

“A ‘Bon François’ Desirous of the Glory of the King”: Intra-Catholic Anti-Jesuitism and the Collapse of the Port Royal Mission, 1610-1613

Joseph R. Wachtel

Volume 49, numéro 2, automne 2020

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1075640ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Department of History at the University of New Brunswick

ISSN

0044-5851 (imprimé)

1712-7432 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Wachtel, J. (2020). “A ‘Bon François’ Desirous of the Glory of the King”:
Intra-Catholic Anti-Jesuitism and the Collapse of the Port Royal Mission,
1610-1613. *Acadiensis*, 49(2), 34–57.

Résumé de l'article

Cet article examine l'échec de la mission jésuite à Port-Royal, en Acadie, en 1613 dans l'optique du discours pamphlétaire anti-jésuite alors populaire en France. Après l'effondrement de la colonie, son propriétaire, Jean de Poutrincourt, écrivit un factum anonyme expliquant en détail comment deux missionnaires jésuites, Pierre Briard et Enemond Massé, conspirèrent contre la France pour causer la perte de l'établissement. Bien que les faits rapportés dans le factum soient inexacts, le litige démontre que, dans le contexte de la politique catholique française consécutive aux guerres de religion, les débats européens sur le catholicisme et la Réforme se transportèrent de l'autre côté de l'Atlantique dans les premières années de la Nouvelle-France.

"A 'Bon François' Desirous of the Glory of the King": Intra-Catholic Anti-Jesuitism and the Collapse of the Port Royal Mission, 1610-1613

JOSEPH R. WACHTEL

Cet article examine l'échec de la mission jésuite à Port-Royal, en Acadie, en 1613 dans l'optique du discours pamphlétaire anti-jésuite alors populaire en France. Après l'effondrement de la colonie, son propriétaire, Jean de Poutrincourt, écrivit un *factum* anonyme expliquant en détail comment deux missionnaires jésuites, Pierre Briard et Enemond Massé, conspirèrent contre la France pour causer la perte de l'établissement. Bien que les faits rapportés dans le *factum* soient inexacts, le litige démontre que, dans le contexte de la politique catholique française consécutive aux guerres de religion, les débats européens sur le catholicisme et la Réforme se transportèrent de l'autre côté de l'Atlantique dans les premières années de la Nouvelle-France.

This article examines the collapse of the Jesuit mission to Port Royal, Acadia, in 1613 through the lens of anti-Jesuit pamphleteering popular in France. After the colony's collapse, its proprietor, Jean de Poutrincourt, wrote an anonymous *Factum* explaining in detail how two Jesuit missionaries, Pierre Biard and Enemond Massé, conspired against France to bring down the settlement. Although the *Factum* is not factually accurate, in the context of French Catholic politics in the aftermath of the Wars of Religion the dispute demonstrates the transfer of European debates over Catholicism and the Reformation across the Atlantic in New France's earliest years.

IN THE SUMMER OF 1613, AN ENGLISH SHIP PILOTED BY Samuel Argall discovered Jesuit fathers Pierre Biard, Enemond Massé, and Jacques Quentin as well as Brother Gilbert du Thet constructing a new mission at St. Sauveur, on the coast of present-day Maine. The English captured the Jesuits as well as the French settlers who had accompanied them to the new colony. Argall and his men offered to repatriate a majority of them to France, but only if a small group of hostages, including Biard and Quentin, would travel to Jamestown as prisoners of England. At Jamestown, Sir Thomas Dale, Marshall of the Virginia Company, urged their execution but, after conferring with Argall, decided that

Joseph R. Wachtel, "'A 'Bon François' Desirous of the Glory of the King': Intra-Catholic Anti-Jesuitism and the Collapse of the Port Royal Mission, 1610-1613," *Acadiensis* 49, no. 2 (Autumn/automne 2020): 34-57.

French settlements had encroached too far down the coast and ordered the prisoners to help the ships return to New France to demolish St. Sauveur, St. Croix, and Port Royal – the Acadian colony to which Biard had been originally posted. Two ships, one commanded by Argall and another by his lieutenant William Turnell, returned to St. Sauveur and burned it to the ground. They then destroyed the initial French settlement at St. Croix. Argall commanded Biard to lead them next to Port Royal to eliminate the French presence along the Atlantic coast, but Biard refused to comply. Argall located the colony without the Jesuit's help, but when he arrived he found the settlement deserted.¹

The English were fed up with Biard. Turnell chastised his commander Argall for seeking guidance from a member of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), who were so loathed in England. Another “English Puritan,” “more malicious than the others,” advised Argall to abandon Biard on shore, for “he did not deserve that the English should give him food since,” by refusing to direct them to Port Royal, “he had tried to prevent [the English] from obtaining it.” While they deliberated on Biard's fate, several of Port Royal's French settlers, desperate for food, appeared on shore and hurled insults – at the Jesuit! Leading the charge against Biard was Charles de Biencourt, the son of Port Royal proprietor Jean de Biencourt, Sieur de Poutrincourt, who had left the younger man in charge of the colony while he negotiated for supplies in Paris. The young Biencourt addressed Argall – stating he was “very much surprised indeed that he had not already rid the world of the pernicious Jesuit,” whom he accused of treason. Biard, he asserted, “was a true and native Spaniard, who, having committed several crimes in France, on account of which he was a fugitive from Justice, had also been the cause of a great deal of scandal at Port Royal, and there could be not the slightest doubt that he would do something still to the English.”²

1 Pierre Biard, *Relation de la Nouvelle France, de ses Terres, Naturel du Pais, & de ses Habitans, item, du voyage des Pères Jesuites ausdictes contrées, & de ce qu'ils y ont fait jusques a leur prinse par les Anglois* (Lyon: Louys Muguet, 1616). It appears in French with an English translation in *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers Company, 1896-1901), vols. 3:19-281, 4:5-169 (JR). In *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu: Missiones Occidentales, Monumenta Novae Franciae*, vol. 1 (Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1967; Rome: Apud Monumenta Hist. Soc. Iesu, 1967) (MNF), editor Lucien Campeau provided a complete French transcription that includes editorial annotations made by Fr. Enemond Massé in the 1620s. Massé's annotations are in MNF, vol. 1, doc. 162, 456-637. For consistency's sake, all direct quotes follow Thwaites's translation, where available.

2 Biard, *Relation of 1616*, JR, 4:43-5.

Biard protested that neither he nor his parents had ever even *been* to Spain, and Argall admitted that Biencourt's claim seemed improbable. To convince him, six French settlers signed a written statement confirming Biencourt's testimony and they urged Argall to take Biard to Jamestown for execution. Since Biard had obstructed English attempts to locate the colony, Argall had little reason to protest Biencourt's suggestion. He ordered Turnell to take the Jesuit to a probable death in Virginia, but a storm blew Turnell's ship off course. Needing to resupply before continuing to England, they landed instead in the Portuguese Azores. Biard promised Turnell that he would not disclose to the Catholic Portuguese that the Protestant English held a Catholic priest as a prisoner if Turnell would grant him safe passage home rather than to England.³

In France, Poutrincourt, Biencourt's father, the leader of the now-destroyed settlement, sensationalized what had happened in a pamphlet: "Englishmen from Virginia, at the persuasion of Pierre Biard, Jesuit" sent a large navy to Port Royal. Since Biencourt and his men had left the settlement to deal with local Indigenous peoples, Biard led the English through the settlement, allowing them to plunder the fort. "The said English pillaged all that had been in the settlement," he complained, "and not content with this – pushed and driven by Biard – they broke the arms of the king with a mass of swords." According to Poutrincourt, Biard here showed that his true objective was to capture Biencourt, whose authority the Jesuit had unsuccessfully tried to usurp, and allow the English to imprison him at Jamestown.⁴

Poutrincourt's narrative is comical: why would a duplicitous Spanish Jesuit become a priest in France and go to North America under the guise of evangelizing, only to instead lead a Protestant English army against a helpless French settlement simply to capture the proprietor's son against whom he held a personal grudge? What forces could produce this inexplicable scene? Why had the relationship between two French coreligionists soured beyond repair in only a matter of months?

