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"Un Remedde Contre Toutes Maladies": Travel Writing and the Scurvy Incident in Cartier's Second Voyage

Micah True
University of Alberta

In the winter of 1535, French explorer Jacques Cartier and his crew endured a perplexing and lethal outbreak of a mysterious disease that would later be identified as scurvy. As crew-members slowly died over the course of several months, Cartier attempted to no avail to treat the strange illness with the familiar remedies of Europe, before finally stumbling upon a miraculous Iroquoian cure that saved the remainder of the crew and allowed the expedition to return safely home to France. This article examines the captain's account of this harrowing episode – one of the best-known passages from the *Brief Récit* of his second voyage – in relation to Cartier's place in the historiography of the French exploration and colonization of North America. The Malouin captain has been portrayed in a variety of ways since his belated rise to prominence in the nineteenth century, perhaps most often as either a heroic trailblazer of French North America or as a materialistic treasure hunter. In light of a careful reading of this famous passage, this article proposes another possible frame in which to understand Cartier's contributions, one that may better do justice to the rhetorical features of his text, and that avoids an exclusive focus on what the captain did or did not do in the New World, without accounting for his relationship to the Old Country.¹ As early examples of the *récit de*

voyage, a literary genre popularized in France during the following century, the texts served not only to document Cartier's successes and failures, but also to minimize the figurative distance between the New World and Cartier's home.

Cartier's description of his crew's encounter with and eventual triumph over an unknown illness during the second voyage is richly detailed, so much so that scholars have had no difficulty identifying it as scurvy.² The trouble began in December of 1535. A deadly disease arrived among the Iroquoian inhabitants of the village of Stadaconé, on the present-day site of Québec City, prompting the French visitors to isolate themselves inside their nearby fort and forbid entry to the Stadaconans. Despite this protective measure, the Frenchmen soon began exhibiting signs of sickness themselves: swollen and blood-speckled legs, infected and rotting mouths, and loss of teeth. By mid-February, fewer than ten of the 110 members of the crew were still healthy. Cartier instructed his crew to pray for deliverance from the disease, and organized a procession toward a portrait of the Virgin Mary, where he promised during the recitation of mass to make a pilgrimage to Notre Dame de Rocamadour if God would allow him to live long enough to return to France. On the day Cartier made this promise, a twenty-two-year-old member of the crew named Philippe Rougemont died of the still unidentified malady. Dissection of the corpse yielded detailed information about the physiological effects of the unknown disease, but no respite from its continuing toll on the crew.

Finally, in mid-April, after twenty-five crew-members had succumbed and forty more seemed certain to die, a cure arrived from a most unlikely source. Cartier himself, one of the few who had never fallen ill, went for a walk outside the fort and happened to cross paths with a group of Amerindians from Stadaconé, including Domagaya, the son

of a prominent village leader and one of two Amerindians who had been kidnapped and taken back to France during Cartier's first voyage. Knowing that his acquaintance had been deathly ill less than two weeks before, Cartier expressed surprise at seeing him in apparent good health, and asked how he had managed to cure himself. Domagaya described the healing properties of a drink made from the leaves and bark of a tree that he called *annedda*, and sent two Iroquoian women with Cartier to procure the necessary ingredients and to brew the strange cocktail. Cartier's chance encounter with Domagaya yielded immediate dividends. Sailors brave enough to try the infusion of *annedda* were cured after only two or three doses. This seemingly miraculous treatment halted the slow destruction of the crew, allowing those who remained to return safely to France.

The story of Cartier's struggles with scurvy is a staple of modern accounts of his experiences in the New World, and scholarly readings of the incident tend to reflect at least one of two long-standing perceptions of his work in the New World: the Malouin captain as a heroic trailblazer of the French New World, and more nuanced analyses that insist on his material objectives. One does not have to look very hard to find references to Cartier as the first European to do myriad things in the New World. Although he elsewhere offered more measured assessments of Cartier's contributions, Marcel Trudel summed up the captain's general reputation when he wrote that Cartier "est le premier à faire un relevé des côtes du golfe Saint-Laurent, à décrire la vie des Indiens du Nord-Est de l'Amérique du Nord, et, c'est bien là son plus grand mérite, il découvre en 1535 le fleuve Saint-Laurent" (*Dictionnaire Biographique*).³ Although not necessarily wrong, retrospective insistence on this impressive string of "firsts" in the New World may have been one factor in Cartier's rehabilitation in the nineteenth century as the fearless hero of

