MISSIONARY LINGUISTICS IN NEW FRANCE

JANUA LINGUARUM

STUDIA MEMORIAE NICOLAI VAN WIJK DEDICATA

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C. H. VAN SCHOONEVELD

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

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MISSIONARY LINGUISTICS IN NEW FRANCE

A Study of Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Descriptions of American Indian Languages

by

VICTOR EGON HANZELI

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Hevae Filiisque Hevae

PREFACE

The present work, originally a doctoral dissertation, is the product of a *milieu* and a *moment*. It reflects its writer's desire to bring into play his interest in seventeenth- and eighteenth- century French culture, his awareness of the historical ties between France and America, and the modest skills he has acquired in studying structural linguistics. A debt of gratitude is owed to those members of the faculty of Indiana University who awakened this interest, fostered this awareness and helped to develop these skills, especially to Professors Thomas A. Sebeok and Sol Saporta (the latter now at the University of Washington) in linguistics, and to Professors Francis W. Gravit and Edward D. Seeber in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French literature respectively.

The Library Committee and the Agnes H. Anderson Fund of the University of Washington liberally supported the research and publication of this work.

My broad coverage of early French missionary manuscripts would have been impossible without the generous help of the following librarians, curators and archivists who assisted me in search, identification and description, and gave permission to quote extensively from manuscripts entrusted to their care: Dr. Thomas R. Adams, The John Carter Brown Library, Providence, R.I.; Mrs. Marian Clarke, The Watkinson Library, Trinity College, Hartford, Conn.; Dr. Gordon M. Day, National Museum of Man, Ottawa; M. J.-R. Denault, Canadian Microfilming Co., Ltd., Montreal; The Reverend Paul Desjardins, Collège Sainte-Marie, Montreal; Mme M. R. Guignard, Cabinet des Manuscrits, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; The Reverend Emilien Lamirande, Scolasticat St. Joseph, Ottawa; The Reverend J. E. Moreau, Notre Dame de Montréal, Montreal; The Reverend Honorius Provost, Séminaire de Québec, Laval University, Quebec; Mrs. M. Yaroski, Redpath Library, McGill University, Montreal.

Grateful acknowledgements go to Miss Nancy Raynaud, who proofread the manuscript and collated the index, and to Mr. Nelson Rojas, who compiled the *index personarum*.

The missionary manuscripts analyzed here are listed, along with other manuscripts of similar description, in Appendix D. They are referred to throughout the text, in parentheses, with the number assigned to them in the list, e.g. (MS 12). Numerous

references will also be made in the following style to the 73-volume set of *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* edited by Reuben G. Thwaites (Cleveland, 1896-1901): (Th, XII, 38).

The spelling of the names of Jesuit missionaries conforms to that of Arthur Melançon's authoritative *Liste des missionaires-jésuites* (Montreal: Collège Sainte-Marie, 1929); for other names, both proper and geographic, the Index (Vols. LXXII-LXXIII) of the *Jesuit Relations* is followed.

For the symbol 'ŏ', see p. 73.

April 1969 VICTOR E. HANZELI
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

