In this paper\textsuperscript{1} we deal with ethnographic evidence. Examining it in the light of two theoretical assumptions, we hope to render the data more reasonably expressive, more revealing, and finally we hope to test the assumptions through the data. Our first assumption states that Micmac culture as constituted today is a product of missionary influence and their reshaping activities. This started in the early 17th century, when the first French missionaries came in and tried to restore a culture under heavy pressure by fishermen and their uncontrolled trading with alcohol as a weapon. Then in the 18th century, a more lasting structure was given to the entire Micmac population by Father Maillard. It could be argued that he shaped traditional Micmac culture more than any other Micmac leader. Our ethnographic evidence will help us in determining whether this much influence was possible at all.

Our second assumption says that the traditional dynamics of a native people reacted in order to accommodate increasing pressure from the outside. Even in the state of constant wars during the 18th century, the Micmac kept a social structure with a traditional leadership. They withdrew into the hills of Nova Scotia and into the Cape Breton highlands, where European pressure was minimal. There they were able not only to physically regenerate themselves, but also to restructure their social organization into a viable society adapted to respond to pressure from a militarily and economically dominant culture, a type of ethnogenesis.

Reasonable evidence from a quite unknown missionary source allows us to highlight two specific cases of missionary involvement. Christian Kauder,

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born in Ettelbrück, Luxembourg, in 1817, was ordained as a priest in 1840. In 1845 he came to the United States as a member of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. In 1852, due to ill health, he left the United States and came to Nova Scotia. There, in the Trappist Monastery of Tracadia, he devoted 15 years to missionary work among the Micmac. A fluent speaker of French, German and English, he nevertheless did not seem to master the Micmac language. Much of the money he received from European missionary societies, through the intervention of Bishop MacKinnon, diocesan Bishop of Arichat, went for paying for the services of Micmac translators. Kauder never wrote books or pamphlets idealizing his work, something which appeared to be a common practice among his contemporary fellow missionaries (e.g., Vetromile, Rand). Letters requesting funds and letters of thanks to newspapers and clerical authorities was all he wrote about his missionary work. In addition he published Micmac translations of liturgical texts, and wrote a Micmac grammar which remained in manuscript. In our view this fact may lend additional seriousness to the work of a humble and quiet man.

In Nova Scotia, Kauder entered into a vacuum, caused not only by missing priests, but also by political debates that had been raging for years. The question was whether or not Nova Scotia should enter the new federation. The near total feeling was no, as expressed in reports by the provincial legislature in those years. Indian issues were very marginal then even according to local standards. We therefore imagine that Kauder’s arrival was more than welcome. He represented a positive reinforcement of traditional Micmac authority.

For the Micmac, relations with Europeans sympathetic to Indian life style due to economic, military and symbolic reasons had been most important all through their history. They especially cherished the exchange of religion and European symbols on an ideal level in order to create a strong alliance. For a long time this has been underestimated. At this point the intriguing and mythically enshrouded personality of the first Micmac chief Membertou must also be mentioned.

The image of the Micmac as depicted through Kauder’s writings describes a people divided in bands, semi-nomadic, moving within a limited area on an annual basis in order to assure their subsistence. Those living in Nova Scotia were estimated at 1000 families in 1859. Important settlements were Eskasonik in Cape Breton where the Grand Chief resided, and the Holy Family Mission on Chapel Island, the only mission station with its own house. In Merigomish, Kauder had a church built, but the ones in Pomquet and Eskasoni were in need of repairs too. There was no furnishing at all, no crossway stations or any other religious paraphernalia. Without the stipend from the order of the Holy Redeemer in the United States he
would not have been able to survive. In the language of his day he calls
the Micmac "poor lost savages and children of the forest". The total area
of his missions comprised about 2000 square miles of difficult terrain, wide
estuaries with marshes, forest and hills and open sea. Most of the 1000
families were under his spiritual guidance. His work as a travelling priest
for European immigrants had already been strenuous, so he knew what was
awaiting him. Another barrier was the Micmac language, which he only
slowly overcame. Testimony is given by his writings that he spent money
for a language teacher and an interpreter for confessions and sermons, not
uncommon to missions even today.

Next to Tracadia, (Tlagatoag 'settlement') and next to the hamlet
called Monastery, lies the Micmac town of Pomquet. Today it is the Pom­
quet and Afton Indian Reserve No. 23, Nova Scotia, on the Pomquet river
and its estuary, which forms a wide bay with many coves, ideal for seafood
gathering and hunting. It was one of the typical Micmac settlements ex­
hibiting native subsistence economy. At Kauder's time, the band itself
consisted of about 50 families living on the reservation and experiencing
strong pressure by white settlers, especially on their agricultural land and
on their timber resource. The reservation size is 980 acres today. This
case may not be unique among peoples of the East coast who encountered
early European expeditions, but it is certainly among the best documented
ones. We have isolated two specific incidents which may help to illustrate
Kauder's role for the Micmac of his times and his area.

