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Article abstract

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PETER COOK

Abstract

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term “king” for Native American leaders. By contrast, English sources would continue to employ the vocabulary of kingship for this purpose into the nineteenth century.

Résumé

Dès le moment où Colomb a parlé de rois chez les « Indiens » en 1493, les explorateurs européens se sont imaginé les chefs autochtones comme des rois, et ce durant tout le premier siècle du colonialisme dans les Amériques. Les récits français et anglais du XVI^e siècle, suivant le modèle des premiers comptes rendus espagnols et portugais, ont donné vie à l'existence de monarques autochtones dans toutes les Amériques, de l'Arctique au Brésil, de la Nouvelle-Angleterre à la Californie. Les recueils populaires de récits de voyage n'ont fait qu'incruster le trope dans l'imaginaire européen. L'omniprésence de ces rois dans les premiers écrits français et anglais de l'époque coloniale révèle le cadre conceptuel par lequel les colonisateurs entrevoyaient le Nouveau Monde et le raisonnement derrière les stratégies qu'ils ont échafaudées pour le conquérir. Vers la fin du XVI^e siècle, le point de vue des Anglais et des Français n'était plus le même, ces derniers dédaignant généralement l'emploi du terme « roi » pour décrire les chefs autochtones. À l'opposé, les sources anglaises continuent à faire référence à la royauté en ce sens jusqu'au XIX^e siècle.

“They have a King in every Countrey, and are wonderful obedient unto him: and they doe him honour according unto their maner and fashion.”¹ So wrote an anonymous French author of the 1540s, referring to the Indigenous peoples inhabiting the St. Lawrence River Valley in present-day southern Québec. This frank recognition of Aboriginal sovereigns strikes a discordant note when placed alongside mainstream narratives of Canadian history. The history textbooks say nothing of Indigenous kings and queens; in current political discourse and popular speech, Indigenous leaders, past and present, are “chiefs.” Sovereigns imply, of course, sovereignty, yet today Indigenous sovereignty is a matter of highly charged political debate, not a commonly recognized historical fact. Indeed, as Michael Asch has pointed out, the constitutional ideologies that have shaped Canada since the nineteenth century seem to be premised on

doubtfulness toward, if not outright rejection of, Native sovereignty.² Yet these sixteenth-century Canadian “kings” are no historical oddities. They were among the scores of “kings” that Europeans described in the Americas after 1492. Beginning with Columbus’ first report of kings among the “Indians,”³ European expeditionaries in the Americas regularly perceived Indigenous societies as monarchies. Following in the wake of Spanish and Portuguese accounts, a growing stream of English and French narratives, especially as collected and disseminated in sixteenth-century compendia of travel writing, contributed fresh examples of American kings in regions as different and distant from each other as Baffin Island, the St. Lawrence Valley, New England, Virginia, Florida, Brazil, and Guiana. When viewed in the broader context of Renaissance Europe’s emerging hemispheric grasp of America and its peoples, these American kings belong to a pattern of classification that tells us much about European understandings of and approaches to the “New World.” In Europe, the recognition of Indigenous sovereigns shaped colonial policies and the representation of American societies and cultures in texts and images. On Turtle Island,⁴ Indigenous experiences of the colonizers were shaped by the latter’s conviction that there were kings in the new found lands and by the strategies the newcomers devised around these royal figures. And by the end of the sixteenth century, English and French perceptions of American kings became a kind of litmus test that highlighted significant transformations in the meaning of kingship itself in those countries.

Sixteenth-Century Colonialism in Practice and in Print

Over the course of the sixteenth century ever-increasing numbers of European ships came to frequent the eastern shores of the Americas. As the Atlantic contours of the continent became clearer and as word of the stunning plunder Spain acquired from Mesoamerican and Andean civilizations in the 1520s and 1530s spread in rumour and in print, England and France eagerly turned to the new found lands in hopes of making similar conquests. Exploration was quickly followed by efforts at colonization, in defiance of Spanish and Portuguese claims to exclusive possession of the Americas. But all

such attempts by the English and French failed, even in regions distant from Iberian settlements. By the century's end, Spain remained the dominant European power in the Americas, and the only colonial establishment north of Mexico was a tiny Spanish outpost on the Florida coast.

In spite of these repeated failures to settle, English and French connections with the New World continued to multiply for political, religious, and above all economic reasons. For both England and France, the quest for overseas possessions was bound up with a broader challenge to Spanish power (often in the form of opportunistic predation on Spanish shipping). For Protestant élites in England, France, and the emergent Dutch Republic, this contest quickly acquired a religious dimension. As well, if, after the 1540s, it proved difficult to find complex Indigenous polities ripe for plundering like those of the Aztecs and Incas, there were other commercial advantages to be found in the Americas: the brazil wood trees of the subtropical coastal rainforest of South America, the teeming codfish on the shallow banks off Newfoundland, or the pelts of fur-bearing mammals of subarctic North America. Finally, the original motive for European westward voyages across the Atlantic, an ocean route to Asia, only gained in potency as the century wore on. For all these reasons, the sixteenth century was, for England and France, one of failed colonies but steadily increasing involvement in the Americas.⁵

One consequence of this involvement was a growing stream of written reports by English and French expeditionaries on the Americas and its peoples. Many found their way into print, others circulated privately in closed circles, and no doubt a significant number have simply not survived. Modern scholarly inventories of extant printed works testify to the accelerating pace of production as printers worked to meet a perceived demand for travel narratives. In the 1530s and 1540s, printers in the French cities of Paris, Rouen, and Lyon produced on average about five books a year on the Americas; by the end of the century, that number had increased more than threefold.⁶

Works stemming from English and French expeditions and presses joined the stream of writing emanating from Italy, Spain, and

Portugal. This textual current is important because it provides a context for understanding the perspectives of the English and French colonizers who, in the first decades of the seventeenth century, would finally establish permanent settlement colonies in the Americas. At Jamestown in 1607, at Québec in 1608, in New England in 1620, and in various Caribbean Islands in the years that followed, England and France at last won lasting toeholds in the Americas. In addition to geographical and ethnographic knowledge about the Americas passed by word of mouth amongst explorers, merchants, sailors, and promoters, the élites who organized and led these expeditions were nourished by the extant literature on the New World. Publications emanating from the failed efforts of the sixteenth century provided readers with notions about Indigenous sociopolitical organization, notions that would prove key to the implementation of colonial designs. Colonialism always implies control, and while armchair travellers might fantasize about the subjugation of Indigenous peoples through some combination of awe or force,⁷ in practice expeditionaries on the ground could achieve neither, and instead were obliged to form partnerships of varying kinds with Indigenous peoples. In doing so, they often relied upon local knowledge, but also upon the body of travel writing, which arguably provided the context into which most local knowledge was received.

And what did sixteenth-century travel writing reveal about Indigenous sociopolitical organization? Modern scholarship has emphasized its tendency to portray Indigenous peoples as barbarians lacking in civility. Such notions fit well with the broad English and French assessment of American peoples as “savages,” a term whose etymological origins suggested a primitive forest-dweller at the threshold between human and non-human animals.⁸ In the worlds of English- and French-language geographical literature, such conceptions enjoyed a very long life, lasting well into the last century.

Far less attention has been paid to the equally widespread notion that American polities were monarchies headed by kings (and sometimes queens). This motif runs through European travel writing on the Americas, from the late 1400s to the dawn of the nineteenth century.⁹ It is a conceptualization of Native American-ness that did not survive the scientific and cultural-evolutionist racism of the nine-

teenth century, which may explain why it sounds so unfamiliar to us today. Just as many nineteenth-century Euroamericans found it impossible to believe that the ancestors of the American Indians had built the thousands of ancient earthwork mounds scattered across eastern North America, so too did they consider Indigenous peoples incapable of such an advanced institution as kingship.¹⁰ Indeed, into the twentieth century, scholarly translations of early modern works regularly effaced Indigenous kings from the record by translating “king” or “lord” as “chief” or “headman.”¹¹ But in the sixteenth century, Native American kings were everywhere. English and French observers saw them in Brazil, Canada, Florida, Guiana, and Virginia. This classification was not contested: some observers elected to use a different vocabulary to describe Indigenous political organization or even explicitly rejected the notion that Indigenous leaders were kings. But the dominant impression from the broad corpus of English and French writing of the sixteenth century is that American sovereigns abounded.

