes, doit empescher qu'on ne permette ces sortes de mariages.<sup>118</sup>

In light of such views and of the governor's paternalistic involvement in the nuptials of his subordinate officers, it is not surprising that so few unions occurred among the officers.

The rarity of mixed marriages was almost matched by the rarity of extended residence among Amerindians. The official closure of the west marked the first half of Vaudreuil's term, and serves to explain why few officers or interpreters were found outside the official pockets of French settlement in the west. As a result, only de Liette among the Illinois, Vincennes among the Miamis, and Joncaire's extended stays among the Seneca furnish examples of long-term residence with a host nation. The complex diplomacy at Fort Pontchartrain at Detroit, involving disparate Amerindian groups, heralded the beginning of a new era in French-Amerindian diplomacy: after 1716, the French presence in the west was characterized by posts and forts where many nations came together: at Detroit, La Baye, and to a lesser extent Michilimakinac and St. Joseph. There, and at posts

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<sup>116</sup>Zoltvany, "Louis-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire," *DCB* 2: 127; Olive Patricia Dickason, "From 'One Nation' in the Northeast to 'New Nation' in the Northwest: A look at the emergence of the métis," in Peterson and Brown, eds. *The New Peoples*, 25. Richard White has mistakenly identified Philippe-Thomas as a synethnic (*The Middle Ground*, 215).

<sup>117</sup>Albertine Ferland-Angers, "Pierre You de La Découverte," *DBC* 2: 703.

<sup>118</sup>Vaudreuil et Raudot à Ponchartrain, 14 9bre 1709, *RAPQ* (1942-43): 420.

on Lake Superior as well, the French presence was marked by contacts and diplomacy involving many nations. Under the authority of commandants whose tours of duty could be relatively short, diplomacy was not so much a matter of cultivating long-term ties to a particular nation as of representing Onontio.

Richard White has described the French-Amerindian alliance in the era of Beauharnois as an institutionalized system in which French and Algonkian "chiefs" were the human centre of kinship ties between the French and their allies; gifts and mediation were the acts by which the alliance was cemented:

Each side had to understand what the other expected from an alliance chief. Unless both sides accepted a man as a chief, he could not act effectively.... As a result, a French commander—that is, a French chief—and an Algonquian chief came to have similar profiles.... Like a chief, a commander ideally gave more than he received.<sup>119</sup>

It is difficult, however, to measure French agents against profiles of Amerindian leadership. Precious little data exists on how individual agents interacted with Amerindians on specific occasions, on their gift-giving activities, and on personal relationships they may have had with Amerindians; the sources thus defy the researcher to reach the same conclusions by examining many discrete relationships between French agents and Amerindians.

Still, the act of gift-giving, which resonates throughout the surviving French correspondence, can be associated with more French agents than any other quality discussed in this chapter. The French agents under study here, with their passion for marks of distinction and their *encadrement* in a social and political pyramid where authority descended from above, were not inclined to seek prestige according to Amerindian ideals; few cultivated long-term ties or personal relationships with Amerindian groups; fewer still were involved in lasting intercultural kin-relationships. Gift-giving serves to explain the role of the majority of French agents—officers serving as commandants and envoys—who

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<sup>119</sup>The basis for White's assertion of the emergence of a common profile of leadership in the intercultural alliance is a synthesis of ethnohistorical information on Amerindian leadership and information on gift-giving and mediation culled from the official correspondence. White, *The Middle Ground*, 177 (quotation), 178-183.

lacked the kind of skills and intercultural ties which characterized interpreters and a few officers. Gift-giving was a concrete act—requiring on the whole little cultural understanding—through which French commandants could appropriate for themselves some of the status enjoyed by Amerindian leaders, but which they could interpret in their own terms:

In the framework of their own elaborate rules of etiquette, precedence and protocol, the French saw that rank, authority, and prestige in the New World were dependent in some measure on their ability to offer gifts, and that generosity was the trait most admired by Amerindians.<sup>120</sup>

That they recognized its importance in diplomacy was underlined by Vaudreuil's successor, Beauharnois, after a period in which the flow of presents from the French to their allies had been stifled:

Sur les plaintes qui m'ont esté faite par les officiers commandants dans les postes d'en haut du retranchement des presens que l'on avoit coutume de leur faire delivrer pour les sauvages de leurs postes, J'ai crû ne pouvoir me dispenser, Monseigneur, de vous représenter la nécessité de rétablir l'usage de ces presens....

Nous avons d'ailleurs besoin de nos Sauvages plus que jamais, On ne peut les assembler et tenir des Conseils avec eux sans avoir les presens a la main, Les postes de Missilimakina, la Baye, La pointe et la rivière S[ain]t Joseph sont du nombre de ceux ou il est le plus nécessaire d'en Envoyer par raport aux affaires qu'on est obligé d'y traiter.<sup>121</sup>

The pleas of the commandants flew in the face of a royal policy which constantly sought to reduce gift-giving as a fiscal measure. However, at Montreal and in the west, gift-giving was the necessary act which allowed individual French agents to appropriate temporarily the status and recognition of a respected leader.

Did the French appreciate the prestige derived from their giving? Andrea Bear Nicholas, writing of French-Abenaki relations, has argued that they did not:

While the French definitely recognized the importance of gift giving, it is not so certain that they understood its significance. They often referred to the Native need for presents as an insatiable need. At other times, they commented either with scorn or self-assurance at the ease with which they thought they could "buy" Native support. They had literally stumbled upon a key to manipulating our people without fully understanding it....

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<sup>120</sup>Cornelius J. Jaenen, "The Role of Presents in French-Amerindian Trade," in Duncan Cameron, ed. *Explorations in Canadian Economic History* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1985), 232.

<sup>121</sup>Beauharnois au conseil, 25 7bre 1727, C11A 48: 125-125v, 126.

