Document generated on 04/23/2024 5:31 p.m.

Vie des arts

Vie des arts

Texts in English

Volume 29, Number 115, June–July–August 1984

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/58890ac

See table of contents

Publisher(s)

La Société La Vie des Arts

ISSN

0042-5435 (print)
1923-3183 (digital)

Explore this journal

Cite this article

(1984). Texts in English. *Vie des arts*, *29*(115), 93–96.

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TEXTS IN ENGLISH

JACQUES CARTIER IN HOCHELAGA IN 1535

By Bruce G. TRIGGER

To honour the approaching 450th anniversary of the first recorded visit of Europeans to Montreal Island, the McCord Museum of McGill University is presenting an exhibition titled «Les Montréalais accueillent Jacques Cartier, le 3 octobre 1535». This exhibition[1] considers the historical account of Cartier's visit, what is known about the Iroquoian inhabitants of Hochelaga who welcomed him to Montreal Island, and the material remains of these people as they have been recovered and studied by archaeologists over the last 130 years. The commemoration of this encounter between the native inhabitants of Montreal and early French explorers reaffirms the McCord Museum's rôle in preserving, studying, and displaying to the public the arts, handicrafts, and other achievements of Montrealers, Quebecers, and Canadians from prehistoric times to the present.

Cartier's Visit

On the afternoon of October 2, 1535 (which would be mid-October in our modern Gregorian calendar), Jacques Cartier and 32 companions came abreast of Montreal Island after a two-week journey up the St. Lawrence River from Quebec. The latter part of the journey had been made in two longboats. We have no reason to doubt that they were the first Europeans to penetrate this far inland but news of their coming had clearly preceeded them up the St. Lawrence. As they approached the central part of the island, over 1000 Iroquoian-speaking Indians came to the riverside to greet them. The men, women, and children danced and brought them food. They tossed so much corn-bread into the French boats that Cartier's chronicler said that it appeared to be raining bread. Cartier went ashore with some of his men and gave the Indians knives, tin beads, and other trinkets as presents. Then the French spent the night aboard their boats.

The next morning Cartier put on his best clothes and left a few men to guard his longboats. Then with the gentlemen of his crew and 20 sailors he set off for the town of Hochelaga, located near Mount-Royal. A well-trodden path led through the oak forests that covered this part of the island. Part way along this trail, Cartier was greeted by a chief who in Iroquoian fashion had lit a welcoming fire on the path. Unfortunately, the two Iroquoian boys from the Quebec City area who had spent the previous winter in France had refused to accompany the French upriver. Hence Cartier was unable to understand what the Hochelagans were saying to him. The Indians led Cartier and his men into the large, open cornfields that surrounded the town of Hochelaga, which was strongly fortified by palisades made of wooden poles stuck upright into the ground. Here the French were greeted by the approximately 2000 inhabitants of the town; a larger number of people than was to live on Montreal Island for 50 years after the founding of the French colony of Ville-Marie in 1642. Cartier and his companions were led into the town where they saw about 50 bark-covered longhouses, each about 35 metres long and 7 metres wide. Each house was occupied by a number of families related in the female line and was well stocked with corn, beans, squash, and barrels of smoked eels which were eaten over the winter. The Indians equated the beads and metal tools ornaments that Cartier brought with him with natural substances, in particular quartz crystals and native copper, that they believed were endowed with power to confer life and health on their owners. Because he possessed unprecedented amounts of these goods, Cartier was regarded as a powerful shaman and the Indians brought their sick and crippled for him to heal. Not knowing what else to do, he laid his hands on them and read from the Gospel of St. John, of which the Indians would not have understood a word. He distributed still more presents but refused to attend a banquet that had been prepared for him and his men because the food, which had been cooked without salt, was not to their taste. The Hochelagans next guided Cartier to the summit of Mount Royal, from which he observed that the Lachine Rapids blocked easy movement upriver and therefore constituted an impediment to the exploration of the interior of the continent. Despite the Hochelagan's hospitality, Cartier did not trust them and he feared for the safety of his vessels. Some of the sailors who were exhausted by the long journey and lack of food were carried back to the longboats by their hosts. Cartier embarked to return to Quebec after a visit to Montreal that had lasted less than one day.

Where Was Hochelaga and How Did Cartier Get There?