It is not my intention to argue that the Indigenous leaders discussed in any of these texts were in fact kings — that is, to insist that the modern anthropologically-defined conception of kingship as a cross-cultural institution is an accurate way of describing the political arrangements of American peoples encountered by the Renaissance explorers. (Modern anthropological writing on sixteenth-century Indigenous peoples of Virginia, Florida, and South America generally deploys the concept of the chiefdom.) But nor is it my intention to argue that the “kings” of the sixteenth-century travel narratives are simply the “chiefs” of modern anthropology. The categorization of Indigenous leaders as kings is a phenomenon that needs to be understood on its own terms, as an aspect of the European view of the Americas and as the context in which to understand colonial policies of the period and the responses of Indigenous peoples to them.

Kings and Queens on Paper

Although English and French voyages to the Americas began shortly after the Columbus expedition of 1492, the earliest printed infor-

mation about the Americas originated from Spanish and Portuguese sources that printers compiled for the benefit of readers. Columbus' letter of 1493, published in 17 editions before the century was out (including three at Paris), described the polygamous "princes or kings" of Hispana and Juana (Hispaniola and Cuba), one of whom welcomed the explorer as his "brother."¹² Mathurin de Redouer's *Le nouveau monde* (1516), a compilation of narratives relating to Africa, India, and the Americas, featured kings on the west coast of Africa and in the Caribbean who received the Europeans graciously.¹³ Another such compilation, a French translation of Pietro Martire d'Anghiera's well-known *De orbe novo* (originally published in 1516), similarly noted kings throughout the newly found islands in the west, despite the absence of other signs of civility such as weights, measures, laws, judges, and books.¹⁴ Printed accounts of the Spanish conquests of Mexico and Peru, some of which appeared in English- and French-language compilations of the 1530s, 1540s, and 1550s, referred to populous, wealthy, and highly stratified Indigenous societies whose leaders were immediately recognized as kings. Indeed, the illegitimate exercise of kingship became, in many of these accounts, the pretext that would justify violent conquest. The tyrannical Aztec king Montezuma initially accepts the Spanish king Charles V as his suzerain but then schemes against him, thus obliging the Spanish to work for the overthrow of such a disloyal vassal.¹⁵ Atabalipa, the king of Peru whose "speech was full of gravity and royal majesty," was also a despicable usurper who had seized the throne from his own older brother, whom he further plotted to eliminate. In capturing and executing Atabalipa, subsequently installing his deposed older brother as king, the Spanish protagonists of the tale could be viewed as restoring moral order to the Inca polity.¹⁶ By the end of the sixteenth century, the Jesuit José de Acosta's influential *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1590) articulated the orthodox Spanish view of Indigenous governance. Most Indigenous peoples, he asserted, did not have kings because barbarous kings were inherently tyrannical. "For this occasion many nations of the Indies have not indured any Kings or absolute and sovereign Lords, but live in comminalities [sic], creating and appointing Captains and Princes for certaine occasions onely The greatest part of this new world

(where there are no settled kingdoms, nor established commonweales, neither princes nor succeeding kings) they governe themselves in this manner, although there be some Lordes and principall men raised above the common sort.” In some even more barbarous places, there were no real leaders at all; “all commaund and governe in common.” Acosta acknowledged that other non-European societies were governed by kings — Siam and China, notably — but in the “West Indies” or Americas, only two such kingdoms had existed: the Aztecs in Mexico and the Incas in Peru. “It is most certaine,” he added, “that these two Kingdomes have much exceeded all the Indian Provinces discovered in this new world, as well in good order and government as in wealth.” In Brazil and Florida, by contrast, there were no kings.¹⁷ Many Spanish sources of the period used the term *cacique*, borrowed from Arawak-speaking peoples in the circum-Caribbean area, to refer to the kinds of Indigenous leaders that Acosta saw as typical of Indigenous societies (but that Columbus had initially called kings). For Acosta, a *cacique* was a “chiefe Lord” and throughout New Spain, the term — along with the feminine form, *cacica* — was used widely to denote the local Native hereditary rulers who maintained much of their status in the first few generations after the Spanish conquest.¹⁸ In the Spanish view, a century after Columbus, American kingship had become a relic of the past, swept away with the fall of the Aztec and Incas polities. In sixteenth-century English and French travel writing, however, American kings remained very much in evidence.

Against the backdrop of mostly Spanish accounts, narratives of French and, later, English explorations and colonizing efforts began to appear. By the middle decades of the century, published reports of French voyages to Brazil and North America confirmed for readers the existence of kings in both these lands. A compilation of travel writing by Giovanni Battista Ramusio included narratives of expeditions sponsored by François I from which readers learned of American kings at Refugio (present-day Naragansett Bay) and Hochelaga (present-day Montreal Island).¹⁹ The French cosmographer André Thevet incorporated the Hochelagan king into his account of French America alongside descriptions of the “great *Morbicha ousaaoub*, that is to say, kings” of Brazil.²⁰ In 1550 a Brazilian *Morbicha* famously

made an appearance at Rouen in one of the elaborate tableaux vivants prepared for Henri II's royal entry into that city and was immortalized in published descriptions that circulated soon after the event.²¹ The French effort to colonize Florida in the 1560s led to a small explosion of printed works, among them René Laudonnière's account of the debacle that led to the colony's dissolution and destruction by a Spanish force in 1565. Its pages pullulate with dozens of Native kings (and queens) with whom the French deal, scheme, and fight.²² A bevy of helpful Floridian monarchs (identified in a marginal heading as "eight savage kings") also appeared in the published narrative of a French retaliatory expedition of 1567.²³

Although they came later to printing works about, and planting colonies in, the New World than did the French, the English quickly caught up in both fields of endeavour. In the 1550s Richard Eden's translations of Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia* and Peter Martyr's *Decades* introduced English readers to the kings of the Caribbean and Mexican regions colonized by Spain,²⁴ and in the following decade Thomas Hacket produced a translation of Thevet's work with its kings in Brazil ("France antarctique") and Canada.²⁵ In the 1570s, narratives of Martin Frobisher's three expeditions to the Arctic appeared in print shortly after the voyages themselves. One of these, an eyewitness account of the second voyage of 1577 by Dionyse Settle, had Frobisher communicating in sign language with the Inuit of Frobisher Bay (in present-day Nunavut) about their king, Cacough, who was said to be carried around on men's shoulders. In the 1580s the Oxford clergyman Richard Hakluyt emerged as the foremost English promoter of "western planting" through the collection, translation, and publication of travel writing relating to the Americas and elsewhere. In his compilations, foreign-language reports appeared in translation alongside recent narratives of English voyages to the Arctic, Virginia (the northern portion of which included present-day New England), Guiana, and other places.²⁶ Each of these regions yielded American kings, and in Virginia and Guiana, especially, their friendship appeared crucial to colonial endeavours.²⁷