Québec nationalist histories and popular culture, whose achievements paved the way for French civilization in the New World, despite being poorly known during his own lifetime and largely ignored in the two centuries immediately after his death. As Alan Gordon recently remarked, the “common sense” view of Cartier in the early twentieth century was that “His voyages represented the founding acts of Canada’s history” (127).⁴

Cartier’s account of his encounter with a strange and deadly illness aligns easily with the common tendency to emphasize his status as a prodigious collector of “firsts.” The description of the physical effects of scurvy that accompanies the captain’s search for relief has been cited as a pioneering work in the history of medicine. Jacques Rousseau, for example, wrote that “Sa description, devenue classique, est même l’une des plus anciennes, sinon la première, offrant un peu de précision” (171). The dissection of Philippe Rougemont’s corpse was “La première autopsie pratiquée au Canada” (Pariseau 240), and was path-breaking even by European standards, since it occurred at a time when bodies still were dissected only infrequently in Europe’s capitals and centers of knowledge.⁵ As far as one observer is concerned, Cartier’s description of the cardiac lesions caused by scurvy was unrivaled in medical scholarship until 1900 (Cadotte 654). And the relief from the disease that came with use of the *annedda* remedy has been called “one of the first documented uses of indigenous medicine in North America” (Durzan 1) and “the first native northeastern medical prescription” (Hosbach 115). From beginning to end, then, Cartier’s experience with scurvy is often characterized in ways that fit neatly within long-standing portraits of the captain as a bold pioneer, racking up an impressive series of achievements that eventually would make him a hero of French-Canadian civilization.

Modern professional historians often have portrayed Cartier less as a collector of accomplishments in the New World than as a man on a mission from the French king, preoccupied with locating material wealth and finding a trade route to Asia for the benefit of France (Gordon 175; Trudel, *Histoire* 69-70). It is not hard to find support in the historical record for this perception of the captain. A royal order pertaining to the outfitting of Cartier's first voyage specified that he was to "faire le voyage de ce royaume es terres Neufves pour descouvrir certaines ysles où l'on dit qu'il se doibt trouver grant quantité d'or et autres riches choses" (Havard and Vidal 36). Cartier indeed seems to have done his best to locate and appropriate the New World's wealth for the benefit of France. The captain famously carried home a load of what he apparently believed to be gold and diamonds from his third voyage, only to learn that his treasure was nothing but worthless iron pyrite and quartz (Trudel, "Pour une mesure" 150; Turgeon 97-98). This failure aside, the geographic knowledge produced over the course of the voyages was quickly incorporated into maps, facilitating subsequent expeditions to seek the New World's wealth as well as transforming Canada in the collective French imagination from an obstacle to reaching the Orient into a potential source of exotic riches (Trudel, "Pour une mesure" 152; Turgeon 99, 112-13). And as Laurier Turgeon has argued, Cartier did not entirely fail in this mission despite his inability to locate precious metals and a trade route to Asia. The captain's enthusiastic reports on the New World's abundance of consumable fauna contributed to the acceleration of the Canadian fur trade and cod fishing expeditions that fed France's voracious appetite for both goods during the colonial period (102-110).

From the point of view of Cartier's efforts to exploit the new terrain in the service of metropolitan France, the illness that laid low his crew has sometimes been viewed as an irksome interruption instead of a challenge that produced several impressive accomplishments. In one of the few examinations of the passage by a scholar of literature, Marie-Christine Gomez-Géraud, for example, noted that Cartier's diseased crew could not, while trapped inside their fort, engage in the work that would be necessary to locate and extract the New World's material wealth, making the scurvy incident the very antithesis of exploration and discovery. Gomez-Géraud writes,

L'enclos du fort est, par excellence, l'envers d'un lieu satisfaisant pour l'explorateur: celui-ci ne peut en effet accomplir sa mission que dans un espace ouvert. Or, même le fleuve, route naturelle qui balise le paysage canadien et permet de s'y enfoncer, a cessé d'être une voie d'accès vers les lieux lointains auxquels tentent de parvenir les découvreurs. (93)

From this point of view, the cure offered by the *annedda* tree was not another of Cartier's accomplishments, but merely the mechanism that allowed him to resume his actual work: the purposeful and methodical exploration of the New World for the purpose of its material exploitation (94-95).