The brevity of the account of Cartier's visit to Montreal in 1535 has produced heated controversies about the location of Hochelaga and the route that Cartier and his men followed to reach it. It is generally believed that they travelled up the St. Lawrence River to a point roughly opposite St. Helen's Island, although other scholars have had them go as far as the foot of the Lachine Rapids, and still others have accepted Beaugrand-Champagne's theory that they proceeded up the Rivière des Prairies and that Hochelaga was located on the north side of Mount Royal. The consistent location of Hochelaga north of the river on sixteenth century maps appears to confirm that Cartier travelled up the St. Lawrence and did not know of the existence of the Rivière des Prairies as a river paralleling the St. Lawrence. The account of Cartier's voyage states that Hochelaga was located near Mount Royal but does not indicate on which side. Ethnographic evidence suggests that the Hochelagans would have preferred sandy, easily-worked soil and as much shelter as possible from the cold north wind. Hence Hochelaga was probably located on the south or southeast side of Mount Royal. In the nineteenth century, the area directly south of Mount Royal was prized for the cultivation of fruit trees.

1. Sir John William Dawson, c. 1859-1860. (Phot. Notman Photographic Archives, McCord Museum, McGill University)

Who Were the Hochelagans?

The Hochelagans belonged to a larger grouping known as the St. Lawrence Iroquoians. In late prehistoric times these Indians occupied the St. Lawrence Valley between Lake Ontario and the Baie St. Paul region, east of Quebec City. The St. Lawrence Iroquoians were closely related, both linguistically and in their life-style to the Hurons, Petuns and Neutrals of southern Ontario and the Five Nations Iroquois (Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas who lived in upper New York State). These latter groups were encountered and described by European explorers and missionaries in the seventeenth century.

After A.D. 500, the Iroquoian-speaking peoples who had hitherto subsisted by exploiting the rich plant and animal resources of the St. Lawrence Valley and around Lakes Ontario and Erie began to grow corn, beans, and squash and to live in sedentary communities and large multi-family houses. They also manufactured globular ceramic vessels in which they cooked their corn soup. While the Hochelagans' manner of life and their heavily-fortified village resembled those of the Hurons, Five Nations, and other Iroquoian groups to the west, the Stadaconan group that Cartier encountered around Quebec City seems to have continued to rely more heavily on hunting and fishing and to have remained more mobile.

Wars with neighbouring Iroquoian groups appear to have dispersed the St. Lawrence Iroquoian groups that lived west of Montreal before the time of Cartier's visit. Archaeological evidence suggests that many St. Lawrence Iroquoians joined the Hurons. Yet no group specifically claimed descent from the Hochelagans, Stadaconans, or any other St. Lawrence Iroquoian group in the seventeenth century.

The Dawson Site

The only Iroquoian settlement that has been found on Montreal Island (except for traces of a probable fishing camp recently encountered as a result of archaeological excavations in the Place d'Youville) is the Dawson site discovered south of the McGill University campus in 1860. At that time, the Burnside property south of Sherbrooke Street had been sold as building lots and was being covered with houses. Workmen who were employed to remove sand discovered several skeletons and numerous portions of broken pottery vessels. These finds were reported to John William Dawson, the Principal of McGill University and a leading geologist of his day. Dawson, who had already shown an interest in Indian artifacts, investigated the site and found there the remains of burials, cooking hearths, pottery vessels, clay pipes, and stone and bone tools that were clearly of Indian manufacture. The site was located along the east side of a small stream that ran southward from the McGill campus just west of Metcalfe Street. It extended as far east as Mansfield Street and from a little south of de Maisonneuve Boulevard north almost to Sherbrooke Street. Thick deposits of trash containing numerous Indian artifacts were found along the western and southern margins of the site. Dawson believed that these indicated that it had been occupied for a very long period of time. It is now known that deep middens are typical of Iroquoian sites that were occupied for only one or two decades. Among the finds of particular interest were various tobacco pipes, including one with three stylized human faces; large bone tubes which may have

been used to extract supernatural poisons from people's bodies in shamanistic curing rituals; pottery gaming discs employed in games of chance; and round "gorgets" cut from human skulls, which may have been joined together to make rattles that were also used in rituals. Dawson's reports on the findings at the Dawson site and the illustrations that accompanied them were of a high standard for the 1860s and accord with his outstanding reputation as a scientist. The Indian artifacts that he and others recovered from the site are now preserved in Montreal at the McCord Museum and at Le Château Ramezay.