Hakluyt's zeal for putting travel narratives into print — the three-volume second edition of his *Principal Navigations* runs to

more than a thousand pages — reflected a broader intellectual and cultural shift in the way geographical information about newly discovered lands and peoples was presented to European readers. Over the course of the sixteenth century, multivolume compendia such as Giovanni Battista Ramusio's *Navigazioni et viaggi* (*Navigations and Voyages*, three volumes published between 1550 and 1559), Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (first published in 1589 with an expanded second edition in 1598–1600), and the De Bry firm's "America" or *India Occidentalis* series (13 volumes published between 1590 and 1634), gradually displaced the approach of traditional cosmographers such as Thevet. As a publishing phenomenon, multivolume collections of travel accounts flourished in the century between 1550 and 1650. Although there were relatively few collections in absolute terms — about ten in the two centuries from 1500 to 1700 — each collection was by its nature the result of a costly and carefully planned effort. The compilers often reprinted previously published material but did so in a manner that enhanced the original, such as by adding illustrations or providing a text in translation. As an intellectual activity, the compilation of disparate travel accounts reflected a broader trend toward an encyclopaedic approach to knowledge and paralleled the fashion of creating cabinets of curiosities. The compendia were implicitly in competition with more traditional cosmographical literature. Where a cosmography purported to present a grand synthesis of geographical knowledge by a single author, a compilation emphasized the classification and ordering of disparate texts by different authors. The rapid rate of new discoveries inclined Renaissance skeptics to look askance at the claims of a cosmographer such as Thevet who claimed to have "diligently described" every "country, province, sea, coast, beach, cape, gulf, port, river, mountain or island" in the world in his *Cosmographie universelle* (1575).²⁸ Like observers of cabinets of curiosity, the readers of the compendia were invited to make connections between the disparate and decontextualized objects in the collection and to creatively make associations between phenomena separated in time and space. Their presumed membership in an intellectual and cultural élite was central to the medium.²⁹ Where a cosmography attempted to lay out the shape of the world in a manner that anyone could follow, a com-

pendium implicitly relied on the reader's intelligence, culture, and education to make sense of the collection of narratives. Cosmographical literature declined precipitously in the last half of the century, yielding to the compendia as a means of knowing the world. And the publishers of compendia satisfied public curiosity about the non-European world by focusing their attention on voyages to the Americas, Africa, and Asia.

All three of the compendia referred to above contain references to Indigenous American kings, not only in the early Spanish accounts of the Caribbean, Mexico, and Peru, but in Dutch, English, French, and German accounts relating to other parts of the Americas. The earliest of the collections, Ramusio's *Navigations and Voyages*, had its third volume (published in 1556) devoted to the New World. The first 19 narratives are from Spanish authors, many relating to Mexico and the Aztec king, Montezuma. In a section apart entitled "Of New France" ("Della Nova Francia"), Ramusio included four French narratives of voyages to what are now eastern Canada and the United States mentioning the aforementioned kings in Refugio and Hochelaga. The monumental collection of voyages (the *Grand Voyages*) published by the De Bry firm was divided into two series: one, *India Occidentalis*, consisted of 13 volumes devoted to the Americas,³⁰ while the other, *India Orientalis*, consisted of 12 volumes devoted to Africa, Asia, and the Pacific.³¹ The volumes of the *India Occidentalis* series contained in all more than 30 major narratives drawn from English, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Latin, and Spanish sources in addition to a number of shorter, often drastically abbreviated, reports. Six of the 13 America volumes provided readers with evidence of Indigenous kings. Finally, the third and last of the volumes of Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (1600) was devoted entirely to the New World. Its pages contain references to nearly 80 named Indigenous kings as well as references to at least a dozen named kingdoms in Canada, Virginia, Florida, Brazil, and Guiana.³²

Despite the differences in their approach, cosmographers and compilers alike played a subtle but certain role in cementing and disseminating the image of Indigenous American kings. First, they juxtaposed American kings with non-European kings elsewhere in the world, in kingdoms whose names would have been, to European

readers, as unfamiliar as Florida or Saguenay. If there were kings in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, then why not in America as well? The *Principal Navigations* included numerous references to famous kings of Antiquity and kings of ancient Britain (including Arthur): “savage” kings thus appeared alongside kings from cultures whose civility was not doubted. This juxtaposition may well have normalized exotic kingship and served to neutralize the effect of those narratives that eschewed the vocabulary of kingship in describing Native American leaders. In the third volume of the De Bry firm’s *India Occidentalis* series, a reader finds two accounts of the people of Brazil: Jean de Léry’s *History of a Voyage to Brazil* and Hans Staden’s *True History and Description of a Country Populated by a Wild, Naked, and Savage Man-munching People, Situated in the New World, America*.³³ In the former, Léry informs us flatly that “there are among them no kings or princes, and as a consequence each is as great a lord as the next one.”³⁴ In the latter, Staden introduces us, first, to the Brazilian king who captures him (but remains unnamed), and later to another, greater, king named Konyan Bebe, “the principal sovereign of the whole land.”³⁵ The compiler leaves the discrepancy unexplained, but overall Léry’s rejection of Brazilian kingship strikes a minor note in a collection that mentions exotic kings in a variety of locales.

A second manner in which cosmographies and compendia cemented the image of American kings was through the addition of marginal notes, illustrations, and captions clarifying or indeed expanding on aspects of the original narratives. To uncover such features, it is of course necessary to compare the original printed or manuscript versions of the travel accounts with the version published in a particular collection. The narratives relating to Jacques Cartier’s three voyages to Canada in 1534, 1535–36, and 1541–42 provide an example of this. Manuscript versions of several of these survive. Following a published account of the second voyage in 1545,³⁶ accounts of the first two voyages appeared in Italian translation in Ramusio’s *Navigations and Voyages* in 1556, and accounts of all three voyages appeared in English in Hakluyt’s *Principal Navigations*. Thevet also incorporated information from these narratives in his published writing.

In Ramusio, the account of Cartier's first voyage of 1534 immediately follows the report of an earlier French voyage of 1524, in which the author, Giovanni da Verrazano, recounts his meeting with two kings in what was probably Narragansett Bay in the present-day state of Rhode Island, but which to European readers was already conceptualized as New France. The first Cartier narrative, however, consistently refers to the Native leaders in the lands surrounding the Gulf of St. Lawrence — still New France — as captains (*capitaines*), not kings. In the second Cartier narrative, the French return to the same region, this time pushing up the St. Lawrence River to reach the homeland of a nation they had encountered on the coast the previous year. The community's leader, a captain in 1534, now becomes a lord (*seigneur*), or *agouhanna* in the local language. Somewhat contradictorily, the region he rules is described in an appended wordlist as a kingdom.³⁷ Still, a lord is not a king.³⁸ Moving yet further upriver, against the wishes of Lord Donnacona, the French reach another village called Hochelaga. Here, the French are received joyously and led to the centre of the palisaded town, where nine or ten men carried in an older man on a deerskin, making gestures to indicate that he was the "king and lord of the country whom in their language they call *agouhanna*."³⁹ Tellingly, the man wears "for a crown" a band of dyed porcupine quills.⁴⁰ After this brief mention, however, kings disappear from the text, and when the French return downriver, they are once again in a land ruled by lords. The text of the second voyage thus presents some ambiguity: the Indigenous leaders, or *agouhannas*, of the region rule provinces and kingdoms and at least one seemed to merit the title of king, yet Indigenous kingship is far less in evidence here than in other sixteenth-century accounts. But here Ramusio's additions serve to entrench the notion of Indigenous kingship. In publishing the Cartier narrative, Ramusio commissioned a series of maps from the cartographer Giacomo Gastaldi, which appeared as engravings in the collection. One such map was of Hochelaga, the town where Cartier had been received by the "king and lord of the country." The cartouche appearing on the right hand side identifies various buildings in the town, including "D. the house of the King Agouhana" and "E. the court of the house of the king."⁴¹ Ambiguity is swept aside: Hochelaga's ruler is a king,

and here is his court. Where Ramusio's collection was an enormous publishing success of the sixteenth century, going through several editions in the half-century that followed, the 1545 French-language edition of Cartier's second voyage, published at Paris under the title *Brief recit*, had far less impact: today, only three copies are known to exist, a number which suggests a small run and no re-printings. Gastaldi's engraving, as well as the placement of the Cartier narratives amidst accounts of Caribbean and Mexican kings, may well have resolved whatever ambiguity the text itself contained regarding the status of Indigenous leaders in New France. Thevet's treatment of the Cartier material in his 1558 description of French America demonstrates the same kind of interpolation. He follows the source material in calling Donnacona the lord of Stadacona, but a marginal heading states explicitly that he is the king of Canada.⁴²