Indeed, the way in which the story is typically summarized by scholars reinforces its reduction to a setback that was overcome by the driven and methodical captain. Gilles Havard and Cécile Vidal, to cite just one prominent and typical example, devote just a few sentences to the crew's struggle with illness, and use it to illustrate the "calamitous winter" that interrupted Cartier's exploration and search for riches. Havard and Vidal recount,

À ce climat tendu s’ajoutaient le froid et, pire, le scorbut, qui fit des ravages parmi les Français. Sur 110 hommes, 10 seulement se trouvaient toujours valides en février. Cartier, qui craignait un assaut, prit soin de cacher ses malheurs aux Indiens. Mais il parvint à obtenir de Domagaya un remède salvateur: la tisane d’*anneda*, faite avec les feuilles et l’écorce pilée du cèdre blanc, riche en vitamine C. Entre temps, toutefois, 25 Français avaient péri.

(40)

By identifying the disease positively as scurvy, this summary of the tale – and many others like it – obscures the befuddlement that marks Cartier’s own account of the incident, and assigns to the captain a degree of decisiveness and purpose that would have been impossible in the face of an unknown adversary.⁶ Instead of first unsuccessfully attempting to avoid the disease by sequestering his crew inside their fort and then seeking relief in prayer and experimental autopsy, the Cartier presented here proceeds immediately to a mysterious local remedy. And his procurement of the cure is presented as an intentional act – he “manages to obtain it” – rather than a fortunate accident or an act of desperation after all else had failed and total destruction seemed imminent. In such renderings of the incident, the captain seems less perplexed by an unknown illness and lucky enough to stumble upon a cure than a purposeful explorer finding the means to overcome a mortal threat to his real work – the exploration of the New World in search of material riches.

Interpretations of the scurvy incident in relation to Cartier’s materialistic mission in the New World are appealing because they hew closely to the captain’s actual purpose there, instead of to retrospective assessments of his heroic achievements. But both points

of view on the scurvy incident traced above – and indeed on Cartier’s entire approach to the New World – also share a limitation that to my mind makes them inadequate to account fully for his work, both physical and textual. Whether a collector of accomplishments or a treasure hunter working on behalf of the king, Cartier is generally depicted as having both eyes fixed firmly on the New World. In accounts of the scurvy incident that correspond to each point of view, the captain is described either as accomplishing something remarkable in the New World, or as being thwarted by circumstances that are temporarily beyond his control. Generally absent from both ways of assessing Cartier and his encounter with a deadly unknown illness is any effort to account for the rhetorical qualities of the passage – that is, the way it functions textually beyond its status as a record of accomplishment or failure. The rest of this article suggests that this focus on what Cartier did, or did not do, in the New World is only half of the story. As a traveler who would eventually return home, and who was writing for an audience of French readers who had not made the voyage themselves, Cartier was not focused only on his exotic destination, but also, simultaneously, on the home he had left behind.

Considered through the lens of Eurocentric travel, Cartier was an intermediary figure between two places that were equally significant to his experiences and to his accounts thereof: the exotic destination and the familiar home to which he would eventually return. As a number of theorists have suggested, departure from home and eventual return are at least as important to the phenomenon of the voyage as the experience of a new and startlingly different place that tends to get most of the attention in scholarship. Indeed, an eventual return to the point of departure is perhaps the defining

aspect of travel, without which any physical displacement becomes instead *errance*, exile, or permanent relocation. As Georges Van Den Abbeele, James Clifford, and others have noted, a voyager's point of departure and eventual return – his or her home – serves as the point of reference for the journey, against which experience of a foreign place is inevitably compared (Van Den Abbeele xv-xviii; Clifford, *Routes* 66). Whether the purpose of the voyage is material gain, intellectual enrichment, or spiritual pilgrimage, any traveler inevitably takes stock of his or her experiences in light of the home.