[F]or Native peoples the connection between the land and the people were governed by spiritual realities.... One could say that these connections were torn apart at the moment French priests, traders, military officers and governors began giving gifts and gaining prestige in return.<sup>122</sup>

This perspective, which emphasizes the potential for manipulating without necessarily appreciating elements of a foreign culture, helps to explain how Frenchmen whose values, careers and lifeways differed considerably from those of the Amerindians with whom they dealt, were nevertheless able to establish ties with Native peoples and function as diplomats in the west. Commandants and envoys did not need to understand how gift-giving and reciprocal obligation might represent something other than tribute and self-interest; nor did they need to recognize their function in an indigenous society. It was merely necessary to recognize the custom and to follow it in the interest of maintaining New France's ties with its allies. Indeed, some Frenchmen may have found in gift-giving and other diplomatic forms the resonance of their own values of propriety, protocol, and paternalism.<sup>123</sup>

### 3.7 Conclusion

The French agents active during Vaudreuil's term as governor of New France were integrated into a structure whose form owed as much to Amerindian models of kinship relations as it did to French models of military and civil hierarchy. On the one hand, Vaudreuil's agents were the human links between the singular Onontio and his Amerindian "children"; regardless of any actual kinship ties such agents had to Amerindians, they were

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<sup>122</sup> Andrea Bear Nicholas, "Wabanaki and French Relations: Myth and Reality," *Interculture* 24, 1 (Winter 1991): 31-32.

<sup>123</sup> Denys Del  ge has suggested that in their relations with Amerindians, Europeans exhibited a "superior" ability to objectify and manipulate culture—with the exception of religion. "Major Paradigms in Amerindian History as Applied to the Study of the French-Amerindian Alliance during the 17th and 18th Centuries," paper read at the conference "Native Peoples and New France: Re-examining the Relationships 1663-1763," McGill University, Montreal, 16 February 1992. On the other hand, superficial congruences between different cultural forms may explain why Frenchmen adapted easily to certain Native practices. Cornelius J. Jaenen has indicated that "French culture attached great importance to etiquette, precedence, and protocol, so that there was an immediate receptivity and appreciation of North American formalities and practices in this domain. There seems to have been a genuine enjoyment on the part of certain pompous Governors of the protracted ceremonies [including gift-giving]." "The Role of Presents," 249.

understood to stand in a metaphorical kinship relationship with Vaudreuil. On the other hand, the vast majority of these agents—officers and official interpreters—were subject to a double *encadrement* of European origin: first, the obligation of any French national to serve the interests of the French sovereign, and, more immediately, their obligation to obey the orders of their superiors in the military and civil hierarchy of New France.

Both metropolitans and Canadians functioned as agents, but Canadians dominated the posts of interpreter. Among the latter, there were no prominent synethnics, although most interpreters of Algonkian languages established close personal ties to Amerindians through marriage or residence. While seniority and experience counted for much in this diplomatic network, Amerindian approval played an important role in determining an agent's effectiveness. Much of this experience was acquired through long-term association with Amerindian groups. In the case of French agents among the Iroquois, captivity rather than voluntary association furnished selected individuals with the linguistic and cultural understanding necessary for the role of cultural mediator. It is difficult, however, to make a case for the extensive acculturation of French agents, even those with the strongest ties to Amerindians. Most pursued goals and careers that were more congruent with the values of their society of origin than with those of Amerindians; indeed, the pursuit of such goals could distance them from the personal contacts which characterized Amerindian politics and diplomacy. Moreover, for officers in the colonial *troupes de la Marine*, the exploitation of their ties with Amerindians was a well-established method of social advancement—just as the cultivation of ties to the French could enhance the importance of an Amerindian diplomat.

Ultimately, only a minority of Vaudreuil's agents possessed longstanding personal ties to Amerindians; yet the emerging shape of the French-Amerindian alliance did not require many agents with such strong links, but rather agents who could fulfill the role of mediator which Onontio had acquired at the peace of Montreal in 1701. Gift-giving, a key element in French-Amerindian relations on an "international" level, was equally important

on an interpersonal level: it allowed the French agent to appropriate some of the prestige of the Amerindian chief, for whom the redistribution of goods was a tangible sign of his status. Frenchmen may well have interpreted the gift-giving complex in their own cultural terms, but could not easily deny its central importance to the intercultural diplomacy of the period.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

En étudiant les coutumes diplomatiques primitives, on ne peut manquer de relever une foule de formes qui, *mutatis mutandis*, présentent une similitude indéniable avec les institutions correspondantes chez les peuples civilisés. Nous ne devons naturellement pas en tirer des conclusions trop hardies. Chez différents peuples, des circonstances ont produit des coutumes différentes et d'autres qui sont apparentées.

Ragnar Numelin, *Les origines de la diplomatie* (1942)

In the late 1930s, Ragnar Numelin's research for a lengthy work entitled *The Origins of Diplomacy* was interrupted, ironically, by the outbreak of the Second World War in Europe. Numelin nevertheless managed to have a preliminary version of his manuscript published in French during the war. By using the methods of comparative ethnography, Numelin hoped to revise the notion that diplomacy was a feature of "civilized" peoples, with its origins in the civilizations of Antiquity which western Europeans thought of as their cultural forerunners. His investigation of historical and contemporary ethnographic accounts of stateless societies all over the world, including those of the Amerindians of North America, led him to conclude that the differences between the diplomatic institutions of such peoples and those of European states were minimal: "il semble souvent ne pas exister d'autre différence que celle qu'implique un niveau supérieur de la civilisation." In other words, the diplomacy of Amerindians was the same as that of Europeans, only more "rudimentary" in form.<sup>1</sup>

Numelin's argument, despite its assumptions about the inferiority of non-European civilizations, at least had the virtue of demonstrating that human societies of varying degrees of scale and complexity all seemed to possess identifiable diplomatic institutions—established methods of handling business with outside groups. Diplomacy, as Numelin suggested, was probably as old as human society itself. States, kingdoms, tribes, and bands were alike in their ability to develop diplomatic forms by which the basic goals of

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<sup>1</sup>Ragnar Numelin, *Les origines de la diplomatie* (Paris: Flammarion, 1942), 125-126.

peace and security could be achieved. The problem with Numelin's conclusion is that the differences between these forms were not always minimal, and at the level where such forms have meaning for humans, the cultural gap could prove to be quite vast.