Hakluyt's handling of the Cartier narratives similarly produced certainty about kings from sources rife with ambiguity. His *Principal Navigations* included the first two Cartier narratives previously published by Ramusio but added two additional ones: the first, an account of Cartier's third voyage of 1541, and the second, an account of a related colonizing expedition that followed in 1542.⁴³ These narratives leave no doubt as to the fact that there were kings in Canada. Indeed, they go further by recapitulating the events of the previous voyages but this time retrospectively styling Donnacona (the *agouhanna* of 1535, now deceased) as a king.⁴⁴ His successor greets the returning French warmly, and this time he is noted as wearing a piece of tanned leather edged with white shell beads "which was upon his head in stead of a crowne."⁴⁵ The brief account of the colonizing effort of 1542–43 said little about actual encounters, simply noting that "they have a king in every Countrey, and are wonderfull obedient unto him; and they doe him honour according unto their maner and fashion."⁴⁶ Other documents in Hakluyt's collection also retrospectively recognized the captains and lords of the earlier narratives as monarchs, turning Donnacona the lord into Donnacona the king. Thus, for example, when author Christopher Carleill summarized the lessons to be learned from Cartier's second voyage, he described with some distaste the French captain's kidnapping of this "poore king of the Countrey, ... traiterously caryed away

into France.”⁴⁷ Carleill didn’t actually read “king” anywhere in the original account, but, like Gastaldi, he inferred Donnacona’s status from the available evidence. Hakluyt himself, in his famous “Discourse on Western Planting” presented to Elizabeth I in 1584, mentioned Donnacona in passing as the “Kinge of Canada.”⁴⁸

Where a cosmographer such as Thevet might remain generally consistent in portraying Indigenous leaders as kings, the compilers typically allowed their sources to speak for themselves. Nevertheless, the impact of accounts that were ambiguous about the existence of Indigenous kings, or that explicitly rejected the vocabulary of monarchy, was muted in the compendia that, in ways both subtle and certain, contributed to cement the image of American kings in the last half of the sixteenth century.

The Meanings of Indigenous Kingship

“What did it mean to call an Indian leader a king or queen?” asked Karen Kupperman in *Indians and English: Facing Off in Early America*.⁴⁹ Analyzing English descriptions of Native leaders (variously called emperors, kings, *sachems*, or *werowances*) in the earliest texts of English colonization in New England and Virginia, Kupperman demonstrated their congruence with early modern English conceptions of kingship and nobility. Like the ideal prince, these leaders conveyed a sense of majesty, dignity, and natural virtue that marked them off from their subjects. They conducted “royal” tours of their realms, as did the peripatetic monarchs of Renaissance England and France; they governed with the advice of councils; and they passed the mantle of leadership to their successors in an orderly fashion. In Kupperman’s view, it made sense for the English to describe these rulers as kings.

These outward, visible signs of kingship did not tell the whole story, for monarchy was far more than just a style of government.⁵⁰ Kingship was, to borrow a concept from American cultural anthropology, a key symbol in early modern European culture. Key symbols, according to Sherry Ortner, have a dual function: they act as root metaphors that summarize complex realities and, at the same time, provide people with key scenarios or strategies in responding to

those realities.⁵¹ Kingship summarized the institutional complexity of the early modern state: within the unitary ‘body politic’ of the king were collapsed the significant disparities in law, custom, language, culture, religion, household organization, and modes of local and regional government that characterized England and France, each a patchwork of formerly distinct polities brought unevenly under the aegis of a single ruler. Whereas the Germanic kings of late Antiquity and early Middle Ages had been kings of peoples — King of the Franks, for example — by the thirteenth century monarchy had become defined territorially as states expanded through conquest and inheritance.⁵² The monarch provided a dynamic, personal focus for national commitment and feeling among communities who might otherwise have little in common. At the same time, the symbol “king” also functioned as a root metaphor in that it served to elaborate or explain complex realities. Perhaps the most striking instance of this was the anthropomorphic extension of monarchy to non-human animal societies—the beehive, the lion pride — and a similar extension of the principle to marginal groups in human society — the king of thieves or of beggars. The relation between the king and his subjects was understood to be homologous with the relations between God and humanity, men and women, fathers and children, and the mind and the body. Monarchy was imagined to be an immanent principle of the natural world: as explained by Saint Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, “every natural governance is governance by one. In the multitude of bodily members there is one which is the principal mover, namely, the heart; and among the powers of the soul one power presides as chief, namely, the reason. Among bees there is one king bee and in the whole universe there is One God, Maker and Ruler of all things.”⁵³

Early modern European kings were not sacred or divine, but they did possess a sacral or quasi-sacerdotal character.⁵⁴ Kings were understood to be the “Lord’s Anointed” and royal unction was a key part of the consecration ceremonies. French kings were anointed with oil brought down from heaven by a dove just in time for the baptism of the pagan Frank Clovis in the early sixth century; despite the passage of centuries, the Holy Ampulla containing the substance miraculously never needed refilling. As historian Marc Bloch mem-

orably demonstrated, the sacral aspect of English and French kingship found its most spectacular expression in the ritual touching for scrofula — skin ailments characterized by swellings in the neck — whereby the monarch touched hundreds or even thousands of sufferers several times each year on major religious holidays.⁵⁵ Only the rightful king, it was believed, had the ability to heal in this manner.⁵⁶ In a juristic formulation made famous by historian Ernst Kantorowicz, monarchs of England and France had two bodies: a natural body that aged and died, and an undying, perpetual mystical body or *corpus mysticum* that was the body politic itself.⁵⁷ In short, monarchy was everywhere, written into the fabric of the universe by God and given human form in anointed kings and queens of royal blood who demonstrated the quasi-miraculous power to heal and whose mystical body extended outward to encompass the entire realm.

In light of the linguistic and cultural barriers that separated them, sixteenth-century English and French expeditionaries can have had little sense of how the Indigenous peoples of the Americas saw their own leaders and whether these notions jibed with European meanings of kingship. In classifying these individuals as kings, the colonizers were not relying on emic or “insider” understandings of Indigenous governance, but on etic or “outsider” assumptions about kingship. As we have seen, not every Indigenous leader was recognized as a king. Yet many were; what explains the widespread nature of this classification?

Some scholars have suggested that early European observers saw Native American kings because, in effect, they had few other means of understanding the unfamiliar political arrangements of Indigenous societies. In an article devoted to popular late-medieval images of kingship, the French cultural historian Roger Chartier notes the potency and ubiquity of monarchical metaphors in French culture and makes this argument: “[the] monarchical principle remained a vital conceptual framework allowing one to understand, and thus to assimilate within the universe of the already-known, new realities. The travel narratives reveal the same procedure; the Native societies encountered [in the Americas] could not be conceived of except through the criteria that organized Western society.”⁵⁸ This is

more or less the same hypothesis put forward by Nancy Shoemaker in an essay examining the encounter of European and Native American conceptions of political authority in colonial North America. According to Shoemaker, "In trying to figure out whether to call Indian leaders kings or chiefs, European colonists as diverse as Jesuit priests and Scottish traders used absolute monarchy as their frame of reference for understanding Indian systems of governance. Indian nations were either absolute monarchies, or they were not absolute monarchies. The criterion they applied most often was absolute power." Thus, Shoemaker argues, in early seventeenth-century Virginia, John Smith viewed Powhatan as a great king and emperor because other leaders showed him deference and villages sent him tribute: "not only as a king but as half a god they esteeme him," wrote Smith. Shoemaker asserts that few other Native leaders earned the title, largely because the nature of leadership in most Indigenous societies east of the Mississippi was so diffuse (an exception being perhaps the Natchez). Writes Shoemaker: "All of the other Indian nations in eastern North America seemed the antithesis of absolute monarchy because they lacked commanding kings and obedient subjects."⁵⁹

Although persuasive, these perspectives do not adequately explain the phenomenon of American kings in the sixteenth-century sources outlined above. While Chartier usefully reminds us of the way in which kingship functioned as a key symbol in early modern European cultures, it is important to remember that alternatives to the monarchical model existed as well. From examples of local self-government such as peasant communes, to more geographically distant ones such as the republic of Venice and the democratic governments of some Swiss cantons, and indeed to historically remote examples such as the republics and democracies of Antiquity, English and French travel writers were certainly aware of the existence of non-monarchical forms of governance that might have been used to conceptualize the Indigenous societies they encountered in the Americas.⁶⁰ English and French observers thus had other options available when classifying Indigenous leaders, some of which we have already seen in our discussion of the compendia. At times these differences were glaring. In the 1570s André Thevet and Jean de Léry

feuded in print over the existence of Tupinambá monarchs in Brazil. Thevet wrote of august Quoniambec, the scepter-bearing king whose abode was a palace; Léry countered with images of naked men squatting in huts, clutching war clubs.⁶¹ Though only 14 years separated the expeditions that inspired two English reports on Guiana, the kings who populate Walter Raleigh's *Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana* (1596) become, in Robert Harcourt's *A Relation of a Voyage to Guiana* (1613), "chiefe lords," "captaines," and "principalls."⁶²