Indeed, this tableaux seems bizarre – but only if analyzing the history of North American colonization through the lens of European imperial rivalries. Within that framework, French missions and French commercial enterprises go hand in hand; England is the enemy, with Spain a looming shadow. These imperial rivalries, while very real, come from the hindsight of the latter half

3 Biard, *Relation of 1616*, JR, 4:29–77.

4 Poutrincourt, "Plainte de Jean de Biencourt Contre le P. Pierre Biard, La Rochelle, 18 juillet 1614," *MNF* 1:433–7.

of the 17th century and especially the 18th century, when maturing colonies clashed for resources in a mercantile world.⁵ Although Jesuits were forward-thinking in terms of building France's New World presence, from the point of view of North American colonial *origins*, in which missionary politics were mired in *domestic* affairs as much or more than the imperial politics that later developed, Poutrincourt's fears look less far-fetched. Between the 1560s – when Protestant French settlers inadvertently challenged Catholic Spanish claims in modern-day Florida – and 1627 – when Richelieu's France forbade Protestant settlement in Canada and ensured Catholic control of New France's religious landscape – the Reformation drove politics in Europe. Europeans developed confessional identities that existed alongside and in addition to their national ones, and colonists brought both with them to the New World. These interlocking and sometimes conflicting identities shaped how they understood the world around them, and in the case of Atlantic Canada ultimately led to the collapse of the colony at Port Royal as two religious/political factions – the international, “ultramontane” Catholics and the so-called “bon François” Gallicans more tied to monarchical power – each used the New World as a battleground in their contest against one another. In other words, what destroyed Port Royal was not a struggle between empires, ethnicities, or economic rivalries, but between Catholics and Catholics – a French intra-Catholic division that had migrated across the Atlantic.

French religious politics: Gallican Catholicism, Ultramontane Catholics, and Calvinist Protestants

The Reformation, although originally a religious phenomenon, had remade the political and geopolitical landscape of Europe and left deep-seated divisions among rapidly confessionalizing European populations – that is to say, populations who sought to clarify their confessional beliefs and formed stricter religious identities that increasingly correlated with cultural and then national identities. Throughout Europe, as reformers converted pastoral audiences, the Catholic Church mobilized the Jesuit-involved counter-Reformation to re-Catholicize those adherents who had been taken for granted in previous centuries and may therefore not have fully understood their faith.⁶ This led to

5 In *Apostles of Empire: The Jesuits and New France*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), Brownwen McShea argued that the Jesuits were fundamentally involved in this process of French empire-building.

6 Roger Châtellier, *The Religion of the Poor: Rural Missions in Europe and the Formation of Modern Catholicism, c. 1500–c. 1800*, tran. Brian Pierce (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge

warfare across Europe – particularly in France – which experienced a series of civil wars between Catholic and Protestants. These wars, the French Wars of Religion, occurred between 1562 and 1598 and resulted in the death of between two and four million people.⁷ By the first decade of the 17th century, when France established settlements in Acadia and Quebec and England established its first lasting colony in Virginia, the religious warfare that had torn Europe apart during the 16th century had finally seemingly come to a close, not to re-emerge in a large-scale way until the Thirty Year's War in 1618.

French explorers exported the religious divide between Catholics and Protestants to the New World from the beginning. To successfully establish a foothold in the New World, France relied on shipowners with a sound financial background, but this posed a particular problem both before and during the Wars of Religion: many of the wealthiest and most knowledgeable French merchants and sailors had become Huguenots. For example, Jean-François de La Roque de Roberval, who in 1541 unsuccessfully had attempted to settle Canada as the first lieutenant-general of New France, was an early Calvinist, as were his successors Pierre de Chauvin in 1600, Pierre de Gua, Sieur de Monts (who led the original group settling Acadia in 1604) and Guillaume de Caën in 1620.⁸ Protestant French activity was not limited to Canada. French Protestants such as Nicolas Durant de Villegaignon – who hoped to find a place where his coreligionists could freely practice and continue to reform their faith – collaborated in exploring Brazil during the 1550s. Believing that a Calvinist colony in the New World might lead to a grand exodus and protection from persecution, Huguenots led by Jean Ribaut and René de Laudonnière founded a new Calvinist settlement in Florida between 1562 and 1564. This attempt was short-lived, and the settlers' religion served as a convenient excuse for a Catholic Spanish fleet led by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés to massacre them in 1565.⁹

University Press, 1997).

- 7 Mack Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Holt extends the end of the wars to 1629 in order to emphasize continuity between Henry IV and Louis XIII, both of which sought to restore *une foi, une loi, un roi* to France.
- 8 For the Huguenot connection in the early years of New France, see John S. Moir, "*Nec Tamen Consumebatur*," in *Early Presbyterianism in Canada: Essays by John S. Moir*, ed. Paul Laverdure (Gravelbourg, SK: Gravelbooks, 2003), 1-12 and Charles Baird, *History of the Huguenot Emigration to America*, 2 vols. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1885).
- 9 Regardless of their religious identities and aspirations for their colonies, these men all carefully treaded the political waters at home and always served as representatives of France, not Calvinism. See Robert Larin, "La monarchie française et l'immigration

Despite these attempts to establish a religious safe haven, most Huguenots engaged in colonization as organizers, financiers, merchants, and sailors not because of their religious affiliations but because they disproportionately filled the occupations dependent on maritime commerce. Their concentration in these trades stemmed in part from the geographical distribution of Protestants in the kingdom, with France's leading port cities such La Rochelle, Dieppe, and Rouen embracing Calvinism beginning in the 1530s.¹⁰

Enforcing the Edict of Nantes's policy of toleration did not resolve New France's religious tensions. At home, some Catholics rejected New France's Protestant proprietor Pierre de Gua, Sieur de Mont's authority. Not only did the Jesuit provincial Jean Gentil cite de Mont's Protestantism as a reason not to send Jesuits to Canada in 1605, the Catholic Parlement of Rouen refused to register de Mont's commission on the grounds that it stipulated that New France be "Christian" rather than "Catholic."¹¹ In Canada, the disputes between de Mont's lay Catholic missionary Nicolas Aubry and de Mont's Protestant minister escalated: "I have seen the minister and our curé get into fistfights over the difference in religion," Samuel de Champlain remarked, and added that "two conflicting religions never produce any great results for the Glory of God in the conversion of the unbelievers." He further explained: "The savages sided sometimes with the one party and sometimes with the other; and the French, mingling in the discussion according to their differing beliefs, vilified both religions, though the Sieur De Monts did his best to restore peace among

protestante au Canada avant 1760: Un contexte social, politique et religieux," in *La mission et le sauvage: Huguenots et catholiques d'une rive atlantique à l'autre XVIe-XIXe siècle*, ed. Nicole Lemaître (Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2008), 55 and Marcel Trudel, *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France, vol. 1: Les vaines tentatives, 1542-1603* (Montreal: Fides, 1963), 181-208.

