

## ABSTRACT

BAKER, PHILIP JORDAN. *The Economy of Salvation: Seventeenth-Century Jesuit Missions and the Process of Conversion in the French Atlantic (Under the direction of Keith Luria)*.

In this thesis, I will put forward my notion of the economy of salvation, which I define as follows: conversion of the evangelized in response to and to gain protection from an existential threat. In the case of the Wendat, this threat came in the form of disease and warfare that appeared in their country as a result of European arrival; for the Bretons, this threat was the militant zeal with which the Jesuits hoped to alter peasant culture. The tools of conversion used by the Jesuits took many forms, but one, which historians have not much examined, is their use of miracles. By examining the Jesuit use of miracles, and the changes that occurred among the Wendat in terms of life- and deathways, and among the Bretons in terms of regional religious belief, I will show that conversion was a process of give-and-take on either side of the Atlantic world. Through this framework, I will put the processes of Catholic missions and conversion in the seventeenth-century into a trans-national, Atlantic framework.

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The Economy of Salvation: Seventeenth-Century Jesuit Missions and the Process of  
Conversion in the French Atlantic

by  
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## **DEDICATION**

For my mom, my constant inspiration

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Born and raised in North Carolina, I have lived in the Raleigh area since I was eleven. I graduated with a BA in History and English from North Carolina State University in 2012. After two years, I decided to come back to earn a graduate degree. While this thesis has most definitely been hard work, it has been a labor of love. A lot of long hours, and probably even more caffeine, went into making this project a reality. I feel fortunate to have had this opportunity to pursue graduate education at NC State, and to wake up every morning and feel excitement to get to work.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

First and foremost, I would like to thank my family. Without you guys, I don't think I could've survived all life has thrown our way. I also owe a huge debt to my academic advisor, Dr. Keith Luria. Without his aid and advice, this thesis could not have happened. I would also like to thank Drs. Megan Cherry and Judy Kertesz, who took the time out of their busy schedule to act as committee members for my thesis defense, and gave continued support and suggestions through the revision process.

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## Introduction

The concept for this project grew out of a longstanding interest in the study of imperialism, and its effects on the people history has deemed as the ‘conquered.’ While reading the Jesuit relations, I became struck by the similarities the seventeenth-century Jesuit missionaries saw between the Native Americans of New France and the rural peasants of France. What was it about these two completely disparate sets of people that the Jesuits found so similar? In France, the peasant populations spoke various dialects from the Romance, Germanic, and Celtic language families; they practiced agriculture and husbandry; and they had long ago converted to Christianity (though some local peculiarities remained). In New France, the peoples the Jesuits encountered spoke Iroquoian and Algonquian languages, and were divided between people living in semi-permanent villages that practiced agriculture, nomads that relied on hunting-and-gathering, and mariners who lived along the coasts. Additionally, the various peoples of the Northeast, whether settled or nomadic, all practiced belief systems based on animistic conceptions of the world. All this is to say, culturally, linguistically, and in the way they conceived of the nature and purpose of the universe, the Wendats and the Bretons appear to modern observers just about as far apart as possible.

Indeed, the only thing these groups of people seem to have had in common, from the Jesuits’ point of view, was a lack of knowledge of orthodox Catholic teachings. While peasants in France had long been Catholic, Church reformers found the peasant religious experience wanting and mired in superstitious beliefs. Thus, the Jesuits conceived of the Native peoples of New France and the peasants of France as equally ‘ignorant.’ And it was

this negative similarity – the lack of knowledge of orthodoxy – that defined the way the Jesuits approached the missionized.

How then, did the Jesuit missionaries seek to combat this perceived ignorance, and how did the evangelized react to these efforts? These are the main questions driving this study. In order to explore these questions I have taken two well known, and well documented groups of people as my subjects: the Wendats in New France, and the Bretons in France. These two groups present interesting points of comparison due to the otherness the Wendats and Bretons alike presented to the Jesuit missionaries. Though subjects of the French king, the Bretons spoke a Celtic language and had remained isolated from the rest of France as a result of their province's status as an autonomous duchy for several centuries. Incorporated into the French kingdom in 1547, the Bretons thus looked just as much the “other” as the Wendat to the Jesuits who came to missionize, though they lived within the borders of the same territorial state, the French kingdom.

Additionally, both the Wendats and the Bretons are extremely well documented in the primary source material for the seventeenth-century. These accounts, however, were the Jesuits' or French elites' observations of the ‘less civilized’ cultures of the Wendats and the Bretons. Using this source material, historians have approached the histories of these two people from cultural, social, diplomatic and military, and political points of view – making great strides in all these areas. Admittedly, the historiography of Brittany and colonial New France is quite large. However, I would like to briefly discuss the recent studies that informed my own thoughts on the subject, as I will situate my own work among these relevant secondary works.

Among the historians of North America during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, the way in which Native American peoples reacted to, and interacted with, the European colonizers has become a topic of great debate. Francis Parkman, a late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century historian authored the foundational works of this field. While his studies are now considered antiquated, Parkman offered one of the first explorations of the Jesuits in New France. Extremely Eurocentric in his point of view, Parkman viewed the Jesuit missions as a “peaceful, benign, beneficent,” process that “aimed to... convert, civilize, and embrace them [Native Americans] among her children.”<sup>1</sup> The work of historians such as Alan Greer and Daniel Richter came about as a reaction to the Eurocentricity that had dominated the historiography since the time of Parkman. For Richter, an historian of British North America who specializes in the history of the Haudenosaunee, in order to understand the history of the Haudenosaunee and their diplomatic and military actions during the seventeenth-century, one must take into account traditional Iroquoian reasons for war - which had yet to be done within the historiography prior to his work.<sup>2</sup> For Greer, an historian who interrogates modes of Indigenous resistances within the sphere of the French Atlantic, parallels between Haudenosaunee beliefs and spiritual life with that of the Catholic missionaries allowed for the two parties to understand one-another, and proved the primary reason for Native American conversion.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Parkman, *France and England in North America: Volume I* (New York: Literary

<sup>2</sup> Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Alan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

In the case of the Wendat specifically, anthropologists added a great deal of depth to our knowledge of the Wendat. Published in 1964, Elisabeth Tooker made a significant contribution to the field with her work, *An ethnography of the Huron Indians*. In this book, Tooker put forth one of the first ethnographic interpretations of the *Jesuit Relations* and various travel writers, such as Gabriel Sagard.<sup>4</sup> Tooker's work set the foundation for Bruce Trigger, perhaps the most important anthropologist of the Wendat. Published in 1976, Trigger's *The Children of Aataentsic I & II*, offers the most detailed look into Wendat lifeways, deathways, spiritual beliefs, and geo-politics yet given, stretching in chronology from the earliest occupations of Wendake to 1660.<sup>5</sup> In the wake of Tooker and Trigger, Karen Anderson published her influential work *Chain her by One Foot*. In this book Anderson posits that the Jesuit presence, along with the destruction caused by disease and war led to the loss of women's traditional economic, political, and spiritual power in Wendat society.<sup>6</sup> Georges E. Sioui, himself a member of the Wendat Nation, has also made a unique contribution to the history of the Wendat. Sioui's work focuses on Wendat cosmology, and how its conception of circularity is reflected and refracted in the material world of the Wendat. Using this idea of circular societies, Sioui has put forth several interesting works that show the cooperative, and

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<sup>4</sup> Elisabeth Tooker, *An ethnography of the Huron Indians* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1964). For a synopsis of Tooker's work see, Bruce Trigger, "Ethnology," Review of Elisabeth Tooker's *An ethnography of the Huron Indians*. *American Anthropologist*, vol. 67, no. 3 (June 1965): 807-808.

<sup>5</sup> Bruce G. Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic I & II: A History of the Huron People to 1660* (Montreal & London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976).

<sup>6</sup> Karen Anderson, *Chain her by One Foot: The subjugation of Native women in seventeenth-century New France* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

reciprocal nature of Wendat society and their alliances with other peoples.<sup>7</sup> John Steckely made an important intervention in the field by weighing Jesuit linguistic records and dictionaries against recent linguistic and archeological work to create an ethnography of the Wendat people.<sup>8</sup> More recent historians, such as Kathryn Magee Labelle, and Eric R. Seeman have used the conceptual frameworks put forward by Greer, Richter, and Trigger to explore the world of the Wendat.<sup>9</sup> Drawing upon the large body of anthropological work and seventeenth-century source material pertaining to the Wendat, these historians have done much to give back to the people of Wendake the agency that earlier works on colonial North America, such as those by Francis Parkman, had taken from them through studies of their customs, diplomacy, and interaction with European peoples.

The historiography of Brittany has had two main recent expositors, Alain Croix and Elizabeth Tingle. Both authors have concerned their studies primarily with the problem of Breton religious life, and the changes it underwent in the seventeenth-century. While both use similar methodologies, they come to very divergent conclusions. For Croix, the religion of Lower Brittany was largely a holdover from its pagan past, with a Catholic veneer.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Georges E. Sioui, *Huron-Wendat: The Heritage of the Circle* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999); Georges E. Sioui and Kathryn Magee Labelle, "The Algonquian-Wendat Alliance: A Case Study of Circular Societies," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2014): 171-183

<sup>8</sup> John Steckely, *Words of the Huron* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2007)

<sup>9</sup> Kathryn Magee Labelle, *Dispersed but Not Destroyed: A History of the Seventeenth-Century Wendat People* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013); Erik R. Seeman, *The Huron-Wendat Feast of the Dead: Indian-European Encounters in Early North America* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Alain Croix, *Les Bretons: La mort et le dieu, de 1600 à nos jours* (Paris: Messidor/Tempus Actuels, 1984).

Along with other prominent twentieth-century historians, such as Jean Delumeau, Croix takes the Jesuits' accounts of local 'superstitions' as evidence of this sort of peasant-pagan culture. Tingle, on the other hand, sees the Bretons of the seventeenth-century as Catholic, who practiced a religion far closer to the accepted Church orthodoxy than the missionaries realized.<sup>11</sup> Drawing upon records from parish churches and confraternities, Tingle argues that in fact the Bretons held rather orthodox Catholic beliefs.

While the missions of the seventeenth-century have been explored in some detail on either side of the Atlantic, Dominique Deslandres offers the only truly comparative study of missions to New France and the French interior in her book, *Croire et faire croire*.<sup>12</sup> Exploring missionary teachings, methods, and culture on either side of the Atlantic, Deslandres' study offers great insight into the religious life of the French Atlantic. However, *Croire et faire croire* only explores the Jesuits and the shared corporate culture they exhibited across their various missions. While her work added much to our understanding of the missions of the seventeenth-century, it does not address the native, evangelized societies in a comparative way. This study will look to fill this historiographical gap through a comparison of native responses to Jesuit missionaries and the changes they looked to impose on the cultures of the proselytized.

In this thesis, I will put forward my notion of the economy of salvation, which I define as follows: conversion of the evangelized in response to and to gain protection from

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<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Tingle, *Purgatory and Piety in Brittany, 1480-1720* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013).

<sup>12</sup> Dominique Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire: Les missions françaises au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2003).

an existential threat. In the case of the Wendat, this threat came in the form of disease and warfare that tore through their country in the 1630s and 1640s; for the Bretons, this threat was the militant zeal with which the Jesuits hoped to alter peasant culture. The tools of conversion used by the Jesuits took many forms, but one, which historians have not much examined, is their use of miracles. By examining the Jesuit use of miracles, and the changes that occurred among the Wendat in terms of life- and deathways, and among the Bretons in terms of regional religious belief, I will show that conversion was a process of give-and-take on either side of the Atlantic world. Through this framework, I will put the processes of Catholic missions and conversion in the seventeenth-century described by the historians mentioned above into a trans-national, Atlantic framework.

Before beginning, however, it is necessary to define a few terms that will prove critical to an understanding of the narrative here presented. Throughout this study, the terms orthodox and Tridentine are used to describe the type of Catholicism taught by the Jesuits. By these terms, I mean to convey the spirit of the Catholic Church following the Council of Trent, focusing upon the following decrees: the affirmation of the legitimacy and authority of the Vulgate (Latin version of the Bible used as the official text of the Catholic Church), and the importance of the ecclesiastical tradition as an added source of authority to the Bible.<sup>13</sup> Though the Council of Trent produced many more decrees, its stance on ecclesiastical tradition (the working of miracles, the pantheon of Saints) and the clergy's necessary role in interpreting this tradition, proved the most important for this study. The catechism became

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<sup>13</sup> R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540-1770* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 15.

one of the most important methods used by the clergy to teach Tridentine doctrines.

Catechism refers to the process used by Catholic clergy to educate the laymen through the recitation of pre-written question-answer dialogues.

When referring to the Native Nations of New France, I have chosen to refer to them by the names they themselves use(d). The most prominent Native peoples in this study are the Wendat, and the Haudenosaunee. Given that the terms passed down by European explorers and colonizers to describe the Wendat and Haudenosaunee, the Huron and Iroquois Five Nations respectively, were originally disparaging in their meaning, the use of Wendat and Haudenosaunee to describe these people seems the better way to proceed. The Algonquians were another cultural group of great importance. Though referred to as a single unit, the term Algonquian will be used within this work to describe the various nations of northern Quebec and Ontario, such as the Mi'kmaq, Abenaki, and Innu, who all belonged to the Algonquian language family. I have chosen to refer to these people as Algonquian for the simple fact that this is the terminology used by many of the secondary and primary sources, and it does not always prove possible to distinguish which particular Algonquian nation the author is referencing.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The term Algonquian comes from the early French colonists who used the term to describe Ojibwaya language speakers they encountered. The term however, whose specific meaning is unknown, has come under debate amongst scholars of indigenous studies. On the origins of the term Algonquian, see Brian Swann, *Algonquian Spirit: Contemporary Translations of the Algonquian Literatures of North America* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), xi-xii.

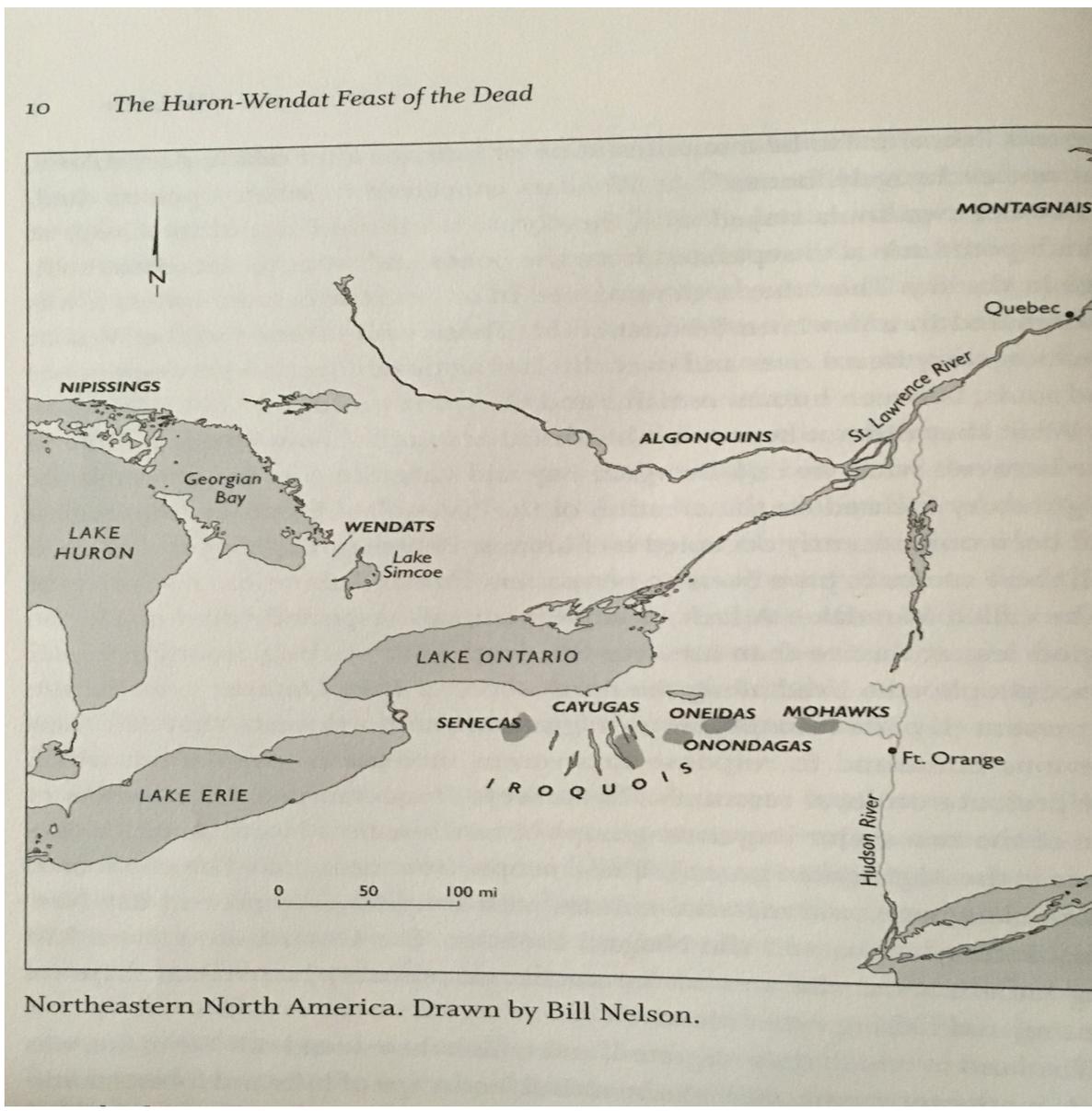
## Chapter 1: Native Worlds

### Introduction

Writing from Quebec in 1634, Paul Le Jeune, at that time the superior of the Jesuit missions in New France, tried to describe the peoples among whom he and his colleagues had begun their work. “I naturally compare our Savages with certain [European] villagers,” Le Jeune wrote, “because both are usually without education.”<sup>15</sup> Though the Jesuits found the cultures and spiritual practices of both French peasants and Native Americans shocking, why such a comparison? To modern historians such a comparison seems completely unconvincing. In this chapter, I will explore the lifeways and deathways of the Wendats and the regionally specific form Catholicism found among the Bretons in the seventeenth-century in order to answer this question. By discussing several key factors of both Wendat and Breton culture, this chapter will address why exactly the Jesuits found both sets of peoples “without education”, and how each culture looked in the seventeenth-century at the time of Jesuit arrival.

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<sup>15</sup> Paul Le Jeune, “Of the Goods Things which are found among the Savages,” *Jesuit Relations* ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland, OH: Burrows Brothers Company, 1901) vol. 6, 226.



Map of the Indigenous Nations of Northeastern North America<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Seeman, *The Huron-Wendat Feast of the Dead*, 10.

## The Wendats and Wendake

Located on a small strip of land wedged between Lake Simcoe and the Georgian Bay in what is now Southern Ontario, the Wendat Confederacy reached the peak of its power and influence in the 1620s and 1630s. What the French called Huronia, and the inhabitants themselves called Wendake, consisted of five nations brought together into a confederacy of some 35,000 people. The five Wendat nations of the historical period are as follows: Attignawantan, or Bear Nation; Attigneenongnahac, or Cord Nation; Arendahronon, or Rock Nation; Tahontaenrat, or Deer Nation; and Ataronchronon, or “nation beyond the intervening swamp.”<sup>17</sup> These nations, who spoke an Iroquoian language, inhabited an area roughly 35 miles from east to west and 20 miles from north to south.<sup>18</sup> Geopolitically, the Wendat homeland sat between several Algonquian speaking nations to the north, and the Iroquoian speaking Tionontate and Neutral nations to the south. Additionally, the Haudenosaunee Five Nations, the Wendats’ main military enemy, occupied the land on the other side of Lake Ontario.

Politically, the Wendat divided their society into four important levels of governance: the clan, the village, the nation, and the confederacy.<sup>19</sup> Within each of the nations outlined above, the Wendat divided themselves by clan membership. Wendake originally housed

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<sup>17</sup> The translation for Tahontaenrat as Deer Nation has, however, come under some controversy. Other translations that have been offered are: “the place of white thorns or bushes” or “the white-eared people.” Sioui, *Huron-Wendat*, 90.

<sup>18</sup> Bruce G. Trigger, *The Huron: Farmers of the North* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969), 9.