As for Shoemaker's suggestion that European observers used absolute power as a barometer to gauge whether Indigenous leaders were kings or not: it is difficult to conceive of there having been any agreement among Europeans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as to what constituted monarchy, let alone anything called absolute monarchy. Despite being anticipated by early modern thinkers such as French jurist Jean Bodin, the concept itself is an invention of historians, and its meaning remains hotly disputed, particularly among scholars of early modern France. As James Collins remarked recently, "few historians today believe that there was anything very 'absolute' about what was once reflexively called the absolute monarchy."⁶³ Given that the absolute power of monarchs was subject of continuous dispute and, in many ways, a matter of perception to contemporaries, how could it have served as a stable category by which Europeans judged Native American societies? Moreover, those early modern observers who discerned kings among the Inuit, as Settle did, or among the Crees of northern Canada — small-scale societies in which leadership was highly diffuse — can hardly have been using absolute power as a key criterion for such classifications.⁶⁴

American kingship, where it appears in travel writing, was not simply the result of Europeans translating an obvious ethnographic reality into the political vocabulary most familiar to them. Other factors seem to be at work. Political calculation, for one, certainly seems to underpin some uses of the trope. The French literary scholar Frank Lestringant has discerned such a purpose in the descriptions of a Brazilian king by the sixteenth-century French cosmographer André Thevet. As he points out, the existence of a Brazilian king

made it easier for Europeans to imagine the extension of empire. “The Indian monarchy,” writes Lestringant, “represents the myth indispensable for the establishment of alliances with the new peoples and further for the installation of jurisdiction over their territories. The isolation of a unique figure which marvelously realizes the monarchic principle transposed into Indian chieftainship considerably simplifies the transactions because the key to domination rests in a single individual, easy to convert and to corrupt.”⁶⁵ Like Topiawari and other the kings of Guiana who, Raleigh informs us, agreed to subject themselves to Elizabeth I, “the great cacique of the north,” or like the Virginian emperor Powhatan who was crowned as a vassal of James I of England in the early 1600s,⁶⁶ the American kings in the accounts written by the prolific Thevet made it possible for his readers to envision the incorporation of distant lands into a transatlantic empire through the familiar procedure of vassalage. Lesser American kings would become the vassals of greater European monarchs.

The kings of sixteenth-century America — as represented in English and French travel writing, and especially in the compendia of the latter half of the period — were the product of a combination of factors: deep cultural dispositions, political calculations, and practical necessity. Monarchy was the preeminent political institution of early modern Europe as well as a compelling metaphor for both the divine and natural order of things; it was perhaps only natural that Europeans would attempt to understand the unfamiliar ways of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas through such a lens. At the same time, the classification of Indigenous leaders as kings had compelling political advantages: kings of the New World could, through effective persuasion, become dependents of European kings who coveted their lands. For readers of Thevet and Raleigh, such political solutions, even if merely hypothetical, were appealing alternatives to the kind of bloody — not to mention expensive — conquests many English and French saw as characteristic of Spanish colonialism. It would be easier to subvert a single king than to subjugate an entire nation. As Kupperman has pointed out, fantasies of conquest were of no use to colonists trying to settle in Virginia and New England around the turn of the century: these settlers wrote of Indigenous kings because the term usefully reflected the real power local Indigenous leaders had

to influence their people and, through them, to shape the fate of vulnerable English settlements. It was, in short, a political necessity. Facing powerful Indigenous polities whose leaders stood out in obvious ways, the colonists were constrained to acknowledge their authority and influence. Although Kupperman concedes that the colonists often had difficulty understanding the idiosyncratic aspects of Native sociopolitical organization and translating these realities with the vocabulary of kingship, on the whole she views the colonists' use of this terminology as a pragmatic response that was appropriate to the real complexity of these polities.⁶⁷

As these reflections suggest, the recognition of Indigenous sovereigns by English and French writers did not necessarily imply great respect for Indigenous sovereignty itself. As in the cutthroat dynastic rivalry at European courts, unwary sovereigns could become the pawns and even the victims of powerful schemers. The French commandant at the short-lived colony in Florida was advised by his men to make an alliance with the king most likely to further their goal of finding gold in the interior, even if this meant alienating other princes. "The Spanish," they reminded him, "when they were making their conquests, always allied themselves with one king, in order to bring down another." The French later kidnapped their ally King Outina in order to extract a ransom of maize from his subjects, a strategy that failed when the latter simply elected another leader.⁶⁸ American kings were resources to be used to further the goals of colonization. The travel writers do not imply that they were the equals of European monarchs or that they possessed the divine sanction and sacerdotal qualities that characterized the kings and queens of England and France.

What Indigenous peoples thought of the notions of kingship that English and French colonizers tried to convey to them is difficult to ascertain and remains the subject for another inquiry.⁶⁹ It is probable that they sought their own equivalencies for European rulers. Raleigh, for example, tells us that the people of the Orinoco River Valley viewed his queen as "*Ezrebeta Cassipuna Aquerewana*, which is as much as Elizabeth, the great princesse or greatest commander." He also notes in passing that the leaders he called kings actually referred to themselves as "Capitaines, because they perceive

that the chiefest of every [European] ship is called by that name.”⁷⁰ Elizabeth I was but a name, whereas the obvious authority of English, French, and Spanish ship captains was a more immediately useful model for impressing their status upon newcomers.

The American kings of the sixteenth century were the inventions of European writers. At times unconscious, at others deliberate, occasionally ambiguous, but always meaningful, the presence of Indigenous monarchs in the travel writing of the period had real consequences for the colonizers of the seventeenth century. For the latter, monarchies were magnets. In 1607, Jamestown was founded in the very location where, on the basis of previous explorations, the English had every reason to believe a powerful Indigenous kingdom existed. Almost anyone would have been able to garner this information from the sixteenth-century compilations collected and published by Hakluyt: the choice of location was evidently deliberate.⁷¹ Further north, in the St. Lawrence River Valley, French colonizers established in 1608 a trading post and settlement colony in the midst of Cartier’s Kingdom of Canada. That kingdom, however, no longer existed: at some point in the last half of the sixteenth century, the villages of Donnacona’s generation had been abandoned and their inhabitants scattered across the Northeast.⁷² In their place were now bands of Algonquian-speaking hunters who quickly became suppliers of furs for Norman, Breton, Basque, Dutch, and English traders. As I have argued elsewhere, these trading relationships were articulated and maintained through the use of Indigenous protocols and metaphors of brotherhood; this was an alliance of kin, not of kings. This new demographic and economic reality, perhaps along with a heightened sensitivity to the meaning of kinship itself born of the polemical debates and political violence that flourished during the French Wars of Religion (1562–1598), seems to have prompted a shift in French classifications of Native leaders.⁷³ The parting of ways between English and French observers was signaled as early as the 1580s. When Hakluyt was serving as assistant to the English ambassador to France in 1583, he travelled to Rouen to interview the merchant Étienne Bellenger about the latter’s recent voyage to eastern North America. Hakluyt’s manuscript summary of Bellenger’s account, brought to light by David B. Quinn in 1962,

relates the French ship's arrival at "Cape Bryton" in the spring of 1583. The Indigenous peoples — presumably the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet of present-day Nova Scotia — who greeted and traded with Bellenger are described as being "of verie good disposition and stature of Bodie," wearing few clothes, and generally "gentle and tractable," though some appeared to him "more cruell and subtile of norture."⁷⁴ There was no mention of leaders at all, let alone kings. When Hakluyt incorporated a few paragraphs of what he had learned from Bellenger in his "Discourse of Western Planting," he juxtaposed Bellenger's with other French accounts such as Cartier's and, as noted above, referred pointedly to the long-dead King of Canada, Donnacona. Twenty years later, the lawyer Marc Lescarbot, who spent 1606–1607 at a French colony in present-day Nova Scotia among the Mi'kmaq, followed the example set by Bellenger and studiously avoided referring to Indigenous leaders as kings; they were, instead, "capitaines." Lescarbot's *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* (1609) was in many ways a new compendia of travel writing, for the author cribbed passages from many previous narratives by French expeditionaries to the Americas. The sixteenth-century chroniclers, noted Lescarbot, called Indigenous leaders kings, but he, Lescarbot, preferred to call them *capitaines*.⁷⁵ Meanwhile, hundreds of miles to the south, the English colonists on the western shores of Chesapeake Bay were struggling in their relations with Powhatan, the man John Smith would describe in his own account as a great king and emperor. For yet another two centuries, English observers would continue to view Indigenous leaders as kings.⁷⁶