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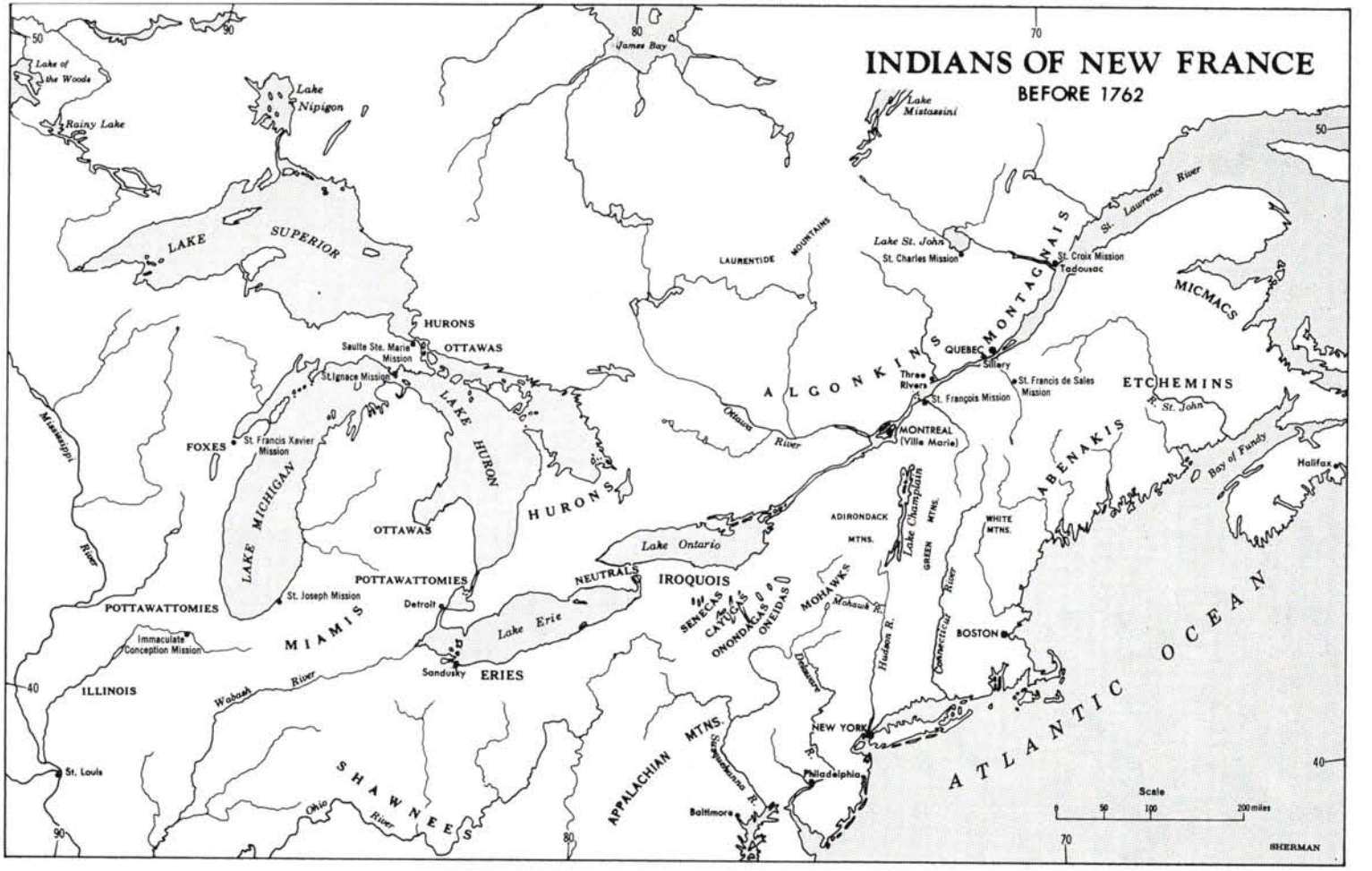
INDIANS OF NEW FRANCE
BEFORE 1762
Lake of the Woods
Rainy Lake
Lake Nipigon
James Bay
Lake Mistassini
LAKE SUPERIOR
LAURENTIDE MOUNTAINS
Lake St. John
St. Charles Mission
St. Croix Mission
Tadousac
St. Laurence River
MONTAGNAIS
MICMACS
HURONS
OTTAWAS
Saulte Ste. Marie Mission
St. Ignace Mission
QUEBEC
Sillery
Three Rivers
St. François Mission
St. Francis de Sales Mission
ETCHEMINS
ALGONKINS
FOXES
St. Francis Xavier Mission
LAKE MICHIGAN
LAKE HURON
Ottawa River
MONTREAL (Ville Marie)
R. St. John
Bay of Fundy
Halifax
ABENAKIS
Mississippi River
OTTAWAS
HURONS
ADIRONDACK MTNS.
Lake Champlain
GREEN MTNS.
WHITE MTNS.
Lake Ontario
NEUTRALS
IROQUOIS
POTTAWATTOMIES
St. Joseph Mission
Detroit
Lake Erie
SENECAS
CAYUGAS
ONONDAGAS
ONEIDAS
MOHAWKS
Mohawk R.
Hudson R.
Connecticut River
BOSTON
POTTAWATTOMIES
MIAMIS
Immaculate Conception Mission
ILLINOIS
Wabash River
Sandusky
ERIES
Delaware
NEW YORK
ATLANTIC OCEAN
APPALACHIAN MTNS.
Susquehanna R.
Philadelphia
Baltimore
SHAWNEES
Ohio River
St. Louis
Scale
0 50 100 200 miles
SHERMAN