<sup>19</sup> Sioui, *Huron-Wendat*, 129.

eight clans: Turtle, Wolf, Bear, Beaver, Deer, Hawk, Porcupine, and Snake.<sup>20</sup> At the village level, a chief of civil concerns and a chief of military concerns represented each clan. The clan chief often came into this position hereditarily, through matrilineal descent.<sup>21</sup> The civil chiefs negotiated with other nations, settled any dispute within their village, and arranged various celebrations such as feasts, dances, and games throughout the year.<sup>22</sup> At the national level, the various chiefs from all five Wendat nations periodically gathered to discuss problems that faced the confederacy as a whole. These meetings also served to reaffirm the friendship between the five nations of the confederacy, and thus help to perpetuate the very existence of the Wendat Confederacy.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to the civil and military chiefs of each village, the elders, typically men, played a large role in Wendat society. The elder men of the village were the key to Wendat knowledge production and transmission. Within Wendat society, the minds of these village elders acted as the repository for their traditions and mythology.<sup>24</sup> At large gatherings, typically feasts of celebration, the elderly men presented the younger members of the village with the various stories associated with the Wendat conceptions of the universe, and the traditional Wendat ways of life. Through these oratories, knowledge passed down to the younger generations.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>22</sup> Trigger, *The Huron*, 69.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

Economically, the Wendat practiced a semi-agricultural lifestyle. As a result, they constructed semi-permanent villages and lived in the traditional abode of the Iroquoian world, the longhouse. Archaeological excavations have shown longhouses in Wendake could reach 88 feet in length and 27 feet wide.<sup>26</sup> The Wendat organized their homes along matrilineal lines and the extended kin networks, or clans, listed above. These extended kin networks shared the longhouse, and divided it equally among the families that called it home, with five or six families typically sharing a single structure.<sup>27</sup> Due to Wendake's large population, longhouses often held dozens of people. Indeed, the excavation of a Wendat village in Le Caron, Ontario, showed that 215 people lived within the village's five longhouses.<sup>28</sup> Matrilocal in nature, the longhouse served a greater societal purpose than simply providing shelter. It was in this matrilineal, extended family structure that Wendat children learned their place in Wendat society, and the obligations they owed to the various social structures of Wendake (family, clan, nation).<sup>29</sup> Thus, the longhouse served as a key aspect in Wendat cultural reproduction, as familial ties across villages, individual roles in society, and kin networks all centered around the longhouse.

One of the most important roles learned in the longhouse was the gendered division of labor. In Wendat society, each gender had the responsibility of maintaining one of the two

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<sup>26</sup> Richard B. Johnston and L.T. Jackson, "Settlement Pattern at the Le Caron Site, a 17th Century Huron Village," *Journal of Field Archaeology*, vol. 7, no. 2 (Summer, 1980): p. 181.

<sup>27</sup> Jodie A. O'Gorman, "Exploring the Longhouse and Community Tribal Society," *American Antiquity*, Vol. 75 No. 3 (July 2010): p. 575. Trigger, *The Huron*, 55.

<sup>28</sup> Johnston and Jackson, "Settlement Pattern at the Le Caron Site," 198.

<sup>29</sup> O'Gorman, "Exploring the Longhouse," 575.

basic means of production: women oversaw the agricultural, and men hunted and fished.<sup>30</sup> The hunts undertaken by the men of a village were an integral part of social life, as they provided meat for consumption and furs for clothing. Typically taking place in the late fall and early winter months, hunting expeditions had to travel outside of the borders of Wendake to find game, as the dense population of the Wendat homeland did not allow much room for deer and bears to roam. As the winter hunts often took men far away from their homes, the hunters relied on ceremony and ritual while on the move to ensure their own safety and plentiful game. As Bruce Trigger has noted, Wendat men often met with the *arendiwane* or communed with certain guardian spirits before setting out on the hunt.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, the Wendat believed that while on the hunt, if an animal was killed its bones should not be given to the dogs and its fat could not fall into the fire. If such things happened, other animals of the same species as the kill would “get wind of it, ... hide themselves, and not let themselves be taken.”<sup>32</sup> Thus, hunting became more than just a means of obtaining protein and furs for the village. The expeditions became a repository of Wendat beliefs, as the hunters consulted *arendiwane*, sought the advice of spirits, and took care not to disturb the *oki* of the animals they hunted.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Elisabeth Tooker, *An Ethnography of the Huron Indians, 1615-1649* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1964), 58.

<sup>31</sup> Trigger, *The Huron*, 32.

<sup>32</sup> Paul Le Jeune, “That the Hurons recognize some divinity; of their superstitions, and their faith in dreams,” *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 10, 167.

<sup>33</sup> *Oki* is the Wendat word for spirit. In the Wendat conception of the universe, everything, either living or inanimate, had an *oki*. This concept will come under further discussion in Chapter 3.

While the Wendat used winter hunting expeditions to augment their diet, they proved extremely efficient agriculturalists. Within Wendat society, the responsibility to tend to the agricultural side of economic reproduction fell to women. Seeing to the crops was perhaps the most important task performed by Wendat women (outside of rearing children). The crops grown, typically corn, beans, squash, and sunflowers, constituted roughly seventy-five percent of the Wendat diet.<sup>34</sup> In addition to planting and harvesting crops, women prepared food, ground flour, and saw to the storage of the agricultural surplus, if any, yielded that year.<sup>35</sup> They produced so much corn, in fact, “one Jesuit missionary said it was easier to get lost [in their cornfields]... than in the neighboring forests and grasslands.”<sup>36</sup> Their ability to create such a large agricultural surplus made the Wendat one of the most materially wealthy nations in the American northeast.

As a result of these large surpluses, the Wendat were perhaps the most important traders in southern Canada, acting as “a veritable granary for the Algonkians [Algonquians],” who often stayed the winter in Wendake, and traded the pelts they had collected for the Wendats’ corn.<sup>37</sup> This relationship between the Wendats and the Algonquians (most prominently the Nipissing, Ottawa, Ojibway, and Algonkin nations) formed between the fifteenth and seventeenth-centuries, and relied on a notion of reciprocity – each side of the alliance gave and partook of the services of the other.<sup>38</sup> Trade, cohabitation, and military

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<sup>34</sup> Trigger, *The Children of Aataenstic I*, 54.

<sup>35</sup> Gabriel Sagard, *The Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons* ed. George M. Wrong (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1939), 101.

<sup>36</sup> Sioui, *Huron-Wendat*, 92.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Sioui and Labelle, “The Algonquian-Wendat Alliance,” 174.

assistance arose as the most prominent of these reciprocal rights. Prior to the arrival of European peoples, the trading alliance between the Wendats and the Algonquians became predicated upon the premise that Wendat agriculturalists would trade surplus produce, such as corn, to the more nomadic Algonquian populations, who in turn provided meat, fish, and furs.<sup>39</sup> In addition, such alliances provided Wendat allies the right to travel through and winter in Wendake, and the same rights applied to the Wendat – for example “Algonquians would welcome the Wendat with open arms” as they passed through Algonquian lands on hunting expeditions.<sup>40</sup> Thus, the right to travel through and temporarily stay within an ally’s territory became integral to the Wendat alliance system. Such rights of shared residency were key for the mutual defense of the communities involved in the alliance. Indeed, the Wendat and the Algonquians often launched joint military campaigns against their common enemy, the Haudenosaunee. In the geopolitically disruptive decades following the arrival of the French, the rights of cohabitation and military assistance also led the Wendat to take in refugee groups, such as the Wenro<sup>41</sup>, and give them a permanent home in Wendake.<sup>42</sup>

Ceremonies had long served to unite the people of Wendake, as well as create the bond between them and their Algonquian neighbors discussed above. The Feast of the Dead proved the most powerful of these ceremonies. The Feast of the Dead occurred only occasionally, with years separating one Feast from another, and sometimes as much as a

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>41</sup> The Wenro were an Iroquoian people who existed apart from the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and lived in Western New York until 1638 when the Seneca expelled them. See Marian E. White, “Ethnic Identification and Iroquois Groups in Western New York and Ontario,” *Ethnohistory*, vol. 18, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 19-38.

<sup>42</sup> Labelle, *Dispersed but Not Destroyed*, 102.

decade passed between Feasts. At these ceremonies, the members of the five Wendat nations, and those foreigners invited to participate, exhumed their dead and reburied them in a large, common grave; archaeologists have found as many as five hundred individuals in these communal burial grounds.<sup>43</sup> Though the meaning of the Feast evolved over several centuries, by the time Europeans such as Jean de Brébeuf witnessed the Feast of the Dead it had come to symbolize the unity of the Wendat Confederacy.<sup>44</sup> The Feast, however, also became a way of uniting the Wendat with neighboring peoples in formal alliances. The Algonquians constituted the prominent allies of the Wendat during the era of French colonization, and subsequently played an important role in the Feast. In the case of both a Wendat only Feast, or a shared Wendat-Algonquian Feast, through the common burial of their dead, the participants became “symbolic kinspeople,” and hoped by uniting the dead they could unite the living in an eternal alliance.<sup>45</sup> In 1636, two years after the Jesuits arrived in Wendake, the Wendat extended an invitation to the Frenchmen to participate in the Feast of the Dead. Brébeuf acknowledged the international scope of this all-important ritual, but did not record the various nations that took part in the ceremony. After the completion of the burial process, the Wendat headmen gave presents in order to show their gratitude and “thank the Nations which had taken part” in this solemn ceremony.<sup>46</sup> Interestingly, the Wendat invited Brébeuf and the Jesuits “to raise the bodies of . . . two Frenchmen who died in this part of the

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<sup>43</sup> Seeman, *The Huron-Wendat Feast of the Dead*, 60-61.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>45</sup> Sioui and Labelle, “The Algonquian-Wendat Alliance,” 177.

<sup>46</sup> Jean de Brébeuf, “Of the solemn Feast of the Dead,” *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 10, 280.

Country... that their bones might be put in the common grave with their dead.”<sup>47</sup> Though the Jesuits declined, this offer on the part of the Wendat shows their desire to cement an alliance with the French. For, as Georges Sioui has noted, by including foreigners in the Feast of the Dead “the Wendats sought and practiced confirmation of their alliances and kinship with other peoples.”<sup>48</sup>

With the establishment of permanent French settlement in the Saint Lawrence River Valley in the 1630s, the Wendat looked to incorporate them into their alliance system. This Wendat-French alliance benefited both parties through the trade of European goods for furs. As the French-Wendat relationship became solidified through the first half of the 1630s, the reciprocal nature of Wendat alliance systems became integrated into this accord. Most prominently, the French under Samuel de Champlain demanded the Jesuits be allowed to live among the Wendat.<sup>49</sup> As Paul Le Jeune wrote, “Sieur de Champlain has told them there is no true friendship unless visits are interchanged, they [the Wendat] are very desirous, at least in appearance to have us in their country.”<sup>50</sup> To the Wendat, allowing allies to dwell in Wendake would not have seemed out of place, and thus allowed the Jesuits to return with them to Ossassané, the largest Wendat village in 1633. By allowing the Jesuits into their homeland, the Wendat secured the right to trade with the French for the goods they desired, much as they had done with the Algonquians - but rather than acquiring meat, fish and furs for corn, the Wendat traded furs for metal goods. The Jesuit presence proved a crucial part of

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 304.

<sup>48</sup> Sioui, *Huron-Wendat*, 234, note 190.

<sup>49</sup> Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic II*, 480.

<sup>50</sup> Paul Le Jeune, “Le Jeune’s Relation, 1633,” *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 6, 19.

the alliance for the French, something to which the Wendat were extremely sensitive and guaranteed the safety of the Black Robes in Wendake during the turbulent decades to come.

While inviting foreigners to take part in solemn ceremonies in Wendake was an integral part of Wendat diplomacy, they also recognized the importance of accepting the invitation of participating in the rites of their neighboring peoples. Indeed, the Wendat occasionally traveled north in order to take part in the Algonquians' Feast of the Dead ceremonies.<sup>51</sup> After the establishment of permanent French settlements in the 1630s, this same imperative often drove the Wendat to send political men to winter in Quebec. The Jesuits hoped to instruct these Wendat men in the ways of the faith so they could teach their own people upon their return to Wendake. To the Wendat, however, wintering with, and participating in the religious ceremonies of, the Jesuits appeared the most prudent and effective course of garnering an alliance with the French.<sup>52</sup> This notion gains some credence when one considers the delegates chosen by the Wendat. The heads of Wendat governance did not pick these delegates based upon their fervor for instruction in Catholicism, nor did they pick individuals that represented all facets of Wendat society (such as women). Rather, the Wendat sent "the principal men of the country."<sup>53</sup> The choice to send politically minded men demonstrates the true purpose of the Wendats' winter stays in Quebec – to form an alliance with the French.

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<sup>51</sup> Sioui and Magee Labelle, "The Algonquian-Wendat Alliance," 177.

<sup>52</sup> Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic II*, 614.

<sup>53</sup> Barthelemy Vimont, "Of the Hurons who wintered at Quebec and Sillery," *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 24, 121.

While burials and ceremonies often served to unite the people of Wendake politically, as well as create diplomatic ties with neighbors, they also sought the procurement of a good afterlife for the deceased. The practice of including grave goods in burials proved perhaps the most important ritual to that end. According to traditional Wendat belief, the *oki*, or spirit, of the deceased used these grave goods in much the same way he/she did while alive in order to secure a safe journey to the afterlife, or village of souls.<sup>54</sup> Thus, “the Wendats had the custom of contributing their most precious personal possessions for burial with the bodies of their kin.”<sup>55</sup> The Wendat believed the deceased could use the goods buried along side them in the afterlife, the conception of which looked very much like their own world. Writing in 1636, while living in Wendake, Paul Le Jeune recorded the importance that the Wendat placed upon grave goods. After witnessing the funeral of a young girl, to whom he had administered the sacraments, Le Jeune noted that “they [the Wendat] enveloped the dead body in several robes; they gave her her trinkets, her ornaments, a quantity of porcelain... and besides this they put in the grave two paddles, and two large bags filled with their wealth, and with different utensils or instruments which the girls and women use.”<sup>56</sup> This rite proved so integral to the Wendat conception of the afterlife, Le Jeune noted, that if they “were refused the privilege of placing in the graves of their dead their few belongings, to go with them to the other life, they say, they would also refuse to allow us [the Jesuits] to approach their sick.”<sup>57</sup> Throughout their time in Wendake, the Jesuits’ hoped to rid the Wendat of their use

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<sup>54</sup> Sioui, *Huron-Wendat*, 142

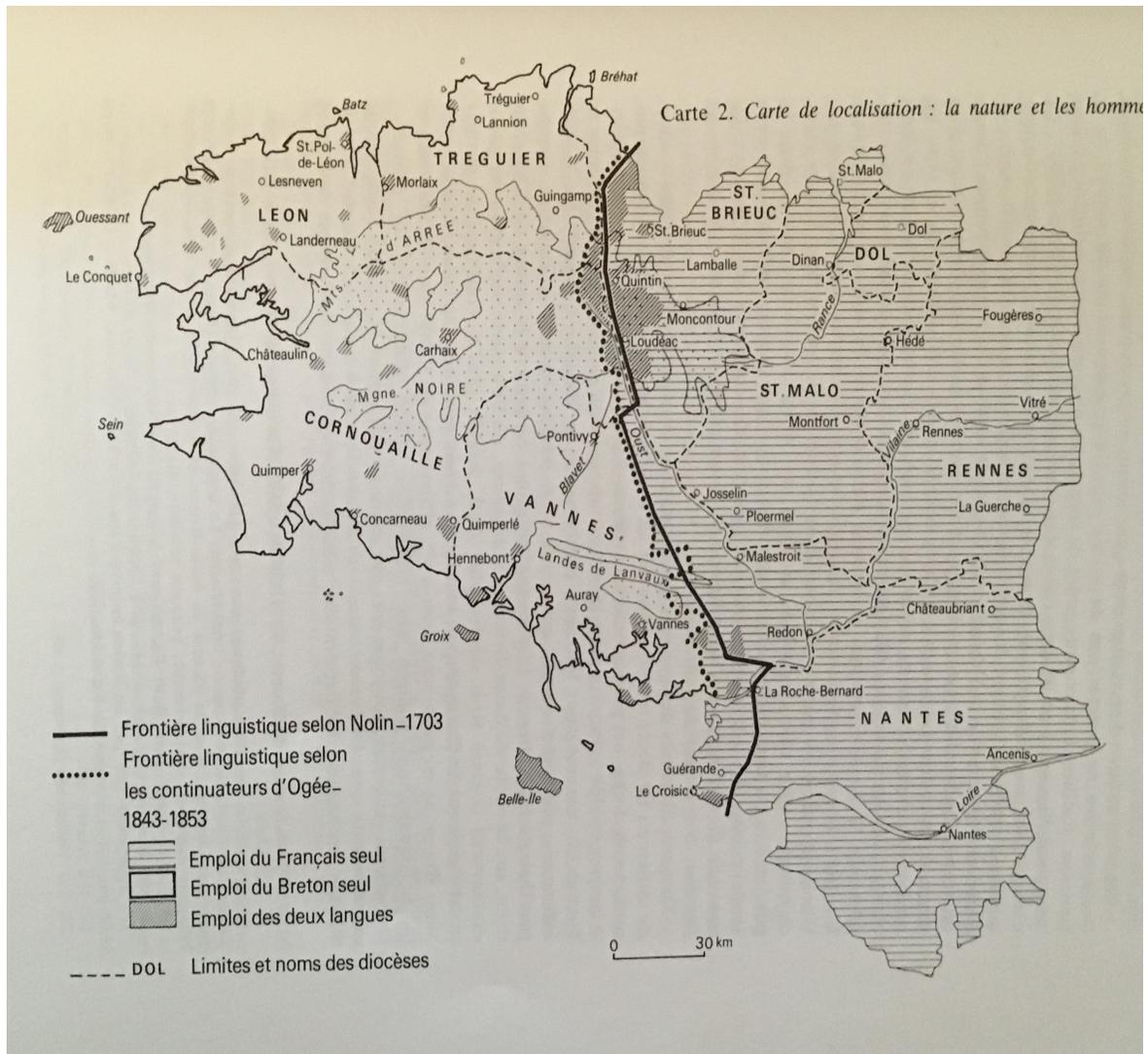
<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Paul Le Jeune, “Le Jeune’s Relation, 1636,” *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 8, 268.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

of grave goods. The persistence of this tradition in the face of Jesuit pressure, symbolized the greater struggle of the Wendat to maintain their way of life and a sense of normalcy in the turbulent seventeenth-century.

The life- and deathways here described came under contestation during the course of the Jesuit missions to Wendake. In the decades following the arrival of the Black Robes on the shores of Lake Simcoe, the Wendat faced a three-front war against their lives, their Confederacy, and their culture. As disease, warfare, and missionary zeal threatened to destroy Wendake, its people looked to fortify themselves from the malignant forces affecting their society. This period of existential crises will come under discussion in the following chapter.



Map of Brittany<sup>58</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Alain Croix, *La Bretagne aux 16e et 17e siècles: la mort, la vie, la foi, Tome I* (Paris: Maloine S.A. Editeur, 1981), 25.

## The Bretons and the *pur et dur*

Since the introduction of Catholicism into the lands of Lower Brittany in the ninth-century, a distinct form of Breton Catholicism had taken hold among the peasant classes. This belief system, which integrated traditional Celtic beliefs into the Christian conception of the universe, resulted in what has come to be known as the *pur et dur*,<sup>59</sup> a system of beliefs unique to Brittany. During late sixteenth and early seventeenth-centuries, Brittany's economy began to flourish as a result of France's newfound empire, resulting in what historians have come to denote as Brittany's 'Golden Age.'<sup>60</sup> As a result of the flourishing trade in Brittany, and the subsequent increase in the fluidity of knowledge, the belief of the upper classes and wealthy merchants came more in line with the orthodoxy of the Church. During these same centuries, the culture of the peasants and popular classes began to change as well. As a result of an interconnectedness between the upper and lower classes of Brittany that occurred as the literate population read aloud pieces of the Bible or popular works of theology, the idea of Purgatory spread throughout the region prior to the arrival of Jesuit missionaries in the seventeenth-century.<sup>61</sup> In this chapter, I will highlight the beliefs that made Breton Catholicism stand apart from that of the greater Gallic or Roman Church and how these beliefs interacted with the orthodox conceptions coming from Paris and Rome. To show the melding of these two distinct branches of Catholicism, I will use the example of Purgatory and how it became integrated into popular Breton belief.

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<sup>59</sup> Literally translated, *pur et dur* means "pure and hard." A more idiomatic translation, however, "pure and long lasting", seems to better fit the Breton usage.

<sup>60</sup> Gwenno Piette, *Brittany: A Concise History* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), 63.

<sup>61</sup> Tingle, *Purgatory and Piety in Brittany*, 56-57.

When missionaries such as Julien Maunoir arrived in the western dioceses of Brittany, what they often described as the far reaches of the earth, they found a form of Catholicism distinct from that of the Roman Catholic or Gallic Church. While Maunoir simply labeled the practices he encountered as ‘superstitions,’ modern historians and anthropologists have traced many of these practices to Celtic origins. In his work, *Histoire de la Bretagne*, Alain Croix highlights three features of Breton religious belief that distinguished it from greater Roman Catholicism: the Ankou, the Anaon, and the prevalence of ossuaries. What set Breton Catholicism apart from that of greater France had much to do with its Celtic past, and the mixture of old Celtic beliefs and rituals with the Catholicism brought to the shores of Lower Brittany in the ninth-century. The mélange of early Catholicism and Celtic traditions among the Bretons came together to form the *pur et dur* to which early modern missionaries became so averse.