The respective diplomatic cultures of the French and Amerindian nations who coexisted in eastern North America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries exhibit certain superficial similarities. Like European dynasts, Amerindians saw intermarriage, or the formal union of men and women from different groups, as a useful mechanism for creating alliances. Diplomatic gifts were exchanged between state rulers and between Amerindians at councils. European princes called each other "brothers," while Amerindians, the Iroquois in particular, employed a whole array of kinship terms to describe their diplomatic relations with their neighbours. Diplomatic encounters on both sides of the Atlantic could be highly ceremonial affairs, regulated by strict protocols, and were frequently concerned with the observance of polite conventions—for example, embassies of condolence upon the death of a prince or important leader. The dispatch and reception of envoys, the use of mediators to resolve conflicts between belligerents, and the making and breaking of alliances seemed common to both European states and Amerindian nations.

Such apparent congruences were highly superficial, for these forms were rooted in two different cultural systems. European princes were conceived of as rulers whose sovereignty was exercised within strictly defined territorial units. These were the absolutist "tyrant-nations" whose interests were acknowledged by European theorists to be paramount in the conduct of international affairs. National interests were, essentially, the pursuit of military and financial power, and of prestige. For decision-makers in the age of Louis XIV, ideological notions such as *la gloire* or *l'honneur de la nation*, dynasticism—the interests of a prince's family—and religious exclusivity justified the behaviour of states on the international stage, where blood and treasure were the currency with which princes paid for their ambition. Diplomacy, like war, was merely one tool of the state, and in early

modern Europe the two were found in easy coexistence rather than in strict opposition. Only with the conclusion of the peace of Utrecht in 1713 did Europeans begin to see diplomacy as an enlightened means to maintain peace among a society of equal sovereign nations—an ideology with which the twentieth-century world is more familiar.<sup>2</sup>

The stateless Amerindian societies of northeastern North America also waged wars and made peace, but within an entirely different context. The need to control important resources, repair demographic losses, and externalize social tensions were of “national” interest to Amerindian nations. A warrior’s pursuit of prestige, the need to avenge or replace a lost kinsperson, and the expiation of grief were concepts that explained both small- and large-scale conflicts (which European observers interpreted as private and public wars). Amerindian societies also possessed the means to resolve such conflicts. The essential principle in this diplomatic culture was the creation of a system of real and fictive kinship relationships which would channel the exchange of both goods and services between groups. With kin, disputes could be resolved through established diplomatic formulae predicated on the basis of kinship ties; with outsiders, no such channels existed, and hostility, or at the very least anxiety, prevailed. The Amerindian ideal of a state of universal kinship was, in its own way, as theoretically capable of making diplomacy rather than war the basis for international relations, as was the European idea of the Law of Nations.<sup>3</sup>

In the early eighteenth century, the forms associated with Amerindian diplomatic culture dominated diplomacy between the French in Canada and the Amerindian nations west of Montreal. This was so because in the development of diplomatic and commercial

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<sup>2</sup>Garret Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971[1955]), 292-294; W. J. Roosen, *The Age of Louis XIV: The Rise of Modern Diplomacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman, 1976), 1, 52-56; Lucien Bély, *Espions et ambassadeurs au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 12-14.

<sup>3</sup>Russell L. Barsh, “The Nature and Spirit of North American Political Systems,” *American Indian Quarterly* 10, 3 (1986): 187; Marie-Laure Pilette, “Un dilemme iroquois : combattre pour s’allier et s’allier pour combattre,” *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* XXI, 1-2 (1991): 73-74; Leroy V. Eid, “‘National’ War among Indians of Northeastern North America,” *Canadian Review of American Studies* 16, 2 (Summer 1985): 140-149.

relations between French and Amerindians, the latter were regularly the hosts of French agents: as such, they took the initiative in defining the form of the encounter. Moreover, Amerindian nations were sufficiently powerful to command the respect of the French newcomers, whose leaders participated willingly in Amerindian diplomatic rituals as a means of advancing colonial, and later, imperial interests. The shape of intercultural diplomacy was consequently as much a result of French penetration of the *pays d'en haut* and intermingling with the Algonkians as it was of the need to deal with the powerful Five Nations, whose military significance probably did much to push the French into the use of certain diplomatic forms.

European attitudes of cultural superiority also contributed to the importance of Amerindian diplomatic forms. Europeans were generally reluctant to extend the diplomatic conventions that characterized intra-European relations to states that lay beyond the pale of European civilization—Russia, China, and Ottoman Turkey. Instead, they adapted to alien rituals and forms. Cornelius J. Jaenen has indicated how the French approach to sovereignty in the New World was conditioned by this dualism: in relations with other European powers in America, the French asserted their sovereignty by means of particular European conventions—the display of crosses and coats-of-arms, and the affirmation of the right of discovery, occupation, or conquest. In relations with Amerindian nations, however, “they sensed that Amerindian independence and self-esteem would never permit a political relationship that went beyond voluntary association.” As a result, the sphere of activity in which French-Amerindian diplomacy took place was, for the French decision-makers, conceptually separate from the sphere in which France dealt with other Great Powers. A symbol of this gulf was the administrative separation of colonial affairs from foreign affairs in the growing bureaucracy of the French state, and the increased reluctance of French kings in the eighteenth century to receive Amerindian envoys in court.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Peter Barber, *Diplomacy* (London: The British Library, 1979), 51; C. J. Jaenen, “French Sovereignty and Native Nationhood during the French Régime,” *Native Studies Review* 2, 1 (1986): 83-113, 101 (quotation); Roosen, *The Age of Louis XIV*, 34-38.