- 10 Louise Dechêne, *Habitants et marchands de Montréal au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Éditions Plon, 1974); J.F. Bosher, "Huguenot Merchants and the Protestant International in the Seventeenth Century," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 52, no. 1 (January 1995): 77-102; Baird, *Huguenot Emigration*, 79-84; Dale Miquelon "The Merchants in the History of the 'First Canada,'" in *Habitants et Marchands Twenty Years Later: Reading the History of Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Canada*, ed. Sylvie Dépatie, Catherine Desbarats, Danielle Gauvreau, Mario Lalancette, and Thomas Wien (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 32-68; Jon Butler, *The Huguenots in America: A Refugee People in a New World Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).
- 11 Jean Gentil, "Mémoire sur le projet de mission Canadienne," *MNF*, 1:10-13. Dominique Deslandres argued that the parlement's stipulation, combined with de Monts's decision to bring both a Catholic priest and a Calvinist minister, shows that "the imperative was to christianize before Catholicizing or 'Calvinizing.'" See Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire: les missions françaises au XVIIe siècle (1600-1650)* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 212. This might have seemed practical to de Monts, but to Catholic missionaries the vague foundation was dangerous.

them.¹² In 1607, de Monts and his men abandoned the settlement and returned to France to regroup.

In this context, it might be tempting to view the religious tensions in early New France through the lens of the traditional Reformation division between Catholics and Protestants; in the case of Acadia, however, it only muddies the issue. If this is the central dispute, why would Catholic Biencourt blame his coreligionist Biard for the destruction of Port Royal rather than the more obvious Protestant English invaders? In reality, the religious divide at Port Royal fell along a different fault line. France, despite remaining Catholic, maintained a three-part religious divide under Henry IV and his successors. While we might understand the Wars of Religion that ravaged France for nearly 50 years to have been between Catholics and Protestants – and they were – they were not strictly so. France had both Calvinist reformers as well as ultramontane Catholics whose religious loyalties were to Rome, but they also maintained a truly national form of Christianity: since the time of Charlemagne, France had developed a special Gallican Catholicism that evolved separately from Rome.

After the councils of Constance and Basel had decreed in the first decades of the 15th century that God directly empowered Catholic bishops in council to reign supreme over the Church, Gallicans believed that the pope did not carry ultimate religious authority. Instead, they began slowly to emphasize the king (and French bishops) as head of the French Catholic Church. This allowed French Christians to practice Catholicism without dividing their loyalties in a world where church and state were not separate. Likewise, in Quebec (before its conquest by Britain), the church remained Gallican – that is to say that it was not independent of state authority.¹³

12 Cited in Baird, *Huguenot Emigration*, 99; see also Moir, *Early Presbyterianism in Canada*, 6.

13 Dale Van Kley, *The Religious Origins of the French Revolution: From Calvin to the Civil Constitution, 1560-1791* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 15-31. The conflict between Gallicanism and Ultramontanism continued to plague New France. The most famous example is perhaps the political struggle in appointing François de Laval as bishop of Quebec. Although Laval had the support of the Gallican state, the Jesuits supported his appointment to prevent their Sulpician missionary rivals from securing the nomination of their own candidate – Fr. Gabriel Queylus. Authorities in Rome, fearful that the Jesuits or the Gallican French state might retain too much independent power over the church in New France, instead made Laval vicar of New France. This granted him Gallican privileges while ensuring that he continued to answer to Rome. When he became bishop in 1674, the diocese was placed within the archdiocese of Rome to maintain this negotiated political balance. See Cornelius J. Jaenen, *The Role of the Church in New France* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1976), 40-2.

By the time of Henry IV's 1610 assassination, two competing ideological factions had solidified in France and were fighting for control of its court and nobles. One, the pro-Jesuit *parti dévot*, remained dedicated to Rome and promoted a pro-Spanish foreign policy; in essence, the *parti dévot* represented the remnants of the radical Catholic League that had waged war on France's Protestants during the second half of the 16th century.¹⁴ Members of the opposing Gallican faction called themselves the "bon François" – men dedicated to the good of France over all other matters. To the bon François, who remained suspicious of Spanish hegemony in Europe and papal influence in Paris, the Jesuits represented everything they stood against and threatened the relative autonomy of the French monarchy.¹⁵

The Society of Jesus had encountered opposition from Gallican Catholics ever since Henry II formally recognized the Jesuits in a series of *lettres patentes* issued throughout the 1500s. The Gallican Church had a long tradition of opposing mendicant religious orders, which they understood to be inherently tied to papal interests. Because of Henry IV's efforts to re-unite French Christendom under "un roi, une foi, une loi," the Gallican Church regained influence after the defeat of the Catholic League and the passage of the Edict of Nantes in 1598. The Gallicans perceived the society as ultimately supporting the international Catholicism espoused by the Catholic League in preceding decades and thus blamed them for the religious violence. Since Gallicans during the 1590s began to argue that the French king was accountable only to God – a belief that would evolve into absolutism under Louis XIII and XIV – they feared Jesuit obstruction of the Gallican traditions that the Parlement of Paris sought to re-establish after the end of the Wars of Religion.¹⁶

14 The bloodshed of the Wars of Religion turned many Catholics more militantly anti-Protestant, but they also marginalized those Catholics' influence with a French monarchy seeking to broker peace within the kingdom. When these more combative Catholics, led by the Guise family, fell out of favor in Paris, they formed the Catholic League in 1576. The members of this organization sought external support and allied with international Catholicism – the papacy, the Habsburgs, and religious orders that included the Capuchins, the Feuillants, and the Jesuits, who were an essential part of the Catholic Reformation embodied by the Council of Trent. See Frederic J. Baumgartner, *Radical Reactionaries: The Political Thought of the French Catholic League* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1975) and Ann W. Ramsey, *Liturgy, Politics, and Salvation: The Catholic League in Paris and the Nature of Catholic Reform, 1540-1630* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1999).

15 Eric Nelson, *The Jesuits and the Monarchy: Catholic Reform and Political Authority in France (1590-1615)* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005).

16 The Jesuits argued that they ought to be recognized in France because of the rights and privileges granted to them by the papacy. Eric Nelson argued that this was their biggest mistake: "French magistrates defined the Society of Jesus as another active religious Order with special privileges granted by the pope that conflicted with the rights and

Like their forebears throughout the latter half of the 16th century, bon François believed the Jesuits to be tyrannicidal usurpers and sought to remove the society from French politics, and, hopefully, the kingdom itself. Indeed, so thorough was this animosity that even the hated Protestants were more highly esteemed. As Dale Van Kley states: "In the view of the 'bon François,' the Jesuits remained an inassimilable presence in France due to this vow of 'blind obedience' to another Prince" who, whether the pope or the King of Spain, made that vow incompatible with the "Royalty of France . . . , with the doctrine of the Gallican Church and the University, and with being subjects of the State, in view of the unique obedience owed by them in all things to their prince." If he had to choose between the Jesuit and the Huguenot, the bon François preferred the Huguenot "who had at least never renounced his patrie."¹⁷ Throughout the 1610s, these two factions constantly attacked one another in the public sphere by producing politically charged pamphlets. One such pamphlet, titled *Anticoton* after Paris's Jesuit Provincial, Pierre Coton, sought to definitively prove that Jesuits not only advanced theories of regicide across Europe, but had also been behind the assassination of Henry IV with the ultimate goal of conquering France in the name of ultramontane Catholicism. During the same years that the society was planning its first mission to Canada, *Anticoton* caused quite a scandal in Paris.¹⁸

French religious politics and the struggle for control at Port Royal

The encounter at Port Royal was the culmination of several months of conflict between Biencourt and Biard and demonstrates how these realities of religious politics crossed into the early development of Atlantic Canada. The Jesuits arrived in Port Royal on 22 June 1611, and the first open conflicts between the missionaries and proprietors had occurred by August. Why had this relationship soured beyond repair in only a matter of months? In 1616 Biard attempted to answer that question in his *Relation de la Nouvelle France*, now remembered by historians as the first account of Indigenous peoples in New

privileges already established in the French Catholic Church"; see Nelson, *Jesuits and the Monarchy*, 21.