Acknowledging the deep impress that key symbols such as "king" had for early modern Europeans can help elucidate some of the implicit strategies of colonization efforts and, by extension, the hidden cultural logics that shaped colonial encounters in the Americas. Throughout the sixteenth century, English and French expeditionaries routinely recognized kings in the American lands they visited. Early Spanish accounts had encouraged this classification; firsthand observation would confirm it, and compilations of travel writing would spread the image far and wide. On the basis of this classification, the colonizers devised strategies that focused narrowly on establishing firm alliances with the individuals they

perceived as sovereigns, such as Donnacona in Canada, Quoniambec in Brazil, Outina in Florida, Topiawari in Guiana, or Powhatan in Virginia. The colonizers would seek to manipulate those individuals and their successors to serve imperial ends. By putting American kings at the centre of their efforts, they were blinded to alternative modes of diplomacy and interaction. There were many reasons that English and French colonizing ventures of the sixteenth century failed; misrecognizing the nature of Indigenous politics was doubtless only one of them. Such misunderstanding was, of course, to be expected in encounters between people from radically different cultures — but today, several centuries removed, we can better appreciate the precise nature of those encounters when we reflect that for the English and French of the 1600s, unlike many in Canada today, Indigenous sovereignty was a self-evident fact.

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- 1 "The Voyage of John Francis de la Roche, knight, Lord of Roberval, to the Countries of Canada, Saguenai, and Hochelaga," in *The Voyages of Jacques Cartier*, ed. Ramsay Cook (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 112. The French original of this narrative is no longer extant; this English translation first appeared in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation*, 3 vols. (London, 1598–1600), 3: 240–242.
- 2 Michael Asch, "Aboriginal Self-Government and the Construction of Canadian Constitutional Identity," *Alberta Law Review* 30, no. 2 (1992), 465–491. See also Thomas F. Isaac, *Aboriginal Law: Commentary and Analysis*, 4th ed. (Saskatoon: Purich, 2012), 50–51.
- 3 In the letter he wrote to the Spanish treasurer during his return from the Caribbean in early 1493. See translation of *De Insulis nuper in mari Incido repertis* (Basel, 1494), in *The Columbus Letter* (Basel, 1494), Osher Map

- Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education, University of Southern Maine, <http://oshermaps.org/special-map-exhibits/columbus-letter> <viewed 25 October 2013>.
- 4 Turtle Island is a name for North America derived from Indigenous stories of creation (especially from Algonquian- and Iroquoian-speaking peoples such as the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabe in northeastern North America) that relate how the continent was formed in the midst of a watery world by animals spreading mud on the back of a turtle.
 - 5 Thus did historian Marcel Trudel aptly title the first volume of his *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France: Les vaines tentatives, 1524–1603* (Montréal: Fides, 1963).
 - 6 Based on impressions enumerated in the Geographical Indexes of *European Americana: A Chronological Guide to Works Published in Europe Relating to the Americas, 1493–1776*, ed. John Alden and Dennis Channing Landis, 6 vols. (New Canaan, Conn.: Readex Books, 1980–1997). The precise numbers are: 1520s, 4.9 books per year; 1530s, 4.5; 1590s, 16.4; 1601–10, 18.6. Not all of these works were by French writers, of course.
 - 7 Plays and novels of the era clearly display such fantasies. In Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (c. 1610–11?), the savage Caliban is personally subjugated by Prospero's magical powers. In a fictional travel narrative published at Lyons in 1609, the crew of a French ship making landfall near Canada are spontaneously proclaimed "kings and emperors" by the locals due to their obvious superiority. *Coppie d'une lettre envoyee de la Nouvelle France, ou Canada, par le Sieur de Côbes, Gentilhomme Poictevin*, facsimile ed., Americana series, no. 157 (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1926), 9–10. In the French play *Acoubar* from 1603, the heroic protagonist Pistion becomes king of the people of Canada after rallying them in battle. Jacques Du Hamel, *The Earliest French Play about America: Acoubar ou La Loyauté Trahie*, introduction by Margaret Adams White (New York: Publications of the Institute of French Studies, 1931).
 - 8 Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984). See also Anthony Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1992), 35–48 on the legacy of classical notions of Otherness and early modern European writing on the Americas.
 - 9 Specifically, from Columbus' letter of 1493 to John Jewett's account of his captivity among the Nuu-chah-nulth in 1803–1805, published in 1807 and again in a revised and expanded edition in 1815.
 - 10 The acrimonious debate between supporters of Lewis Henry Morgan and those of William Prescott in the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s bears witness to this. Following his Spanish sources, Prescott had portrayed the early sixteenth-century Aztec rulers as monarchs in his best-selling *Conquest of Mexico* (1843). Morgan, a student of the Iroquois, believed that Indigenous peoples were incapable of state-level organization and accordingly attacked Prescott's work (and that of others who accepted Prescott's view of Aztec civilization). In

- Morgan's emerging evolutionary perspective, Native peoples in the Americas were only capable of "savagery" and "barbarism," the first two stages of human development. See Wilcomb E. Washburn and Bruce G. Trigger, "Native Peoples in Euro-American Historiography," in *Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, vol. 1: *North America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 61–124, here 86–88.
- 11 See, for example, H. P. Biggar's 1924 translation of the *Voyages of Jacques Cartier*, reprinted in 1993 by Ramsay Cook with additional changes ("chief" becomes "leader"). In Charles E. Bennett's translation of René Laudonnière's narratives of French expeditions to Florida in the 1560s, the Indigenous term *paraousti* is consistently translated as "chief," despite Laudonnière's insistence that the term meant "king." René Laudonnière, *Three Voyages*, trans. and ed. Bennett (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1975).
 - 12 *De Insulis nuper in mari Incido repertis* (Basel, 1494), in *Columbus Letter*.
 - 13 *Le nouveau monde et navigacions faites p[ar] Emeric de Vespuce flore[n]tin Des pays et isles nouvelleme[n]t trouvez au parava[n]t a nous incongneuz, ta[n]t en lethiope q[ue] arabie Calichut [et] aultres plusieurs regions estranges, Translate de italien en la[n]gue francoyse par Mathurin de Redouer licencie es loix* (Paris: Galliot du Pre, 1516), lxxx recto.
 - 14 Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, *Extraict ou recueil des isles nouvellement trouvés en la grand mer Océane* (Paris: S. de Colines, 1532), esp. 11r (absence of weights, measures, etc.).
 - 15 Anghiera, *Extraict*, 156r–171r.
 - 16 *L'histoire de la terre neuve du Perù en l'Inde Occidentale, qui est la principale mine d'or du monde, nagueres descouverte, & conquise, & nommée la nouvelle Castille, Traduite d'Italien en Francoys* (Paris: Pierre Gaultier for Jehan Barbé and Vincent Sertenas, 1545), sig. G.iiii. recto - H.iii. recto. Most scholarly works today give the ruler's name as Atahualpa or Atahualpa.
 - 17 José de Acosta, *The Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, ed. Clements R. Markham (London: Hakluyt Society, 1880), 2: 410–411. This edition follows an English translation of 1604. The authoritative modern scholarly edition is *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, ed. Jane E. Mangan, trans. Frances M. López-Morillas (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), here 346.
 - 18 E.g., Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, 2: 310; Rebecca Horn, "Cacique," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*, ed. David Carrasco (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), <http://www.oxfordreference.com>. <viewed 25 October 2013>.
 - 19 Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Terzo volume delle navigatione et viaggi* (Venice, 1556). For modern critical editions of these narratives, see Lawrence C. Wroth, ed., *The Voyages of Giovanni Da Verrazzano, 1524–1528* (New Haven: Yale University Press for the Pierpont Morgan Library, 1970) and Jacques Cartier, *Relations*, ed. Michel Bideaux, Bibliothèque du Nouveau Monde (Montreal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1986).
 - 20 André Thevet, *Les singularitez de la France antarctique* (Paris: Les héritiers de Maurice de la Porte, 1558), 46.