The conduct of French diplomacy with Amerindian nations was thus the exclusive domain of the governor of New France, although the incumbent's metropolitan superiors established the basic policies. In 1703, at the beginning of Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil's term as governor, the colony's pressing need of its Amerindian allies in the War of the Spanish Succession, as well as the particular obligations that fell to the French under the terms of the Peace of Montreal in 1701, committed the French to the use of Amerindian diplomatic protocols. At Montreal, in the *pays d'en haut*, and in Iroquoia, French and Amerindian diplomats met and conducted business within the framework of the council—essentially a structured dialogue between two speakers, punctuated by the exchange of validating gifts. Amerindian diplomatic rhetoric marked these dialogues, and, translated into French, was adopted by French officials in official dispatches and, in all likelihood, in everyday discourse as well. Although the French kept written records that partially documented these councils, they generally did not ask Amerindians to ratify them; instead, both French and Amerindian council participants understood that the exchange of wampum or other gifts served to validate the agreements.

Between 1703 and the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), Vaudreuil's diplomatic organization succeeded in meeting the challenge of a diminished French presence in the west. His corps of diplomatic agents consisted mostly of officers in the *troupes de la Marine*, many of whom had some experience with Amerindian diplomatic culture. A handful of these agents' careers were characterized by long-term residence among Amerindian groups, adoption into Amerindian families, and in some cases, intermarriage. Most, however, merely sought success in the diplomatic arena as a stepping-stone to higher positions in the civil and military hierarchy of New France. As well, diplomatic missions to Amerindian nations provided lucrative opportunities for French officers. In the years after 1712, the re-establishment of many western posts meant that more (and less experienced) officers took up diplomatic responsibilities in the *pays d'en haut*, acting as Vaudreuil's representative, or speaker, in councils with Amerindians.

Although some officers learned Amerindian languages, most were seconded by interpreters who sprang from a lower social class.<sup>5</sup> Interpreters of Algonkian languages were generally ethnic French Canadians involved in the fur trade. Many married Amerindian or synethnic women and raised families in the *pays d'en haut*. Some of the most prominent interpreters of Iroquois languages, on the other hand, were adoptees and former captives of the Five Nations.

Neither officers nor interpreters were able to impose themselves as diplomats, regardless of their *crédit* with Amerindians. The latter always played an important role in determining the success of a French agent. Although Amerindians regularly selected agents that had experience, a diplomat's misconduct could render him odious to his host nation.

The few written accounts produced by French officer-diplomats (other than the highest officials) and preserved in the official correspondence of the Canadian colony do not reveal that many identified closely with Amerindian culture; nor do their life choices suggest a particular desire to form long-lasting ties with Amerindians. Interpreters and junior officers exhibited more willingness to maintain long-term commercial and kinship ties with Amerindians. Yet their success—both as diplomats and as traders—ultimately rested on their ability to advance French interests as dictated by Vaudreuil, and to exploit Amerindians.

It is tempting to view the French-Amerindian alliance as resting upon a nebulous network of interpersonal relations between French and Canadian *coureurs de bois* and Amerindians in the upper country. Certainly, many incidents suggest that the officers whose actions and opinions dominate the official correspondence were actually less important than the lesser-known interpreters. In 1717, Alphonse de Tonty was on his way to take up his command at Fort Pontchartrain (Detroit) when he encountered first three, and then another fourteen canoes of Odawas and Potawatomis, making for Albany. The French were powerless to prevent them from continuing, and other French officers in

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<sup>5</sup>Even among officers, those credited with the most linguistic ability tended to come from the lower ranks.

Tonty's position were content to merely count the number of canoes going by. Tonty, however, resolved to bend his diplomatic skills toward convincing the Amerindians to abandon their plans. Despite his experience in Amerindian diplomacy, it took three days of intercultural councils, a number of important trade concessions, and the influence of three Canadians—one of whom was the interpreter Loranger—"qui avoient du Credit sur l'Esprit de ces Sauvages" to overcome the Amerindians' reticence to forego trading with the English. Ten canoes followed Tonty to Detroit, while Loranger was dispatched with another seven to Montreal. Even the latter's *crédit*, however, could not prevent one of the seven from disappearing up the "rivière des Onontagués" (Oswego River).<sup>6</sup>

Vaudreuil's diplomatic organization depended greatly upon agents like Loranger, whose linguistic abilities and (often illegal) trading activities made formal French-Amerindian relations possible.<sup>7</sup> But this fact should not overshadow the importance of established diplomatic forms which permitted French career officers and Amerindian diplomats to resolve conflict in a mutually satisfactory way. Amerindians consistently asked for officers to represent Onontio in the villages, preferring to deal with important French leaders rather than with the traders, who were arguably more culturally sensitive.

Comprehensive cultural mediation may not have been a necessary prerequisite for intercultural diplomacy. As Jennifer S. H. Brown has indicated in her study of intercultural relations surrounding the Hudson Bay fur trade, superficial common understanding between two culturally divergent groups is all that is really necessary for peaceful social interaction, or trade. Members of neither group needed to move very far from the cultural commitments of their own people in order to deal with the other.<sup>8</sup> Thus, while historians of French-Amerindian relations are right to underline the fact that some

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<sup>6</sup>Vaudreuil au ministre, 12 8bre 1717, Archives des colonies (Paris), C11A, Correspondance générale, Canada, vol. 38, fol. 109-112v, National Archives of Canada, MG 1, microfilm, reel F-38.