In Breton, the word Ankou was the name given to the bringer of death. A skeletal figure, often depicted carrying a large dart, the Ankou literally represented the “personification of death.”<sup>62</sup> Croix has traced the idea of the Ankou back to the Celtic god of death, *Sukellos*.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, similar mythological figures appear throughout various Celtic cultures, whose names share etymological roots with the Ankou. For example, in Cornwall, a figure known as *Ankow* plays a similar mythological role to the Breton Ankou.<sup>64</sup> While the figure of the Ankou no doubt traces its origins to Celtic religion, clear Christian influences

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<sup>62</sup> Tingle, *Purgatory and Piety in Brittany*, 5.

<sup>63</sup> Croix, *Les Bretons*, 85.

<sup>64</sup> Ellen Badone, *The Appointed Hour: Death, Worldview, and Social Change in Brittany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 161.

came to morph this personification of death into his seventeenth-century form. In *The Life of Saint Nonne*, written in the fifteenth-century, the Ankou appears as the son Adam, “created by God in punishment of original sin.”<sup>65</sup> But the Ankou was not simply a literary device that appeared in hagiographic works. Among the majority of the popular classes of the Breton-speaking dioceses, the Ankou became associated with parish life. As Croix states, “the first, or the last death of the year in the parish” became the Ankou for the following year.<sup>66</sup> This idea of the Ankou as the harbinger of death prevailed among all classes of Brittany, as engravings next to this skeletal figure at churches read thusly: “With my dart, I will terrorize you”; “I will kill you all”; “poor or rich, there is no one to whom I will give grace.”<sup>67</sup> Within these engravings the Catholic idea of death as the ultimate equalizer comes out as well. Thus, the Ankou represents an interesting mixture of Celtic-Breton culture with Catholic teachings brought to Brittany in the late first millennium. He is both the Celtic bringer of death, and the Christian equalizer, as none shall be shown mercy against his will.

After the Ankou had taken the souls of the departed, those with unfinished business were thought to belong to, and dwell among, the Anaon, what Croix labels as “the society of the dead.”<sup>68</sup> In Breton beliefs the Anaon dwelled close to the mortal realm, with the ability to easily come to earth and interact with the living as well as material objects. Here again one sees the traces of Brittany’s Celtic past. As stated by Celtic historian Sharon Paice MacLeod, “one of the most pervasive themes seen throughout the Celtic tradition is the belief that the

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<sup>65</sup> Croix, *Les Bretons*, 85.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 83-84.

<sup>68</sup> Alain Croix, *La Bretagne aux 16e et 17e siècles: la vie, la mort, la foi, tome II* (Paris: Maloine S.A. Editeur, 1981), 1059.

Otherworld... exists around us at all times.”<sup>69</sup> Within Celtic belief, this Otherworld, while existing within a different realm than our own, was intimately connected to the physical world. This description of the Otherworld bears striking resemblance to the souls in the Breton Anaon, who resided in a different plane of existence, yet remained connected to, and able to interact with, the material world. The pan-Celtic roots of the Anaon stand out when considering the Welsh word for the Otherworld, *Annwfn* or *Annwn*.<sup>70</sup> Yet distinctions did exist between the Breton Anaon and the traditional Celtic Otherworld. In traditional Celtic mythology, the Celtic gods and goddesses made up the inhabitants of the Otherworld, whereas the souls of the departed constituted and dwelled in the Breton Anaon. This distinction seems to be a result of the larger Celtic, including Breton, conversion to Catholicism – one god replaced many, the souls of the departed became those who surrounded and interacted with the Bretons, and the veneration of the dead became the most important feature of Breton religious belief. By the time the Jesuit missionaries arrived in Brittany in the seventeenth-century, the Breton Cult of the Dead was neither heaven nor hell, but more closely resembled a place of purgation. In fact, entry into the Anaon became predicated upon faults committed while living, faults that show a clear sense of Christian morality. Alain Croix breaks these faults down into three categories: a soul could return if it had committed professional faults, such as a preacher who had been unfaithful in the execution of the mass; a soul could return in order to seek pardon for moral faults; and lastly,

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<sup>69</sup> Sharon Paice MacLeod, *Celtic Myth and Religion: A Study of Traditional Belief with Newly Translated Prayers, Poems, and Songs* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2011), 11.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

a soul could return if it were drowned or murdered in order to demand reparation.<sup>71</sup> Thus, in the Anaon we find an interesting mixture of Celtic tradition and Catholic morality and belief, as the Anaon existed very close to the earth, yet in order to dwell in the Anaon the Breton soul had to disobey the rules of Christian morality (or in the case of the reparation for murder, to enforce it).

While the Ankou and the Anaon represent key features of Breton belief in the supernatural world, the prevalent use of ossuaries constituted the physical manifestation of this unique system of beliefs. While ossuaries could be found in use across Western Europe, the density of their appearance in Lower Brittany is striking. Whereas Croix accounts for roughly thirty-eight parishes with ossuaries in Upper Brittany, he counts well over 100 parishes in Lower Brittany that used ossuaries, with the density of ossuary occurrence increasing the farther west one travels.<sup>72</sup> Why, when one reaches the Breton-speaking dioceses, did the existence and use of ossuaries explode? Here again, one must turn to the Celtic ancestry of the Bretons, which separated them linguistically and culturally from the people of Upper Brittany, who were part of the larger Langue d’Oïl socio-linguistic family. In Celtic belief, contact with those who dwelled in the Otherworld took place outside of the village, often occurring around ancient burial mounds.<sup>73</sup> In seventeenth-century Brittany, the ossuaries played a similar role. At these sites, the Bretons came to pay homage to the dead

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<sup>71</sup> Croix, *La Bretagne aux 16e et 17e siècles*, 1058-1059.

<sup>72</sup> Alain Croix, *Les Bretons et dieu: atlas d’histoire religieuse, 1300-1800* (Rennes: Université de Rennes, 1986), chapter 22.

<sup>73</sup> MacLeod, *Celtic Myth and Religion*, 12.

and conduct local religious services.<sup>74</sup> In fact, Celtic influence on ossuary practice also comes through in the personage of the Ankou. Across Lower Brittany, medieval and early modern Bretons carved depictions of the Ankou into the stone structures of the ossuaries, with the menacing quotes attributed to him above carved into the stone as well.

When the Jesuits arrived among the Bretons in the seventeenth-century they found a land imbued with what they perceived as ‘superstitions.’ But, what appeared superstitious to the Jesuits, held deep meaning in Brittany, many of these beliefs having roots in its distant Celtic past. And indeed, these Celtic practices had mixed with Catholic beliefs throughout the medieval and early modern periods to form a unique body of practices. This Breton Catholicism, and the continued practice of beliefs such as the Anaon contributed to the superstitions found by Maunoir, such as emptying containers of water so the souls of the departed did not drown, or putting a stone close to the fire “so that the souls of... ancestors could sit and warm themselves.”<sup>75</sup>

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While the practices discussed above continued to define Breton Catholicism throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth-centuries, the doctrines of the greater Church slowly penetrated the Breton consciousness. With the spread of printing in the province and an increase in literacy among the Breton elite, orthodox beliefs such as Purgatory began to circulate. In his work *The Birth of Purgatory*, Jacques Le Goff places the emergence of

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<sup>74</sup> Croix, *Les Bretons*, 57.

<sup>75</sup> Elizabeth Tingle, “The sacred space of Julien Maunoir: the re-Christianising of the landscape in seventeenth-century Brittany,” in *Sacred space in early modern Europe* ed. Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 252.

Purgatory in “western Christianity” between ca. 1150-1250.<sup>76</sup> The Breton belief in the ‘third place,’ however, did not stagnate or plateau once Purgatory appeared on the theological landscape. Due to a variety of forces, which lay outside the scope of this study, belief in Purgatory continued to increase into the mid-seventeenth-century. Long before the Jesuits and Maunoir arrived in Brittany, works of Catholic theology, such as the *Ars Moriendi*, that contained notions of Purgatory made their way into the houses of the Breton elite. Indeed, as Alan Croix has shown, texts containing images or the idea of Purgatory appeared in Brittany in 1485, as some of the earliest publications in the province.<sup>77</sup> Yet, for Croix, the adoption of Purgatory into popular piety came much later, taking root with the missions of the seventeenth-century. Other historians of the early modern period, most prominently Elizabeth Tingle, have argued that due to an “inter-connectedness between the written and the oral in the early modern period,” popular belief in Purgatory appeared much sooner.<sup>78</sup> A literate, bilingual population could read printed works coming from greater France aloud in public spaces, translating the language and ideas into terms the peasants could easily understand. By such means, argues Tingle, the belief in Purgatory had already spread into the popular classes by the seventeenth-century. In her work, *Purgatory and Piety in Brittany*, Elizabeth Tingle uses records from the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries, such as chantry foundations and obit masses<sup>79</sup>, in order to show “that different groups in Breton society were influenced by

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<sup>76</sup> Jacques Le Goff, *La naissance du Purgatoire* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1981), 14.

<sup>77</sup> Croix, *Les Bretons*, 74.

<sup>78</sup> Tingle, *Purgatory and Piety in Brittany*, 85.

<sup>79</sup> Obit masses are defined as a “service marking the anniversary of death.” See “Definition of Obit,” J. A. Simpson, E. S. C. Weiner, and Michael Proffitt, *Oxford English Dictionary*

the teachings and writings on Purgatory emanating from the wider French Church.”<sup>80</sup> The argument of this section, however, will attempt to chart a middle ground between the arguments of Croix and Tingle. For while Purgatory appeared in Breton literature in the fifteenth-century, popular practices found by Jesuit missionaries in the seventeenth-century showed evidence for the continuation of the Anaon in popular piety. Yet Tingle’s point is not wrong, for prior to belief in Purgatory penetrating into Brittany, the living venerated the dead, but their actions held no bearing on the ultimate salvation of those souls. It was the dead who had to come back to earth to seek absolution for the faults they committed while living or to seek the redress of wrongs done against them. As I will show, the belief in Purgatory and the Anaon became conflated among peasants of Brittany, as people continued to believe in the traditional Cult of the Dead, but now felt responsibility to pray for the salvation of these souls.

Alain Croix and Elizabeth Tingle have done much to show the rise in the belief in Purgatory among the Breton population leading up to the years of missionary activity. Yet, Croix argues that the majority of the Breton population lived in relative isolation from their churches, able to attend no more than two times a year.<sup>81</sup> As Tingle has shown in her study of parish records, and as I will show below through a careful reading of Julien Maunoir’s journal, a belief in Purgatory had clearly made its way into the consciousness of early modern Bretons of all social classes prior to the arrival of Maunoir and his co-evangelists.

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(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993),

<http://www.oed.com.prox.lib.ncsu.edu/view/Entry/129603?rskey=nUok8A&result=1#eid>.

<sup>80</sup> Tingle, *Purgatory and Piety in Brittany*, 129.

<sup>81</sup> Croix, *Les Bretons*, 60.

Orthodox beliefs in Purgatory, however, demanded intercession for the dead via the clergy in one form or another. If Croix's calculation is correct, and most Breton peasants only had the resources or time to go to church once or twice a year, how then do we account for the increased belief in Purgatory and the demand it put on believers to see to the souls of the deceased?

In Lower Brittany prior to the arrival of the missionaries, and during the early stages of the missions, this belief in intercession for the dead became integrated into the belief system that surrounded the Anaon. Writing on his mission to the town of Mür (now known as Mür-de-Bretagne) in 1646, Maunoir's report gives evidence for the mixing of the Anaon and Purgatory in popular belief. A fourteen-year-old boy, who had been orphaned after the loss of his father, was reduced to tears when his "boor" of a neighbor told him "his father was burning in hell."<sup>82</sup> Later, the father appeared to the boy, telling him: "I am not in hell, I only expiate in Purgatory the negligence I showed in the education of my children. Return with your sisters to the missionaries of Mür who teach the mysteries of the faith."<sup>83</sup> Within this account, clear signs in the belief of Purgatory come through. Not only does the father mention that he currently resides in Purgatory, but he states that his soul remains in a state of purgation due to sins or faults he committed while alive. Yet, elements of the Anaon come through just as prominently as elements of orthodoxy. Just as souls who dwell among the Anaon can come back to earth in order to right a moral fault, the father has come to his son in

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<sup>82</sup> Julien Maunoir, in Erec Lébèc, *Miracles et Sabbats: Journal du Père Julien Maunoir* (Paris: Les editions de Paris, 1997), 97. All translations from the original French, of both primary and secondary sources, are my own.

<sup>83</sup> Maunoir, *Miracles et Sabbats*, 98.

order to right “the negligence” he showed in educating his children in the ways of the Church, and orders his son to seek out the Jesuits and their teachings. Also, while souls in Purgatory have no contact with the living (according to Catholic orthodoxy), and require the intercession of the living on their behalf, this posthumous father-son interaction shows none of that. Rather, the father’s soul seems to dwell rather close to earth and his family, able to interact with the living as he saw fit. Additionally, the cleansing of his soul did not require prayers but instead that he saw to it that the faults he committed while alive were rectified from beyond the grave. Thus, in Lower Brittany a belief in Purgatory had taken hold among the popular classes by the time of Maunoir’s arrival, but it had become integrated into the traditional belief in the Anaon, resulting in a realm of purgation in which souls could see to their own salvation through the interaction with the physical world.

As a result of the isolation of Lower Brittany from the rest of the French kingdom, prior to the missions of the Counter-Reformation, Breton Catholicism came to take on a character distinct from the Catholic practices in greater France. As noted by the seventeenth-century Jesuit hagiographer Antoine Boschet, contrary to the religious strife throughout France in his time, “no other religion has watched over the state of this Province, than the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion.”<sup>84</sup> Among Bretons of all social classes there existed a strong belief that they constituted some of the oldest Christians in Europe, dating back centuries when Celtic missionaries from the British isles crossed the English Channel and brought the faith to the rocky shores of Brittany. Historians have thus long noted, “Celtic

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<sup>84</sup> Antoine Boschet, *Le Parfait Missionnaire ou la vie du Reverend Père Julien Maunoir* (Paris, 1697), iv [https://archive.org/details/bub\\_gb\\_AFn1BaSMR2sC](https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_AFn1BaSMR2sC).

Brittany as a special zone of evangelism, with a pure and distinctive early Church.”<sup>85</sup> Such distinctions persisted into the seventeenth-century. This religious tradition, known as *pur et dur*, came under assault during the Jesuit missions, as the Black Robes looked to instill Catholic, Tridentine orthodoxy among the Breton population.

### Conclusion

When the Jesuit missionaries arrived in both Wendake and Lower Brittany, it seemed that on either side of the Atlantic as if Satan himself had extended his empire, and taken hold of countless souls. In both Brittany and Wendake, the natives had strong ties to the physical world around them, and believed their world to be imbued with several different kinds of supernatural spirits. Most importantly to the Jesuits, however, it seemed that the Bretons and the Wendats alike had no knowledge of the Word. In New France, the Black Robes clearly knew they faced a population with no prior knowledge of Catholic forms; in Brittany, however, they were surrounded by signs of an ancient Catholicism (calvaries, chapels, etc.), but faced a popular religion they believed to contain many holdovers from a distant, pagan past. The Jesuits thus began their work in New France and Brittany, hoping to conquer the souls of both Wendat and Breton alike by using similar methods on either side of the Atlantic.

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<sup>85</sup> Tingle, “The sacred space of Julien Maunoir,” 239.

## **Chapter 2: Existential Threats**

### Introduction

During the course of the seventeenth-century, the indigenous worlds described in the previous chapter came under attack. As France extended its influence both at home and abroad, Jesuit missionaries often led the way. Unafraid to travel to foreign or distant lands, and indeed at times excited at the prospect of martyrdom, the Jesuits sought to Catholicize the known world. In New France, however, the Jesuits brought more than the Word. Their presence carried with it unseen pathogens, which proved disastrous for the Wendat. Additionally, the changing geo-political situation that accompanied the colonization efforts of the nascent French empire brought a new style of warfare, and increased violence, to the fields of Wendake. In Brittany, the Church sought to stamp out localized practices they deemed as ‘pagan’ or ‘superstitious.’ Much like in New France, Jesuit missionaries, led by Julien Maunoir, attempted to change the indigenous cultures they encountered. On either side of the Atlantic, a growing Franco-Catholic presence proved disruptive to the native worlds here under examination.

### The Wendats: Pox, Powder, and Priests

On the eve of French arrival in Wendake in 1634, the Wendat were a prosperous people who lived in semi-permanent villages that hundreds, or sometimes thousands, of souls called home. Despite their numbers, their wealth, and their ability to maintain political, economic, and demographic stability before the 1630s, the introduction of the French, and the unseen pathogens they brought with them, brought Wendake to the brink of collapse.

While diseases such as smallpox and measles were not the sole destroyers of the Wendat and their Confederacy, they nonetheless played a major role, in conjunction with warfare and European missionaries, in the destruction of the Wendat physical and metaphysical world.

After arriving in Wendake in 1634, the Jesuits often remarked on the robust health of the Wendat people. The Black Robes were quick to point out the physical prowess and good health that accompanied the Wendat way of life – something which probably stood in out in marked contrast to the populations of European cities, such as Paris, filled with the sick and poor. In reflecting upon his early missions to the Wendat and the possibility of their conversion, Paul Le Jeune described them as “large, strong, well-made men.”<sup>86</sup> Indeed in general, French travelers in the region noted the Wendats’ robust health.<sup>87</sup>

The health of the Wendat people quickly declined, however, after the arrival of Le Jeune and his fellow Frenchmen in Wendake. Archaeological data and studies of the annual reports written to Jesuit superiors in Quebec and Paris, the *Jesuit Relations*, have shown the rapid onset of European epidemic diseases among the Wendat following 1634, and the subsequent devastation this wrought upon their people. These diseases spread so quickly that by 1637, the population of Wendake and its southern neighbor, the Tionontate or Corn nation, fell from a combined 35,000 to 23,000 people.<sup>88</sup> By describing the epidemics that spread through Wendake from 1634-1640, the Jesuit missionaries left invaluable evidence of the quantifiable and qualitative effects of the disaster. Writing in 1642, Jerome Lalemant

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<sup>86</sup> Paul Le Jeune, “Containing a Journal of Things which could not be set forth in the preceding Chapters,” *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 7, 229.

<sup>87</sup> Gary Warrick, “European infectious disease and depopulation of the Wendat-Tionontate (Huron-Petun),” *World Archaeology*, vol. 35, no. 2 (2003): 260.

<sup>88</sup> Warrick, “European infectious disease,” 262.

noted that “where eight years ago one could see eighty or a hundred cabins barely five or six can now be seen; a Captain, who then had eight hundred warriors under his command, now has not more than thirty or forty; instead of fleets of three or four hundred canoes, we see now but twenty or thirty.”<sup>89</sup> Indeed, these epidemics proved so virulent that single seasons carried away thousands, such as the 8,000 people lost to smallpox during the winter of 1639-1640.<sup>90</sup> By the year 1640, the Wendat population had fallen to around 12,000 – a depopulation of sixty-percent.<sup>91</sup>

When considering the variables that have an important impact on population levels, historians and anthropologists have pointed to fertility as a key factor in Native American demographic decline. Several of the European diseases, particularly smallpox, that wrought havoc among the Wendat proved especially virulent in pregnant women.<sup>92</sup> As a result, birthrates during a given epidemic declined. Yet, even if the mother successfully gave birth, infant mortality remained high, as women infected during epidemics often lost the ability to successfully nurse their infants.<sup>93</sup> Epidemic disease thus not only wiped out a majority of the Wendat population, but also contributed to the inability of that population to recover before another incidence of disease hit Wendake.

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<sup>89</sup> Jerome Lalemant, “On the general condition of the Christians of New France,” *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 24, 108.

<sup>90</sup> Warrick, “European infections disease,” 260.

<sup>91</sup> Warrick, “European infections disease,” 262-263.

<sup>92</sup> Russell Thornton, Tim Miller, and Jonathan Warren, “American Indian Population Recovery Following Smallpox Epidemics,” *American Anthropologist*, vol. 93, no. 1 (March 1991): 33.

<sup>93</sup> Alfred W. Crosby, “Virgin Soil Epidemics as a Factor in the Aboriginal Depopulation in America,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 33, no. 2 (April 1976): 294.

A sixty-percent depopulation, however, entails more than a loss of life. With such a massive epidemic, entire political and social structures erode, and, in societies like the Wendat that orally transmit knowledge from one generation to the next, knowledge of traditions and mythology is erased. In the case of the Wendat and Wendake, the mass casualties of the 1630s and 1640s caused large-scale cultural degradation, as political, educational, and spiritual leaders died or became discredited. As scholars such as Alfred Crosby have noted, virgin soil epidemics<sup>94</sup> effect entire populations, infecting infants, the young, and the old alike. As the elders of Wendat society died at unprecedented rates, they often passed away before transmitting “to posterity the history and the annals of the country.”<sup>95</sup> Additionally, elders often served as chiefs or in decision-making councils. As the political and military leaders of Wendake continued to die, the Wendat knowledge of diplomatic relations and political customs became threatened.<sup>96</sup>

Throughout the 1630s and 1640s, diseases such as smallpox, measles, and whooping cough continued to tear through the Wendat countryside, causing the population of Wendake to fall to a fraction of its former size. This desolation had an extremely negative impact on the clan systems that so permeated Wendat society. Writing in 1638, Paul Le Jeune gives an insight into how the epidemics broke apart families and kin networks. Describing an unnamed Wendat man, Le Jeune tells how “he had an interesting and large family,” and how

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<sup>94</sup> Virgin soil epidemics are defined as follows: epidemics “in which the populations at risk have had no previous contact with the diseases that strike them and are therefore immunologically almost defenseless.” Crosby, “Virgin Soil Epidemics,” 289.