17 See Dale Van Kley, *Reform Catholicism and the International Suppression of the Jesuits in Enlightenment Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), 70. I am truly grateful for Dale's feedback on a draft of this article.

18 *Anticoton, ou refutation de la lettre declaratoire du Père Coton: Liure où est prouvé que les Jesuites sont coupables & auteurs du parricide execrable commis en la personne du Roy tres-chrestien HENRY IV* (Paris, 1610). I cited an English translation published in London in 1688.

France by a Jesuit priest. In his introduction, Biard explained his purpose: to conclusively refute the testimony of a “slanderer and factionist.”¹⁹ Biard never named his attacker, and Jesuit censors sensitive to Gallican attacks against the society in France removed most of the interactions between Biard and Biencourt before publication thus making it useless in explaining the breakdown of relations.²⁰

Biard, however, surely intended to refute Poutrincourt’s 1614 anti-Jesuit tract, *Factum du procès entre Jean de Biencourt et les PP. Biard et Massé*. Poutrincourt, seeking to capture the success of early pamphlets such as *Anticoton* in his *Factum*, masterfully recast the sequence of events by re-writing a fantastical narrative that played upon the deepest fears of France’s Gallican Catholics, who believed in upholding the relative autonomy of the French episcopacy against domination by the ultramontane Jesuits and their Spanish allies. A thorough reading of Poutrincourt’s *Factum* offers us little in terms of accurately portraying events that led to Port Royal’s collapse. Despite the *Factum*’s fictional narrative, Poutrincourt’s mastery of Gallican rhetoric proves his own Gallican anti-Jesuit loyalties, at once not only explaining why the Jesuit mission failed but also demonstrating the significance of French religious politics after the Wars of Religion in shaping the earliest French societies in North America.²¹

¹⁹ Biard, *Relation of 1616*, JR, 3:155.

²⁰ Notably, the *Relation of 1616* has two missing chapters. Although Thwaites originally explained this as a printing error, a later edition with annotations by Massé suggests that these chapters actually described some hostile exchanges between Biard and Biencourt regarding Jesuit involvement in the regicide of Henry IV. The society, fearful of re-opening the pamphleteering regarding Jesuit involvement in Henry IV’s assassination, likely deleted the two chapters of the *Relation of 1616* regarding this incident. There is further evidence to support such censorship. Toward the end of his life, Biard wrote one final rebuttal to Poutrincourt’s *Factum*, but Jesuit Superior Muzio Vitelleschi, fearful of re-opening the anti-Jesuit pamphleteering of the prior decade, did not let him publish it. There are no known copies. See Campeau, “Introduction,” MNF, 1:260*, 271–6* and Muzio Vitelleschi, “Le P. Mutius Vitelleschi, Gén., au P. Jean Fourier, Prov., Rome, 26 septembre 1622 – à Lyon,” MNF, 2:46–7. Because MNF numbers the introduction separately from the documents, it designates the pages of the introduction by including an asterisk. The asterisk is thus a part of the original pagination within the text itself.

²¹ Jean de Poutrincourt, *Factum du procez entre Messie Jean de Biencourt Chevalier sieur de Poutrincourt, Baron de S. Iust, appellant d’une part, Et Pierre Biard, Euemond Massé & consorts, soy disans Prestres de la Société de Iesus, intimez* (Paris, 1614). The *Factum* was written in the third person and published anonymously, but the content matches other sentiments harbored by Poutrincourt, and no one else would have had either enough motive or knowledge of the situation. It is possible that Poutrincourt’s friend Marc Lescarbot, a lawyer who had been at Port Royal in 1606, or Lescarbot’s friend Nicolas Desnoyers, a lawyer serving the anti-Jesuit Parlement of Paris, might have helped Poutrincourt edit the document. None of these men witnessed the events described.

The story of Port Royal's aftermath is a tale of conflicting testimonies, with Poutrincourt and Biencourt on one side and the Jesuits, primarily Biard, on the other, and we might never know exactly how events unfolded. In truth, Poutrincourt's account is too biased to use in formulating an objective story. But while the *Factum* might not provide an accurate narrative of Port Royal's collapse, it does confirm the nature of Poutrincourt's anti-Jesuit sentiments, and, by extension, the ultimate source of the Port Royal dispute. While Poutrincourt and his son certainly sought financial success (and instead experienced financial frustration) in Acadia, why did they believe that it was their Jesuit partners undermining them? A close reading of their account unveils the influence of vigorous anti-Jesuit pamphleteering during the Wars of Religion and the Gallican crisis in forming Poutrincourt's biases.

Jean de Poutrincourt's anonymous *Factum* first appeared in early 1614, in time for the editor to add a brief chapter about Argall's destruction of Port Royal to the narrative. Although he called it a *Factum* – a legal testimony given to judges – Poutrincourt's pamphlet was only intended to persuade the court of public opinion. His immediate goal was to convince the Crown to restore his title to Acadia, which he had lost to his Jesuit-friendly rival Antoinette de Pons, Marquise de Guercheville two years prior. To regain his lands he decided that he first had to undermine the Jesuits, whom he believed now held power in New France. On the surface this seems a simple economic problem; however, Poutrincourt attacked Jesuits Biard and Massé so viscerally because he *already* assumed Jesuits to be usurpers and thus he imagined them to pose a threat to his enterprise from the beginning. This had further-reaching consequences: by situating Canada within familiar political debates he thought he might convince the Queen Regent to forbid Jesuit involvement in colonization indefinitely, something he had tried to do himself in 1609 after Henry IV mandated that he bring Jesuits to Canada as a precondition for his settlement.²²

Poutrincourt organized the *Factum* into two parts. In the first part, which comprises the bulk of the document, Poutrincourt outlined his account of the

For a further discussion of the *Factum*'s authorship, see Campeau's introduction to the document in *MNF*, 1:320–22 as well as his description in *MNF*'s introduction, 229*–30*.

22 Poutrincourt left France with his own non-Jesuit priest against the king's orders in 1609, hoping that missionary success would show the king that Jesuit involvement was not necessary. Poutrincourt's friend and former New France colonist Marc Lescarbot wrote to Marie de' Medici of Poutrincourt's successes in 1610, indicating that a mission could succeed without Jesuits. See Marc Lescarbot, "The Conversion of the Savages who were Baptized in New France during this year, 1610, with a brief narrative of the voyage of Sieur de Poutrincourt," in *JR*, 1:79–105.

events that unfolded between himself, his son, and the Jesuits in Acadia. Since Poutrincourt's time in Canada barely overlapped with the Jesuits, he relied upon two major sources to construct his narrative: written testimony in the form of letters written or seized by his son Biencourt, which he attached to the *Factum*, and secondhand testimony probably filtered through his own liaison Simon Imbert, who relayed the story to him when Imbert returned to France in late 1612. In the second part, the *Factum* reflects upon Jesuit behavior in New France and offers a warning to the kingdom: the Society of Jesus sought to control France and deliver the realm to Spain. Based primarily upon hearsay and written for a specific purpose, the factual accuracy of the *Factum* remains suspect; but its vitriolic mastery of Gallican anti-Jesuit rhetoric uncovers the underlying cause of Port Royal's failures. The following incidents come from Poutrincourt's account and are unlikely to have happened as described.