<sup>7</sup>Claiborne Skinner, "The Sinews of Empire: The Voyageurs and the Carrying Trade of the Pays d'en haut, 1681-1754" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1991), chapter three, esp. 97-123.

<sup>8</sup>J. S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), xvii.

degree of common ground was established between representatives of both cultures, it is equally appropriate to underline the lack of mutual cultural understanding. In diplomacy as in war, different goals, different motives, and different values did not prevent cooperation. Cooperation did not require profound ethnographic knowledge or extensive mutual acculturation.

In the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the Amerindian forms that were used to maintain and cement alliances provided the basic forum for interaction between the French in Canada and the Amerindians nations west of Montreal. Later generations of French officials would benefit from the services of synethnic cultural mediators like Charles Langlade, but the French diplomats under Vaudreuil were culturally distant from the Amerindians with whom they dealt.<sup>9</sup> In the absence of such a buffer of *métis* brokers, diplomacy was conducted in accordance with established protocols of Amerindian invention, but which the French could manipulate while investing them with their own cultural values.

Along with the council in which it found ritualized expression, gift-giving was probably the most significant of these forms. European diplomatic theorists of the seventeenth century did not usually consider generosity one of the fundamental moral qualities of the diplomat; liberality was generally "treated as a principle of tactics rather than a virtue."<sup>10</sup> For Amerindian leaders and the speakers who represented them in council, liberality (in the form of gift-giving) was a necessary virtue; for highly-placed metropolitan and colonial officials it was a necessary evil; and for experienced French diplomatic agents in the upper country it was merely necessary. This may seem like the proverbial distinction without a difference, but it is not. During the 1740s, when the French ceased to make such fine distinctions between their imperial vision of New France and the reality of the

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<sup>9</sup>Langlade was related to Canadian officers and Odawa chiefs through his parents, Augustin Mouet de Langlade and Domitille Villeneuve. Jacqueline Peterson, "Prelude to Red River: A Social Portrait of the great Lakes Métis," *Ethnohistory* 25, 1 (Winter 1978): 57.

<sup>10</sup>Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, 218.

Amerindian-inspired forms of the alliance that permitted their presence in vast swaths of Amerindian land, the intercultural alliance was seriously undermined. Amerindians allies were perceived as subjects, gift-giving became an undesirable expense, customary trade relationships were abandoned to European market forces, and mediation was replaced by attempts at coercion. In such cases, the vigorous reaction of Amerindians recalled to the French the actual bases of their relationship with the Native peoples of North America.<sup>11</sup>

In adopting selected elements of Amerindian diplomatic culture, the French in Canada recognized and legitimized such practices. From Onontio's point of view, Canada and the *pays d'en haut* was at once both a fragment of the French state, and part of a widespread kinship state that united the colonists and Amerindians under the aegis—or, in Amerindian diplomatic rhetoric, the protective embrace—of his diplomatic fatherhood. While metropolitan Frenchmen employed maps and treaties to define the geographical limits of European sovereignty, Vaudreuil and the agents most intimately involved in dealing with Amerindians were well aware of the network of fictive kinship ties and reciprocal obligations that conditioned relations between the French and their Amerindian allies. New France's actual borders lay where Amerindian ideals of kinship and alliance bound the French to Amerindian nations as allies, and not where metropolitan cartographers presumed they did. In the double role of Onontio and governor general of New France, Vaudreuil mediated between the demands of metropolitan decision-makers and Canadian geopolitical realities. But though Vaudreuil and his agents took Amerindian diplomatic institutions seriously, to the point of adopting certain rhetorical expressions, their interest in them was generally pragmatic in nature.

Richard White has used the term “the middle ground” to refer to the notion of a “common conception of suitable ways of acting,” which emerges through a process of mutual invention among peoples of differing cultures brought into contact. For White, the

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<sup>11</sup>D. Peter MacLeod, “‘Une conspiration générale:’ The Exercise of Power by the Amerindians of the Great Lakes during the War of the Austrian Succession, 1744-1748” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1992), 168ff; White, *The Middle Ground*, 199ff.

middle ground in French-Amerindian relations “resulted from the daily encounters of individual Indians and Frenchmen with problems and controversies that needed immediate solutions.” Intercultural diplomacy—the formal encounter of Amerindians and the French—is thus regarded as a mere forum upon which these conflicts were played out—a formal setting wherein “common conceptions” found their expression.<sup>12</sup>

It is doubtful whether, for the majority of Amerindians and Frenchmen, such common conceptions of suitable ways of acting ever existed apart from the formal setting of diplomacy. The everyday problems discussed by White arose from the intimate contacts between Frenchmen and Amerindians in the *pays d'en haut*, far from the concentrations of French settlement. It is understandable that such contacts might be fertile ground for the creation of mutually comprehensible ways of acting. But on a larger, societal level, Amerindian nations and the French in Canada required the means to bridge cultural differences in order to achieve collective goals of security and stability. The established structures of intercultural diplomacy provided Amerindians and the French with a peaceful means of finding a congruence of interests. Beyond mutual agreement as to these forms, little else had to be shared—certainly not the subjective value placed upon them. The question of power and its exercise in eastern North America must not be overlooked: clearly, the military power of the Iroquois Five Nations had as much to do with the tendency of the French to favour *les voies de douceur* over *les voies de sévérité* as did the interpersonal ties forged between Frenchmen and Algonkians in the *pays d'en haut*.<sup>13</sup>

Intercultural diplomacy in the first quarter of the eighteenth century was characterized by Amerindian forms and protocols which colonial officials and agents

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<sup>12</sup>White, *The Middle Ground*, 50, 56 (quotation). White seems to contradict himself by writing that “[t]he middle ground was both a product of everyday life and a product of formal diplomatic relations between distinct peoples,” (53), and later that “the middle ground itself, however, did not originate in councils and official encounters” dealing with large questions of alliance, but in the need to resolve everyday problems (56). As the author notes himself, this distinction is not really appropriate.