<sup>95</sup> Jerome Lalemant, “Good Sentiments of Some Christians,” *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 30, 60.

<sup>96</sup> Trigger, *Children of Aataenstic II*, 601.

“the disease invaded it, and delivered a good part of it over to death.” Le Jeune’s description continued as follows:

An old woman, a relative, who managed his household, was taken off in a few days; his own wife and two of his children died before his eyes; some of his kindred and relations who were living with him were carried off at the same time... After having buried nearly all these with his own hands, he himself was stricken, —behold him seized with the same contagion as the others; and, to increase his afflictions, his eldest son, believing him dead, married against his will. It was enough to crush the spirit of a Giant...<sup>97</sup>

Through this passage, one may begin to gain a better understanding of the horror that faced the Wendat in 1630s and 1640s. During these years, entire kin networks fell apart, which connected people across the five nations of Wendake and served as the basis by which villages selected local chiefs, thus eroding a key base of Wendat political life. This also proved disastrous to the population of Wendake, as familial units acted as caretaker for one-another when a member of the family became ill.<sup>98</sup> As entire families became simultaneously ill, and thus unable to care for each other, the death toll among the Wendat only increased.

The loss of such a large percentage of the population in such a short amount of time had drastic consequences for the economic and social life of Wendake as well. As Wendake experienced a devastating loss of life, those who had seen to the day-to-day tasks of their village were either no longer alive, or, if they survived, physically incapable of participating in socially reproductive activities such as agriculture. During an epidemic that occurred between the months of May and November 1636, those infected remained bed ridden for a

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<sup>97</sup> Le Jeune, “Of the Baptism of a Savage, and of some of his family,” *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 14, 134-135.

<sup>98</sup> Crosby, “Virgin Soil Epidemics,” 296.

significant portion of time, if they recovered at all. This lengthy recovery time prevented many Wendat villages from planting and harvesting crops, participating in hunting expeditions, or trading.<sup>99</sup> As epidemics ravaged Wendake, they caused fields to lay fallow and crops to go unattended.

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While disease may have constituted the most virulent of the plagues to visit the Wendat during the decades here under discussion, other factors, such as warfare, did indeed play an important role. Indeed, the phenomena of disease and warfare in Wendake were irrevocably linked. The main enemy of the Wendat during the first half of the seventeenth-century was the other, and perhaps now more famous, confederacy to the southeast – the Haudenosaunee, or Iroquois Five Nations. Within the historiography, scholars tend to divide into two camps over the Wendat- Haudenosaunee conflict. The first, and older of the two, is what is known as the Beaver Wars theory. Originally put forth by George T. Hunt in 1940 in his famous book, *The Wars of the Iroquois*, the Beaver Wars theory states that Native Nations came into conflict with one another over the course of the seventeenth-century as a means of gaining greater access to, and creating a monopoly over, the European fur trade. The other side of the debate, and the far more recent theory, which is called the Mourning Wars theory, takes a far more ethnographic approach. Put forth by historians such as Daniel Richter and José António Brandão, and archaeologists such as William A. Starna, the Mourning Wars theory states that Native Nations such as the Haudenosaunee and Wendat maintained steady campaigns of warfare during the seventeenth-century in order to capture

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<sup>99</sup> Labelle, *Dispersed but Not Destroyed*, 15.

people from other nations and adopt them into their own society to augment their numbers in the face of depopulation caused by disease and war, or to seek revenge.<sup>100</sup> Though historians have put these two theories at odds with one-another, I shall examine them both in the light of the Wendat experience. For, in order to understand Wendat war with the Haudenosaunee during the period of French colonization, both frameworks need exploration.

The economic explanation put forth by Beaver Wars theorists certainly seems appealing when one considers the vast trading networks of the Wendat. This network, which extended into the nations of the Upper Great Lakes region, allowed the Wendat to obtain huge stores of beaver pelts, and thus become the principal trading partner of the French.<sup>101</sup> This trade proved extremely profitable for both sides. As a result of the trade, the Wendat acquired European metal implements, such as knives and kettles, which came to supplant their traditional stone and wooden tools. On the French side of the exchange, New France received thousands of furs that it shipped to the metropolis, recording a high of “33,000 pounds of pelts” in the year 1646.<sup>102</sup> As the theory goes, the Haudenosaunee did much the same with Dutch traders in Upper New York, but quickly exhausted their supply of beaver.<sup>103</sup> As a result, the Haudenosaunee “began to seek a share of the furs that the Wendat were obtaining from the north,” which “gradually transformed a traditional feud with the Wendat

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<sup>100</sup> José António Brandão, “*Your fyre shall burn no more*”: *Iroquois Policy toward New France and its Native Allies to 1701* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997). See also, Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse*. William A. Starna and José António Brandão, “From the Mohawk-Mahican War to the Beaver Wars: Questioning the Pattern,” *Ethnohistory*, vol. 51, no. 4 (2004): 725-750.

<sup>101</sup> Trigger, *The Huron*, 1.

<sup>102</sup> Alan Axelrod, “Fur Frenzy,” *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History*, vol. 24, No. 3 (Spring 2012): 82.

<sup>103</sup> Brandão, “*Your fyre shall burn no more*”, 89-90.

into a bloody war.”<sup>104</sup> According to the Beaver Wars theory, access to the profitable trade with the French explains why the Haudenosaunee often attacked “Huron [Wendat] canoes, loaded with men and furs.”<sup>105</sup> Thus, according to scholars such as Richter and Brandão, as a result of the desire to trade furs for European goods, the Wendat and Haudenosaunee Confederacies engaged in longstanding, often brutal warfare in order to monopolize the market. This theory, however, came under powerful scrutiny from cultural and ethno-historians.

Feeling that the Beaver Wars interpretation attempted to account for the affairs of Native Nations in European economic terms, rather than in terms the Native American actors themselves would have used to describe social interaction, historians such as Daniel Richter proposed what they called the Mourning Wars theory. These historians argued that one must place the Wendat-Haudenosaunee conflict in a framework that takes into account the native understanding of warfare prior the arrival of Europeans. Traditionally, Iroquoian peoples had pursued war as a way of bolstering their own numbers, often adopting captives as members of one of the nation’s clans. This process, however, had the double-edged effect of being both destructive and creative. As war parties killed the opposing warriors and took captives, they destroyed the social networks of the enemy. These captives were then adopted and integrated into the society of their captor, creating a new populace for the victorious party.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Trigger, *The Huron*, 2.

<sup>105</sup> Barthelemy Vimont, “Of the Fortifications Commenced on the River of the Hiroquois, and the Wars of the People,” *Jesuits Relations*, vol. 22, 272.

<sup>106</sup> Roger Carpenter, “Making War More Lethal: Iroquois vs. Huron in the Great Lakes Region, 1609 to 1650,” *Michigan Historical Review*, vol. 27, No. 2 (Fall 2001): 34-35. See also Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 49.

As a result of the epidemic diseases that ravaged both Wendat and Haudenosaunee populations during the 1630s-1640s, increased warfare became necessary to keep their populations from dwindling any further.<sup>107</sup>

Whether the increased warfare between the Wendat and the Haudenosaunee in the first half of the seventeenth-century came about from a desire to control trade networks or to increase their numbers in the face of epidemic disease, these conflicts ultimately resulted in the destruction of the Wendat confederacy, and the scattering of their nations. But, why exactly did these conflicts prove so destructive? Due to a combination of the desire to control the fur trade and to fight the depopulation caused by disease and war described by the Mourning Wars and Beavers Wars theories, the struggle between the Wendat and Haudenosaunee escalated to unprecedented proportions. As a means of gaining the upper hand the Haudenosaunee abandoned traditional Iroquoian modes of warfare, which often “had a formal, ritualized aspect.”<sup>108</sup> Opposing war parties often met to “parley before a battle and agree on a set of ‘rules.’”<sup>109</sup> Indeed, as described by Bruce Trigger, “the traditional siege of a Wendat village aimed at challenging its defenders to come out and fight.”<sup>110</sup> Thus, Native warfare took on a very formal mode, centered around pitched battles which looked to capture enemy combatants rather than kill them. This form of fighting, however, changed in the 1630s and 1640s. Abandoning traditional modes of warfare, the Haudenosaunee began

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<sup>107</sup> Brandão estimates the population of the seventeenth-century Haudenosaunee decreased by a total 14,863 from disease alone. With a population of approximately 25,000 before the epidemics of the 1630s and 1640s, Haudenosaunee population fell by at least sixty-percent. See, Brandão, *Your Fyre Shall Burn No More*, 73.

<sup>108</sup> Carpenter, “Making War More Lethal,” 36.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic I*, 661.

launching raids on Wendat villages, ambushing trading and hunting parties, and employing European firearms to great effect. These new tactics utilized by the Haudenosaunee wreaked havoc on the Wendat.<sup>111</sup> The Jesuits recorded the success of these new techniques in vivid detail. Writing from “the country of the Hurons [Wendat], May 26, 1640,” Father Joseph Marie Chaumonot recorded the details of a Haudenosaunee ambush:

“Our savages [the Wendats], having gone to fight, were surprised by the enemy in an ambush. Seeing the impossibility of defending themselves, the elders said to the younger men: ‘Since you can render services to our nation, take flight, while we shall check the enemy.’ This is what happened: those old savages were taken, led away captive...”<sup>112</sup>

With Chaumonot’s account, one can see the extreme efficacy of these new tactics. Unused to fighting with and against guerilla style tactics in order to counter ambush attacks, the Wendat war party, presumably expecting to find Haudenosaunee delegates to discuss the terms of battle, were scattered by this surprise attack, losing many to casualty and captivity. In addition to this deviation from traditional tactics, which caught the Wendat wholly by surprise, Haudenosaunee warriors proved either more willing or more able to incorporate European firearms into their arsenal. While the various nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy did not always act in concert, they were of one mind when it came to the acquisition of European weaponry. Determined to keep their Confederacy intact during the turbulent decades of the 1630s and 1640s, the Haudenosaunee sought whatever means possible to defeat both their indigenous and European enemies, and see to the survival of

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<sup>111</sup> Labelle, *Dispersed but Not Destroyed*, 49-50.

<sup>112</sup> Joseph Marie Chaumonot, “Letter of Father Joseph Marie Chaumonot to the Reverend Father Philippe Nappi, Superior of the Professed House at Rome,” *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 18, 43.

their people.<sup>113</sup> As the Haudenosaunee established trading links with the Dutch West India Company, they acquired a reliable trading partner considerably closer to their homeland, than Montreal or Quebec City were to Wendake.<sup>114</sup> Through this Dutch, and later English, connection, the Haudenosaunee had easier access to European firearms than their Wendat enemies. This use of European weaponry represented a dramatic change in Native war technology, as rifles “killed loudly,” and thus introduced a new element of fear into battle.<sup>115</sup> As a result of these changes, traditional modes of warfare broke down, leading to increased violence and attacks on the Wendat homeland. These attacks on Wendake became so common place that “women and children were not safe, even within sight of their own villages,” and they began to fear that “the Iroquois [Haudenosaunee] would steal into their villages at night and kill a few people, then try to escape unharmed.”<sup>116</sup> Having lost sixty-percent of their population as a result of disease during 1634-1640, the Wendat proved incapable of repelling these new and deathly effective military tactics of the Haudenosaunee.

During the middle decades of the seventeenth-century, disease and warfare combined to bring the Wendat world crumbling down with extraordinary efficacy. As new diseases reduced the Wendat population to a fraction of its former size, changing war tactics caught their soldiers by surprise and resulted in the decimation of their military forces, the burning of their villages, and the scattering of their confederacy. While these forces worked in tandem to erode the Wendat life-world, a third factor attacked the metaphysical world of the

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<sup>113</sup> Brandão, *Your fyre shall burn no more*, 90.

<sup>114</sup> Carpenter, “Making War More Lethal,” 41-42.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>116</sup> Trigger, *The Children of Aataenstic I*, 660.

Wendat. First appearing among the Wendat in 1634, the Society of Jesus and its Jesuit missionaries looked to make inroads in the conversion of the ‘savages’ of New France. Originally welcomed due to the Wendat alliance with the French, many Wendat quickly became annoyed with the Jesuit presence. But as the years wore on, and Wendat culture proved incapable of dealing with the horrors it faced, some began to turn to the Black Robes.

As the Jesuits entered Wendake, they did not seek the economic ends that the Wendat, or their fellow Frenchmen, the *habitants*, looked to gain from trade. Instead, the Jesuits sought a metaphysical exchange, as they looked to collect souls through conversion and baptism. While the Jesuits constantly described the Wendat as savages or barbarians, they nonetheless recognized their humanity. While describing his stay with a Wendat man during the year 1636, Jean de Brébeuf made note of several characteristics of the good nature of his host. According to Brébeuf, his Wendat host was an extremely hospitable, charitable, and wise individual. Describing the village in which he stayed after a fire had destroyed most of the longhouses, except that of his host, Brébeuf describes how this man “prepared a good feast, invited the whole village,” and gave one of his bins of corn “freely to the whole village.” This act, what Brébeuf called “a wise action,” showed to the Jesuit that the Wendat held the same capacities as Christians for charity, hospitality, and the use of reason.<sup>117</sup> Thus, as the Jesuits penetrated further into the North American interior and the Wendat homeland, the Jesuits regarded “the unconverted as ‘tainted but not obscured by sin,’ and...

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<sup>117</sup> Jean de Brébeuf, “How it is a benefit to both Old and New France to send colonies here,” *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 8, 95.

consequently saw the indigenous people as recognizable souls that could be saved.”<sup>118</sup> Due to this view of their mission as more spiritual than worldly, the Jesuits began an attack on the metaphysical world of the Wendat. As a result of this Jesuit presence, which they could not dislodge without jeopardizing their relationship with the French colonial state, the Wendat patiently listened to the missionaries, whether they truly believed what the Black Robes came to teach or not.

Indeed, this Wendat desire to keep trade lines open with the French may very well have saved the lives of the missionaries in Wendake during the worst years of the epidemics. As disease and warfare continued to decimate the Wendat homeland, many Wendat wished to oust the Jesuits and the missions from their villages. During a mission in 1640, Jerome Lalement recorded an instance in which several Wendats declared “they had seen black gowns in a dream... who were unfolding certain books, whence issued sparks of fire which spread everywhere, and no doubt caused this pestilential disease.”<sup>119</sup> As the diseases that racked the Wendat only “increased after the arrival of [the] Fathers,”<sup>120</sup> some Wendat began to turn against the Jesuits, justifying their actions through traditional belief systems. Through the traditional interpretation of dreams, some members of Wendat society sought to react against the Jesuit presence, and find comfort in their own spiritual practices.

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<sup>118</sup> Carolyn Podruchny and Kathryn Magee Labelle, “Jean de Brébeuf and the Wendat Voices of Seventeenth-Century New France,” *Renaissance and Reformation* Vol. 34 No. 1-2 (Winter-Spring 2011): 101.

<sup>119</sup> Jerome Lalement, “Of the mission of Saint Jean Baptiste to the Arendaronons,” *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 20, 31.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

As the 1640s wore on, the traditionalists in Wendake became more and more radical. Feeling the Jesuits had done nothing but erode the Wendat way of life, some became convinced that the loss of a trading alliance with the French would be worth it if the Wendat could rid their homeland of the Jesuit presence.<sup>121</sup> The traditionalist faction of Wendat society became so radicalized, in fact, that in April 1648, six headmen decided to order the murder of a French colonist. Only the second act of violence ever committed against the French by the Wendat, two Wendat men killed the colonist Jacques Douart, a 22-year-old *donné* who had come to New France as a boy.<sup>122</sup> Following the murder, according to the Jesuits, the whole of Wendake “was in commotion, and the most notable persons among the nations who dwell in it were summoned to attend a general meeting on the matter.”<sup>123</sup> Convening on how to resolve the situation, the traditionalist leaders who had authorized the murder called for the expulsion of the Jesuits from Wendat land. With the link to French trade severed, these traditionalist leaders proposed an alliance with the Haudenosaunee to keep trade revenue flowing.<sup>124</sup> While many moderate traditionalists more than likely continued to resent the Jesuit presence, it seems they ultimately decided to support the continued French alliance out of necessity. After the council had convened, Jerome Lalemant recorded one leader’s speech to the Black Robes: “Have pity on those who condemn themselves, and who come to ask pardon of thee. It is thou who hast strengthened this country by residing in it. If thou shouldst withdraw from our midst, we would be like a straw pulled out from the earth that

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<sup>121</sup> Trigger, *Children of Aataentsic II*, 744.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 746.

<sup>123</sup> Jerome Lalemant, “Of the Murder of a Frenchman killed by the Hurons, and of the Reparations that was made thereof,” *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 33, 228.

<sup>124</sup> Trigger, *Children of Aataentsic II*, 747.

serves but as a sport for the winds.”<sup>125</sup> While this translation most certainly seems embellished, the council had nonetheless decided to seek the forgiveness of the French. In order to restore good relations with the French, the Wendat leaders agreed to give the Europeans around 100 presents, each worth the same amount as ten beaver pelts.<sup>126</sup>

This episode of the murder of Douart and the desire a faction of the Wendat to eliminate ties with the French all together provides evidence for the beginnings of a Revitalization Movement in Wendake. The ultimate goal of these movements was the unity of the nation itself, or unity of the nation with bordering native peoples. This process played out prominently in eighteenth and nineteenth-century British colonies and the nascent United States, perhaps most famously with Tenskwatawa and the Shawnee. Typically, native revivalist movements were predicated upon the abandonment of anything European, a process that played out with the murder of Douart and the subsequent political crisis. Since the beginning of the Franco-Wendat trading partnership, the Wendat incorporated European wares into their lives, and had allowed the Jesuits to remain in many of their villages, even when some thought the Fathers were the reason for the epidemics, in order to secure French trade. By the end of the 1640s, however, the pressures of disease, warfare, and evangelization drove some to take drastic steps, and to demand the removal of the European presence. Hoping to align the Wendat with the Haudenosaunee as a substitute for French trade, the traditionalists wanted to eliminate the influence of Europeans and their religion on the Wendat way of life.

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<sup>125</sup> Lalemant, “Of the Murder of a Frenchman killed by the Hurons, and of the Reparations that was made thereof,” 237.

<sup>126</sup> Trigger, *Childre of Aataentsic II*, 748.

While some sought to expel the Jesuits as a means of coping with the disastrous decades of the 1630s and 1640s, others began to explore all the spiritual and healing options available, including the Jesuits. Writing in 1640, the Jesuit missionary Joseph Marie Chaumonot described how “one of the principal and oldest Captains” of the Wendat came to seek the Jesuits’ aid. This man, “named Ondihorrea, ... brought very low by sickness, at first refused our visits and our help,” Chaumonot recorded. Yet, “having tried in vain all the usual remedies of the country for the recovery of his health,” Ondihorrea came to the Jesuits, “prompted, by some sort of vision.”<sup>127</sup> In this story, the ailing Wendat man, Ondihorrea, does all he can to cure the illness through traditional methods (which will come under greater discussion in the following chapter). And, even when he ultimately turns to the Jesuits for aid, Ondihorrea does not reject traditional Wendat beliefs in favor of Christianity, but rather justifies his actions through traditional interpretation of dreams. Through the story of Ondihorrea, another possible reaction to the destruction that faced the Wendat comes to light, as he exhausted every possible spiritual and healing option available.

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As the Wendat fell victim to disease, warfare, and colonial incursion, they were not passive agents. The people of Wendake actively attempted to cope with the horror around them through whatever means they had at their disposal. In some cases, this meant going to war with the Haudenosaunee; in others, this meant seeking the aid of traditional medicine and healers; and, if times proved hard enough, others still turned to the aid of the Jesuits,

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<sup>127</sup> Joseph Marie Chaumonot, “Of Various Obstacles and Difficulties Encountered in Connection with the Birth of These New Churches; and of Those that Still Appear Daily in Their Establishment,” *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 17, pg. 136-137.

looking to the new comers as a last-ditch effort when traditional ways did not remedy the situation. The purpose of this chapter was not to separate disease, war, and missions from one-another, but rather to show how each contributed to the erosion of Wendat political, social, economic, and knowledge structures. For while disease and warfare killed thousands of Wendat men, women, and children, the fall-out from these events continued long afterward, as knowledge of traditions, diplomacy, and mythology became threatened as the elders who held such knowledge often died before communicating it to the younger generations. As epidemic disease and endemic warfare led to constantly changing leadership, the means by which the Confederacy had previously decided upon courses of action (consensus among clan chiefs and village representatives) became harder to achieve, leading to fractures within the Confederacy and its constituent nations.<sup>128</sup> Thus, as the colonial violence of disease and warfare acted in concert to weaken Wendat society, this violence presented an inroad to the colonial efforts of the French, and the evangelical goals of the Jesuits. In the following chapters, Jesuit actions among the Wendat, and the Wendat response to the Jesuit missionary impulse, will come under examination.