The texts that such travelers often wrote upon their return home had a key role in their efforts to measure their experiences of exotic destinations, and also to allow readers who had stayed at home to effect a similar reckoning in order to make sense of distant and unfamiliar places. As was typical and even recommended of the approximately 1,300 traveler's tales that would be printed in France during the genre's seventeenth-century heyday (Melzer 78), Cartier's texts unfold chronologically, beginning before the captain's departure from France and, with the exception of the third text, which inexplicably breaks off mid-voyage, ending only after his safe return.⁷ By beginning and ending their tales in a familiar locale – instead of recounting only what happened far from home – travelers allowed those who had stayed at home to replicate vicariously the experience of departing from the familiarity of home, seeing something new, and then returning home to reflect on the lessons learned about the home, the world beyond its borders, and the relationship between the two places (Van Den Abbeele xix; Campbell 2-3). Read in this light, Cartier's texts, and others like them, can be understood not only to document distant accomplishments or the oddities and opportunities to be found in a distant and unfamiliar place, but also to attempt to make the lessons of the exotic

destination comprehensible in terms of the home – that is, to draw the two places closer together rather than merely to share new information with those who did not travel.

One way traveler-writers like Cartier sought to reconcile home and exotic destination was by suggesting, through direct references to the familiar features of the point of departure, that the unfamiliar place described was perhaps not so different after all. Although Cartier often and perhaps most famously focuses on novelty in his texts, he also highlights similarities between the Old World and the New, as if to say that although in some ways strikingly different, the New World was still comprehensible in European terms. In one passage from the account of the second voyage, for example, Cartier comments on the flora and fauna he encountered while exploring the St. Lawrence River:

[...] nous avons esté navigans amont ledit fleuve sans perdre heure ny jour
Durant lequel temps avons veu et treuver d'aussi beau pays et terres aussi
unies que l'on sauroit desirer plaines des beaux arbres du monde savoyr
chaisnes hourmes noyers pins seddres pruches frennes boulz sauldres osiers et
force vignes [...]. Il y a pareillement force grues signes outardes ouayes
cannes allouettes faisans perdrix merles mauvys turtres chardonneroulx
seryns rossignolz et aultres oiseaulx comme en France et en grand
habondance. (147-48)

In this passage and in others like it, Cartier enumerates features of the New World that would be recognizable to residents of Europe, insisting not on the uniqueness of the place but instead on its familiarity.⁸ As if the simple listing of familiar trees and birds were not enough to communicate the idea that the place he was describing was in some ways similar to his homeland, he explicitly notes that the birds he lists are like those in France,

implying that their presence in the New World was a sign of the kinship of that place to more familiar locales. Cartier's frequent references to familiar France constitute a defense mechanism that could mitigate the challenges posed by his destination's radical differences by rhetorically drawing it closer to Europe, as if the traveler had never left the comfort of home at all.

Just as he identified the New World's flora and fauna with familiar examples from home as a way of reducing the figurative distance between the two places, Cartier's first response to the outbreak of a deadly disease among his crew was to seek signs that it was one already known to Europe, and that familiar remedies could therefore be applied. As noted above, the captain quarantined his crew inside their fort upon learning that the residents of Stadaconé were deathly ill, reflecting European strategies for combating the spread of plague (Lindemann 64, 203-04). When that measure failed to prevent his crew from falling ill, Cartier organized a procession toward a portrait of the Virgin Mary, followed by mass and pious promises of pilgrimage. Such processions were, at the time, commonplace in European medicine (Gomez-Géraud 92), where the line that is perhaps more readily discerned today between religious and scientific approaches to healing was not so clear. As Mary Lindemann has observed, illness was understood by Christians in Cartier's time to come ultimately from God, and "The most immediate and useful remedy for the soul – prayer – was also the most certain relief for the body" (253). Many scholars who have summarized the incident have read Cartier's quarantine as a protective measure against potentially aggressive Amerindians, and have failed to mention his explicitly religious attempt at treatment, which is no longer, by modern standards, a scientific response to scurvy.⁹ And yet, both of these early moments in the account deserve

consideration as part of the captain's confrontation with the disease, because they constitute attempts to treat a New World illness with Old World remedies, and thereby to find a link between the two places that could diminish a troubling difference between them: the possible existence in the New World of dangerous and unknown diseases.