<sup>13</sup>For a discussion of “power” in French-Amerindian relations, see D. Peter MacLeod, “‘Une conspiration générale’: The Exercise of Power by the Amerindians of the Great Lakes during the War of the Austrian Succession, 1744-1748” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1992), 14-17.

adopted and manipulated in order to advance French interests. On the basis of experience and necessity, they may have agreed with their Amerindian counterparts as to the appropriateness of these forms, but their conception of them did not match that of Amerindians. French agents wielded diplomatic influence by acquiring prestige in accordance with Amerindian values, but did not hold these values themselves. Intercultural diplomacy was not the superficial forum of a middle ground: it was the middle ground itself—a peaceful arena for dealing with pressing issues between groups, and one that temporarily circumvented the tendency of cultures to clash.

## APPENDIX I

AMERINDIAN DIPLOMATS IN FRENCH-AMERINDIAN COUNCILS AT  
MONTREAL AND QUEBEC, 1703-1725

The following list of Amerindian diplomats includes only those who are identified in recorded councils taking place at Montreal or Quebec between 1703 and 1725. Amerindians who acted as diplomats in councils in the *pays d'en haut* but who never visited the Canadian colony are thereby excluded. In any event, few enough emerge from the French council record, which is biased in favour of Montreal councils. As well, the numerous Amerindian diplomats who attended the councils at Montreal in 1711 have been omitted from this tally for reasons of space.

With only a few exceptions, these individuals acted as speakers in council, representing their nation or village or a subgroup thereof. A small number of orators occasionally represented several distinct groups at once: Koutaouiliboé, Onanguicé, and Teganissorens are the best examples.

Each individual is identified by name, nation, and village (where appropriate); a chronological list of councils with the French provides a brief sketch of the diplomatic career of each. Biographies in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography (DCB)/Dictionnaire biographique du Canada (DBC)* are noted. Other useful secondary sources are: J. A. Clifton, *The Prairie People*; D. K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse*; F. Jennings *et al.*, eds. *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy*; and Gilles Havard, *La grande paix de Montréal de 1701* (see bibliography).

Chachagouesse (Nicanapé), Illinois (from Le Rocher)  
Montreal, August 1712 [DBC 2: 134].

Companisé, Odawa (from Michilimakinac)  
Montreal, 1 August 1706.

Garakontié II, Onondaga  
La Famine, 1684; Montreal, 12 August 1708; Fort Frontenac, 1 December 1708.

Innokinsa, Miami  
Montreal, 5 August 1703.

Kinongé (Le Brochet), Odawa du Sable  
Michilimakinac, 1683; Montreal, 1695; Montreal, 1700; Montreal, 1701; Montreal, 1 August 1706; Quebec, August 1713 [DBC 2: 330-331].

Koutaouiliboé, Odawa Kiskakon (from Michilimakinac)  
Montreal, 1700; Montreal, 1701; Detroit, 1707; Montreal, 23 July 1708; Montreal, 29 July 1710; Montreal, 18 July 1712 [DBC 2: 338].

Le Pesant, Odawa du Sable  
Montreal, 14 July 1703; Montreal, 24 August 1705 [DBC 2: 431-433].

Makisabé, Potawatomi (from Saint Joseph river)  
Montreal, August 1712.

Miscouaky, Odawa du Sable  
Montreal, 1700; Quebec, 26 September 1706; Quebec, August 1713 [DBC 2: 495].

Mouet, Sauk  
Montreal July 18 1712.

Niquimas, Odawa (from Michilimakinac)  
Montreal, 2 September 1703

Ohonsiowanne (La Grande Terre), Onondaga  
Montreal, 1699; Montreal, 1700; Québec, October 1703; Montreal, 18 October 1704 [*DCB* 2: 502].

Onanguicé, Potawatomi (from La Baye)  
Montreal, 1695; Montreal, 1697; Montreal, 1701; Montreal, 1715 [*DCB* 2: 504].

Onaskin, Odawa (from Michilimakinac)  
Montreal, 1 August 1706.

Oronyatek, Seneca  
Montreal, 25 October 1703.

Otchik, Potawatomi (from Detroit)  
Montreal, 24 June 1717.

Ouchala, Fox  
La Butte des Morts (Wisconsin), 1716; Fox village (Wisconsin), 1717; Montreal, 1719; La Baye, 6 September 1722; La Baye, 7 June 1726 [*DCB* 2: 502-503].

Ouilamek, Potawatomi of St. Joseph river  
Montreal, 1701; Montreal, 4 August 1705; Montreal, 18 July 1712; Montreal, 1714; Montreal, 1717; Montreal, 1719 [*DCB* 2: 503-504].

Outoutagan (Jean Le Blanc), Odawa du Sable  
Montreal, September 1695; Montreal, 1701; Detroit, 1706; Montreal, 16 June 1707 [*DCB* 2: 504-506].

Pilemont, Potawatomi (from St. Joseph river)  
Montreal 18 July 1712.

Saguima, Odawa (from Michilimakinac)  
Quebec, August 1713; Albany, 30 May 1723.

Shamgoueschi, Odawa (from Saginaw Bay)  
Montreal, 24 June 1717.

Teganissorens (Decanesora), Onondaga  
Montreal, 1682; Quebec, 1683; Quebec, 1694; Montreal, 1701; Montreal, 31 October 1703 [*DCB* 2: 619-623].

Tonatakout, Seneca  
Montreal, 1700; Montreal, 1701; Montreal, 10 September 1712 [*DCB* 2: 658-659].