#### The Bretons: The Coming of Church Militancy

In his hagiography of Julien Maunoir, Antoine Boschet fancifully recounts the reasons behind Maunoir's Breton missions. "For as we listen to many grand commanders, that in their young age, put themselves at the head of their comrades," Boschet states, so too did Maunoir distinguish himself at a young age from his peers, and realize his calling as a

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<sup>128</sup> Labelle, *Dispersed but Not Destroyed*, 14.

priest.<sup>129</sup> Here, Boschet draws a parallel between the young Maunoir, who realizes his calling as a man of the cloth, and a young man who realizes his calling as a soldier. This language typifies the way in which the Jesuits spoke of their missions – in the language of warfare. This warlike attitude emanated from the center of Jesuit power, Rome, where “the will to conquer was omnipresent.”<sup>130</sup> This sense of battle-like urgency was not lost on Maunoir and the Black Robes in Brittany. Indeed, they felt “it was a holy war to which the missionary was called, and a ‘holy militia’ in which he enrolled in order to overcome Satan.”<sup>131</sup> As a result of this attitude toward their missions, the Jesuits who travelled to Brittany in the seventeenth-century sought to launch an assault on the peculiar sort of Catholicism they found there.

Historians have summarized the mission to which this holy militia felt called as the desire to alter village life, and transform the folk culture and religious practices found there. The missionaries of the Reformation period hoped to cause a break between the popular classes and the peasant religious practices of the past (such as the Anaon), and replace them with a more individualized, abstract, and orthodox form of belief.<sup>132</sup> In order to do this the missionaries taught new catechisms, new songs and parables, and brought a stricter code of conduct for local priests and ecclesiastical authorities. In other words, they undertook a

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<sup>129</sup> Boschet, *La Parfait Missionnaire*, 6.

<sup>130</sup> Louis Châtellier, *The religion of the poor: Rural missions in Europe and the formation of modern Catholicism, c. 1500-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 22.

<sup>131</sup> Dominique Deslandres, “The French Jesuits’ Missionary World,” in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540-1773* ed. John W. O’Malley et al (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 260.

<sup>132</sup> Keith Luria, *Territories of Grace: Cultural Change in the seventeenth-century Dioceses of Grenoble* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 5.

massive pedagogical campaign, aimed at conquering the folk beliefs of Europe, and a “wholesale transformation of popular culture.”<sup>133</sup>

Arriving in Brittany in 1641, Julien Maunoir aimed to “combat the ignorance and the love of pleasure” he found embedded among the populace.<sup>134</sup> Working among the Breton population, Maunoir found many acts of their religious lives ‘superstitious’ and not in adherence with the teachings of the Church. Writing of a mission in 1647, Maunoir tells how the Jesuits “abolished a superstition that consisted in reciting each month, on their knees, a *Pater* in the honor of the new moon.”<sup>135</sup> For the Jesuits, the abolition of such ‘superstitious’ acts constituted the *raison d’être* of the Breton missions. In order to better combat such beliefs, the Jesuits used a variety of techniques to reach and evangelize as many as possible. “There was a conscious targeting of ‘the masses,’” writes Tingle, “to make Catholic ideas accessible to them, so that Protestant arguments,” or unorthodox, ‘superstitious’ acts, “would not win over the unlearned.”<sup>136</sup> These missionaries did not simply wish to get rid of the improper practices or forms of Catholicism they found; rather they hoped to impart a system of true belief. To that end, the Jesuits knew that such a “religion had to be learnt.”<sup>137</sup>

Describing a mission to Langonnet in 1646, Maunoir reports an episode that highlights the Jesuit distrust of popular traditions and beliefs. Maunoir tells of the conversion

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<sup>133</sup> David Bell, *Cult of the Nation in France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 161.

<sup>134</sup> Boschet, *La Parfait Missionnaire*, 70.

<sup>135</sup> Maunoir, *Miracles et Sabbats*, 103.

<sup>136</sup> Tingle, *Purgatory and Piety in Brittany*, 85.

<sup>137</sup> Tingle, “The sacred space of Julien Maunoir,” 240.

of a man “who... had been tormented by the Devil for having mocked a procession.”<sup>138</sup>

While going to visit the parish preacher, this man, “arriving before a bridge, heard the voice of his persecutor [the Devil] menacing him with death if he crossed.” Making the sign of the cross, the man traversed the bridge and went to the closest chapel where he confessed and “took the firm resolution” to give up drinking. In this story, Maunoir believes the man to have heard the voice of the Devil speaking to him, threatening his life. Another interpretation that I would like to put forward is that the man heard the voice of a member of the Anaon who had come back to earth to warn him of the dangers of his alcohol consumption. If Maunoir had known of the Anaon (which seems likely since, by 1646, he had spent five years in Lower Brittany and had become fluent in Breton) his equation of this belief with demonic influence reveals a high level of distrust in peasant religious belief. By describing a man’s interaction with the Anaon as hearing the voice of the Devil, Maunoir reveals the Church’s attitude toward non-orthodox beliefs across Europe – at best they were superstition, at worst they were the work of the devil.

In order to eradicate the ‘superstitions’ of the European peasantry, the Jesuits undertook a staggering number of missions. Writing in 1642 of his time in the dioceses of Léon and Dol, Maunoir states he conducted six missions, and the Jesuits there “instructed some 15 thousand people... heard six thousand general confessions... and obtained the conversion of four thousand sinners.”<sup>139</sup> Although one cannot take Maunoir’s numbers at face value, it seems clear that by conducting similar missions for decades, Maunoir and his

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<sup>138</sup> Maunoir, *Miracles et Sabbats*, 95.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

companions proselytized thousands of men and women across Lower Brittany. In *Catholicism Between Luther and Voltaire*, Jean Delumeau described the Jesuit process in the following manner: “They descended on a parish in groups of four, six or eight, and would not leave until the entire population of the village or quarter had received the sacrament of penance.”<sup>140</sup> In this way, Delumeau estimates that “Maunoir preached some 375 missions in Brittany alone between 1640 and 1683.”<sup>141</sup>

This militaristic desire to convert the peasants of Brittany en masse to the orthodoxy of the Church posed an existential threat to the cultural and religious life of Lower Brittany. While, to be sure, the Breton peasants did not face the same horribly destructive processes as the Wendat in the seventeenth-century, their culture nonetheless came under attack during the Counter Reformation era. The idea that these missions posed an existential threat to the Bretons gains further credence through several stories recounted in Maunoir’s journal of the peasants’ resistance to the Jesuits. Writing of his mission to the parish of Saint-Mayeux in 1646, Maunoir tells how after he and his fellow missionaries began instructing the local populace “without delay,” that the “young people dispersed into the neighboring forest, like the savages of Canada.” Not to be deterred, the Jesuits “followed the deserters who, seduced, retraced their steps and listened for three hours to our chants and our teachings.”<sup>142</sup>

Maunoir’s efforts, however, came to naught, as “the lord of the place, a priest... let the young

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<sup>140</sup> Jean Delumeau, *Catholicism Between Luther and Voltaire: A new view of the Counter-Reformation* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1977), 192.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>142</sup> Maunoir, *Miracles et Sabbats*, 95.

people go back to their bacchanals,” as this priest regarded this as a religious practice.<sup>143</sup> The resistance given by the local laity and clergy alike shows the difficulties the Jesuits faced in the province. While the Bretons considered themselves Catholics, folk practices and beliefs nonetheless held a place of central importance as a means of navigating the social and spiritual worlds around them.

The threat that some Bretons felt the Jesuits posed is made even clearer in an assassination attempt against Maunoir. Describing an episode in 1646 during his mission to the town of Mür, Maunoir tells how “two gentlemen” walked out on his sermon to join a dance taking place nearby. While Maunoir attempted to continue his sermon, the two men returned, “abused their authority, and before an assembly of four thousand people, did the dance of the youth directly under the preacher’s pulpit.” Due to this episode, the lord of this area (a territory Maunoir calls Loüet) attempted to exile “one of these miscreants.” The other men associated with the pulpit dance, whose characters Maunoir states were not much better than their exiled accomplice, then attempted to assassinate Maunoir.<sup>144</sup> Due to the “grace of God,” however, Maunoir “was already gone, ignorant of their project, when they arrived.” These men then turned “their rage against a poor, 30 year old domestic who had heard” Maunoir’s sermon that night.<sup>145</sup> These men clearly reacted against the Jesuit attempt to ban certain practices (in this instance dancing in church). Wanting to retain the practices that held meaning to them, some Bretons reacted against the Jesuit presence. While instances of

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 96-97.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

violence against the Jesuits were rare in Brittany, this example shows that the belief that their culture was threatened did nonetheless exist.

These reactions against the Jesuits appear as a microcosm of the ultimate reaction of the Bretons to integration into the French kingdom. During the rule of Louis XIII and Louis XIV, the French state attempted to integrate the once independent duchy into the greater realm, and missionaries came to play a key role in this endeavor. The 1675 Revolt of the Bonnets Rouges, which had its epicenter in the Vannes diocese of Lower Brittany, arose in response to a tax on *papier timbré* – paper used in creating official documents.<sup>146</sup> In response to what they perceived as an unfair burden, the Breton peasants rose up in revolt against the state. Through this example of the Bonnets Rouges, the ability of the Breton peasants to negotiate their political grievances with the French state, through violence if necessary, stands out. Much like the Wendat, the Bretons were not hapless, isolated bystanders overtaken by the expansion of the French state and its missionary arms, but rather sought to negotiate in the political world in which they found themselves.

As Maunoir and his compatriots swarmed across the Breton countryside, they met with a mixture of welcome and resistance. While the Bretons had long considered themselves Catholics, non-orthodox practices had come to hold a place of central importance to Breton religious life. While most Bretons welcomed the Fathers, as they were indeed holy men of the Church, some resented their efforts to alter the peasant or regional culture of Brittany. The Jesuits, however, proved they could not be deterred.

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<sup>146</sup> Robin Briggs, *Early Modern France, 1560-1715* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 11. See also, Jean Lemoine, *Le révolte dite du papier timbré, ou, Des bonnets rouges en Bretagne en 1675* (Paris: H. Champion Librairie, 1898).

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have not meant to suggest that the Church's Counter-Reformation efforts in Brittany matched the magnitude of despair and destruction that met Wendake in the seventeenth-century. Rather, I have attempted to demonstrate how on either side of the French Atlantic world, people who became the objects of Jesuit missions faced existential crises as a result of the presence of the French Catholic other. For the Wendat, the coming of the French and their Jesuit missionaries brought disease and increased warfare to their land. In Lower Brittany, though the peasant populations did not face epidemic disease and endemic warfare, the greater Roman Catholic Church did indeed launch an attack on their belief systems. Across Europe, the Church sought to enforce uniformity among its followers and do away with localized, regional 'superstitions.' How the Jesuits attempted to 'convert' the Wendat and Bretons alike will be the subject of the next chapter.

### Chapter 3: A series of miraculous events

#### Introduction

In the seventeenth-century, Wendat and Breton alike shared the conception that they lived in a world imbued with the supernatural. For the Wendats, this meant the *oki* everywhere around them. For the Bretons, they felt the souls of the Anaon and the saints of the Catholic liturgy to be ever-present in their world. For both groups as well, the living could appeal to these supernatural forces in order to heal the sick, lame, or dying. These traditions appeared to the Jesuits as rich soil in which to plant the seeds of Catholicism. And as the Fathers worked among the Wendats and the Bretons, they sought to exploit the system of spiritual beliefs of each to further their missionary ends.

Throughout these missions, the Jesuits relied on various pedagogical techniques. These techniques, however, resulted from the strange marriage of the apocalyptic need to quickly convert ‘heathen’ or ‘idolatrous’ populations, and the desire to inculcate Catholicism among the youth of the population through formal, school based education.<sup>147</sup> But before this latter objective could come to pass, the Jesuits first had to ‘convert’ the proselytized populations through any means necessary.<sup>148</sup> While many scholars have written on the various techniques used by the Jesuits to proselytize the Wendat and Bretons alike, this chapter will focus on the Jesuit use of miracles, and the varied functions of the miraculous in these missions.

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<sup>147</sup> Robert Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450-1700* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 122.

<sup>148</sup> Michael Welton, “Cunning Pedagogics: The Encounter Between the Jesuit Missionaries and Amerindians in seventeenth-century New France” *Adult Education Quarterly* Vol. 5 No. 2 (February 2005): 109.

### Miracles among the Wendat

When the Jesuits first arrived among the Wendat in 1634, they felt they had found a people living in what Aristotle had deemed the first stages of human society. “At first,” writes Paul Le Jeune, summarizing the Aristotelian philosophy, “men were contented with life, seeking purely and simply only those things which were necessary and useful for its preservation.”<sup>149</sup> The Jesuits, for all their condemnation of Native practices, quickly realized, however, that the Wendat did not lack a system of beliefs. In Wendat society, men called *arendiwane*, whom the Jesuits labeled ‘sorcerers’ or ‘jugglers,’ and whom modern ethnographers now refer to generally as shamans, constituted the chief spiritual authority. Through the use of miracles, the Jesuits looked to displace the *arendiwane* and usurp their role as the main spiritual authority among the Wendat, as well as educate the inhabitants of Wendake in Catholic doctrine. To begin, it will prove useful to offer a brief discussion of the Wendat belief system and shamanistic culture.

Modern anthropology and psychology categorize shamanism as “a body of techniques and activities that supposedly enable its practitioners to access information that is not ordinarily attainable by members of the social group... These practitioners use this information in attempts to meet the needs of this group and its members.”<sup>150</sup> Prior to the arrival of Europeans, the Wendat had a long-standing tradition of supernatural healing, which the Jesuits later drew upon. The general Wendat term for shaman was *arendiwane*, which

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<sup>149</sup> Paul Le Jeune, “Le Jeune’s Relation, 1634,” *The Jesuit Relations*, Vol. 7, 6.

<sup>150</sup> Stanley C. Krippner, “Conflicting Perspectives on Shamans and Shamanism: Points and Counterpoints,” *American Psychologist* Vol. 57 No. 11 (November 2002): 963.

translates into English as, “his supernatural power is great.”<sup>151</sup> Within Wendat society, several different forms of *arendiwane* existed, and each was considered a “specialist who through apprenticeship and visions had acquired extraordinary spiritual power.”<sup>152</sup> Bruce Trigger categorizes the four types of *arendiwane* as follows: “those who were able to control the wind and rain, those who could predict future events, those who could find lost objects, and finally, those who could heal the sick.”<sup>153</sup> Of these, Trigger acknowledges ‘those who could heal the sick,’ as the most important of the *arendiwane*, and it was these men and their traditions that the Jesuits’ hoped to displace and usurp through their use of healing miracles.

As Elisabeth Tooker has noted, the Wendat recognized three different forms of illness: “(1) illnesses due to natural causes that were cured by natural remedies, (2) illness caused by the desires of the soul of the sick person that are cured by supplying these desires... and (3) illnesses caused by witchcraft that were cured by extracting the sorcerer’s spell.”<sup>154</sup> The illnesses caused by desire and witchcraft fell under the purview of the healing *arendiwane*. In order to diagnose the illness and decide how to best treat it, those *arendiwane* who specialized in diagnostics, called *ocata* or *soakata*, appealed to their “*oki* or familiar spirit who revealed to [them] the cause of the illness.”<sup>155</sup> The Wendat believed one had to do more than simply consult with the supernatural, however, in order to bring about a cure. As related by Georges E. Sioui, “if natural means produced no cure, the Wendats concluded that

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<sup>151</sup> Trigger, *The Huron*, 115.

<sup>152</sup> James Axtell, “The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America,” in Axtell *European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1981), 75.

<sup>153</sup> Trigger, *The Huron*, 115.

<sup>154</sup> Tooker, *An Ethnography of the Huron Indians*, 83.

<sup>155</sup> Trigger, *The Huron*, 115.

a spell had been cast, or that the ailment was symptom of the soul's suffering, which must be soothed by feasts (of many different kinds), rituals, and gifts.”<sup>156</sup> Thus, for the Wendat, not only believing, but also saying the right words and performing the correct actions played a key part in the shamanistic healing process. In his work, *Huron-Wendat: The Heritage of the Circle*, Sioui describes the *awataerohi* or ‘hot cinders dance.’ According to Sioui, this “was a curing ceremony to deal with pain felt in a part of the body...” The Wendat believed this pain emanated from a small spirit, which had entered the body due to witchcraft or within a dream. As Sioui states, “The ceremony included certain songs known only to holy people belonging to the many Wendat curing societies.”<sup>157</sup> Thus, prior to the arrival of the Jesuits, the Wendat believed in the power of spiritual healers, who had received supernatural sanction to perform such rituals – a tradition the Jesuits proved apt at exploiting. Due to this tradition of supernatural healings, the Catholic insistence on ritual would not have seemed out of place, but rather fit within the Wendats’ own conceptions of the universe – that the natural and supernatural were so intertwined that a trained spiritual authority could heal an ill individual through the application of supernatural ritual.

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When the Jesuits first arrived in New France they had assumed the conversion of the natives to Christianity would be a quick process, as the Divine Word cast light upon their savage world. But as the missionaries ventured further inland, and found conversion much harder than anticipated, miracles came to play a crucial role. The Jesuits, however, saw these

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<sup>156</sup> Sioui, *Huron-Wendat*, 158.

<sup>157</sup> Sioui, *Huron-Wendat*, 161-162.

miracles as more than simply an outburst of the Holy Spirit in the physical world; they, in fact, became a powerful weapon of Jesuit propaganda. The Jesuits thus used various miracles in an attempt to prove to the Wendat that the Catholic Fathers had a greater connection to the supernatural than did the *arendiwane*, and to demonstrate the validity of the Catholic faith. Much as in Brittany, the Jesuits of New France seized the opportunity for education that miracles afforded. Interestingly, while in Europe Jesuit efforts concentrated on children, among the Wendat the missionaries looked to primarily educate the adults. Finding the children “restless and unhappy” during instruction (most likely because Wendat children typically spent their days engaged in active learning, i.e. how to hunt, farm, and make food) “the Jesuits turned to adult education approaches.”<sup>158</sup> Using images that portrayed Christian tenets, crosses, and holy relics the Jesuits hoped to induce miracles, and guide the afflicted or onlookers through the Catholic prayers necessary to acquire the aid of the saints or God himself.

Writing of his mission in 1640-1641, Paul Le Jeune summarized the Jesuits’ intentions among the Wendat rather succinctly: “If you help the Savages, you will possess them all.”<sup>159</sup> To that end, Le Jeune and his colleagues sought out opportunities to work miracles of healing among their Wendat hosts – opportunities that were not hard to find. Writing of this same mission, Le Jeune described how “A young man,” named Ononrouten, “one of the greatest hunters and warriors in the country, and one of the best connected in all

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<sup>158</sup> Sagard, *The Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons*, 132-135. Welton, “Cunning Pedagogics,” 103.

<sup>159</sup> Paul Le Jeune, “Of the mission of Saint Jean Baptiste to the Arendaronons,” *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 20, 240.

this village, —was brought so low by the disease that they wholly despaired of him...” For Le Jeune, this proved the perfect opportunity to showcase the power of the Catholic faith. Learning of the young man’s affliction, one of the Jesuit Fathers “made a journey thither toward the end of the month of September,” and subsequently “instructed and baptized” the ill Wendat hunter. According to Le Jeune the baptismal waters showed themselves rapidly efficacious, as “shortly after, he [the young Wendat man] return[ed] to health, contrary to all hope...”<sup>160</sup> Healing a famed warrior and ‘connected’ man who seemed all but lost did wonders for the reputation of the Jesuits. As “heaven continued its favors upon this poor young man,” curing him so that he could once again “love life,” Ononrouten, who “was named Charles at his baptism,” held a feast for his people, at which he “openly declared that he had from the God of the believers his sight, his health, and his life.”<sup>161</sup> Le Jeune, however, was not the only Jesuit to capitalize on the public nature of these healings.

In his *Relation* from 1633-1634, Pierre Biard described several miracles that he had worked to bring about. Relating his mission to the Wendat village Pentegoët, Biard described a man “who was not expected to live, having been sick for three months.” When Father Biard came to this man while “according to his custom, visiting the sick people of the place,” he found the ill Wendat “having a violent attack, speaking only with great difficulty, and bathed in a cold perspiration, the forerunner of death.” Hoping to heal the man, Biard “had him kiss a cross several times, which he attached to his neck, announcing as well as he could the good tidings of the salvation acquired thereby...” After thus praying for the intercession of God on

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 23-24.

this man's behalf, Biard returned to a French ship. But, Biard stated, "what God did in his absence was apparent from what we saw a day later. "For... this Savage, with several others, came there healthy and happy, parading his cross, and, with great demonstrations of joy, expressed his gratitude to Father Biard before them all."<sup>162</sup> Here again, the Jesuits rescued a man very near death, performing their intercessory rituals when "there were a number of Savages present..."<sup>163</sup> The public nature of these miracles, and the communal nature of Wendat society, served the Jesuits well. As the Fathers successfully performed miracles in front of crowds of Native onlookers, they hoped to implant in the minds of their viewers that they truly possessed the ability to heal.