Similarly, the autopsy performed on the corpse of Philippe Rougemont reveals itself on closer examination to be less a pioneering exploration of the unknown for its own sake than a search for something with which to identify or compare the mysterious ailment. Cartier himself explained the decision to cut open the dead crew-member's body: "Et pour ce que la maladie estoit incogneue fist le capitaine ouvryr le corps pour veoir si aurions aucune congnoissance d'icelle pour preserver si possible estoit le parsus" (170). In examining the internal organs of his deceased crew-member, Cartier was not merely attempting to document the effects of an unknown ailment for posterity – although, as noted earlier, the resulting description of the physiological effects of scurvy has been much appreciated. Instead, he sought to identify the unfamiliar ailment in the existing European intellectual repertoire, and thereby to diminish its danger. Deadly or not, a disease that could be named and treated with old European standbys would be another sign of a relationship between worlds Old and New. Unfortunately for Cartier's crew, his search for a point of reference in European medicine was unsuccessful. At least as far as the deadly disease that was slowly killing off his crew was concerned, the New World stubbornly refused Cartier's efforts to effect a rhetorical rapprochement.

Indeed, it seems that Cartier's efforts to put a name to the disease and apply familiar remedies were destined to fail because Europe simply did not possess the information that he was seeking, even though other voyagers of the period seem to have

experienced the same ailment.¹⁰ Vasco da Gama, for example, encountered scurvy during his own voyages, and reported a temporary respite from its effects after trading for oranges with Moorish vessels on the Eastern Coast of Africa (Carpenter 1-2). There is no indication in the text that Cartier was aware of this previous encounter with scurvy, and even if he had been, its value would have been minimal to him, since oranges were undoubtedly in short supply in the Canadian winter. The first European academic treatise on the disease was not published until two decades after Cartier's second voyage, and the word itself had scarcely appeared in the French language (Carpenter 29; Rousseau 171). More specific knowledge on the role of Vitamin C would have to wait for James Lind's famous eighteenth-century experiments in treating the disease with citrus fruit, and the biological processes involved were not understood until the early twentieth-century (Carpenter 52). Indeed, information about scurvy and how to treat it was truly scarce in Europe in Cartier's time. Although positive identification of the disease as scurvy in some modern scholarly accounts can give the impression that Cartier knew his adversary, the author's own text reflects an initial fruitless and doomed search for a European point of comparison, an attempt to identify the disease by name or at least to treat it with a familiar remedy.

With the New World refusing Cartier's efforts to erase its figurative distance, in medical matters, from Europe, the captain eventually found himself embracing a remedy that was unfamiliar, so much so that he was constrained to borrow the Iroquoian word used by his interlocutors for lack of an obvious French point of comparison (Mathieu 46). And yet, Cartier's comments on the remedy's swift and dramatic effect among his ailing crew reflect not – or not only – an appreciation for the new and different, but instead a

rapid pivot back to his focus on the Old World. The traveler-writer described the infusion of *annedda* in terms that assimilated it into Europe's more familiar religio-medical practices. Prefacing his account of the chance encounter with Domagaya that resulted in his acquisition of the remedy, Cartier wrote that "[...] Dieu par sa sainte grace nous regarda en pitié et nous envoya la congnoissance et remedde de notre garrison et santé" (172). Later in the account, Cartier referred to the cure as "ung vray et evydent miracle" (173) and wrote that his crew had recovered their health "grâce à Dieu" (174). Since, as noted above, sickness and healing were already understood in Europe to be largely spiritual matters, the captain's expressions of gratitude to God suggest not only religious fervor, but also the existence of a common divine hand at work in both European medicine and the newfound Iroquoian remedy. And as if the message of a link between New and Old World healing were not clear enough, Cartier also refers to the *annedda* treatment as "medecine" (174), neatly assigning it to a category of European knowledge.

Not only was the mysterious tree apparently worthy to be called "medecine," it was deemed by Cartier to be better than anything Europe had to offer. In addition to curing scurvy, the *annedda* infusion reportedly healed all of the crew's other ailments as well, including long-standing cases of syphilis (174). In the captain's own words, the drink was "[...] un remedde contre toutes maladies le plus excellent qui fut jamais veu ny trouvé sus la terre [...]" (171). As if the implied critique of European medicine were not clear enough, Cartier went further by explicitly comparing the new treatment favorably to Europe's best medical knowledge: "je veidz jamais arbre a esté employé en moins de huit jours lequel a faict telle operation que si tous les medecins de Louvain et Montpellier y eussent esté avecq toutes les drogues d'Alexandrie ilz n'en eussent pas tant

faict en ung an que ledict arbre en a faict en six jours” (174). Cartier’s assertion that the *annedda* treatment was superior to European medical knowledge and enthusiastic classification of it as “medecine” serve to incorporate the strange brew into European categories of knowledge, thereby minimizing, rather than merely exposing, the differences between the two places and their inhabitants. What superficially appears to be Cartier’s discovery of a new and startling custom is framed in the text as medical knowledge of the sort found in Europe’s centers of knowledge.¹¹ Unlike Cartier’s lists of familiar plants and animals, the message seems to be not only that the New World was like the Old, but also that the Old World could stand to become more like the New, in at least one respect.