ENGLISH AND FRENCH ENCOUNTERS WITH INDIGENOUS LEADERS
IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA

- 21 *Entrée à Rouen du roi Henri II et de la reine Catherine de Médicis en 1550* (Rouen: Espérance Cagniard for the Société Rouennaise de Bibliophiles, 1885), sig. K iv recto. Of the 300 “Brisilians” acting in this pageant, some 50 were actually native Tupinambá brought to Rouen; the rest were Frenchmen familiar with Brazilian customs. It is unclear which was the “king.” See also Michael Wintroub, *A Savage Mirror: Power, Identity, and Knowledge in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).
- 22 René Goulaine de Laudonnière, *L’histoire notable de la Floride* (Paris: G. Auvray, 1586).
- 23 “The Voyage of Captain Dominique Gourgues to Florida, 1567,” in *Principal Navigations*, 3: 357.
- 24 *A Treatise of the Newe India* (London, 1553) and *The Decades of the Newe World* (London, 1555) are reproduced in Edward Arber, ed., *The First Three English Books on America* (Birmingham: n.p., 1885).
- 25 *The New Found Worlde, or Antarctike* (London: Henrie Bynneman, 1568).
- 26 On Hakluyt, see Peter C. Mancall, *Hakluyt’s Promise: An Elizabethan’s Obsession for an English America* (Yale University Press, 2010).
- 27 In particular, see “An Account of the Particular Employments of the Englishmen Left in Virginia by Sir Richard Grinville,” in *Principal Navigations*, 3: 255–265 and the “Voyages Made for the Discovery of the Large, Rich, and Beautifull Empire of Guiana by Sir Walter Raleigh,” in *ibid.*, 3: 631–671. Raleigh’s *Discoverie ... of Guiana* had initially appeared in print a few years earlier, in 1596, and was an immediate publishing success.
- 28 Michiel van Groesen, *The Representations of the Overseas World in the De Bry Collection of Voyages* (1590–1634) (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 29–34, citing Thevet’s boast in his dedication to Henri III in *Cosmographie universelle*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1575).
- 29 These reflections are inspired by Wintroub, *Savage Mirror*, 173.
- 30 Thirteen volumes in the Latin edition, 14 in the German edition.
- 31 Twelve volumes in the Latin edition, 13 in the German edition.
- 32 According to the helpful index in an early twentieth-century scholarly edition: Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Voyages Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation*, 12 vols. (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1903–1905). The index can be found in the final volume.
- 33 This is the rendering proposed in a modern English translation: Neil L. Whitehead, ed., *Hans Staden’s True History: An Account of Cannibal Captivity in Brazil*, trans. Michael Harbsmeier (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).
- 34 Jean de Léry, *Histoire d’un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil*, ed. Paul Gaffarel, 2 vols. (Paris: Alphonse Lemerre, 1880), 30.
- 35 Hans Staden, *Véritable histoire et description d’un pays habité par des hommes sauvages nus, féroces et anthropophages, situé dans le Nouveau Monde, nommé Amérique* (Paris: Arthus Bertrand, 1837), 88; 123.
- 36 *Brief recit, & succincte narration, de la navigation faicte ès ysles de Canada, Hochelage & Saguenay & autres, avec particulieres meurs, langage, & ceremonies des habitans d’icelles* (Paris, 1545).

- 37 For Stadacona as a kingdom and subject towns, see the wordlist of the second voyage in Ramsay Cook, ed., *Voyages of Jacques Cartier* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 90; 95.
- 38 For a sense of the ways in which jurists and theologians of late-medieval England and France debated the meanings of lordship and kingship and the distinction between them, see J. H. Burns, *Lordship, Kingship, and Empire: The Idea of Monarchy, 1400-1525*, The Carlyle Lectures 1988 (Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1992), esp. chap. 3.
- 39 "... le roy et seigneur du pays qu'ilz appellent en leur langue agouhanna." Jacques Cartier, *Relations*, ed. Michel Bideaux, Bibliothèque du Nouveau Monde (Montreal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1986), 154.
- 40 "... pour sa couronne," *ibid.*
- 41 *Delle navigationi et viaggi raccolte da M. Gio. Battista Ramusio, terzo volume* (Venice, 1606), fol. 380. The 1606 edition was the third edition of the third volume of the collection.
- 42 "Dona-coua, A-guanna, Roy de Canada." Thevet, *Les singularitez de la France antarctique*, 151v.
- 43 Both were fragmentary. The earlier Cartier reports, those of 1534 and 1535, were English translations of the text in Ramusio. The two fragmentary accounts relating to Cartier's third voyage, however, had never before appeared in print. No known manuscript version of these narratives is known to exist, and scholars remain uncertain as to how Hakluyt acquired them. Presumably, it was during a sojourn in Paris in 1583-87, during which time he acquired other French accounts of expeditions to Florida. See Mancall, *Hakluyt's Promise*, chaps. 6 and 7.
- 44 Cook, ed., *Voyages of Cartier*, 96.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 99.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 112.
- 47 "A Briefe and Summary Discourse upon the Intended Voyage to the Hithermost Parts of America, written by Captaine Carlile in April, 1583," in Richard Hakluyt, *Voyages of the English Nation to America*, ed. Edmund Goldsmid, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: E. & G. Goldsmid, 1889-90), 2: 45.
- 48 *Voyages of the English Nation*, 2: 240.
- 49 Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Indians and English: Facing Off in Early America* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000), 92.
- 50 Kingship and monarchy are not always synonymous, for the cross-cultural study of kingship reveals the existence of systems of joint kingship and alternating kingship in Asia, Africa, the Pacific, and parts of Europe; see Declan Quigley, "Introduction: The Character of Kingship," in *The Character of Kingship*, ed. Quigley (Oxford and New York: Berg Publishers, 2005), 2. However, in late-medieval and early modern Europe kings were essentially monarchs or sole rulers; hence my conflation of the terms in this essay. See Jacques Le Goff, "Le roi dans l'Occident médiéval: caractères originaux," in *Kings and Kingship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Anne J. Duggan (Exeter: Short Run Press for the Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, King's