In the early years of the missions to Wendake, the Jesuits encountered some resistance from their hosts. During the 1630s, many Wendat had expressed distrust of the Jesuits, even labeling them as evil sorcerers. But as the native population suffered in dramatic fashion from disease, and increased warfare with the Haudenosaunee for over a decade, and the French remained unaffected by the epidemics of the country, many began turning to the Black Robes as a potential source of aid when traditional remedies proved ineffective. As people continued to die, and villages continued to disappear, the Jesuits saw an opportunity to erode the power of the *arendiwane* in Wendat society. Consequently, the Jesuits sought to attack the Wendat belief in the healing powers of the *arendiwane* through verbal attacks and criticisms – contrasting, what they felt, to be their effective healing miracles against the ineffective methods of the *arendiwane*. Evidence of the Jesuits' attempt to seize upon the

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<sup>162</sup> Pierre Biard, "Biard's Relation de la Nouvelle France," *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 4, 92.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

*arendiwane*'s perceived inability to heal comes through in Le Jeune's *Relation* of 1635.

Writing of the burial of a young, unbaptized Wendat boy, Le Jeune reports the following:

“After the burial, the mother of the one who died without Baptism, seeing her son had been discarded like the body of a lost soul, shed bitter tears. ‘Ah, my son,’ she said, ‘how sorry I am for thy death.’ Then the Father, who had seen the jugglers blowing upon this youth in his sickness, said to her, ‘Behold the cure that these triflers promised to thy son; thy little girl is sick, be careful not to summon them nor have them sing to her.’ ‘Never,’ said she, ‘shall they come near her; if she grows worse, I will call you.’ Some time afterward the Fathers, deeming her very sick, baptized her, to the great satisfaction of the mother.”<sup>164</sup>

Here, Le Jeune presents evidence to a grieving mother of, what he perceives as, the inefficacy of the *arendiwane*'s techniques. Whether the Wendat woman truly renounced the *arendiwane*, or Le Jeune misinterpreted her intention, the attempt by the Jesuits to use grief as a tool of persuasion comes through. By presenting the grieving with examples of the *arendiwane*'s inefficacy the Black Robes hoped to dissuade the people of the power of their healers. The Jesuits thus sought to use verbal attacks and persuasion as teaching tools as well, railing against the Wendats' beliefs and the *arendiwane*'s ultimate inability to stop the diseases, such as smallpox and diphtheria, which tore through Wendake.<sup>165</sup> Thus, miracles, and the Jesuits reputation of working them, became a powerful tool for not just persuading the Wendat of the truth of Catholicism, but simultaneously causing doubt regarding the effectiveness of traditional practices.

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<sup>164</sup> Paul Le Jeune, “Le Jeune’s Relation, 1635,” *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 8, 255.

<sup>165</sup> Welton, “Cunning Pedagogics,” 109.

Since the founding of the Jesuit order by Ignatius Loyola, ‘conversion by the image’ held a key position in Jesuit pedagogical techniques.<sup>166</sup> The Jesuits who worked in New France proved no different. Indeed, due to language barriers that existed between the Jesuits and the Wendat, despite the Black Robes best efforts, the Jesuits continued to rely on painted images of Catholic ideas, such as the fires of hell, to garner an audience and get their message across.<sup>167</sup> Despite the Jesuits’ best efforts to learn Wendat, there remained many phrases and ideas that proved untranslatable. During his mission to the Arendaronon nation of the Wendat, Jérôme Lalemant described an instance in which Jesuit Fathers used these images to cure a woman suffering from “a violent colic.” According to Lalemant, the woman’s condition had become so severe that the illness “made her yield up, by strange vomitings, everything that she had in her body.” In fact, the state of her illness seemed so irreversible that the woman “lost feeling” in her body, and “her kinsmen already accounted her dead.” Hearing of the woman’s seemingly fatal condition, Lalemant states that the Jesuit father “hastened thither.” Arriving in her cabin, the Jesuits “put before her eyes an image of Our Lord.” Having shown Atatasé, the ailing woman, their painted images, the Black Robes “[were] utterly astonished that her senses c[a]me back to her...” Suddenly she could speak and hear, and the Fathers baptized her “with entire satisfaction.”<sup>168</sup> For Lalemant, an “image of Our Lord,” proved enough to work a healing miracle upon this poor woman, whom the Jesuits came to call Marie after her baptism. By using such an image, the Jesuit fathers who

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<sup>166</sup> John Steckley, “The Warrior and the Lineage: Jesuit Use of Iroquoian Images to Communicate Christianity,” *Ethnohistory*, vol. 39, no. 4 (Autumn 1992): 482.

<sup>167</sup> Greer, *Mohawk Saint*, 100.

<sup>168</sup> Jérôme Lalemant, “Of the mission of Saint Jean Baptiste to the Arendaronons,” *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 20, 24.

worked to heal Atatasé/Marie employed pedagogical techniques used by their colleagues throughout the missions of New France. By using a Christian image to induce a miracle, the Jesuits both imparted knowledge of the Catholic faith to this Wendat neophyte and the witnesses who observed the miracle, and displayed to them the miraculous power associated with such an image.

Similarly, Jesuit accounts from the Wendat missions depict the Fathers using symbols of Christianity in the process of ritual healing. Outside of the miraculous, such devices were rather common. In fact, archaeologists have found medals given to the evangelized by the Jesuits inscribed with messages such as, “Good and infinite Jesus have mercy on us.”<sup>169</sup> To return to the example of Biard’s mission to Pentegoët, the Jesuit describes an instance in which the use of Christian images, a cross specifically, played a part in the miraculous healing of a Wendat man who had “been sick for three months.” Instructing the sick man, “the Jesuit had him kiss a cross several times, which he attached to his neck, announcing as well as he could the good tidings of the salvation acquired thereby...” For the Jesuits, thus, adorning oneself with Christian symbols could bring a man back from death’s doorstep. And indeed, the ill Wendat, who had been “bathed in a cold perspiration, the forerunner of death,” recovered his health. Traveling to the Jesuit camp, this man “came there healthy and happy, parading his cross... with great demonstrations of joy...”<sup>170</sup> As a result of such celebrations, the perception that the Jesuits had the ability to heal the sick spread throughout Wendake.

While the Jesuits used the forms of Christianity, images and relics, to induce miracles

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<sup>169</sup> Welton, “Cunning Pedagogics,” 111.

<sup>170</sup> Pierre Biard, “Biard’s Relation de la Nouvelle France,” *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 4, 92.

and proselytize the Wendat, they also looked to impart the substance of the theology during the moments of the miraculous. Though iconography proved an important aspect of the Jesuit pedagogical techniques, their translations of prayers and catechisms into Wendat proved their most effective, and challenging, task. A common practice in their missions around the world, Jesuit missionaries attempted to learn the language of the proselytized and consequently translate works of Christian doctrine. In the Canadian missions, Jesuits spent years learning the complex Algonquian and Iroquoian languages in order to create translations of Catholic prayers and catechisms that “preserved both meaning and orthodoxy.”<sup>171</sup> In order to better proselytize the Wendat, Brébeuf, around 1628, translated the famous ‘*Doctrina christiana*,’ by Father Diego Ladesma, into Wendat, a text that had already been printed in several different European languages by the time of Brébeuf’s mission.<sup>172</sup> The use of prayers and catechisms became an important part of the miraculous as well. In his *Relation* of 1635, Le Jeune relates the story of an ill girl, whom the Wendat community had tried to heal unsuccessfully by consulting “a famous Sorceress...” According to Le Jeune, when the parents consented to the Jesuits’ help, Father Buteux went to her, and began “to talk, presenting as he [could] the principal articles of our faith.” Buteux, however, was “not yet well versed in the language,” and thus relied on the parents to provide a translation. In this way, the Jesuits, with the aid of the Wendat parents, “repeat[ed] softly and explain[ed] in clearer terms what was said to this poor soul, which showed itself as thirsty for this doctrine

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<sup>171</sup> Margaret J. Leahey, “‘Comment peut un muet prescher l’évangile?’: Jesuit Missionaries and the Native Language of New France,” *French Historical Studies* Vol. 19 No. 1 (Spring 1995): 113.

<sup>172</sup> John Steckley, *De Religione: Telling the Seventeenth-Century Jesuit Story in Huron to the Iroquois* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 11.

as the dry earth for the dew from Heaven.” Despite the fact that “some time was employed in instructing her, the parents were always contented, and the patient still more.”<sup>173</sup> Here, the Jesuits relied on a translated form of ‘the principal articles of our faith,’ as a means of attempting to heal a sick girl. Through these means, the Jesuits imparted knowledge of Catholic doctrine to both the ill girl and her parents, as all three became active participants in the healing ritual, reciting the prayers in which the Fathers instructed them.

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From propaganda to pedagogy, miracles of healing became a central part of the Jesuits conversion techniques. Their ability to draw upon Wendat customs of supernatural healing, and practitioners with special knowledge legitimized these miraculous events in the minds of the Wendat, whose conception of the universe already allowed for such phenomena. By working miracles throughout Wendake, the Jesuits became, for some Wendat “the functional equivalent of a native shaman,” as both parties had shown powerful connections to the supernatural.<sup>174</sup> Through such means, the Jesuits proved able to win converts among the Wendat. Such methods for converting the Wendat proved efficacious enough for modern scholars to estimate that “by 1648 almost 10 percent of them had become Christian.”<sup>175</sup>

The question remains, however, how true in their belief were these converts? Did they wholeheartedly embrace the faith, or did they simply incorporate some aspects of the

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<sup>173</sup> Le Jeune, “Le Jeune’s Relation, 1635,” vol. 8, 264.

<sup>174</sup> Axtell, “The Invasion Within,” 84.

<sup>175</sup> Nicholas P. Cushner, “The Beaver and the Fleur-de-Lis,” in Cushner *Why Have you Come Here?: The Jesuits and the First Evangelization of Native America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 150.

Jesuits' teachings into their own conceptions of the universe? Through the examination of life and death ways after the arrival of the Jesuits in Wendake, the next chapter will explore the viability of the Wendats' full acceptance of Catholicism, and what, if anything, the Wendat could have received other than spiritual sustenance from the French, their missionaries, and their faith.

### Miracles among the Breton Peasants

When Julien Maunoir began his work as a missionary in Brittany in 1641, he perceived a land of ignorance stretching out before him. Arriving in the rocky landscape of the Lower Breton dioceses, Maunoir bemoaned the condition of the faith among the people he encountered. "In effect," he stated, reminiscing on his missions in 1672, "in this vast region, that Michel Le Nobletz and the Dominican father Pierre Quintin were alone in evangelizing, the majority of parishes counted at most five or six peasants capable of stating the basic rudiments of Christian doctrine."<sup>176</sup> The Bretons themselves took pride in being, according to their oral histories, some of the oldest Christians in Europe. Yet to Maunoir, the Bretons did not possess the ability to express their faith in orthodox, Tridentine forms, thus proving that "nothing really distinguished them from barbarians, outside their churches and their liturgy."<sup>177</sup> How then, to convert these lost souls, teach them the catechism, and bring them into the fold of the Catholic Church?

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<sup>176</sup> Maunoir, *Miracles et Sabbats*, 19.

<sup>177</sup> Maunoir, *Miracles et Sabbats*, 20.

Writing about his first year as a missionary in Brittany in 1641, Julien Maunoir describes how “in that year, I accomplished eleven missions,” in the dioceses of Léon and Cornouaille.<sup>178</sup> According to Maunoir, his feats in this year included several miraculous healings, which he accomplished with the aid of grain blessed by Saint Jeanne – a relic given to Maunoir by Le Nobletz prior to beginning his mission. Such events included the healing of a woman’s gangrene, ridding a man of blindness, and curing an ill infant. In one of the more detailed accounts he gives of his time on the island of Ouessant, Maunoir tells of how he healed a young girl of a blindness from which she had suffered for two years.

We returned to the church to say mass when we learned that a young girl was awaiting our visit. We went to her house and taught her the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and of the Incarnation and we exhorted her to believe in Our Lord. After having moistened her eyes with the water that had washed the grain of Saint Jeanne, we shouted these words: *Sellit ouzomp*, that is to say: “Look at us.” And immediately, she regained her sight. Her father, Nicholas Veniou, her mother, Marie Bloch, and her neighbors, Françoise Walgorn, Laetitia Raoul and Jean Enaret, attested that she had been good and well deprived of her sight for two years.<sup>179</sup>

For Maunoir these sorts of healing rituals, which called upon saintly intercession, became a key part of his missions during the decades he spent traveling through the Celtic-speaking

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>179</sup> Maunoir, *Miracles et Sabbats*, 39.

dioceses of Brittany. The Jesuit's penchant for miraculous healings won him considerable fame among the Bretons. These healings no doubt played a large part in the success Maunoir came to enjoy in the western dioceses of Brittany.

It must be stated, however, that healings did not constitute the only miracles used by Maunoir. As Peter Goddard has noted, Jesuits, and seventeenth-century Catholics more generally, felt that demons played a large and active role in the world.<sup>180</sup> As such, the Jesuits performed exorcisms across Western Europe from the Palatinate to Essex; and Maunoir proved no different. While preaching in the town of Douarnenez, Maunoir encountered a young girl who had fallen “victim of an evil charm.”<sup>181</sup>

The bewitchment consisted of a total paralysis of her hand.... With the aid of the cross, we attempted to pull out the suffering from her fingers.... We did so well to menace the demon... he would submit the young girl to a torture that we would not have put a robust man to take her place.... Then, we plunged into a profound meditation and, after a half-an-hour, thanks to the intercession of the archangel of Brittany and of Saint Corentin, the young girl was delivered from all harm.<sup>182</sup>

Exorcisms became a key component to Maunoir's missions for their ability to draw a crowd. As Alexandra Walsham has said, “In France, a succession of well-publicized possession cases were likewise transformed into ‘baroque spectacles’, powerful vehicles for vindicating

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<sup>180</sup> Peter A. Goddard, “The devil in New France: Jesuit Demonology, 1611-50,” *The Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 78, no. 1 (March 1997): 40-62.

<sup>181</sup> Maunoir, *Miracles et Sabbats*, 45.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-46.

the Real Presence [of Christ]....”<sup>183</sup> The simple theatrical nature of these sorts of events, in which the victims suffered from extreme pain, and the Jesuits shouted prayers and used holy relics, no doubt brought out spectators. And in the cases in which the victim was healed, these onlookers walked away impressed with the power of the Jesuits and the orthodox Catholicism they preached.

The two types of miracles described above, healings and exorcisms, constituted a large part of Maunoir’s missions in Brittany. The public nature and powerful implications of these acts served the Jesuits well, as they attracted a great deal of attention. The sheer numbers of converts and catechisms that Maunoir reports suggests that these miracles drew massive crowds. In his account of the year 1643, Maunoir states that, “During these missions, we catechized 20 thousand people.”<sup>184</sup> Rather than taking this to mean that Maunoir, and the few other fathers who accompanied him on these missions, taught the tenets of Church doctrine on a one-on-one basis, it seems better to see this as a process of education en masse. Indeed, in early modern culture, to prove a miracle had occurred, and was not simply an invention of those involved, required witnesses. As the historian Fernando Vidal has shown in his writings on saint making, “Testifying under oath to ecclesiastical authorities, witnesses reported extraordinary events,” and “the details of the depositions reinforced the factuality of the event.”<sup>185</sup> While Maunoir makes no mention of such Church policies, the correlation between testimony and the acceptance of the miracles as truth must nonetheless have been in

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<sup>183</sup> Alexandra Walsham, “Miracles and the Counter-Reformation Mission to England,” *The Historical Journal* Vol. 46 No. 4 (December 2003): 801.

<sup>184</sup> Maunoir, *Miracles et Sabbats*, 62.

<sup>185</sup> Fernando Vidal, “Miracles, Science, and Testimony in Post-Tridentine Saint-Making,” *Science in Context* Vol. 20 No. 3 (September 2007): 481.

his mind. Thus, miracles took on a public nature, with witnesses always present, both to corroborate the truth of the event, as well as to benefit from the teachings involved. Due to the ability, and necessity, of the miraculous to bring in witnesses, these events became the main tool employed by Maunoir in his battle against the ‘ignorance’ of the Bretons.

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In Brittany, miraculous events of all kinds have a long and storied past. Across the various social-strata of medieval and early modern Breton society, people sought relief from what ailed them through saintly intercession. Writing of an episode in 1177, historian Julia H.M. Smith notes that, “three vertebrae and one rib,” which constituted “the relics of Petroc,” began “working miracles at Saint-Méen from the moment of their arrival.” The relics proved so powerful, having worked fourteen miracles, that the local monks “enshrined them in their church.”<sup>186</sup> The belief in using relics of saints to bring about miracles in Brittany thus stretched back centuries before Maunoir arrived. And, much in the manner of Maunoir, medieval Bretons generally sought out these miracles as a means of healing themselves. In fact, “In the hagiography of eleventh- and twelfth-century France, three-quarters of all postmortem miracles are healing miracles.”<sup>187</sup> The miraculous healings that the Jesuits came to use as a means of persuasion in their proselytizing efforts were, before Maunoir even arrived, already a readily accepted fact in the Bretons’ conception of the universe. This tradition of saintly intercession in Brittany became key to the Jesuits’ missions, as they proved able to play upon this desire for miraculous healing to win the hearts of the people.

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<sup>186</sup> Julia M.H. Smith, “Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles, and Relics in Brittany, c. 850-1250,” *Speculum*, Vol. 65 No. 2 (April 1990): 316.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 329.

When Maunoir arrived in Brittany, the practice of saintly healing brought about through contact with relics had long established itself in the popular culture. Contrary to Tridentine teachings, however, Bretons often sought out contact with these relics, and the healing powers they supposedly provided, without the direct aid of the priests. Saint Golven gained posthumous renown for aiding those who found themselves “in difficulty while going about their daily business.”<sup>188</sup> And indeed, as Smith has noted, miracles such as this are not “the type of miracle which presupposes the existence of a clerically coordinated cult site.”<sup>189</sup> While this example may not be of a healing nature, it nonetheless shows that the tradition of saintly intercession did not necessitate the action of an intermediary. Even when the clergy played a role in the occurrence of miracles, it seems to have been rather indirect. Several healing miracles in Quimper attributed to Saint Ronan, for example, took place at the shrine dedicated to the Saint. In one such miracle, “a dumb man is cured by praying at the altar on which Ronan’s relics lie,” and in another, “a possessed man is cured after spending a night beneath the saint’s shrine.”<sup>190</sup> These accounts suggest priestly knowledge of the attempt to garner saintly intercession, since they took place on church grounds, but do not suggest the priests’ direct involvement in the miracles’ occurrences. Thus, one can see that in Breton religious tradition miraculous events did not necessitate the direct involvement of the clergy, which flew in the face of Tridentine policy.

The Jesuits in Brittany sought to take advantage of this history of Breton miracles. By acting as the intercessory party between God and the people, the Jesuits established

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 326.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 330.

themselves as a middleman in the miraculous events of seventeenth-century Brittany. As Alexandra Walsham has noted, “Tridentine Catholicism did not reject the principle that words, symbols and objects could be receptacles of the divine: it simply sought to bring these resources under closer clerical control and ensure that the priesthood maintained exclusive rights to their application and use.”<sup>191</sup> This policy of shifting control of relics, and the miracle production for which they were responsible, from the popular classes to the priestly classes is reflected in Maunoir’s writings. Throughout his missions, Maunoir employed grain that had received the blessing of Saint Jeanne for just this purpose. During a mission to Quimper in 1643, Maunoir, “at the Saint-Antoine hospital... offered to a mad man, that we had to enchain, a little of the water in which had been dipped the grain of Sainte Jeanne. The demented regained his reason, and, the next day, equipped with the last sacraments and master of his mind, he fell asleep in the Lord.”<sup>192</sup> By treating a ‘mad man’ with water anointed by a relic (the grain of Saint Jeanne), Maunoir drew upon the tradition of using relics to induce saintly intercession on behalf of the ill. Unlike in Breton tradition however, Maunoir acted directly to bring about this intercession. Whereas in medieval Breton healing miracles, priests acted indirectly, if at all, to bring about these miracles, Maunoir actively treated the ‘mad man’ with the holy water – placing himself squarely in the middle of the process. By successfully performing healing miracles the Jesuits used “sacramental rites as a means of showing that they possessed better contacts with Heaven than their opponents.”<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Walsham, “Miracles and the Counter-Reformation Mission to England,” 786.

<sup>192</sup> Maunoir, *Miracles et Sabbats*, 63.

<sup>193</sup> Hans de Waardt, “Jesuits, Propaganda, and Faith Healing in the Dutch Republic,” *History*, vol. 94, no. 315 (July 2009): 346.