Although Cartier clearly recognized the value of the *annedda*, he does not seem to have tried to introduce the actual use of the remedy into French medicine, and if he did try, he failed. Other French texts of the period suggest that seeds from the tree may have been offered as a gift to King François I and planted at Fontainebleau following Cartier’s second voyage, but the plant’s healing properties apparently were soon forgotten (Mathieu 45-54, 59-60; Dickenson 36). If the would-be exploiter of the New World may be said to have failed to provide the New World’s medicinal riches to his home country, he certainly succeeded by another measure, one linked to his status as a traveler whose Eurocentric itinerary implied a need to reflect on the relationship between the unfamiliar destination and the home to which he would eventually return. Indeed, the impact of Cartier’s enthusiastic comments on the remedy was soon felt in Europe, even if its curative effect was not. The Parisian lawyer and seventeenth-century visitor to New France Marc Lescarbot, for example, prescribed the *annedda* to potential future travelers

as a “sovereign” remedy, a cure of last resort: “Et pour un dernier et souverain remède, je renvoye le patient à l’arbre de vie (car ainsi le peut-on bien qualifier), lequel Iacques Quartier ci-dessus appelle *annedda*” (2.522). Samuel de Champlain and Gabriel Sagard were similarly aware of the promising remedy, but like Lescarbot reported only frustration in attempts to locate it.¹²

Despite the failure of subsequent voyagers to find and exploit the *annedda* after Cartier enthusiastically elevated it to the status of medicine, the treatment remarkably has remained a staple of western medical knowledge. Textbooks on vitamins routinely use the story to illustrate the beginnings of the discovery of the link between Vitamin C and scurvy, and summaries of the incident – which generally conform to the familiar pattern of painting Cartier in heroic, trailblazing terms – appear regularly as historical curiosities in medical journals. And scientific researchers frequently attempt, on the basis of biochemical, botanical, and other evidence, to identify the still-mysterious tree that Cartier called *annedda*.¹³ Although the tree and remedy itself seem to have been lost almost as soon as Cartier found them, the captain’s story became and has remained a staple of western medical science, instead of an Iroquoian custom described as part of a portrait of a unique culture.

The encounter with the *annedda* remedy sometimes seems, in scholarly accounts, to lend support to common conceptions of the famous explorer as heroic trailblazer or materialistic treasure hunter in the New World, but it is clear that Cartier’s accounts of his New World adventures also reflect a particular way of confronting and making sense of new and unfamiliar places and cultures. Cartier faced with an unknown and deadly illness is not – or not only – a heroic discoverer, treasure hunter, or explorer, but a

traveler whose physical experience and written account of the New World were centered on the home to which he returned after each voyage. Although Cartier's description of the incident appears at first glance to be a harrowing and dangerous brush with the radically different New World, it also reflects a traveler's need to make sense of the relationship between the two places drawn into dialogue by the voyage itself. Even though it occurred while Cartier and crew were physically unable to move, the scurvy incident is a quintessential tale of travel, in which a potentially troubling departure from the familiar and an experience of the unknown are mitigated through a series of attempts to integrate new experiences into Europe's pre-existing understanding of the world.

A close look at the crew's struggles with deadly illness and the subsequent cure suggests that thinking about Cartier as a traveler on a circular itinerary away from and then back to home – and of his texts as travel writing – has certain advantages over the other, more common frames for considering his contributions discussed above. Some scholars have been dismissive of the texts' rhetorical merit, preferring to see them primarily as sometimes cryptic ship's logs of navigational data and straightforward descriptions of curiosities observed,¹⁴ a tendency that has also sometimes colored scholarly readings of the scurvy incident. Jacques Rousseau, for example, claimed that “La description de la ‘grosse maladie’ ne renferme aucune équivoque. Rien d'important dans le récit qui demande une exégèse, sauf un point pourtant, l'identité de l'annedda, le mystérieux remède employé pour enrayer le mal” (172). By opting here for the explicitly literary frame of travel writing, I hope to have shown that more was at work in Cartier's texts than sometimes meets the eye, and that conceptions of the captain that focus only on his actions in the New World do not tell the whole story. Thinking of Cartier as a traveler

moving between and thinking about two places simultaneously yields a reading of his text that shows the extent to which he was not only trying to document his accomplishments and experiences in a new and unfamiliar place, but also to reflect on the relationship of that place to his homeland, and thereby to minimize, rather than merely describe, the figurative distance between them.