1. The Pomquet Petition

In this petition Kauder writes in 1862 (Kauder 1862) on behalf of Pomquet
chief Sak Plospel ('Jack Prosper') to the bishop in order to ask for help
redressing a situation of illegal sales of trees on reservation land by one
Micmac individual. Kauder also addressed the stealing of land and the
demand for a prompt delivery for clothes of good quality, as had been agreed
upon in treaties. It is in Kauder's handwriting, and the letter is addressed
to the diocese bishop of Arichat Bishop MacKinnon to be forwarded to
the governor of Nova Scotia. This actually happened. The petition and
redress were discussed in the assembly in 1863 (Nova Scotia 1863) and
acted upon. A positive step was taken by the legislative and it passed;
money was attributed to the Micmac for compensation.

2 For nearly seven years he had served as a missionary to European immigrants,
before leaving the order. Manuscript by the author.

3 The copy of the petition is to be found at the Ludwig Missions-Vereinsarchiv
in Munich.
Close working contacts between Kauder and Jack Prosper seemed to have existed. In both cases described here, the local chief was the beneficiary. Kauder continued a tradition of the Catholic church among the Micmac, which was to help them in problematic situations. He cooperated with the Micmac hierarchy, thus reinforcing and supporting the Micmac authorities according to the system set in place by Abbé Maillard during the 1700s. Kauder revived the strong link between the church and the Micmac.

2. The Missing Chief Insignia

As already described, French missionaries played a crucial part in the original unification of the Micmac bands they touched upon. All European powers needed hierarchies with single leaders in order to discuss and signcession documents, whether they were called friendship declarations or peace treaties. Even though the French did not come to settle, they did come to take possession. In order to justify their landing and the establishment of the Port Royal settlement, they made symbolic cooperation treaties in which they gave local spokespeople (who later became the Micmac chiefs) medals of French kings. The medals used by Abbé Maillard had the portrait of King Louis XIV on one side, they were given as a sign of peace and alliance to chosen village leaders. The success of these insignia led Abbé Maillard in the 1700s to create a Micmac communication network and thus a church hierarchy at the same time. Most efficiently it was used in French military actions against the invading British. It even functionned after 1755 when the last French were expelled from Acadia. This was the basis of the legend of the French underground military leader Maillard and his Micmac troops. Militarily it was the hate for the British and the fight for freedom, and on the religious level it was the distribution and copying of a catechism with a hymnal in the Micmac hieroglyphs, which cemented this unequal union for the Micmac.

Let us now turn to the situation into which Kauder intervened. Kauder gives us a description of local life in Pomquet (Kauder 1857–). He writes of his successful temperance movement, and he remarks that only one person was left drinking alcohol. He also writes that for a period of 100 years they have not had a missionary who spoke their language. The old torn manuscripts were the only means with which they held on to their beliefs. However no family had a complete copy. Kauder managed to piece together two complete sets. He writes that some children also possessed a small catechism which they copied for each other, on birchbark, for lack of paper. Two local boys and two girls taught the hieroglyphs on Sundays and Feast days to others without being paid.
The chief of Pomquet, Sak Plospel/ Jack the happy/ is a fine catholic, who works among them like a missionary. The same can be said of the six other chiefs. He is about 53 years old, father of seven children who all are very religious. His wife is knowledgeable about herbs, she works as a doctor.

Kauder writes that the Micmac had nearly no religion left when he arrived. Traditional medicine and some leftover Catholic religion may have been practiced by these village chiefs. We assume that the individuals practicing it stayed the same, but the religious contents changed. A description of the catholic practices reveals how integrated this Catholicism has been in Micmac life and religious practice.

Every day in the morning and in the evening Plospel calls all the Indians to communal prayer. In addition all pray the rosary. Before and after mass there are prayers; even when they take a drink of water, they make the sign of the cross. On Sunday and feast-days they assemble under the leadership of Plospel for a mass. Mass and Vesper are sung, also in absence of a priest, which is very often. The chief holds a speech. After a communal meditation he goes into the huts of those who had not participated, to enquire the reasons. Also he gives good help for the sick and the dying. He prepares them for death, after they have received the last sacraments by the priest. And he buries the dead, all prayer and hymns are in the hieroglyph book, as they should be sung and said during the ritual. Also he baptizes small children in emergency cases. For which his wife is well trained too.

These are the responsibilities of a village chief. They may date back to the times of Abbé Maillard as mentioned before. Thereby the missionary ensured the full loyalty of the whole band, by missionizing from the top and by keeping traditional structures alive, as well as by reinforcing a formerly more dynamic hierarchy. This combination of different cultural pressures allowed Catholicism not only to be persistant, but also to become the only religion of Micmac people today. They had lay priests with full authority long before the Catholic church ever thought of tolerating or introducing this position. The lay Micmac authorities preached and assured a continual practice of Catholicism, a Micmac Catholicism certainly, and a part of their identity.

These headmen were helped by prayer-leaders (nujialasudemat). Due to their nomadic life, in which groups often separate, their chief is not always with them. In this situation one of the prayer-leaders holds the regular communal meetings. Kauder says: “This office is a big honour. I have increased their number in Pomquet. I gave each a large framed picture which they carry everywhere, and when he does office, he hangs it up on a tree or in a hut.”