By thus showing that he possessed better contacts to heaven than the Breton population, Maunoir tapped into the Breton tradition of saintly intercession, but appropriated the miraculous act so that he stood as the necessary intermediary between the people and the saint.

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As the Jesuits established themselves as the true links on earth to God by the performance of these miracles, they hoped to do away with “Drunkenness, superstition, and other sins,” and “ignorance and corruption of morals” they perceived throughout the region.<sup>194</sup> To that end, the Jesuits looked to use miraculous events as pedagogical tools. Indeed, imparting the doctrines of the Church became a key part of Maunoir’s use of miracles. Relating a mission to Quimper in 1643, Maunoir describes how a “well-born woman suffered seventeen days from a swelling of the arm.” And while the doctors had shown themselves useless, Maunoir implored the woman “to have faith in Jesus Christ,” as well as “the recommendations of Saint Corentin.” Maunoir then proceeded to “touch her arm with the grain of Saint Jeanne,” whereupon “her pain suddenly disappeared and she recovered her health.”<sup>195</sup> While working a miracle of healing, Maunoir also instructed the woman to have faith in the teachings he propagated. In this same mission to Quimper, Maunoir worked another healing miracle that utilized elements of orthodox theology that the Jesuits hoped to spread. The subject of this healing, again a woman, bled from her nose for thirty hours. But, after the Jesuits “outlined the sign of the cross on her forehead with the

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<sup>194</sup> Elizabeth Tingle, “The sacred space of Julien Maunoir, “ 238.

<sup>195</sup> Maunoir, *Miracles et Sabbats*, 63.

grain of Saint Jeanne, and enjoined her to address a prayer to the saint... the blood stopped flowing.”<sup>196</sup> Here again, Maunoir uses an instance of saintly intercession on the behalf of the ill to spread Tridentine policy. By making the sign of the cross upon her, and instructing her on what to say in order to stop the bleeding, the Jesuits communicated the proper forms of prayer and instilled within the mind of the ill woman, and those who witnessed the healing, that these prayers, indeed, constituted the true forms of the Catholic faith. The moment of a miracle thus became a powerful teaching tool, as the Jesuits guided the afflicted through the ordeal, telling them what to do and what to say. When these efforts of the Jesuits resulted in a miraculous healing, those whom they healed now associated orthodox, Tridentine forms of prayer and requests for saintly intercession with these miracles; thus causing the teachings of the Jesuits to take root in their mind.

As Maunoir used the miraculous as a means of introducing the teachings of the Church among the Bretons, children, especially young girls, came to play a central part in these pedagogical efforts. Describing his mission to Saint-Pol-de-Léon in 1648, Maunoir tells the story of a young girl who had been given “the grace to see the Virgin and Saint Corentin.” Maunoir continues, “Indeed, having already attended my catechisms in Cornouaille and learned how to venerate the prelate, she engaged herself in reciting the *Pater*... three times per day.”<sup>197</sup> This example, in which a member of the proselytized community saw Mary and Saint Corentin with the aid Maunoir, as well as the examples of the exorcism and the healing given earlier, all involve young women. In fact, in his

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>197</sup> Maunoir, *Miracles et Sabbats*, 112-113.

recounting of many of his missions, Maunoir describes the effects of miracles on the “young girls” of the local population. As he wrote his journal “on the order of his superiors,” clearly Maunoir intended these girls to serve as a symbol.<sup>198</sup> But what, exactly, did these girls represent to Maunoir and the Jesuit superiors to whom he wrote? In a work composed in 1697 entitled *The Perfect Missionary, or the Life of the Reverend Father Julien Maunoir*, Antoine Boschet, himself a Jesuit, discussed a religious procession in Brittany in which Maunoir participated. Describing the roles the various participants played in the procession, Boschet notes how “many... of the young girls, who had represented the blessed Virgins, in imitating modesty and purity, renounced diversions and profane adjustments.”<sup>199</sup> The symbolism apparent in this procession, in which the young girls of virginal status represented purity and modesty, seems to be the symbolism at work in Maunoir’s own writings. By putting the miracles worked upon young, virginal girls on more prominent display than others, Maunoir played off this association of virginity with purity and modesty. By playing off this association both in his missions and in his writings, Maunoir conflated these traits with saintly intercession, and thus holiness. By showing that the saints more readily responded to the pure and modest (in the way the Church viewed purity and modesty) Maunoir hoped to instill these, and other, Catholic characteristics into the adult Breton population. By focusing on young members of the proselytized community, the Jesuits sought to indoctrinate the younger members of that community, and also use the youth as a means of teaching the parents. “The state of the spirit among the population changed beyond

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<sup>198</sup> Lébèc, *Miracles et Sabbats*, 1.

<sup>199</sup> Boschet, *Le Parfait Missionnaire*, 305.

recognition and the parents followed the example of their children,” Maunoir said of a mission in 1642.<sup>200</sup>

Just as Maunoir’s predecessor in Brittany, Michel Le Nobletz, had used painted tableaux to convey the messages of Catholic orthodoxy, Maunoir used the graphic imagery of healing miracles and exorcisms to display the truth of the faith. And by teaching the youth of the communities, Maunoir proved able to evangelize both the children and the parents of the Breton communities in which he worked. This aspect of teaching the children of the local population, and subsequently their parents, is evident in the first example given in this chapter, where Maunoir and his fellow clergyman healed a blind girl on the island of Ouessant. Upon returning to the local church after performing his missionary duties, Maunoir tells how the fathers learned “that a young girl was awaiting our visit.” Going to the afflicted girl’s home, Maunoir and his fellow clergymen “taught her the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and of the Incarnation and we exhorted her to believe in Our Lord.” Here, the miraculous and the pedagogical became conflated. Before Maunoir could act as an intercessory party on behalf of the girl, she had to first learn the true form of Christian belief. As Deslandres has noted, a key exercise the Jesuits employed in their teachings was a “collective recitation in high voices of the elementary prayers and fundamental elements like the commandments and the sacraments.”<sup>201</sup> By insisting the young girl in Ouessant learn, and confirm, the truth of the Trinity and Incarnation, Maunoir sought to teach her the “fundamental elements” of the orthodox Catholic faith. From here, Maunoir goes on to describe the miracle itself. Wetting

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<sup>200</sup> Maunoir, *Miracles et Sabbats*, 59.

<sup>201</sup> Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire*, 160.

the blind girl's eyes "with the water that had washed the grain of Saint Jeanne, we shouted these words: *Sellit ouzomp*, that is to say: 'Look at us.' And immediately, she regained her sight."<sup>202</sup> Maunoir tells us that the girl's father, mother, and neighbors had all testified that prior to the miracle, she, indeed, had no sense of sight. Given the often-public nature of these miracles, these relatives most likely witnessed Maunoir's work. By watching the Jesuit missionary cure their daughter and neighbor of blindness, the adults who witnessed the miracle no doubt felt a new awe for the power of the Black Robes and their orthodox teachings. Having witnessed the miracle, these onlookers benefited as well from Maunoir's explanations of "the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation," and thus received indirect instruction from the Jesuits. While children often served as the recipients of miraculous healing and exorcisms due to their assumed innocence and purity, adults too gained instruction in the Catholic faith via these miraculous events, thus allowing the Jesuits to catechize entire communities through the rendering of miracles.

Louis Châtellier has written that, "The missionaries who arrived in the rural areas did not find a people without God. Indeed, they were perhaps frightened by the ease with which he was appealed to, taken to task and even seen in the persons of these preachers who came to teach them the Word."<sup>203</sup> While this may not have always proven true, as seen through the assassination attempt on Maunoir, if the numbers of converts and catechisms taught that Maunoir claims in his journal can be trusted, a majority of Bretons proved willing to learn the tenets of the Tridentine faith that the Jesuits brought with them. And as the Jesuits

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<sup>202</sup> Maunoir, *Miracles et Sabbats*, 39.

<sup>203</sup> Châtellier, *The Religion of the Poor*, 107.

produced more and more miracles, they only strengthened their position among the local populace. As Maunoir and his colleagues proved themselves able to heal the sick, and cast out demons from the afflicted, they only “added to the trust that ordinary Catholics had in the expertise of the Jesuit fathers.”<sup>204</sup> As the Bretons gained this trust in the Jesuits, their teachings began to take greater effect, and the catechism and doctrines that they pushed became more and more well known from the 1640s to the 1660s.

### Conclusion

As Dominique Deslandres put it, “Using an ancient, but proven recipe, the missionaries... used and abused the miracle.”<sup>205</sup> As Jesuits in New France and Brittany worked to evangelize and convert the native populations, they came to rely on the use of miracles. In both theaters of missionary work, the populations had already established systems of supernatural healing. While in Brittany this system was clearly far closer to the Jesuits’ orthodox notions of miracles than the Wendats’ shamanism, the system of saintly intercession the Bretons relied upon prior to the Jesuits missions looked differently than it did after the Jesuits had missionized the region. Thus, on both sides of the Atlantic, Jesuits worked to establish themselves as middlemen in the healing process, making the Black Robes and their orthodox Catholicism a necessary, intermediary step on the road to both earthly and spiritual salvation. Interestingly, the pedagogical tasks of these miracles took similar forms in both New France and Brittany as well. In both instances, the Jesuits

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<sup>204</sup> de Waardt, “Jesuits, Propaganda, and Faith Healing in the Dutch Republic,” 357.

<sup>205</sup> Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire*, 168.

followed the same guidelines – using relics, prayers, and images – to bring about a miraculous healing. The attempt to convert people as spiritually diverse as the Wendat and the Bretons through similar means reveals an interesting pattern among the Jesuits. Believing their religion, and the rituals associated with it, to be so true, and even rational, they thought using the same means no matter the audience would produce the same effect: conversion.

## **Chapter 4: Economy of Salvation**

### Introduction

What was the ultimate effect of the Jesuit missionary efforts on the evangelized? In this chapter I will investigate this question using the cultural traits highlighted for the both the Wendat and Bretons in Chapter 1 as a measuring stick of sorts. By using specific cultural traits to measure change-over-time, I will show how the Wendats and the Bretons fit into the economy of salvation - a complex in which proselytized cultures took on certain orthodox Catholic forms in order to achieve certain goals. By engaging in this exchange the Wendat hoped to obtain 'salvation' from the warfare and disease that so plagued their world in the seventeenth-century. In Brittany, the Bretons hoped to retain the important aspects of their local form of Catholicism in the face of missionary militancy and zeal. On either side of the Atlantic, conversion became a process of give and take.

### The Wendat and their Quest for a Home

With the disintegration of Wendake, and the ultimate dispersal of its people in 1649-1650, the Wendat diaspora began. This diaspora effectively split the Wendat into eastern and western groups. Those who moved westward, sought refuge through assimilation with or adoption into other Native Nations, such as the Ottawa, the Ojibwa, and, in some cases, even the Haudenosaunee. This option seemed best for the Western Wendat as they were ensured the continued use of Iroquoian languages and culturally similar practices related to both life- and deathways. Those who relocated among the other Great Lakes Nations, however, continued to fall victim to the same cycle of warfare that had driven them out of Wendake –

whether at the hands of the Haudenosaunee, or more western nations, such as the Sioux. Those who chose to live among the Haudenosaunee voluntarily were treated better than captures, but still faced the possibility of having clan networks divided among multiple Haudenosaunee nations in order to speed along the acculturation process.<sup>206</sup>

As a result of these potential consequences, which no doubt played on the minds of all inhabitants of Wendake, the Eastern Wendat looked toward the French settlements for protection from the plagues that drove them from their home. Just as the Wendat had allowed the Jesuits to dwell among them for the better part of two decades, they now looked to the French to allow them to settle in permanent villages in Quebec. Before the Wendat could relocate to Quebec, however, the French demanded they convert to Catholicism. While many Wendat had already become nominally Catholic and/or familiar with the faith as a stipulation of trading with the French, and as a result of the Jesuit missions, many now converted to the faith as a means of gaining the protection and stability they hoped life in Quebec would offer.

While the Jesuits saw the establishment of these autonomous Wendat villages near cities such as Quebec and Trois Rivières as a means to better convert the Wendat and establish the Church among them, the adoption of Catholicism took on a far more practical meaning for the Wendat. What the people of Wendake sought most of all upon its dispersal was survival, and a subsequent return to normalcy. While the Wendat proved willing to take on some of the forms of Catholicism both in Wendake and in their new villages of Sillery, La Conception, and Île d'Orléans (*reductions* established by the Jesuits), many of their

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<sup>206</sup> Trigger, *Children of Aataentsic II*, 828.

traditional life- and deathways remained recognizable, and in some cases unaltered.<sup>207</sup>

Through an examination of the life- and deathways of the Catholic Wendat upon their relocation to French Quebec, in conjunction with traditional patterns of social and political action, this chapter will examine the rationale behind the Wendat conversion to Catholicism.

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To people of the seventeenth-century, French and Wendat alike, the spiritual and the everyday were inseparable. One's actions, both inward and outward, took direction from one's beliefs and subsequent conceptions of the world. Scholars of indigenous conversion have often cited the parallels that existed between certain Native American and European practices as a way of explaining the spiritual changes that often accompanied colonialism. For example, in his work, *Mohawk Saint*, Alan Greer suggests that the Haudenosaunee practice of readying for war and the possibility of capture and subsequent torture by inflicting "'practice' burns and blows" upon themselves paralleled the Christian practice of self-mutilation to understand the pains and suffering of Christ and the tortures of hell.<sup>208</sup> In his book on the Feast of the Dead, Eric Seeman has put forth a similar argument. For Seeman, the importance that both the Wendat and the Jesuits placed upon the ritualized use of bones

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<sup>207</sup> The term *reductions* refers to the villages established by Jesuits missionaries in the French and Iberian American empires. These villages were intended to 'reduce' the native populations to Christianity, and embed European religion and ways of living in the evangelized populations. For a more substantive look at *réductions* in New France, see Takao Abe, *The Mission to New France: A New Interpretation in the Light of the Earlier Jesuit Experience in Japan* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2010).

<sup>208</sup> Greer, *Mohawk Saint*, 118-119.

allowed them to create a spiritual middle ground, and better understand the practices of the other.<sup>209</sup>

An examination of lifeways thus proves critical to a greater understanding of the sincerity of the Wendat in their conversion to Christianity. As Anthony Padgen has written, “conversion to the Christian faith... meant far more than the acceptance of the truth of the Gospels. It demanded not only belief but also a ‘radical change of life’... which in ordinary language meant that he [the convert] became subject to new norms of living, to a new style of life, to a new outlook and aim.”<sup>210</sup> The Jesuits established the *réductions* as a means of furthering this goal. Originally derived from the Spanish-Paraguayan example of the *reducciones*, the Jesuits hoped that by getting Native American populations to move to the *réductions* they could ‘reduce’ them to Christianity – that is instill within these populations the desire to lead a localized, sedentary lifestyle in the manner of Europeans. For, to believe as a Christian, one must live as a Christian (i.e. European). Thus, the Jesuits hoped that life in the *réductions* would cause Native peoples to construct European style houses, practice European style husbandry, and generally conform to the style of European life, for all this would eventually cause the Wendat to believe in the truth of Christianity and live and think in the manner of Europeans.<sup>211</sup>

Prior to the disintegration of Wendake, the longhouse had served as a key social and familial factor in Wendat society. As the Wendat moved into French Quebec the maintenance

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<sup>209</sup> Seeman, *Huron-Wendat Feast of the Dead*, 2.

<sup>210</sup> Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the origins of comparative ethnology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 19-20.

<sup>211</sup> Axtell, “The Invasion Within,” 57.

of the traditional longhouses had a powerful effect on the maintenance of Wendat culture. Writing of a Wendat settlement after the dispersal of Wendake, Ragueneau described how “having come to a place which they deemed sufficiently adapted to residence,” these men and women “settled down there and built their cabins...”<sup>212</sup> Here, what Ragueneau describes as ‘their cabins’ must be read as ‘their longhouses.’ For, when describing a French or Jesuit residence, the Black Robes used the word ‘house.’ An example of this key difference in phraseology comes through in Ragueneau’s writing of the ‘Mission of Saint Charles.’ In this letter, Ragueneau describes how “toward the close of the Winter” a part of the Wendat people had “set out to come to us in the Island where we were living...” And, after “a very distressing journey of six long days... they arrived safely at this house.”<sup>213</sup> Thus a clear distinction existed in Ragueneau’s mind – European-style dwellings were houses, and Native American-style dwellings were cabins. This distinction becomes important for the interpretation of Ragueneau’s description of the Wendat move to Quebec. Describing the Wendat colony at the *réduction* on the Ile d’Orléans, Ragueneau described how “the colony of Huron [Wendat] Christians has its settlements on the island of Orleans... they have cleared fields, have erected cabins, and claim to have founded there their second country.”<sup>214</sup> Thus, even as the Wendat moved into French Quebec, and settled in Jesuit *réductions*, they continued to build and live in longhouses.

While the Jesuits wanted to inspire general European forms of social organization in all Native converts, a sedentary life became perhaps the most important trait they hoped to

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<sup>212</sup> Paul Ragueneau, “Of the Mission of Saint Charles,” *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 35, 172.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>214</sup> Paul Ragueneau, “On the Huron Colony,” *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 36, 202.

engender in the Wendat of Quebec. Though the Wendat had practiced settled agriculture in Wendake, the tradition of the winter hunt proved vexing to the Jesuits. Again subscribing to the maxim that European ways created Christian belief, the Jesuits hoped to convince the Wendat to abandon their seasonal hunting expeditions. By attempting to get the Wendat to abandon their winter hunts, the Jesuits hoped to keep the entire population of a given village fixed to that location year around. Through these means, the Jesuits hoped to convert more Wendats, as they could more easily interrupt and disparage local practices in the *réductions* than out on expeditions. The *Relations*, however, tell of several instances in which the Wendat of Quebec ventured out on the winter hunt. Ragueneau littered his *Relations* with phrases such as “a good many of our Neophytes have gone out hunting...” Writing of the winter of 1650, Ragueneau tells how “a young woman, a Catechumen, [fell] ill during her pregnancy,” and thus “left her company in the woods, at the time when the hunt was most successful...”<sup>215</sup> Despite this image, however, Ragueneau never dedicates more than a sentence to the Wendat hunts, not wanting to admit to his European superiors that he and his colleagues had had to acquiesce and accept the Wendats’ seasonal nomadism as a necessary part of *réduction* life.<sup>216</sup> As the winter hunts often took Wendat men well outside the borders of Wendake, the Jesuits never seemed to have accompanied them – preferring instead to stay among the mass of the population in order to carry out their mission.<sup>217</sup> As a result, the continuation of these winter hunting expeditions proved vexing to the Jesuits, for while the

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<sup>215</sup> Paul Ragueneau, “Of the Residence of Three Rivers,” *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 36, 196.

<sup>216</sup> Marc Jetté, *Enclaves amérindiennes: les ‘réductions’ du Canada, 1637-1701* (Sillery, Quebec, Canada: Les éditions du Septentrion, 1994), 146.

<sup>217</sup> Sioui, *Huron-Wendat*, 106.

Wendat were on the hunt they could escape the missionaries' constant surveillance and teachings.<sup>218</sup>

By attempting to constrain Native lifeways in the *réductions*, the Jesuits looked to “transmogrify their [Native American] behavior by substituting predictable European modes of thinking and feeling for unpredictable native modes.”<sup>219</sup> The Wendat, however, proved able to resist the pressure of the Black Robes, and retain much of their traditional lifeways. By continuing to build the traditional longhouses, the Wendat not only kept alive their traditional architecture, but kept clan and kinship networks intact in the face of disease and relocation. And through the preservation of their hunting expeditions, the Wendat afforded themselves an opportunity to escape the gaze of the Black Robes, during which time they may have engaged in traditional rituals to secure a good hunt. Thus, despite their professed conversion to Christianity, the Wendat continued to look very much un-European, and thus un-Christian. While one cannot necessarily measure the sincerity of belief based on outward forms, the retention of many Wendat customs lends further credence to the notion that the Wendat incorporated aspects of Christianity into their existing set of spiritual beliefs, or simply put up a Christian façade in order to placate the Jesuits and gain admittance into French Quebec.

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While the examination of lifeways can provide insight into seventeenth-century notions of conversion, an exploration of deathways becomes crucial when attempting to

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<sup>218</sup> Jetten, *Enclaves amérindiennes*, 146.

<sup>219</sup> Axtell, “The Invasion Within,” 43.

measure the extent to which the Wendat conformed to Catholic belief. One of the most important rituals associated with Wendat deathways, grave goods, continued after the move to Quebec. While Catholic burials often included adorning the body with fine clothes and rosary beads, the Jesuits hoped to convince the Wendat to do away the inclusion of everyday items. Yet, even as the Wendat moved into Quebec and settled in or near French towns and Jesuit *réductions*, the Black Robes “seldom persuaded even their converts to deprive the dead of their grave goods.”<sup>220</sup> Though the Quebec Wendat began to include rosaries in their burials, per Catholic tradition, archaeologists have found individuals whose graves included a “cache of shell beads... a pint of basswood seeds... pipe stems and potsherds,” and one grave even “contained the teeth and jawbone of a dog.”<sup>221</sup> Thus while many of the Wendat ‘converts’ incorporated rosaries into their burial rituals, the important tradition of including other, more everyday items as grave goods persisted. The inclusion of grave goods suggests a continued belief in the *oki*, and that the afterlife looks very much like earthly life – in contradiction to a Christian paradise in which the conditions of want and need no longer play upon the soul. By maintaining Wendat forms of burial, they resisted the complete takeover of native systems of spiritual belief pertaining to death by those of their European neighbors. This attempt to keep Wendat burial forms intact symbolizes the larger struggle to keep Wendat culture intact in the face of disease, warfare, and European missionary zeal.