I

THE HISTORICAL CONTINUUM OF LINGUISTIC SCIENCE

The reliable, up-to-date and detailed history of linguistic science is yet to be written. "Almost everything remains to be done", Dell H. Hymes charged at a symposium presented at the 1962 meeting of the American Anthropological Association. "No adequate general history of anthropology, or of linguistics, exists ...."[1]

Much primary information is lacking or is practically inaccessible and most writings concerning linguistics before the nineteenth century are devoid of proper historical perspective.

Comparative philology was born and grew up as an autonomous field of research, with the first Romantic generation, receiving a special scholarly impetus from the German Romanticists. "Die neuere historisch-philologische Forschung, der Ruhmestitel des 19. Jahrhunderts, ist das wertvollste, dauerndste Ergebnis der deutschen Romantik", writes a modern critic of Friedrich Schlegel.[2]

The belief that the Romanticists created not only something entirely different from, but also far superior to the achievements of the preceding generations in linguistic (and literary) studies originated with the Romanticists themselves. Schlegel gloried in his contemporaries' attempts towards "eine vergleichende Grammatik und ein durchaus historischer Stammbaum, eine wahre Enstehungsgeschichte der Sprachen, statt der ehemahligen erdichteten Theorien vom Ursprunge derselben."[3]

The Romantics asserted their aims and their methods in contradistinction to those of their predecessors. The partisan zeal with which they preached their own originality, coupled with the impact of their actual achievements, was bound to lead to a distortion of the achievements of the preceding generations and finally, to the creation of historical myths.

[1] "Notes Toward a History of Linguistic Anthropology", *Anthropological Linguistics*, V (1963), No. 1, 59.

[2] J. Körner, "Friedrich Schlegels 'Philosophie der Philologie'", *Logos*, VII (1928), 1.

[3] In his *Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* in *Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. VIII (1846), p. 318. The Grimm Brothers complained also that scholars before their time restricted their study to the linguistic Big Three: Hebrew, Greek and Latin, and that "die beschaffenheit einer rein menschlichen, und unmittelbarst nahe liegenden wundervollen gabe [die deutsche Sprache] zu erwägen, fiel lange gar niemand ein." (*Deutsches Wörterbuch*, Vol. I [1854], col. v.)

The philologists indicted pre-nineteenth-century linguistics as a-historical, speculative and lacking scientific method. This was a fair charge in the sense that the philologists were indeed the first to provide a theory of language evolution and to bolster the theory with an empirical method of determining genetic relationships among various languages. Late nineteenth- and twentieth-century critics added further charges according to their own theoretical bias: grammarians (and the term included all students of language before the nineteenth century) did not recognize the primacy of speech over "letters", they legislated usage instead of describing language, they ignored the uniqueness of linguistic structures and produced works in which the language in question was described in terms of Latin or "universal" grammar. The modern "structuralist" also disparages older grammars as "atomistic", dealing in lists of items (words, "exceptions") instead of emphasizing articulated *Gestalts*. From this formidable list emerged an unqualified general condemnation of pre-nineteenth-century linguistics.