Dawson believed this site to be the remains of Hochelaga. If so, it would have been occupied only for several decades around 1535, since the Iroquoians relocated their settlements every few decades as the fertility of surrounding fields declined and nearby sources of firewood became exhausted. Yet the area over which Dawson found artifacts covered less than 0.8 hectare and more recent work has failed to produce evidence that the Dawson site was any larger than this. The site is therefore too small to be the remains of a large Iroquoian community such as Hochelaga, which would have been several times bigger. By studying broken pieces of pottery, such as those that Dawson collected from the site, archaeologists can determine the age of Iroquoian communities in relationship to one another. Recent studies suggest that the pottery from the Dawson site probably dates earlier than the sixteenth century, although they do not completely rule out the sixteenth century. The Dawson site may well have been abandoned prior to the time of Cartier's visit. Dawson dated the site to that time on the basis of a few scraps of iron and brass (or copper) that he believed were found in "such circumstances as to render accidental mixture" with the Iroquoian material improbable. While some of this material may be derived from Cartier's visit, what was found is so fragmentary and of such an undefined nature that it can only be dated to some time between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is no longer certain that any of these pieces are contemporary with the Iroquoian material from the site. Yet, while it cannot be proved that the Dawson site is the remains of Hochelaga, it is clear that this site was inhabited by the same tribal group that occupied that famous community. Hence the material collected and preserved by J.W. Dawson and others that is now on display at the McCord Museum constitutes a precious link with the inhabitants of Montreal who welcomed Jacques Cartier to what already in the sixteenth century was the metropolis of the St. Lawrence.

1. On view from March 28 until November 25, 1984

AN OLDER ENTENTE

By Bernard DENVIR

On Saturday October 14th, 1066, Duke William of Normandy and his army advanced up the small hill on which Battle Abbey now stands, and changed the course of English history. William the Bastard to the French, William the Conqueror to his new Anglo-Saxon subjects, had consummated a marriage between two cultures, two traditions. Within a few years this would produce a flowering of a hybrid growth which was to boast some of the finest Romanesque monuments in Europe and a Franco-British culture of remarkable brilliance. William of Malmesbury, that entertaining historian and avid raconteur who was born twenty-five years after the arrival of Duke William wrote, "With their arrival, the Normans breathed new life into religious standards, which everywhere had been tending to decline, so that now you can see in every village, town and city, churches rising in a new and magnificent style of architecture"; and he went on to describe the great new choir which had arisen in Canterbury Cathedral, "Nothing like it had been seen, or could be seen in England, either for the brilliant light of its windows, the gleam of its marble paving, and the many coloured paintings which lead the wondering eye to the panelled ceiling above".

Yet till now there has been little effort made to encapsulate for the twentieth century these splendours of the twelfth. Many have been utterly destroyed, by Tudor avarice or Puritan iconoclasm; shrines have been ravished, monasteries despoiled, statues mutilated. But now Britain is making amends in one of the most magnificent exhibitions of Norman, or Romanesque, art ever to have been mounted. Housed within the sombre, grey cement walls of the massive Hayward Gallery on London's South Bank, a building which in its late 1960s architectural brutalism echoes the rugged strength of a Norman keep, are some six hundred objects, astutely selected, brilliantly displayed, meticulously catalogued, all from the period between 1066 and 1200, relics of one of the most successful *ententes cordiales* in the history of European culture. (The exhibition closes on July 8th). Drawn from some fifteen countries and from scores of small village churches, Swiss abbeys, provincial museums and little-visited chapels, many of the exhibits have never been on view to a general public, nor have they, often enough, ever left their original location. Now seen within the glowing context of that creative explosion brought about by the meld of Anglo-Saxon, Viking and French traditions, they take on a new significance and exude a more vibrant beauty.