Though funerary rites sought to secure a good afterlife for the dead, in one form or another, Wendat burials also served a diplomatic function for those who remained. The idea

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<sup>220</sup> Axtell, “The Invasion Within,” 74.

<sup>221</sup> Seeman, *Huron-Wendat Feast of the Dead*, 105.

of burying Wendat and French alongside each other in order to cement relationships continued after the Wendats' move to Quebec. Both sides, Jesuit and Wendat, did what they could to help the refugees of Wendake "feel at home alongside the French settlers."<sup>222</sup> While the Quebec Wendat no longer practiced the Feast of the Dead, one way they sought to 'feel at home' was through the continuation of burial practices. By burying their dead in Christian cemeteries, next to the graves of Frenchmen, the Wendat sought the same diplomatic and social ends as communal burial in the Feast. As the Wendat moved into Quebec, and mingled among French settlers, rather than creating a burial ground apart from the French, they desired their dead to "be buried in the Christian cemetery" of their particular town. By burying their dead alongside the French of Quebec, the Wendat deployed one of their most powerful diplomatic tools, which allowed them continued access to the protection that the Jesuits and French gave them from the disease and warfare that had driven them from their homeland. Just as they had hoped to create a lasting earthly alliance with the Algonquian peoples through shared funerary space in the Feast of the Dead, the Wendat now hoped to create and maintain such an alliance with the French by laying the bones of their deceased to rest alongside those of the French.

### The Bretons and their Land of the Dead

During the latter half of the seventeenth-century, the Jesuits, led by Julien Maunoir missionized throughout the dioceses of Lower Brittany, working miracles, teaching the

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<sup>222</sup> Karin Vélez, "'A sign that we are related to you': The Transatlantic Gifts of the Hurons of the Jesuit Missions of Lorette, 1650-1750," *French Colonial History*, vol. 12, (January 2011): 33.

catechism, and ‘converting’ the native Bretons. But how did the Bretons react to this new, orthodox Catholicism? While this question poses the same difficulties it did in the case of the Wendat, in that the rural Breton population left no written sources telling how they felt, it nonetheless remains possible to explore this issue. In order to do so I will draw upon the work of folklorists, especially Anatole Le Braz (1859-1926), a late nineteenth-century folklorist who wrote on the Breton countryside. While Le Braz recorded facets of Breton life some two hundred years after the missions of Julien Maunoir, the beliefs he described seem unaltered or similar to the pre-missionary forms of Breton Catholicism. Additionally, physical evidence that remains cast in stone across Lower Brittany (churches, ossuaries, sculptures, etc.), and the notes left by Maunoir and his biographers regarding the later years of his missions shed light on the peasant religious mindset. As mentioned in Chapter 1, there existed three interesting characteristics which set Breton Catholicism apart from the greater Gallic and Roman Churches: the belief in the Ankou (the bringer of death) and the Anaon (the Cult of the Dead), as well as the prevalent use of ossuaries (a structure that stores the bones of the dead). I will use these three distinctive characteristics to show if or how Breton beliefs transformed in the face of the Jesuit missions. Secondly, I will continue to chart the rise in the orthodox belief of Purgatory throughout the seventeenth-century among the popular classes, exploring the ways missionary teachings interacted with popular conceptions of the ‘third place’ as another vantage point from which to view the efficacy of the Jesuit missionary tactics. I will show how each side of the missionary encounter, Breton peasants and Jesuit priests, made concessions to the other throughout the ‘conversion’ process in order

to gain what they wanted: for the Jesuits this meant ‘saving the souls’ of the Bretons, while for the evangelized this meant retaining a sense of Breton Catholicism.

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The Ankou, the Breton personification of death, a skeletal figure who carried a dart and came to earth to collect the souls of the dying, persisted in Breton religious culture throughout the early modern period; indeed, the Ankou did not disappear from popular belief until the twentieth century.<sup>223</sup> Though Maunoir makes no mention of this macabre figure, Le Braz made extensive notes on the belief in the Ankou during his travels through the province. As Le Braz noted, the Ankou still held the position of “the worker of death (oberour ar maro),” and remained closely tied with the sense of community in the parish, as in some places the last person to die each year became, for the following year, “the Ankou of this parish.”<sup>224</sup> While Le Braz recorded several tales regarding the Ankou, the one that tells the most about the survival of this figure’s traditional role in Breton society is *The Ballad of the Ankou*. As mentioned in Chapter 1, quotations ascribed to the Ankou often echoed the New Testament notion of death as the ultimate equalizer, carrying away both rich and poor in its wake. *The Ballad of the Ankou* describes this skeletal worker of death in much the same way. When a rich man offers the Ankou a bribe in order to save himself, the Ankou replies:

“I will not accept a pin, - And I will give grace to no Christian ... Pope nor cardinal will I save; - Kings, I will save none, - Not one king, not one queen, -

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<sup>223</sup> Badone, *The Appointed Hour*, 169.

<sup>224</sup> Anatole Le Braz, *La Légende de la Mort chez les Bretons Armoricaains* (Paris: Honoré Champion, Libraire, 1902), 95.

nor their princes, or their princesses... I will not save archbishops, bishops, or priests, - Noble gentlemen or bourgeois, -

Artisans nor merchants, - nor, in the same way, the laborers.”<sup>225</sup>

Thus, even in the late nineteenth-century the Ankou continued to play the role of Christian equalizer he had held even prior to the Jesuits’ arrival. His survival well into the nineteenth-century highlights the success of the early modern Breton population in retaining aspects of their particular religious culture in the face of missionary zeal.

While the Breton bringer of death remained strong in popular religious culture, the collectivity of the dead, the Anaon, remained intact though with some alterations. As Le Braz noted, the Anaon dwelled close to the earth, and possessed the ability to interact with the material world. Describing the practice of leaving food out for departed souls, Le Braz recounts how the “smell of the honey is... particularly sweet to the Anaon,” and that as such, when a fly lands on a container of honey, “the people believe that it’s the soul of the dead who is getting his provision of food, before putting himself en route for the place which he is assigned.”<sup>226</sup> Thus, the Anaon retained its feature as a place where souls dwell close to earth and from which they can easily come back to earth and interact with the people and material surroundings. Yet, the notion that it was necessary for these souls to come back to earth to right a fault of one kind or another diminished over time. Interaction with the dead in order to absolve their sins became centered around the church and priesthood. Recounting the story of Anna Tanguy, a Breton woman who lived near the town of Pendra, Le Braz tells how this

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 140-141.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 230-231.

woman paid the rector of her parish to conduct an intercessory mass. That night, Anna Tanguy was awoken by a voice which said to her, “God bless you! ... You have relieved me of my burden.”<sup>227</sup> In this example, Anna Tanguy felt the need to devote a mass at the parish church (*chez le recteur*) in order to absolve the dead of their sins and/or fault committed while living. Yet, the souls of the departed still possessed the ability to contact the living, even if just to thank them – a remnant of the belief in the *Anaon*, not recognized by orthodox authorities. Thus, a blending of beliefs in the *Anaon* and orthodox Purgatory occurred, where souls could return to earth and interact with the living, yet they could no longer work toward their own absolution and they had to rely on the prayers and masses conducted by the living.

Perhaps the most perceptible change, however, occurred among the ossuaries. While the use of ossuaries had faded out by the time Le Braz visited the province, their use remained highly important for Breton religious life during the missionary period and well into the nineteenth-century. As Le Braz noted, “During another time, there were ossuaries in all Breton cemeteries,” where the bones of exhumed skeletons “were stacked one on top of the other, in good order, and they [the Bretons] placed the head in a box which was sometimes given the shape of a coffin, sometimes a chapel.”<sup>228</sup> Through Le Braz’s account of the old Breton ossuary practices, which had only faded some thirty years before he arrived, one sees the continued use of charnel houses throughout the early modern, and well into the modern, period. Yet, while the veneration of the dead through the use of ossuaries persisted, it took on a more distinctly Catholic form, as the ossuaries shifted from the countryside to the

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<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

parish church and became integrated into its structure. As the Jesuit missionaries spread through Brittany ‘converting’ the natives, intercession for the dead came to necessitate masses held in church and/or the participation of a priest in the process. The physical evidence for this shift is seen in the parish enclosure movement. This movement, which occurred in Breton communities during the latter half of the seventeenth-century, saw the construction “of a wall around the parish church and cemetery, within which were also housed the ossuary and an elaborate Calvary...”<sup>229</sup> The ossuaries tended to be the last part of Breton religious life enclosed within these parish walls. An excellent example comes from the town of Argol, in the diocese of Quimper, where the community finished construction on a new parish church in 1569, erected a Calvary in 1617, and moved the ossuary to church grounds in 1665.<sup>230</sup> Also, in the town of Saint-Thégonnec the local ossuary moved to church grounds around 1676.<sup>231</sup> Thus, as the missionaries began to ‘convert’ the Bretons through their various pedagogical methods, the ossuaries, a site of veneration of and communication with the dead since the pre-Christian Celtic era, moved to church grounds where the clergy could oversee such intercessory work on behalf of the dead. Indeed, as ossuaries moved to church grounds, altars where priests conducted requiem masses and held prayers for the dead became integrated into the structure of these charnel houses.<sup>232</sup> Yet, while the ossuaries became repurposed to suit the orthodox program put forward by the missionaries, there still remained some telling Breton features, such as carvings of the Ankou.

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<sup>229</sup> Badone, *The Appointed Hour*, 136.

<sup>230</sup> Tingle, “The sacred space of Julien Maunoir,” 244.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 244.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

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Priestly intercession became a key feature of orthodox practice promulgated by the Church in relation to Purgatory during the Counter Reformation era. As Tingle has noted, the importance of “professional, clerical intercession,” grew throughout the missionary period.<sup>233</sup> This need for priestly intercession in early modern Brittany did not just grow during the missionary period, however, but came about as a direct result of it. By working the miracles explored in Chapter 3, Jesuit missionaries effectively placed themselves between the laity and the realm of the supernatural, usurping the intercessory powers individuals once had in regards to the Anaon. While the direct effect of the miracles worked by Jesuits was the healing of an individual, these miracles also often occurred in public spaces, allowing a greater number of people to learn about Catholic orthodoxy via the miraculous. Similar to miracles, intercessory masses involved a priest as the link between the earthly and the sacred. During these masses, the priests’ main motivation “was intercession for individuals,” so that particular souls residing in Purgatory might obtain absolution.<sup>234</sup> And, though the intention of these masses was the absolution of individuals, in order to achieve this end, the greater community of believers needed to engage in this ritualized activity. As Tingle states, “perpetual masses were also a form of public display, intended to draw onlookers into prayer and to engage churches in responsibility for individual souls.”<sup>235</sup> Thus, miracles reflected the process of intercession evident at masses for the dead. Through a priestly medium, believers worked for the salvation of a suffering individual: in the case of the miracles, someone

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<sup>233</sup> Tingle, *Purgatory and Piety in Brittany*, 121.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

suffering a physical illness, in the case of intercessory masses, someone suffering metaphysically in Purgatory.

This rise in the demand for intercessory priests and masses in order to purge the sins of the dead had a strong influence on the Breton notion of the Anaon; and as the missionaries began to infuse orthodox practices into popular beliefs, the Anaon and Purgatory became conflated. As such, concepts from each belief bled into this new, semi-orthodox version of the ‘third place.’ Le Braz makes note of this heightened power of the clergy as the driving force behind intercessions for the dead. While visiting the town of Saint-Michel-en-Grève, Le Braz noted, in general, the priest who had conducted a person’s funeral was the only one to speak on behalf of that person’s soul.<sup>236</sup> This notion of the priest as the main intercessor with the dead goes hand-in-hand with the orthodox conception of Purgatory. As taught by the Church, a true intercessory mass for the dead necessitated the presence of a priest; making priests the crucial element in the process of intercession for the dead.<sup>237</sup> As a result of this process, priestly intercession for the dead dwelling in the Anaon became the norm in Brittany. In Le Braz’s account, the rector of Saint-Michel-en-Grève, M. Dallo, was one of the “most knowledgeable” members of the community in regards to the Anaon, and even “knew in which directions the souls of the dead had dispersed that he had interred, save two.”<sup>238</sup> M. Dallo’s expertise in regards to the Anaon shows just how intertwined the ideas of Purgatory and the Anaon became as a result of the increased pressure of the Church on Breton Catholicism.

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<sup>236</sup> Le Braz, *La légende de la Mort*, 179.

<sup>237</sup> Tingle, *Purgatory and Piety in Brittany*, 221.

<sup>238</sup> Le Braz, *La légende de la Mort*, 179.

The increase in the parishes' role in popular religion allowed for the continuation of the pedagogical efforts of the missionaries and wider clergy, as the parish became "a place where parishioners were taught about Purgatory and the afterlife of the soul."<sup>239</sup> The effect of this continued pedagogy carried out on the grounds of the local churches comes through in the writings of Antoine Boschet. Writing on the life of Julien Maunoir, Boschet described a scene in which the clergy proved able to strengthen the position of the church as the place for intercession. To Boschet, the beliefs of the Bretons "were very subject to change" as long as one takes care not to endorse them. To that end, Maunoir announced that, "his sermon for the communion of the dead would be the next Sunday." Describing the reactions of the Breton parishioners, Boschet simply says, "they will commune for the dead parents, and this communion will achieve to fix them in obedience."<sup>240</sup> Taking advantage of his role as the necessary intermediary party between the living and the dead, Maunoir attempted to mold the behavior of his audience. By telling the Bretons in attendance when, where, and how to pray for the souls of the dead, Maunoir looked to impart the forms of proper Catholic ceremonies to his congregation. Under the pressure of a clergy whose numbers and power continued to grow due to missionary efforts, the Bretons began to conform to the intercessory complex of the greater Church, recognizing the intercessory powers of the clergy and localizing prayers for the dead within the structure of the parish church.

More concrete evidence for the rise of Purgatory in early modern Brittany comes through in the records of parish archives. Through the study of wills and foundation requests

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<sup>239</sup> Tingle, *Purgatory and Piety in Brittany*, 185.

<sup>240</sup> Boschet, *Le Parfait Missionnaire*, 364.

for intercessory masses, Croix and Tingle have shown a marked increase in the demand for intercession among the laity in the seventeenth-century. In 1531 in the Vannes diocese, clergy made up 100% of the founders of intercessory masses; by 1631, the clergy constituted 40% of the founders; and by 1691, they represented less than 10%.<sup>241</sup> This marked fall in the foundations of intercessory masses by clergy shows a clear and increasing interest in such activities by the laity. Interestingly, the foundation of such masses did not become restricted just to the upper classes, but rather permeated the entire society. As Croix has shown, charitable donations by the parishes' wealthier members coupled with a collective pool of peasant resources allowed the poorer people within Breton society to found intercessory masses. Through these methods, people who either did not possess the means to found a mass on their own, or who lacked family to pray for them, could found masses for themselves or their loved ones.<sup>242</sup> Evidence for the access of the peasantry to found an intercessory mass comes through in the story of Lucas Moello. In 1687, M. Moello, a laborer from Cléguer, founded masses for himself, and "his late wife Catherine Baillaud." Despite his lowly economic status, Lucas Moello still found it possible to found four services per year in his own parish church, as well as three in the church of Lanvaudan where his wife had undergone baptism.<sup>243</sup> Thus, increase of intercessory masses founded by the laity in Lower Brittany continued throughout the seventeenth-century, with all social classes able to participate and see to the salvation of the souls of themselves and their dearly departed through masses conducted in the parish church.

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<sup>241</sup> Tingle, *Purgatory and Piety in Brittany*, 99.

<sup>242</sup> Croix, *La Bretagne aux 16e et 17e siècles, Tome II*, 1135.

<sup>243</sup> Tingle, *Purgatory and Piety in Brittany*, 182.

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Throughout the missionary period, c. 1640-1700, the Bretons proved able to negotiate with the missionaries. While it may not have come under conscious consideration, an exchange clearly occurred between the two parties. On the one hand, the Jesuits obtained the souls they wanted through the supposed conversion of the Breton natives. Indeed, greater Breton adherence to some orthodox beliefs, such as Purgatory, saw a marked increase during the missionary period. Despite this increase in some elements of orthodoxy, and the missionaries' declarations of unparalleled successes, the Bretons managed to hold on to the elements of their belief system that defined Breton Catholicism. As seen through the writings of Le Braz, the belief in the Ankou persisted into the nineteenth-century, seemingly unchanged from its pre-missionary formulations; and images of the Ankou continued to be incorporated into the design of churches and ossuaries throughout the early modern period. The belief in the Anaon underwent some serious shifts, but the notion that the dead still dwelled close to earth, and could still indeed contact the living, comes through clearly in Le Braz's writings, in stories such as that of Anna Tanguy. Similarly, the ossuaries became structures in which orthodox beliefs became practiced, but the use of ossuaries nonetheless persisted well into the nineteenth, and in places twentieth, century. These ossuaries also remained central to Breton religious life, as priests and congregations carried out masses for the dead among the bones of their ancestors. Thus, while the Bretons took up some aspects of orthodox belief, they retained the elements that made their belief specifically Breton.

## Conclusion

Despite their best efforts, the Jesuit desire and attempt to alter the cultures of the evangelized met with considerable resistance. The Wendats and Bretons alike proved extremely adept at navigating the new religious landscape the Jesuits attempted to impose. In the face of the existential threats that endangered the culture of both societies, the Wendats and the Bretons integrated enough of the Jesuits' orthodox teachings into their own belief to be considered 'converts' by the missionaries. Through an examination of life and deathways among the Wendat, and the three distinctive features (the Ankou, the Anaon, and the ossuaries) of Breton religious practices, it becomes evident that key aspects of both societies that the Jesuits attacked remained more-or-less intact. While historians of early modern France and colonial America have noted how missionary religious instruction became a process of give and take between the Church and the proselytized population,<sup>244</sup> I have put these two discourses into an Atlantic context. By observing the way two completely disparate cultures interacted with Jesuit missionaries, and incorporated and rejected parts of their teachings, an interesting transnational phenomenon of conversion as an exchange becomes apparent. It is this phenomenon that I have labeled the economy of salvation.

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<sup>244</sup> Luria, *Territories of Grace*, 11. Also, see Greer, *Mohawk Saint*.

## Conclusion

As seventeenth-century European monarchs financed the exploration, conquest, and colonization of the extra-European world, at home they continued to centralize power. In the case of France, and its Valois and Bourbon kings, these processes resulted in a vast colonial empire controlled from Paris and Versailles. As part of this centralizing enterprise, ‘the most Christian kings’ of France sent out large-scale missions to convert the peoples of the kingdom and empire to the true version of Catholicism.

On either side of the French Atlantic, Jesuit missionaries labored for decades, learning the languages and customs of the proselytized in order to better convert these populations. In this study I have explored the ways in which Jesuits working in North America among the Wendat and in France among the Bretons attempted to convert the ‘barbarous’ and ‘ignorant’ en masse. As Europeans spread into North America, and colonists and missionaries ventured into New France, Native American nations became devastated by epidemic disease. For the Wendat, this enormous loss of life and the new geo-politics of the seventeenth-century launched them into years of destructive warfare with the Haudenosaunee. For the Bretons, the coming of the Jesuits and other Catholic missionaries en masse during the seventeenth-century symbolized an attack on their culture, and distinctive form of Catholicism. Rooted in Celtic traditions, Breton culture, and especially religion, looked extremely superstitious to the Jesuits who came to their rocky lands. Looking to eliminate the ‘superstitions’ of Breton Catholicism, the Jesuits began an attack on the religious values of Lower Brittany that had roots in Celtic culture.

During the course of the Jesuit missions to the Wendat and the Bretons, both sides of the missionary equation, evangelizers and evangelized, worked through a system of give and take, here described as the economy of salvation. In this process, the natives (Wendats and Bretons alike) nominally became the type of Christians into which the Jesuits hoped to fashion them, or adopted a few of the orthodox practices the missionaries brought; and in return, the Jesuits collected the souls of the 'saved', keeping the evangelized from suffering the damnation of hell. The aims of the Wendats and Bretons differed, but the process through which they sought these goals was similar.

Through this thesis, I have explored the question of why the cultures of rural peasants and Native Americans looked similar to the European elites who attempted to transform these cultures, and how this view affected the project of one of these elite groups, the Jesuits. Additionally, I have shown the response of the missionized populations, vis-à-vis the traditions they retained. Through an examination of these retained traditions, it becomes possible to see the similar ways seemingly disparate peoples and cultures react to the attempted transformation of their socio-cultural world.

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