According to Poutrincourt, the Jesuits terrorized the Huguenot crew during the voyage to New France. At the outset, Abraham Duquesne and Jean Dujardin, two Calvinist merchants who tried at great lengths to prevent the Jesuits from departing, allegedly warned Biencourt that the missionaries conspired to deliver the ship, *la Grâce de Dieu*, to Spain.²³ The captain and the pilot, also Calvinists, protested that their largely Huguenot crew had refused to sail because they anticipated quarrels with the priests. Biard assured them that "they would live as in France," honoring the policy of religious toleration mandated under the Edict of Nantes, and the ship departed. According to the *Factum*, Biard did not fulfill his promise. One night, while sailing through the English Channel, *la Grâce de Dieu* passed what Biencourt thought to be an English vessel. "To arms! To arms!" Biard supposedly cried. "It must be had!" "But coming nearer," wrote Poutrincourt, "we recognized it to be a Spanish ship; and this changed the language of the Jesuit, who began to say that we should leave in peace." "But," Biencourt continued, one of the sailors asked, 'Had we more right against the English?' "'Yes,' responded the Jesuit, 'because they are heretics'."²⁴ When they arrived, the largely Huguenot crew on *la Grâce*

23 Duquesne's and Dujardin's actions backfired. Because of their stubbornness, the Jesuits allied with de Guercheville to buy out their share of the ship. This gave them considerable financial independence, which would continually frustrate Poutrincourt in the subsequent years.

24 Since Poutrincourt wrote anonymously, the pronouns often do not match the author. He was not present during this voyage, or for most of the events recounted in the *Factum*.

de Dieu had supposedly become so disillusioned with Biard that they refused to remain at Port Royal.²⁵

“On Pentecost 1611, they arrived at Port Royal with great joy on both sides,” said Poutrincourt of his first meeting with Biard and Massé. But while “outwardly, they tried to display reverences to make believe that they would serve the King in New France,” they instead sought only to enrich themselves by undermining the work of Poutrincourt’s own secular Catholic missionary Fr. Jesse Fléché and aligning themselves with Poutrincourt’s rival, Robert du Pont Gragé.²⁶

Poutrincourt decided to return to France for supplies, first hoping to solidify his son’s authority over du Pont Gragé and his small group of traders from St. Malo. Biencourt remembered du Pont Gragé as an obstinate renegade who had challenged his father’s authority one year prior. In the summer of 1610, before the arrival of the Jesuits, several local Indigenous people travelled to Port Royal to complain that du Pont Gragé had raped, kidnapped, and murdered one of their family’s women. They begged Poutrincourt, with whom they had already established a trade alliance, to punish the man. Poutrincourt charged one of his men to try du Pont Gragé. When called to testify, du Pont Gragé allegedly stated that he “recognized sieur de Poutrincourt as a gentleman, but not as a judge, nor did he have the power to investigate him” – a major blow to Poutrincourt’s legitimacy as proprietor. Having no recourse but to send the trial to France, Poutrincourt’s men imprisoned du Pont Gragé on board Poutrincourt’s ship. Twelve days later, after refusing to cooperate with Poutrincourt’s interrogation, du Pont Gragé escaped and “evaded us and crossed the river,” disappearing into the forest and spending an entire year eluding Poutrincourt’s wrath.²⁷

Shortly after Biard and Massé arrived in New France, Biard had met the outlaw du Pont Gragé when he accompanied Poutrincourt on a brief voyage up the St. Croix to speak with the Etchemin. Poutrincourt’s men came upon four ships at the trading post Pierre Blanche, a small trading post. One of the

25 *Factum*, MNF, 1:335–9.

26 *Factum*, MNF, 1:342.

27 Biard confirmed that du Pont Gragé escaped imprisonment from Poutrincourt in his *Relation of 1616*. Even as early as 1611 Biard vaguely stated that something transpired between du Pont Gragé and Poutrincourt, but never indicated what. I am therefore inclined to believe that du Pont Gragé was accused of rape, tried, and, unwilling to bend to Poutrincourt’s authority, had been imprisoned indefinitely before escaping. See *Factum*, MNF, 1:340–1 and Biard, *Relation of 1616*, JR, 3:183–5; Biard, *Relatio Rerum Gestarum*, JR, 2:219; and Biard, “Lettre au R.P. Christophe Baltazar, 10 juin 1611,” JR, 1:169.

ships hailed from St. Malo and belonged to du Pont Gragé. While Poutrincourt conferred with the captains of each ship, Biard discovered du Pont Gragé on shore; he had passed “the entire year with the Savages, living just as they did.” After hearing du Pont Gragé’s testimony, he “begged sieur de Poutrincourt to have some consideration for the great merits of his father “[François Gragé] who had served with Poutrincourt in 1606. Du Pont Gragé “was very much afraid of M. de Poutrincourt,” Biard recounted. Poutrincourt certainly remembered du Pont Gragé’s earlier challenge to his authority, and took the opportunity to reinforce his own status as governor of Acadia by forcing du Pont Gragé and each captain present to recognize not only Poutrincourt as vice-roy, but Biencourt as vice-admiral. Afterward, Biard brokered an apology from du Pont Gragé and “peace was declared.” Despite the charges that he had raped and murdered an Indigenous woman, du Pont Gragé offered a rare opportunity for Biard: the former had lived among the group for an entire year and Biard was astounded by the young man’s “ability to speak their language.” “One hope remained” to convert Indigenous people, Biard later recalled, “in a young Frenchman, fluent in the native tongue.” Poutrincourt did not accept this explanation for Biard’s interest in the young man.²⁸

Although they discovered du Pont Gragé with Biard’s help, Poutrincourt did not include the Jesuit in the planning when he and Biencourt prepared to transfer authority over the colony from father to son. According to Poutrincourt, this exclusion greatly irritated Biard. The Jesuit, who had originally faulted du Pont Gragé for challenging Poutrincourt’s authority, could not be trusted with du Pont Gragé, as he had changed his opinion of the young trader after learning that he “had married a woman in Spain.” Because they had been left out of the arrangements about the transfer of leadership, Poutrincourt claimed that the Jesuits “prepared a rebellion against Poutrincourt and his son because Poutrincourt had firmly recognized justice (in following the laws of France) and they were not flexible in their passions, as *bon François*” – good Frenchmen – “desirous of the glory of the king.”²⁹

To historian Lucien Campeau, this particular line in the *Factum* evinced that Poutrincourt experienced hallucinations – after all, there is no evidence of a conspiracy; but Poutrincourt’s use of the phrase “bon François” indicates

28 Biard, “Lettre au R.P. Christophe Baltazar, 10 juin, 1611,” *JR*, 1:167–9; Biard, *Missio Canadensia*, *JR*, 2:99–101; Biard, *Relatio Rerum Gestarum*, *JR*, 2:219; Biard, *Relation of 1616*, *JR*, 3:185–7.