- College, London, 1993), 2–3.
- 51 Sherry B. Ortner, “On Key Symbols,” *American Anthropologist* 75 (1973), 1338–1346.
- 52 For an overview of the symbolic reconfiguration of French kingship in this process, see Joseph R. Strayer, “France: The Holy Land, The Chosen People, and the Most Christian King,” in *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of E. H. Harbison* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 3–16. In 1254 the royal chancery of France changed the usual title for the king from *rex Francorum* (King of the Franks) to *rex Franciae* (King of France). Colette Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology: Myths and Symbols of Nation in Late-Medieval France*, trans. Susan Ross Huston (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 284–285.
- 53 St. Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship, to the King of Cyprus*, trans. Gerald B. Phelan, ed. I. Th. Eschmann (1949; reprint ed., Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1982), 12.
- 54 See W. M. Spellman, *Monarchies 1000–2000* (London: Reaktion, 2001), and Francis Oakley, *Kingship: The Politics of Enchantment* (Malden, Mass.; Oxford: Blackwell, 2006). Both works emphasize the somewhat atypical nature of European kingship, particularly with respect to its sacral (but not sacred) quality; for both authors, this was a consequence of long ideological and political struggles between various local and regional monarchs, on the one hand, and the papacy’s pretensions to a universal monarchy, on the other; see Spellmann, *Monarchies*, chap. 4; Oakley, *Kingship*, chap. 5. At times contemporary rhetoric about kingship flirted with apotheosis, as in the “mirrors of princes,” a literary genre that outlined the ideal education of a king. “The king is the image of God governing all things, even a human God on Earth,” opined Jean Héroard in one such work. See Isabelle Flandrois, *L’Institution du prince au début du XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992), 172.
- 55 Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France*, trans. J. E. Anderson (London/Montreal: Routledge & Kegan Paul/McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1973).
- 56 During the Wars of Religion in France, a Catholic royalist argued that despite being a heretical Huguenot and excommunicant, only the royal heir Henri de Navarre would have the god-given ability to cure scrofula. Myriam Yardeni, *La conscience nationale en France pendant les Guerres de Religion (1559-1598)* (Louvain/Paris: Editions Nauwelaerts/Béatrice-Nauwelaerts, 1971), 180.
- 57 Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).
- 58 “Le principe monarchique demeure vivace comme grille de lecture permettant de comprendre, et par là d’intégrer dans un univers de choses déjà connues, les réalités nouvelles. Les récits de voyages révèlent la même procédure : les sociétés indigènes rencontrées ne peuvent être pensées qu’à travers les critères qui organisent la société même d’Occident.” Roger Chartier, “La « monarchie d’argot » entre le mythe et l’histoire,” in *Les marginaux et les exclus dans l’histoire*, Cahiers Jussieu, no. 5 (Paris: Union générale d’éditions, 1979), 275–

- 311, here 291–292.
- 59 Nancy Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness: Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth-Century North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), chap. 2; see absolute power (45), John Smith and Powhatan (46), few kings (46).
 - 60 For a general overview of local self-government in France, see Pierre Goubert and Daniel Roche, *Les Français et l'Ancien Régime*, 2 vols. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1984), 1: 68–83. For Venice, see Edward Muir, *Civic Rituals in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) and Åsa Boholm, *The Doge of Venice: The Symbolism of State Power in the Renaissance* (Gothenburg, Sweden: Institute for Advanced Studies in Social Anthropology, 1990); for Swiss cantons, see Randolph C. Head, *Early Modern Democracy in the Grisons: Social Order and Political Language in a Swiss Mountain Canton, 1470–1620* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as English and French observers acquired greater knowledge of groups such as the Haudenosaunee or Iroquois confederacy, they saw comparisons to be made with the Greek and Roman republics of ancient times. For the later eighteenth century, see Frederick G. Whelan, *Enlightenment Political Thought and Non-Western Societies: Sultans and Savages* (New York: Routledge, 2009), chap. 2, esp. 73–75.
 - 61 Frank Lestringant, “The Myth of the Indian Monarchy: An Aspect of the Controversy Between Thevet and Léry (1575–1585),” in *Indians and Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays*, ed. Christian F. Feest (Aachen, The Netherlands: Edition Herodot, 1987), 37–60.
 - 62 Both works present the term “cacique” as well; in Raleigh, it is a synonym for “king,” while in Harcourt, it means “chiefe” or “commander.” One of the few systematic editorial changes made to Raleigh’s manuscript account of the voyage when it was first published in 1596 was to replace “lord” and “cassique” with “king” when referring to named Indigenous leaders such as Morequito, Topiawari, and Carapana who were deemed central to the narrative. Joyce Lorimer deduces that these changes were made at the suggestion of Sir Robert Cecil himself. *Sir Walter Raleigh’s Discoverie of Guiana*, ed. Joyce Lorimer, Hakluyt Society, 3rd ser., no. 15 (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate for the Hakluyt Society of London, 2006), xxxi–xxxii (Cecil as editor), 58–59, 76–77, 82–83, 148–149, 170–171 (changes from “cassique” or “lord” to “king”). For references to Indigenous leaders in Harcourt, see *A Relation of a Voyage to Guiana* (London: John Beale for W. Welby, 1613), 6, 7, 12, 14, 15, 18–20, 27. Interestingly, when Harcourt summarizes parts of Raleigh’s earlier voyage, he does employ the term “king.”
 - 63 James Collins, *The State in Early Modern France*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), cited in Cesare Cuttica and Glenn Burgess, “Introduction,” in *Monarchism and Absolutism in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Cuttica and Burgess (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), 4.
 - 64 In the 1670s, the English governor of the Hudson’s Bay Company post at Rupert River produced a journal that employed, apparently without irony, the terms king, chancellor, and prince to refer to headmen among the Crees of

- Eastern James Bay. Joseph Burr Tyrell, ed., *Documents Relating to the Early History of Hudson Bay* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1931), esp. 383–390.
- 65 Lestringant, “The Myth of the Indian Monarchy,” 46–47.
- 66 For Raleigh, see *Principal Navigations*, 3: 633; for Powhatan, see Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2007), 228–230.
- 67 Kupperman, *Indians and English*, 91–102. Kupperman’s sense of a good “fit” between the colonists’ descriptions and Indigenous realities is underlined when she adds, as something of an aside, that “[m]odern analyses agree that the Powhatans had a complex governing structure” (97). Neil Whitehead has a similar opinion of Raleigh’s conceptualization of the politics of the Orinoco River basin as kingdoms, referring as he does to “the accuracy of Raleigh’s description of native political hierarchy.” See Walter Raleigh, *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana*, ed. Neil L Whitehead (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1997).
- 68 “... les Espagnols, lors qu’ils estoient sur les termes d’acquérir, s’estoient tous-jours alliez de quelque Roy, pour ruiner l’autre.” Laudonnière, *Histoire notable*, 77v (quotation), 85r (kidnapping).
- 69 Some reflections on this question and on the relevant literature can be found in Peter Cook, “Vivre comme frères: Native-French Alliances in the St Lawrence Valley, 1535–1667” (PhD diss., McGill University, 2008), 132–144.
- 70 *Principal Navigations*, 3: 633.
- 71 This point is made is April Lee Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 8, 230–231 n. 1.
- 72 The precise timing and causes of the disappearance of St. Lawrence Iroquoian settlements remains a matter of scholarly debate. For a summary of the data see Gary Warrick, “The Precontact Iroquoian Occupation of Southern Ontario,” *Journal of World Prehistory* 14, no. 4 (2000), 415–466, here 454–457.
- 73 Peter Cook, “Kings, Captains, and Kin: French Views of Native American Political Cultures in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries,” in *The Atlantic World and Virginia, 1550–1624*, ed. Peter Mancall (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2007), 307–341.
- 74 David B. Quinn, “The Voyage of Etienne Bellenger to the Maritimes in 1583: A New Document,” *Canadian Historical Review* 43, no. 4 (1962), 328–343, here 341.
- 75 Marc Lescarbot, *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*, ed. Edwin Tross, 3 vols. (Paris: Librairie Tros, 1866), 1: 41. According to Carina Johnson, an interesting parallel shift occurred in the sixteenth-century Hapsburg domains. Initially, the Aztecs were represented as a culturally sophisticated civilization possessing a recognizable religion, albeit an idolatrous one. Aztec nobles were received at the Hapsburg court as vassals of Charles V and Aztec regalia were incorporated into royal collections, reflecting the aspirations of a universal monarchy that

could expand to encompass non-Christian polities as well as Christian, European ones. The cultural changes and political strife brought about by the deepening Reformation and Counter-Reformation, however, led to sterner views of idolatry, a heightened emphasis on religious uniformity, and the recasting of Aztecs as heathen savages. See Carina L. Johnson, *Cultural Hierarchy in Sixteenth-Century Europe: The Ottomans and Mexicans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), esp. chaps. 1, 2, and 3.

- 76 As late as the 1860s, the English occupying Fort Victoria (the Hudson's Bay Company post at the southern tip of Vancouver Island) called Chee-ah-thluc, a *siem* (leader, one who becomes wealthy and important) of the Lekwungen, "King Freezy." See John Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), 61; 74. King Freezy's obituary in the *British Colonist* (11 November 1864) adopts a mocking tone that is uncharacteristic of the earlier uses of the trope studied here.