Notes

¹ The text does not indicate who wrote the travel account, a point that continues to be a subject of some debate among scholars. Marius Barbeau famously suggested that François Rabelais may have written the account of the second voyage, and others have attributed the text to Jean Poulllet, a member of Cartier's crew. Medical historians have sometimes attributed the text – or at least the part of it that recounts the scurvy incident – to Sanson Ripault, the expedition's surgeon (Cadotte 652). Most modern scholars affirm that despite the third person narration, which apparently was common in Cartier's time, the captain himself wrote the texts that correspond to his voyages. On these debates, see Gordon 31; Trudel, *Histoire* 72-73 (note 25); and Bideaux's introduction to his edition of Cartier's *Relations*, which argues that Cartier himself was indeed the author.

² The following summary of the incident and all quotations of Cartier are from Michel Bideaux's 1986 edition of Cartier's *Relations*, 169-74.

³ One could easily offer many additional examples, but I will content myself with just three: Victor Hanzeli remarked that Cartier's account of his first voyage contained the first Iroquoian words to appear in print (17); Gustave Lanctot, an influential early Cartier scholar, began a brief article by noting that "Il y a quatre cent ans passés, en 1534, Jacques Cartier accomplissait le premier périple du golfe Saint-Laurent et révélait à l'Europe l'existence d'un grand pays, qui devait être un jour le Canada" (40); Jon Parmenter recently credited Cartier with the "first encounters of the Laurentian Iroquois" (4).

⁴ As Alan Gordon observed in his recent book on the subject, "Jacques Cartier [...] is clearly a recovered historical hero. Forgotten to all but a few erudite scholars for over two hundred years, he was resurrected and reinvented during the nineteenth-century" (26). Marcel Trudel remarked that this elevation of Cartier was "[...] comme une revanche pour la conquête de 1760 et, en même temps, une manifestation d'orgueil national" ("Pour une mesure" 149).

⁵ According to Cadotte, “Dans l’empire germanique et à Bologne, on ne procédait qu’à une seule dissection par année; en Espagne, on ne disposait que d’un seul corps tous les trois ans. A Paris, la première dissection eut lieu en 1478 ou en 1494 et en Angleterre, les Facultés eurent droit à quatre cadavres par année à partir de 1540. [...] Vésale d’ailleurs n’a pas encore publié son *Humani Corporis Fabrica Libri Septem* qui ne paraîtra qu’en 1543. Morgagni, père de l’anatomie pathologique, ne publiera ses œuvres que près de deux siècles plus tard” (651).

⁶ For similar accounts of the incident, see Combs 9, Ball 3, and McDowell 599. For more examples of scholarly summaries that suggest that Cartier knew his adversary by name, see Packer and Fuchs 4, Houston 161, Durzan 1, etc. Far from identifying it as scurvy, Cartier himself remarked more than once that the disease was unknown to him and his crew (169-70).

⁷ Aligning the beginning-middle-end arc of their narratives with the departure-destination-return trajectory of the physical voyage was recommended in early modern *arts de voyager* – instruction manuals for would be travelers and travel-writers – and had the virtue of ensuring that travel texts would be rhetorically pleasing. See Normand Doiron 149-85 and also Van Den Abbeele xviii.

⁸ As André Berthiaume observed in a study of Cartier’s use of analogies, “Par l’usage étendu de la comparaison, Cartier cherche à atténuer les distances, qui ne sont pas seulement géographiques, entre deux mondes, l’ici européen et l’ailleurs amérindien, séparés par un Atlantique de préjugés” (24). Examples abound. When Cartier disembarks on the Île d’Orléans, he finds it stocked with familiar vegetation, writing “Et nous estans à ladite yslle la trouvasmes plaine de fort beaulx arbres comme chaisnes hourmes pins seddrez et aultres boys de la sorte des nostres et pareillement y trouvasmes force vignes ce que n’avions veu par cy devant à toute la terre. Et pour ce la nommasmes l’isle de Bascuz” (139-140). Later in the same text, Cartier described a forest “[...] plaines de chaisnes aussi beaulx qu’il y ait en forest de France [...]” (151). For more, see Berthiaume.