An *entente* Anglo-Norman culture certainly was, though, of course, one may doubt its cordiality in some respects. Remi, Bishop of Lincoln, who had fought amongst the Norman knights at Hastings, decided, according to Henry of Huntingdon, a contemporary of William of Malmesbury, to build in his cathedral city a strong church, in a strong position, invincible to enemies, as suited the time; and the greatest glory of the times, the massive cathedral at Durham, looms over that city like a great fortress, anticipating in its impregnability the later Palace of the Popes at Avignon. But, cordiality apart, there had been close links between England and Normandy long before the fatal arrow entered Harold's eye, and the Anglo-Saxons went down in the blood and mire of a Sussex field. Edward the Confessor was himself half-Norman; and the artists of the Winchester School had always been admired, and their works acquired by French abbeys and cathedrals. The most famous memorial of the contest between Harold and William, the Bayeux tapestry, was made at Canterbury for Odo, the Conqueror's brother, and English needlework had always been in great demand across the Channel. The actual tapestry is too fragile to allow it to be brought from Bayeux, but Stothard's famous copy, made in the early nineteenth century before the original was altered by well-meaning restorers, is valuable not only in its own right, but also as part of that revival of interest in early medieval culture which is documented in one of the more fascinating sections of the exhibition.

Stupidly apt to think of the men and women of the Middle Ages as cocooned within their own tight little worlds, it comes as something of a shock to realize through this exhibition how cosmopolitan they were. Take one of the finest

1. *Exeter City Matrix,*
Silver, c. 1200.
Devon Record Office, City Archives.
(Phot. D.B. Sinclair)

manuscripts in the exhibition, for instance, the Leofric Gospels. They had been made at Landévennec in Brittany, whence the monks had fled because of Viking raids in 924. In the next century the book was acquired by Leofric, who was bishop of Exeter between 1050 and 1072, and who himself had been educated in Thuringia. The Normans, in fact, were part of an international mafia, which spread from Scandinavia to Sicily. Henry II's daughter married William II of that kingdom, and the porch of the church at Iffley, on the towing path outside Oxford, is adorned with ornamental work more common in that Italian island than in the green country-side of Berkshire. The greatest of Norman churchmen, Lanfranc, William's nominee to the see of Canterbury, came from Pavia. When he built the great cathedral there and extended the abbey of St. Augustine, he used stone from Caen, and an architect from Sens. Some of the sculpture on view in the Hayward was executed for a church in Herefordshire by an artist who had been taken on the pilgrimage route to Santiago by Oliver de Merlimond, and who had studied and sketched what he had seen in the churches of Poitou and Saintonge, while other examples from Reading show strong Lombardic influence.

Of course, the church in general and the religious orders in particular played a great cosmopolitanising rôle. The obituary-list (a document lauding a dead abbot, which was circulated to other monasteries so that they might add their own praise) of Vitalis, abbot of Savigny, was taken to 200 religious houses in France and England before returning to France, and the most impressive murals in this exhibition come from the chapter house of Sigona in Aragon, where they had been painted by an English monk who had studied in Sicily. The Tree of Jesse window from York was echoed later at St. Denis and Chartres, and St. Stephen Harding, one of the first abbots of Cîtaux the fountain head of the great reforming order, came from Sherbourne in England. The configuration of the subject of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, which occurs in the stained glass of Canterbury, was repeated in the following century in the Basilica of St. Francis at Assisi.

There were echoes of a more ancient past intermingled with the bright new world of the Anglo-Normans. Phallic boars, stretching through Viking mythology back to the Stone Age in their inspiration, appear on the tympanum from the church of St. Nicholas in Norwich, and a ge-

neaology in the exhibition shows the kings of Britain being descended from Adam through the Norse god Woden. At the same time, too, there are constant reminders at the Hayward Gallery of the extent to which the legacy of Greece and Rome was still a living thing; indeed the very word Romanesque (despite the fact that the English prefer to describe it as "Norman") suggests this. Stories from Aesop's *Fables* appear in the Bayeux tapestry; the damp fold type of sculpture, with drapery moulded in pleats so close to the body that it looks as though it were wet, represented at its finest by some of the figures from St. Mary's Abbey at York, was derived from ancient Greece via Byzantium. Manuscripts of the works of Prudentius and Boethius abound; there is a book by Terence from St. Albans, acquired by Lanfranc's nephew, and the works of Pliny were duplicated in distant Yorkshire scriptoria. Henry of Blois, brother of King Stephen, educated at Cluny, was one of the first great collectors, buying classical sculpture in Rome to adorn his English palace, and a ciborium from the abbey of St. Maurice d'Agaune in Switzerland, made in England, but supposed to have been donated to that institution by Charlemagne, shows in its interior the centaur Chiron, educating Achilles.