## APPENDIX 2

## FRENCH DIPLOMATIC AGENTS 1703 - 1725

The following list of French agents is organized alphabetically by name. Also given are the dates of birth and death, where known, as well as the place of birth and date of arrival in Canada where pertinent; the noble status<sup>1</sup> and highest civil and/or military rank achieved by the agent during a Canadian career;<sup>2</sup> and a brief characterization of the agent's diplomatic functions.

Published biographical sources are given at the end of each entry. See the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography (DCB)/Dictionnaire biographique du Canada (DBC)*, vols. 1 to 3; René Jetté, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles du Québec*; Louise Phelps Kellogg, *The French Regime in Wisconsin and the Old Northwest*; and Lorraine Gadoury, *La noblesse de Nouvelle-France* (see bibliography).

AILLESBOUST d'Argenteuil, Pierre de

1659 (Quebec) - 1711

Canadian noble; *capitaine*

envoy to Michilimakinac and Detroit, 1708; to the Odawa and Iroquois, 1710

*DCB* 2: 12-14.

AILLESBOUST de Mentheth, Nicolas de

1663 (Montreal) - 1709

Canadian noble; *capitaine*

envoy to the upper country, 1703

*DBC* 2: 13-14.

AMARITON, François

died ca. 1733

*écuyer, capitaine*

commandant at La Baye, 1724-1727

Jetté 11; Kellogg, 305 n. 32.

AMOURS de La Morandière, Philippe de

1680 - before 1746

Canadian noble; *officier*

commandant at La Baye, 1717 - 1721

Kellogg, 296.

BISSOT de Vincennes, François-Marie

1700 (Montreal) - 1736

Canadian noble; *enseigne*

officer among the Wea, ca. 1719 - 1730

*DCB* 2: 66-67.

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<sup>1</sup> An asterisk (\*) indicates that the individual is a *noble agrégé*, according to the definition proposed by L. Gadoury (see *La noblesse de Nouvelle-France*, annexe 4, 172).

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise specified, the rank given is that in the Canadian *troupes de la Marine*, sometimes referred to as the *troupes de la colonie*. The term *officier* is indicated if the precise rank is unknown.

BISSOT de Vincennes, Jean-Baptiste

1668 (Quebec) - 1719

Canadian noble\*; *enseigne*

envoy and commandant among the Miamis, 1696 - 1719

*DCB* 2: 68.

BOUCHER de La Perrière, René

1668 (Montreal) - 1742

Canadian noble; *capitaine*

commandant at Sault Saint-Louis, 1708 - ca. 1712, at Fort Beauharnois, 1727 -

1728; proposed envoy to the *pays d'en haut*, 1715

*DBC* 2: 86-87.

CHABERT de Joncaire, Louis-Thomas

1670 (near Arles) - 1739; in Canada from ca. 1690

French noble; *lieutenant*

interpreter and envoy to the Seneca, ca. 1700 - 1739

*DCB* 2: 125-127.

DAUPHIN de La Forest, François

1649 (Paris)- 1714; in Canada from 1675

French noble; *capitaine*

commandant at Detroit 1710 - 1714

*DBC* 2: 176-177.

DUPUY, Simon

1677 (Ile-aux-Oies) - 1716

Canadian noble; *lieutenant*

envoy to Detroit in 1714 and 1715

Jetté, 390.

GODEFROY de Linctot, René

1675 - ?

Canadian noble; *capitaine*

commandant at the Nipissing mission, ca. 1713; second-in-command at

Chequamegon Bay, 1718; commandant among the Dakota, 1730

Kellogg, 301 n. 20.

HERTEL de La Fresnière, Joseph-François

1642 (Trois-Rivières) - 1722

Canadian noble; *capitaine*

interpreter, commandant at Fort Frontenac 1708 - 1712

*DBC* 2: 292-294.

LA PORTE de Louvigny, Louis de

1662 (Paris) - 1725; in Canada from 1683

French noble; *commandant général des pays d'en haut*; governor of Trois-Rivières

commandant at Michilimakinac, 1689 - 1694 and 1716; at Fort Frontenac, 1699 -

ca. 1702; envoy to the Odawa, 1705, and to the Fox, 1717

*DCB* 2: 345-347.

LADOUCEUR

interpreter among the Miami ca. 1720

LAMBERT dit Dumont, Eustache  
 1688 (Québec) - 1760  
 Canadian noble\*; *lieutenant*  
 envoy to the Miami in 1720  
 Tanguay, 5: 112.

LE MARCHAND de Lignery, Constant  
 1663 (near Tours) - 1731; in Canada from 1687  
 French noble; *capitaine*; major of Trois-Rivières  
 commandant at Michilimakinac, 1712 - 1719 and 1722 - ca. 1728  
*DCB* 2: 389-390.

LE MOYNE de Longueuil, Charles  
 1656 (Montreal) - 1729  
 Canadian baron; *capitaine*; governor of Montreal (and interim governor of New  
 France, 1725-1726)  
 envoy to the Onondaga, 1704 - 1725  
*DBC* 2: 418-420.

LE MOYNE de Maricourt, Paul  
 1663 (Montreal) - 1704  
 Canadian noble; *capitaine*  
 interpreter and envoy to the Onondaga, ca. 1694 - 1704  
*DCB* 2: 403-405.

LEGARDEUR de Saint-Pierre, Jean-Paul  
 1661 (Quebec) - ca. 1722  
 Canadian noble; *capitaine*  
 envoy to Michilimakinac, 1707, to La Baye, 1711, and to the Saulteur, 1718;  
 interpreter at Montreal and during Fox campaign of 1716; commandant at  
 Chequamegon Bay, 1719-1722  
*DBC* 2: 401-402.