⁹ Once his crew was already afflicted with the disease, Cartier indeed appears to have attempted to hide the extent of the problem from the Stadaconans, apparently in order to avoid seeming vulnerable. But the quarantine at least initially served as an attempt to avoid the illness that had struck the nearby Amerindian community (169). Exceptionally and to her credit, Marie-Christine Gomez-Géraud includes Cartier’s religious intervention in her treatment of the scurvy incident. Trudel also offers a remarkably complete account of the incident in his *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* 102-04.

¹⁰ For a good overview of European encounters with scurvy from 1498 to 1700, see Carpenter, chapter 1. The second chapter contains an overview of the academic treatises on the subject that appeared during the same period.

¹¹ On the particular significance of Louvain, Montpellier, and Alexandria as centers of medical knowledge, see Mathieu 42-43.

¹² Wrote Lescarbot: “Quant à l’arbre Annedda tant célébré par Jacques Quartier, il ne se trouve plus aujourd’hui. Ledit Champlain en a fait diligente perquisition, et n’en a sçeu avoir nouvelle” (II.258). Champlain himself recognized the *annedda* tree as a reputed cure for scurvy in his writings, but apparently never managed to find it, although he observed what he considered to be encouraging signs. On meeting an Amerindian leader named *Aneda*, Champlain saw a potential source of the remedy: “Je me persuadai par ce nom que c’estoit un de sa race qui avoit trouvé l’herbe appelée Aneda, que Jacques Cartier a dict avoit tant de puissance contre la maladie appelée Scorbut, dont nous avons desja parlé, qui tourmenta ses gens aussi bien que les nostres, lors qu’il yvernerent en Canada. Les sauvages ne cognoissent point ceste herbe, ny ne sçavent que c’est, bien que ledit sauvage en porte le nõ” (322). In his 1632 *Grand Voyage du Pays des Hurons*, Recollet missionary Gabriel Sagard reduced the *annedda* to hearsay, suggesting that he, too, had not managed to find it. Wrote Sagard: “On dict aussi que nos Montagnets et Canadiens ont un arbre appellé *Annedda*, d’une admirable vertu; ils pillent l’escorce et les feuilles de cet arbre, puis font bouillir le tout en eauë, et la boivent de deus jours l’un et mettent le marc sur les jambs enflées et malades et s’en trouvent bien tost guéris, comme de toutes autres sortes de maladies interieures et exterieures” (272).

¹³ For examples of vitamin textbooks, see Packer and Fuchs 4, Ball 3, Combs 9, and McDowell 599; for articles in medical journals that recount the scurvy incident, see Martini, Desjardins, Cadotte, and Pariseau; for recent efforts to identify the *annedda*, see Houston, Durzan, Hosbach, and Mathieu. The absence of a complete description of the tree has left scholars to piece together the relatively sparse clues as to its identity. Cartier’s accounts reveal that the tree was as big as France’s oak trees. And since the leaves were retrieved there was still ice and snow on the ground, it is clear that the tree in question was still green in winter, eliminating candidates like the Hawthorn and Sassafras (Rousseau 174). The languages of other Iroquoian groups in North America contain the word *annedda* and similar terms, designating various species of conifer (Rousseau 182). Jacques Rousseau’s identification of the white cedar as a prime candidate for *Annedda* has been influential, although dissenting views also are common. Richard E. Hosbach weighed the biochemical evidence in a 1994 article and proposed the eastern white pine as the most likely suspect. Martini asserted, on grounds that are unclear, that the tree in question was a spruce (5). By far the best treatment of the question is Jacques Mathieu’s book *L’Annedda: L’Arbre de Vie*, which discredits some popular theories and argues that the tree encountered by Cartier was the balsam fir.

¹⁴ The editor of one twentieth-century edition, for example, wrote that “L’auteur ne cherche pas à faire œuvre d’artiste. Il varie peu les formules, narre les situations les plus tragiques sans émotion et tient fidèlement son journal de bord, plus soucieux de précisions maritimes ou de possibilités minières que de particularités ethniques. C’est la simplicité du style et l’exactitude des détails qui font les mérites du livre” (Julien 26).

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