Men's minds ranged widely too. The exquisitely painted flowers in a herbal from St. Augustine's Canterbury are close to a natural science textbook compiled by Byrhtferth, a monk of Ramsey Abbey, based on the writing of Isidore of Seville. From the old monastic library at Canterbury, one book which survived the insensate plunder of Henry VIII's minions is a copy of Flavius Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*. An astrological treatise of c. 1120 borrowed from the Bodleian Library in Oxford contains a section on "Marvels of the East", based on ancient Greek descriptions of India; the fantastic creatures which appear in it owe their shapes to the fact that they are based on imagery from Hindu mythology, rather than from actual observation of people.

Men, or at least some men, in those days, lived more comfortably than we are often apt to think. Many monasteries (especially St. Augustine's at Canterbury) were, for their time, technological marvels, solid, well-built edifices, with efficient piped water supplies and complex drainage systems. Luxury goods abounded, and the exhibition is replete with ivory combs, jewels and other personal adornments. Aelfric's *Colloquium*, written in the eleventh century, records a dialogue between a scholar and a merchant. "What kind of things do you bring us?" "Purple and silk, precious stones and gold, various sorts of clothing, pigments, wine, oil and objects made of bronze, copper, silver, glass and the like. I wish to sell here dearer than I bought there, so that I can gain some profits to keep my wife and son." It must have been a merchant such as this whose ship was wrecked off the Hebrides some time in the twelfth century, and amongst his stock there has survived — discovered in 1831 at Ug in the isle of Lewis — that magnificent set of walrus-tusk chessmen. On a more personal plane there is the delicate golden necklace given by Reginald FitzJocelin, the arch enemy of Becket (who had excommunicated his father, the Bishop of Salisbury!) to Queen Margaret of Sicily in connexion with the efforts she had made at Rome to improve the complicated pattern of English church life.

Becket himself is a constant presence in the exhibition. One of the most poignant memories is a box with a red glass lid which once held phials of his blood scooped up from the pavement of his great church, and on a more personal level, his letters compiled into a book by Prior Alan of St. Augustine's and edited by John of Salisbury, the foremost scholar and political thinker of Anglo-Norman England.

It is amazing how frequently, in what is often thought of as an anonymous age, we catch the echoes of individual people whose personalities have survived for close on a thousand years. There is Master Hugo, the craftsman employed at Bury St. Edmunds who not only produced a magnificantly illuminated bible, but cast the bronze doors of the abbey and carved the fine wooden figure for a crucifix which is in the exhibition. Artists were indeed recognised as creative personalities, and on one of the plaques commissioned by that intriguing character Henry of Blois, there is the inscription, "Art comes before gold and gems; the artist before everything". That is not a sentiment one would think of as being expressed at this time, and that by a man who was not only an astute and successful politician who aroused the ire of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, but one who founded one of Britain's most famous alms-houses, the hospital of St. Cross at Winchester.

What fingers have caressed these objects in the exhibition, what eyes have followed the lines in the manuscripts, we shall never know. But one book is better documented than the rest, the St. Louis Psalter, lent by the University of Leiden. It was written by an Augustinian monk in the North of England for Geoffrey Plantagenet, illegitimate son of Henry II and Archbishop of York who died in exile and is buried at Grandmont near Rouen. On his death it passed to Blanche of Castille, Queen of France, whose father Alfonso made some additions to it. Her son was the canonized Louis IX, and there is an inscription in a fourteenth century French hand which reads, "This Psalter belonged to my Lord St. Louis, who was king of France, from which he learnt to read in his childhood." Louis gave it to his daughter Agnes, wife of Robert of Burgundy, from whom it passed to her granddaughter, who married Philippe of Valois, who gave it to his second wife Blanche of Navarre, from whom it passed to Philip of Burgundy and became part of the rich artistic heritage of that house, remaining for some time at Dijon, the capital city of that rich kingdom. When the Hapsburgs absorbed Burgundy, it was moved to Bruges, and then in 1741 bequeathed to the University of Leiden. This is the first time it has been back in England since c. 1190.