29 *Factum*, *MNF*, 1:342 (emphasis in original).

another explanation.³⁰ By anonymously referring to himself as a “bon François” in the third person, Poutrincourt, in a single but telling phrase, admitted his Gallican loyalties. He did not imagine a Jesuit conspiracy at du Pont Gravé’s camp in the summer of 1611 because of a mental disorder, but because his own political identity predisposed him to expect Jesuit treason at every turn. Poutrincourt continued that the Jesuits “take all occasions to favor their [opponents’] enemies after they have recognized them,” and he believed Biard had taken note of the hostilities brewing between du Pont Gravé and Poutrincourt and worked to exploit them.³¹

It was after Poutrincourt left for France, however, that Biard allegedly began a campaign in earnest to wrest control of Port Royal from its proprietor. Although Poutrincourt did not witness anything Biard did after leaving Canada in June 1611, he used testimony from his son and ostensibly from other settlers and combined them with popular Gallican fears of the society to demonize Port Royal’s Jesuits. Left alone in charge at Port Royal, these pre-existing, anti-Jesuit stereotypes probably weighed even more heavily upon Biencourt. At roughly 20 years old, the young proprietor had little leadership experience and had not developed diplomatic skills. Charged with feeding his father’s habitation and defending the colony from foreign powers while maintaining friendly relationships with the local Indigenous peoples, Biencourt felt insecure in his authority and therefore especially wary of what he perceived to be power-hungry missionaries. “With hatred,” Poutrincourt wrote, “the Jesuits continued their ways of sowing mad impressions of the sieur and his son, saying that [the non-Jesuit] Fléché had operated poorly in the baptism of the savages.” Biencourt, seeking to rein in the supposedly unruly priests, “did not find the Jesuits willing to give up their ways of doing things.” Moreover, “given the age of Biencourt,” the Jesuits “say that they nourish his body and soul and minister to all of the inhabitants . . . that they were all [the Jesuits’] servants.”³²

The *Factum* identifies two major attempts by Biard and Massé to usurp power at Port Royal. In Poutrincourt’s account, Biard, “knowing that sieur de Biencourt had made a map of the port of the Armochiquois, demanded it from him; and said that he wished to go there” in order to conspire to replace Biencourt with du Pont Gravé. Biencourt refused, reminding Biard

30 Campeau argued that “It is probably difficult to find a historical document furnished with more signs of a psychological disorder than that written by the Biencourts”; see *MNF*, 1:236*.

31 *Factum*, *MNF*, 1:341–3.

32 *Factum*, *MNF*, 1:343–4.

that the proprietor took orders only from Poutrincourt or the king. Biard then directly demanded that the young trader lead him back to du Pont Gravé's encampment. "But knowing that this was to plot with them and give advice to the Spanish" and deprive him of his power, Biencourt held firm. In the face of what he perceived as overwhelming opposition, Biencourt determined to travel the region himself and reinforce his authority among all French operating in New France, including the traders from St. Malo, whom he called "predisposed toward rebellion." Still ostensibly hoping to unite with du Pont Gravé, Poutrincourt maintained that Biard had urged Biencourt to bring the Jesuit with him and claimed that French Huguenots led by Jean Plâtrier and possibly Protestant English colonists might have established settlements in the area – and must be eliminated.³³ Regarding Plâtrier, Biencourt rebuked Biard – reminding him that "we must live here under the edicts of France." In other words, it was Biencourt's Gallican duty to uphold the religious toleration mandated by the Edict of Nantes in the face of Jesuit intolerance. The *Factum* does not explain why Biencourt relented, but in the end he took the Jesuit with him and, when they arrived at Plâtrier's settlement, the Huguenot trader welcomed them unarmed and vowed to aid them against not only any potential English threat but also against the potentially dangerous du Pont Gravé. Poutrincourt's version of the story, then, mirrored the French political divide: under a policy of toleration Gallican Catholics allied with Huguenots to defend the supremacy of the French monarchy against the usurping Jesuits and their supporters who sought to bring the world under the dominion of Catholic Spain and the papacy.³⁴

The *Factum* seeks definitively to prove Biard's favoritism toward du Pont Gravé and their "malice" against Biencourt.³⁵ At St. Croix, Biard supposedly asked to travel by himself to see du Pont Gravé "so that he might use his rhetoric to pacify all." As Biard later testified in his *Relation*, they found neither du Pont Gravé nor his deputy Merveille at the encampment. The camp's sentinel, in a moment of drunken stupidity, allegedly revealed that the two men had gone to the Indigenous people to "warn them of the arrival of the said sieur so they could seize him, and he boasted of planning to kill the Vice-admiral [Biencourt]." Biencourt arrived at du Pont Gravé's camp shortly thereafter, and the group, searching for the two missing traders, stumbled upon Merveille

33 This is a reference to a settlement established at St. Croix; see *MNF*, 1:345n93.

34 *Factum*, *MNF*, 1:345.

35 *Factum*, *MNF*, 1:351, 355.

tending his garden. Merveille cried out to them in desperation, complaining that the hungry traders had been reduced to savagery and feared they would not survive the winter. In anguish, he confided that he was dying and asked Biard for absolution. Biard moved between Merveille and Biencourt to administer the sacrament, and as the Jesuit obstructed Biencourt's vision, the *Factum* claims that Merveille pulled out a hidden gun, planning to fire upon Biencourt as he walked away. One of Biencourt's men noticed the weapon and shouted to the vice-admiral, who seized Merveille and wrestled his firearm away, foiling the would-be assassin. Although the *Factum* certainly implied Jesuit collusion in the attempted killing, Poutrincourt did not outrightly accuse Biard of premeditated complicity. However, the Jesuit did beg Biencourt take mercy on his assailant. Biencourt, ostensibly fed up with the Jesuit for defending Merveille, offered to leave Biard at du Pont Gravé's settlement. Instead, Biard opted to continue the voyage with Biencourt "because he wished to learn everything he could [about French claims] so that he could give advice in Spain."³⁶

All of these accusations had an ultimate purpose of blaming Jesuit treachery for Poutrincourt's loss of control of the Atlantic coast to the Jesuits' ally, de Guercheville, and the subsequent second alleged attempt by Biard and Massé to take control of the colony. Nearly half of the pamphlet relates to the falling out between Biard and Biencourt when Jesuit brother Gilbert du Thet, agent of de Guercheville, and Poutrincourt's agent Simon Imbert arrived at Port Royal on Nicolas l'Abbé's ship in January 1612. But instead of writing his own account, Poutrincourt largely settled for appending testimonies by Biard and Biencourt written in March 1612. In the few paragraphs he did compose himself, Poutrincourt described accusations Imbert made against du Thet during the voyage: he alleged that the Jesuit supported regicide, that the society was complicit in the assassination of Henry IV, and that they sought to deliver France to Spain and ultimately place all of Europe under Spanish – and ultimately Jesuit – control. "In the chamber of Captain l'Abbé, he wrote, "and in the presence of sieur Imbert," du Thet "began to say that there was a grand coup leading to the assassination of the king, without which Christianity would have perished, that the Most Christian King [Philip III of Spain] trembled with

36 *Factum*, MNF, 1:345–54. This is one of the few instances in which Biard responds to the charges in detail; see Biard, *Relation of 1616*, JR, 3:211. He also wrote about this incident to his provincial in 1611; see "Lettre au R. P. Christophe Baltazar," JR, 2:225–31. In Biard's telling, this was a product of tensions resulting from a general sense of the unknown, and that Merveille had not produced a weapon.