Here Kauder gives us descriptions of the two most important offices upon which Micmac Catholicism rests. He indicates how he revitalized
the position of prayer-leader, making it attractive by offering symbols of office, and by incorporating more people, creating a broader base within the population. After recruiting new prayer-leaders, Kauder set about to repair the biggest social rift in the village of Pomquet. Micmac village chiefs traditionally had received insignia in the form of large silver medals given to them by Louis XIV, King of France; or so the inscription said. When a chief died, the bishop gave it to his successor at a solemn high mass.

The medal of Pomquet had been lost under the second-to-last chief before Plospel. Therefore some did not accept Plospel's authority. There were, so to say, two chiefs among them. This led to disorder and sometimes to fights. Kauder writes:

To stop this disorder I searched everywhere for the medal, but in vain. The year before last, a priest from here had to go to Europe, and he brought some medals back. Last year at the feast of St Anne, patron saint of this tribe, Plospel, the legitimate chief, received this medal solemnly during the high mass and in the presence of all his subjects. Now the chief is being respected everywhere.

The new medal shows on one side the picture of Pope Pius IX, on the other side a cross with the following hieroglyphs:

Jesus eulidelemin, Jesus erbarme dich unser
Jesus (have mercy)

Kijinu Mali abonemiun, Unsere Mutter Maria hilf uns
(Mother Mary help us)

Kauder writes:

In order to strengthen the chief's power, four KAPTINACH (ministers) were chosen the same day to be of help to him. From old times on they had insignia, MUTSCHKOLK, in their language. It has this form . These too had been lost. Four were made of silver in Halifax. I just received them. Next Sunday the bishop will present them. All these insignia must be kept; because they help to keep these savages in respect and under the control of their leaders. There are now only three to four restless ones among them. I hope they will quiet down with time. The Indians are independent of any other power. The chief and his Kaptinach can even sentence somebody to death. They never sentence anybody without asking the bishop's advice. Most punishments of public offenses consist in public penitences. The harshest for them is the exclusion from common prayer and mass.

Kauder has given us his rationale for supporting the native hierarchy. He stands alone, as a single missionary in the 1860s, very much like earlier French missionaries, in a seemingly lost position vis-à-vis the numerous Micmac. But from early on, reason, compromise and understanding dictated the missionaries' behaviour. They worked within the Micmac hierarchy
and sought to tighten it in order to gain easier access and an earlier gain of influence in the Maritimes. It always has been simpler to deal with one partner instead of a hundred.

The fact that Kauder writes about the independence of the Micmac is crucial. It shows us how much he and any other outsiders were still compelled at that time to enter communication on the Micmac’s own terms; this even over 100 years after the final British domination began. It also illustrates how genuine the Catholic remains in Micmac life had been. They were certainly not forced to listen to this one missionary. It looks very much like the first encounters in 1610, when a single priest took up ritual contact with Micmac and left such a deep impression. One individual and his influence won what no military force could have done. At Kauder’s time the seeds had already been well sown for a Catholic Micmac identity. His actions and the publication of the first and only Micmac hieroglyph book cemented this identity, at least for the next 50 years, until Father Pacifique arrived. Catholic influence has always been mediated by the highest Micmac officials. Kauder writes about the death sentence; it is very doubtful that Micmac would have done that. But the fact that the bishop would have been asked, shows that a more or less regular communication channel existed between the highest authorities on both sides (see also the petition). And the concept of public penitence is slowly being taken up again by modern democracies.

Another argument for the inherent Micmac communal Catholicism is conveyed by the remark by Kauder that an exclusion from mass or communal prayer is considered to be the harshest punishment. At first this sounds too logical, a Catholic priest being proud of his parish and thus colouring his reports. But at a second glance it reveals some Micmac cultural attitudes — Catholicism is communal, as are Micmac traditional values. Thus it is clear that an exclusion from the community must symbolize the strongest punishment for people whose life only takes full sense through the community. Kauder knew the Micmac values well, but he knew even better how to make both Micmac and Catholic values coincide so that he and his missionary aims would come out on top. In the same sense he used public confessions, something every Micmac must have dreaded, in order to reenforce Catholic values.

We hope this paper has revealed some entirely new facets of this shy and frail missionary. Kauder can claim the merit for having reactivated Micmac Catholicism in the mid-19th century. He most likely saved the Micmac of Pomquet, and this not against their will, from the fate of many other East Coast peoples — the loss of the substance of cultural identity — by filling some cultural voids with Catholic contents.

Our conclusion then must consist of a combination of our two initial
assumptions. Our documents, which originate from a Catholic priest, show how powerful the Micmac's own cultural dynamics and mechanisms were, even in times of poverty and starvation. Finally we can safely assume that a combination of native social dynamics with guidance and protection through missionaries and their influence in the white establishment allowed not only a minimal leeway for action and basic life, but also a basic frame for survival in a newly combined identity, whether it be a form of ethnogenesis or a missionary restructuring of Micmac society.

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