2. BOETHIUS, DE MUSICA, DE ARITHMETICA
Cambridge University Library.
A fine example of Romanesque illustration produced at Canterbury in the eleventh or early twelfth century.

Marrying the English feeling for nature and its concern for decoration with the French respect for classical form and monumental dignity, exploring the potentialities of the ribbed vault, balancing in script, in needlework, in coinage, in pottery and other arts and crafts the romanticism of the Anglo-Saxon tradition with the classicism of the Franco-Norman, the first two centuries of this millenium produced in the British Isles a cultural pattern, the ground-plan of which was never to be totally eradicated, and which has been so finely presented to twentieth century eyes in this exhibition at the Hayward Gallery.

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A LA DÉCOUVERTE DES PAYS DU NORD

suite de la page 61

transposait, avec une expression particulièrement vivante, l'accent radieux qui marquait toute cette manifestation. «Dans les montagnes, j'ai trouvé l'éternel et l'immortel qui, telle l'image que renvoie un miroir, m'ont fait découvrir et comprendre tant soit peu tout ce qui me touche profondément», de dire Willumsen. «Là, j'ai puisé l'énergie qui m'a aidé à poursuivre ma route...» Parallèlement, c'est aux montagnes que Harris, lui aussi, devait la révélation d'une puissance primordiale, d'une force grandiose, lumineuse, unissant l'homme, la nature et l'esprit. L'exposition de Nasgaard apparaît comme un témoignage de toutes ces coïncidences, qui n'ont, en fait, rien de si exceptionnel et qui sont ici audacieusement mises en présence.

Malheureusement, comme toute exposition à thèse, celle-ci comporte un point faible, qui est, une fois encore, le catalogue. Si Nasgaard a su traiter de la peinture scandinave avec une juste efficacité, devant l'art canadien il a quelque peu échoué. La sélection des œuvres du Groupe des Sept semble avoir été faite à la hâte (en effet, pour la plupart, elles provenaient de la propre collection du Musée, en elle-même excellente). Il en va de même pour le texte – et notamment en ce qui a trait au Groupe des Sept –, qui présente un manque évident de rigueur dans la recherche. Nasgaard se proposait de faire connaître les liens entre l'art canadien et l'art scandinave: il lui aurait suffi, pour ce faire, de se reporter à la période victorienne, à l'époque où William Blair Bruce, ce peintre de Salons né à Hamilton, Ontario, et dont les motifs d'inspiration étaient typiquement canadiens, partit vivre en Suède. Il faut préciser que la femme de Bruce, Carolina Benedicks, était issue d'une importante famille de commerçants suédois, qu'elle avait ses entrées à la Cour et, tout comme Bruce du reste, dans les cercles artistiques. Elle plaida même la cause de son mari auprès du prince Eugène. Les artistes canadiens contemporains n'étaient pas sans savoir que William Bruce vivait à l'étranger et qu'il s'était installé en Suède. Maurice Cullen, qui deviendra par la suite l'un des inspirateurs du Groupe des Sept, fréquenta Bruce à Grez, de 1892 à 1894, et d'autres encore, lui rendirent visite lorsqu'il vivait en Suède.

Et quelle place, précisément, Cullen ou Suzor-Coté tenaient-ils dans cette exposition? Tout comme Bruce et nombre d'autres Canadiens, ils ont étudié à Paris. Les ateliers français offraient le privilège commun de réunir tout naturellement des étudiants venus du monde entier, les Scandinaves compris. Rien non plus sur le Groupe du Beaver Hall, qui fut fondé à Montréal à la même époque que le Groupe des Sept et qui comptait des peintres comme Albert Robinson? Et sur Clarence Gagnon? Les illustrations que ce dernier réalisa pour *Maria Chapdelaine*, et dont le thème n'était autre que l'âme du Nord, ne sont pas, elles non plus, mentionnées. En outre, l'absence de bibliographie dans le catalogue de Nasgaard constitue une omission tout aussi surprenante et, qui plus est, elle jette un doute sur la nature didactique de l'entreprise. Il faut avouer, néanmoins, que les origines d'un mouvement sont souvent obscures et que l'analyse de Nasgaard, somme toute, apporte une contribution aux écrits nébuleux traitant de ce sujet.

1. Du 13 janvier au 11 mars 1984.

(Traduction de Laure Muszynski)

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