LIÉNARD de Beaujeu, Louis  
 1683 (Paris) - 1750; in Canada from 1697  
 French noble; *capitaine*; *lieutenant du roi* at Trois-Rivières  
 commandant at Michilimakinac 1719 - 1722; second-in-command during the 1728  
 expedition against the Fox  
*DBC* 3: 434-435.

LIETTE, Pierre-Charles de  
 died after 1721; in Canada from ca. 1685  
 French noble  
 envoy to the Illinois 1702 - 1721  
*DBC* 2: 453-454.

LORANGER  
 Canadian; interpreter for the Odawa, 1705 and 1717

MARAY de La Chauvignerie, Louis  
 1671 (France) - after 1724; in Canada from ca. 1690  
 French noble; *enseigne*  
 interpreter and envoy to the Iroquois, ca. 1692 - 1724  
 Jetté, 762.

- MÉNARD, Maurice  
1664 (Trois-Rivières) - ?  
Canadian; *interprète du roi*  
interpreter at Michilimakinac, ca. 1695 - after 1722; envoy to the Odawa, 1706 and  
to the Fox, 1717  
Jetté, 794.
- MORISSEAU, Jean-Baptiste  
1684 (Repentigny) - ?  
Canadian; *sergent des troupes*  
*interprète en langues iroquoises* and envoy to the Iroquois ca. 1725  
Jetté, 839.
- RÉAUME, Jean-Baptiste<sup>3</sup>  
1675 (Quebec) - ?  
Canadian; voyageur and *interprète du roi* at La Baye and Saint-Joseph  
Jetté, 970-971.
- RÉAUME, Pierre  
1691? (Charlesbourg) - ?  
Canadian; interpreter at Montreal, 1718  
Jetté, 970-971.
- RÉAUME, Simon  
1669 (Quebec) - ?  
Canadian merchant and voyageur; interpreter, ca. 1717 - 1734  
Jetté, 970.
- RÉMY de Montmidy, Martin  
ca. 1661 (near Reims) - ?; in Canada after 1693  
French; *enseigne*  
commandant at Saint-Joseph, 1717 - 1720  
Jetté, 974.
- RENAUD Dubuisson, Jacques-Charles  
1666 (Paris) - 1739; in Canada from 1685  
French noble; *capitaine*; major of Trois-Rivières  
commandant at Detroit 1710 to 1715, among the Miami, 1718 - 1725, and at  
Michilimakinac 1729 - 1730  
DBC 2: 578-588.
- RICHARD, Jean-Baptiste  
1682 (Pointe-aux-Trembles) - ?  
Canadian; interpreter  
Jetté, 982-983; DBC 1: 585-587.

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<sup>3</sup>Jean-Baptiste Réaume and his brother Simon played key roles in the French campaign against the Fox in 1730. Joseph Peyser gives further biographical details on them in "The Fate of the Fox Survivors: A Dark Chapter in the History of the French in the Upper Country, 1726 - 1737," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 73, 2 (Winter 1898-90): 102-110.

- RIGAUD de Vaudreuil, Philippe de  
1643 (near Revel, Languedoc) - 1725; in Canada from 1687  
French marquis; governor general of New France  
governor of Montreal. 1698 - 1703; Ontario, 1703 - 1725  
*DCB 2: 565-574.*
- ROBUTEL de La Noue, Zacharie  
1665 (Montreal) - 1733  
Canadian noble\*; *capitaine*  
commandant at Kaministiquia, 1717 - 1721  
*DBC 2: 607.*
- ROY, Pierre  
1677 (Laprairie) - 1732  
Canadian; *interprète du roi aux Miamis*  
Jetté, 1018-1019, 1022.
- SABREVOIS, Jacques-Charles de  
1667 (Garancière-en-Beauce) - 1727; in Canada from 1685  
French noble; *capitaine*  
commandant at Detroit, 1715 - 1717, at Fort Chambly, 1720 - 1724  
*DBC 2: 614-615.*
- SAINT-OURS Deschaillons, Jean-Baptiste de  
1669 (Sorel) - 1747  
Canadian noble; *capitaine; lieutenant du roi* at Québec  
commandant at Kaministiquia, 1721-1726 and at Detroit, 1728 - 1730  
*DBC 2: 625-626.*
- TESTARD de Montigny, Jacques  
1663 (Montreal) - 1737  
Canadian noble\*; *capitaine*  
envoy; commandant at La Baye, 1721 - 1723; at Michilimakinac, 1730 - 1733  
*DBC 2: 653-655.*
- TONTY, Alphonse de  
1659 (France) - 1727; in Canada from 1685  
French noble; *capitaine*  
second-in-command at Detroit, 1701 - 1705; commandant at Fort Frontenac, 1706 -  
1708; at Detroit, 1717 - 1727; envoy to the *pays d'en haut*, 1711  
*DCB 2: 631-633.*
- VÉNIARD de Bourgmond, Étienne de  
ca. 1675 (Normandy) - 1725; in Canada from ca. 1695  
enobled 1725; *enseigne*  
commandant at Detroit 1706  
*DBC 2: 673-675.*
- VIENNAY-Pachot, Jean-Daniel-Marie  
1694 (Quebec) - 1725  
Canadian; *lieutenant*  
Huron interpreter at Detroit; envoy to the Dakota, 1719  
Jetté, 1125; *DBC 2: 316-317.*

VILLEDONNÉ, Étienne de  
1666 (Paris) - 1726; in Canada from 1685  
French noble; *capitaine*  
commandant at Saint-Joseph, 1722 - 1726  
*DBC* 2: 681.

YOU de La Découverte, Pierre  
1658 (La Rochelle) - 1718; in Canada from ca. 1670  
French noble\*; *enseigne réformé*; *aide-major* at Montreal  
envoy to upper country in 1703  
*DBC* 2: 702-703.

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