fear, that the Archduke [Albert VII of Austria and regent of the Netherlands] had been forced to deliver the keys to his country and that France would never surrender to anyone, except to Spain.” Additionally, du Thet allegedly outlined a comprehensive Jesuit plan to use their colleges to manipulate France’s youth into submitting to the society’s authority: “A great number of young people are sent to our colleges; why should they not serve us?”³⁷

“But what escalated the hatred openly between [the Jesuits and] sieur Imbert, wrote Poutrincourt, was that, confessing to Père Enemond Massé,” Imbert “said to him other things that had been revealed to sieur de Biencourt that the Jesuit Gilbert du Thet have said . . . concerning the assassination of Henry the Great.” As evidence, Imbert submitted a copy of the infamous *Anticoton* – the popular pamphlet that circulated in Paris in 1610 and that, among other things, accused Paris’s Jesuit provincial Père Coton of orchestrating Henry IV’s murder.³⁸ Remembering the scandal it had caused in Paris in 1610, Imbert’s accusation of Jesuit involvement in the regicide put the three Jesuits on the defensive. Poutrincourt claimed that Massé, fearing the society’s great conspiracy revealed, immediately reported to Biard, and the two “plotted a means by which to defame Imbert.” Together, they invented a crime, claiming that Imbert had sold cargo belonging to de Guercheville and the Jesuits at Dieppe. They confronted Imbert, and accused him of lying about the ship’s finances and reminded him that “thou shalt not bear false witness.”³⁹ “Never had the priests before projected an accusation more calumnious,” says the *Factum*, for “by their actions, we see that they are truly devils.” Denying the accusations, Imbert challenged Massé: “Do you live here as Christians? Is this how you plant your religion? Your behavior puts me in great doubt of your credence. Our Lord has no false witness of your Society.”⁴⁰

While Massé again conferred with Biard, Poutrincourt noted, Imbert sought out Biencourt. Imbert lashed out, telling Biencourt that the partnership with de Guercheville “was a means invented by the Jesuits to drive [Poutrincourt] out of his broad seigneuries of Canada.”⁴¹ Biencourt suggested that Imbert

37 *Factum*, MNF, 1:359–9.

38 Biard made no mention of this in any of his accounts, preferring to make vague claims against Imbert. After Biard’s death in 1622, Massé began to revise the *Relation of 1616* to fill in details that the society’s censor removed before its publication. To Biard’s account, Massé added that Imbert “had not forgotten to bring with him *l’Anticoton*”; see MNF, 1:554.

39 See Book of Deuteronomy, 5:20.

40 *Factum*, MNF, 1:361–3.

41 Biard, *Relation of 1616*, JR, 3:235–9.

stop arguing with the Jesuits and warned him of the collusion between the missionaries and du Pont Gruvé. Biard, livid at what Imbert had said to Massé, confronted the two and demanded that Imbert repeat his testimony to the mission's superior. "And why?" asked Imbert, "I expected that you would come to me with satisfaction of the false accusation that you have made and plan to use against me at my trial." In Biencourt's version of Biard's response to Imbert, Biard not only lost his temper, but also revealed his conception of Jesuit power. "But who do you think we are?" he asked. "Is it not we who are the judges? Who is it who makes magistrates and councilors, if not us?" Colonist Louis Hébert, witnessing the "cries and violence" made by the Jesuits, interrupted and "said that the behavior of the Jesuits was worse than that of that of heretics and that they would never convert the savages." Du Thet, who had also joined the conversation, directed his reply toward Biencourt: "Is it not true that we fed all of you and that consequently, you and your people are our subjects?" Biencourt cried "I will not listen to your rhetoric. I will send all of this to the king and the gentlemen of his council, who can interpret them better than I." Imbert offered to return to France and "make a report of all of their behaviors to the king" and to the anti-Jesuit "parlement of Paris, and to the Sorbonne." Massé, "afraid of the Parlement and the Sorbonne," demanded that Imbert recant his testimony, but "Imbert said there was nothing he could do."⁴²

The Jesuits, according to Poutrincourt, decided to escape the settlement and snuck on board l'Abbé's ship. Instead of narrating this episode, Poutrincourt submitted testimonies from Biencourt and letters seized from Biard as evidence of the encounter and the underhanded "machinations" of the Jesuits.⁴³ Biencourt had ordered Hébert, his apothecary, and several of his men to order Biard to disembark, granting permission to use force if necessary. In a statement signed by 11 witnesses, Hébert claimed that Biard "replied that he did not recognize de Biencourt to be anything but a thief and that he will do nothing of the kind; moreover that he will dismember him piece by piece, and will excommunicate anyone who touched him, along with a few more atrocious words."⁴⁴ Afterward, Biard wrote an official warning to both Biencourt and

42 *Factum*, MNF, 1:364-5.

43 *Factum*, MNF, 1:364-5.

44 Louis Hébert, "Procès-verbal du sieur Hébert contre le P. Biard, 13 mars 1612," MNF, 1:378-9. According to the laws of the Church, Biard was within his rights to excommunicate anyone who attempted violence – even forced removal – of a Catholic priest. Gallicans did not believe that priests held this power (particularly Jesuits, who had in principle ceded it in order to remain in France), and Biencourt likely would not have recognized

l'Abbé, arguing that the Jesuits had never been under Biencourt's jurisdiction for several reasons. First, not only was their purpose in New France different but it was more important. He reminded them that Poutrincourt only obtained the right to settle Port Royal under the condition that the Jesuits be allowed to evangelize there, indicating to Biard that their mission superseded the economic needs of the colony. Second, the decrees of Henry IV, Marie de' Medici, and Louis XIII all granted the Jesuits freedom of movement; preventing their departure directly violated royal decree. Third, the Jesuits owed nothing to Biencourt for they did "not hold any land or dwelling in fief" but had paid for everything themselves. If anything, Biard claimed, Biencourt actually owed the Jesuits money as Biencourt never paid the Jesuits a return on their investment per the contract signed at Dieppe. Fourth, Biard warned Biencourt that de Guercheville held far more power than Poutrincourt and that she would surely hold them accountable for their actions. Finally, Biard protested that du Thet must be allowed to defend himself against Imbert's charges and that Imbert, who manipulated de Guercheville's finances once already, required oversight during the return voyage.⁴⁵

Biencourt ordered his men to ignore Biard's threats, stated Poutrincourt, and commanded one of the settlers, Jean Pointel, to remove the priests from the ship. When Pointel broke down the door to their cabin, Biard immediately excommunicated him; but Massé, perhaps grasping the futility of the situation the two missionaries put themselves in, agreed to meet with Biencourt while Biard remained on board the ship. During the meeting, Biencourt asked Massé why the Jesuits had attempted to escape the colony. According to Biencourt, Massé replied that he did not recognize Biencourt as commander of New France and that "he [Massé] had more authority from the King than I [Biencourt] had in this country; added that he was excommunicating me and was lodging a complaint about the wrongs that had been perpetrated on himself and his companion, Fr. Biard." While Massé's answer merely echoed what Biard had already said, his concurrence certainly validated all of the fears Biencourt had held about the Jesuits' motives since they had first met them at

such an excommunication. For a more complete overview of excommunication, see Campeau, Document 137, *MNF*, 1:366n163.

45 *Factum*, *MNF*, 1:366-71. Of these fears, Campeau believed that the latter was the root of the problem: the reason Biencourt did not want the Jesuits to leave the colony was because if Biard knew that Biencourt was stealing from the society, the Jesuit would certainly report him. This is almost certainly true in the short term, but Campeau's explanation ignores the broader context that caused Biencourt's fears; see *MNF*, 1:371n181.

Dieppe. Biencourt arrested Massé and continued to send men to remove Biard from the ship while Biard continued to excommunicate anyone who touched him.⁴⁶ Biard would later recount that “reconciliation was effected afterward, and everything calmed down,” but the damage was done.⁴⁷ Soon afterward, Biard and Massé left Port Royal to build their own independent mission at Saint Sauveur (in the modern day US state of Maine). It was here that Argall’s men put an end to the dispute when they captured Biard (who agreed to go with them as part of a small group of prisoners if they promised to let Massé bring the rest home to France) and continued on to destroy Port Royal.⁴⁸

In the end, Poutrincourt concluded that Jesuit perfidy had ruined him. When l’Abbé’s ship, carrying Imbert and du Thet, came to port in Dieppe, “the Jesuits of Rouen and of Eu came out to seize not only the merchandise, but also the clothes of Poutrincourt’s servants, in the name of the Marquise de Guercheville.” It is interesting that Poutrincourt blamed the Jesuits rather than the marquise herself, considering she was the one who had deprived him of his titles: after du Thet reported Imbert’s theft and the dysfunction between Biencourt and Biard, de Guercheville immediately sought de Monts, who had initially granted Poutrincourt title to the Acadian coast, and convinced him to instead grant to her all land outside of Port Royal itself. Poutrincourt lost everything.⁴⁹

Poutrincourt left France in December 1613, hoping to resupply Port Royal and reassert his authority. When he arrived, he found his settlement not under control of de Guercheville’s Jesuits but rather destroyed by Argall and its surviving colonists starving. Given the wreckage of the fort and his dwindling finances, Poutrincourt decided to momentarily abandon his enterprise. Using what furs Biencourt’s men collected after Argall left for Jamestown, Poutrincourt brought the hungry traders back to France. A small number, including his son, opted to stay and trade along the coast and although Biencourt inherited Poutrincourt’s title to the settlement after his father’s death, he never managed to rebuild it as Quebec eclipsed Acadia in importance.⁵⁰

46 Biencourt, “Lettre du sieur de Biencourt au sieur de Poutrincourt, 14 mars 1612,” *MNF*, 1:375–8.

47 Biard, *Relation of 1616*, *JR*, 3:245–7. Due to censorship in the *Relation of 1616*, we do not know Biard’s version of the story; see footnote 18 above.

48 Biard, *Relation of 1616*, *JR*, 4:23–7.

49 *Factum*, *MNF*, 1:390–4.

50 For a biography of Biencourt after the destruction of Port Royal, see Adrien Hugué, *Jean de Poutrincourt, fondateur de Port-Royal en Acadie, vice-roi du Canada, 1557-1615*:

According to the *Factum's* editor, the Jesuit conspiracy in Canada had far-reaching implications not only for France but also for the entire Roman Catholic world. Using examples from the preceding text, the editor generalized Biard's alleged actions to definitively prove a number of pre-existing anti-Jesuit stereotypes. "The Jesuits are quick to interfere in a place they think worthy of pursuing their ambition and avarice," he wrote, claiming that his own priest's baptisms became so renowned that the Jesuits, always jealous of non-Jesuit clergy and willing only to overtake already successful enterprises, had to intercede. Good missionaries, according to the *Factum*, did not need letters of approval to perform their work. If the Jesuits had not manipulated authorities – in this case the Queen Regent – to secure letters, "their actions would not be endured." Sailors on the vessel, too, learned that the society ultimately disrupted the social fabric.⁵¹

Jesuit self-promotion presented an imminent danger to France, according to Poutrincourt. "You see the affection that they have toward the Spanish," he continued. To gain adherents, the society through their schools "debauch[ed] the children of good families, in the sight of the king and parlements, who have no power to chastise them." These devious underlying character traits all pointed to a more tangible threat, "horrible and nonetheless familiar to the Jesuits, because it concerns the assassination of kings, which according to their books, they support."⁵² Although Jesuits in Paris might deny involvement in Henry IV's death, Biard and Massé, asserted Poutrincourt, proved otherwise. Not only did Massé supposedly confess involvement to Biard, but "in the presence of twenty people, Biard said equivocating things and asked if it was atrocious to have said that the assassination of Henry the Great had been a blow from heaven." They professed this regicidal theory not because of a belief in the rightful overthrow of a tyrannical monarch, but because "they despise royal authority," preferring instead to establish themselves through their own power. Their "end goal is growth abroad and the weakening of the French state within."⁵³

campagnes, voyages et aventures d'un colonisateur sous Henri IV (Amiens, FR: Société des antiquaires de Picardie, 1932), 445-510.

51 *Factum*, MNF, 1:397.

52 A reference to Spanish Jesuit Juan de Mariana, who published *De Rege and Regis Institutione* in 1599. He claimed that political philosophers and theologians alike agreed that it was just for either communities or individuals to take up arms against a tyrant. His work was in part responsible for the popular association of the Society of Jesus with the philosophy of regicide.

53 *Factum*, MNF, 1:397-401.

The *Factum*, then, should not be read as a stand-alone pamphlet about New France, but as part of a larger body of bon François anti-Jesuit pamphleteering that proliferated in the 1610s. “They are all bad,” the *Factum* concludes. “This is why the cities that were most supportive of the League, such as Orléans, Chartres, Troyes, Châlons, Sens and other capitals, recognizing that such a sect was born in order to raise the people up against legitimate magistrates, did not wish to receive them in their territories.”⁵⁴ The *Factum* took the side, in its view, of all of the good Catholic Orders who hated the Jesuits and still managed to obey the pope without undermining secular authority.

Poutrincourt’s *Factum* represents the culmination of decades of anti-Jesuit sentiments in French politics. Although he certainly intended the *Factum* to blame the Jesuits and provide an outlet for his frustrations following the failure of his colony, a thorough reading reveals the ways in which popular anti-Jesuitism became a lens through which Poutrincourt and his son came to interpret Biard and Massé in New France.

This new interpretation reorients our understanding of the origin of French Jesuit missions in significant ways. First, the *Factum* conclusively demonstrates the transfer of anti-Jesuit religious politics to New France in the first decades of the 17th century. By definitively proving Poutrincourt’s Gallican anti-Jesuitism, the real underlying cause of Port Royal’s failure shifts into focus. Second, the *Factum* forces historians to reconsider Biard’s 1616 *Relation de la Nouvelle-France*, the first of Thwaites’s *Jesuit Relations* and a common source used by historians of early contact-era Indigenous people most often cited as an ethnographic encyclopedia. This is perhaps an improper use of Biard’s work. While the *Relation* details many of Biard’s observations of Indigenous life, and thus serves as a very useful ethnographic document, he wrote it primarily as a defense of Massé and himself against the accusations of Poutrincourt’s *Factum* and the *Relation* is therefore a part of the pamphlet war that raged between the Jesuits and their detractors in the early decades of the 17th century. As such, Poutrincourt and Biard wove Canada into political debates in France concerning the nature of both political and religious authority.

JOSEPH R. WACHTEL est professeur agrégé d’histoire à la Fitchburg State University, où il étudie les rencontres religieuses dans les pays côtiers de l’Atlantique. Il s’intéresse présentement à l’utilisation des technologies numériques dans la représentation d’espaces historiques de l’Amérique du Nord coloniale.

54 *Factum*, MNF, 1:405.

JOSEPH R. WACHTEL is an associate professor of history at Fitchburg State University, where he studies religious encounters in the Atlantic World. He is currently interested in the use of digital technologies in depicting historical spaces in colonial North America.