Existing histories of linguistic science now present all scholarship preceding the nineteenth century as a pre-history of linguistics. The battlecries of the Romanticists have been turned into time-honored generalizations. Holger Pedersen, the first historian of language studies in modern times, began his rather sketchy monograph by stating that "until the close of the eighteenth century, European linguistic science had advanced but little beyond the knowledge of linguistics achieved by the Greeks and Romans".[4] He described sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century linguistic scholarship as a period of mere gathering of data and, at its end and at its best, a systematic collecting of language specimens.

The most recent and detailed history of linguistic studies, actually the only single work that deserves such an appellation, in Hans Arens' *Sprachwissenschaft: Der Gang ihrer Entwicklung von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*. Here the documentation is painstaking, the coverage is broad and up-to-date. Precise references and quotations abound. Yet the traditional dichotomy between pre- and post-nineteenth-century linguistics still prevails: Part One, pp. 1-132, is entitled "Aufstieg zur Sprachwissenschaft"; whereas Part Two, pp. 133-522, rates the title "Die Sprachwissenschaft". Arens justifies this division by the arguments of his many predecessors since Pedersen, stressing that, before Schlegel, no advance in linguistic knowledge and no development of linguistic method were affected by the numerous grammars "die lediglich nach dem Schema der lateinischen Grammatik (die ja ihrerseits nur wieder die griechische Urform wiederholte) jede fremde Sprache abhandelte".[5]

[4] *Linguistic Science in the 19th Century* (1931), p. 1. For other criticisms of pre-nineteenth-century linguistics, see the introductory chapters in the work by Brunot, Jespersen, Meillet, Rousselot and Thomsen as listed in the Bibliography.

R. H. Robins' *Short History of Linguistics* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1967) and Georges Mounin's *Histoire de la linguistique des origines au XXe siècle* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1967), published too late to be included in the coverage of this Chapter, represent laudable departures from standard interpretations of pre-nineteenth-century linguistics.

[5] Freiburg (1955), p. 49.

The founders of modern structural and functional linguistics have taken an equally dim view of the endeavors, activities and achievements of their predecessors of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Ferdinand de Saussure calls all grammar before Franz Bopp "dépourvue de toute vue scientifique et désintéressée sur la langue elle-même; ... c'est une discipline normative fort éloignée de la pure observation et dont le point de vue est forcément étroit".[6] Leonard Bloomfield's *Language*, epoch-making as it may be from the point of view of modern linguistic studies in the United States, is far from being original in its scorn of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century language studies, when the "era of exploration brought a superficial knowledge of many languages" and that of eighteenth-century scholars whose many "misconceptions prevented [them] from making use of the data that were at hand".[7]

Guy Harnois' *Les Théories du langage en France de 1660 à 1821* claims to be a concise "histoire de la linguistique, avant qu'il y ait une linguistique".[8] The author, in choosing the period to be covered in his small monograph, divides the history of linguistic studies into three "Comtean" states: "l'état théologique ou fictif"; "l'état métaphysique ou abstrait", dating from the publication of the Port Royal grammar in 1660; and, thirdly, the scientific state which, for a Frenchman that he is, begins in 1821 with Raynouard's *Grammaire comparée des langues de l'Europe latine.*

Few authors have raised their voices against these historical oversimplifications, although re-evaluations of individual achievements in linguistics have been published sporadically since the 1930's.

In 1933, Adrien Millet in his *Les Grammairiens et la phonétique ou l'enseignement des sons du français depuis le XVIe siècle jusqu'à nos jours* reminded us of something that the abbé Rousselot had mentioned a decade before: that there was a continuous improvement of the recording of the speech sounds of French ever since the sixteenth century. He wrote: "Il n'est pas douteux que les grammairiens d'élite qui ont illustré la seconde partie du XVIIIe siècle, étaient admirablement préparés à comprendre les développements que la linguistique comparée allait donner à leur enseignement. Ils furent des phonéticiens avant la lettre."[9]

Robert A. Hall Jr., a few years later, published an article on the "Synchronic Aspects of Renaissance Linguistics" in which he propounded the scientific merits that emerged from both the "Tuscan" and "Anti-Tuscan" camps. Machiavelli, for him, anticipated phonemic doctrine and Tolomei was the first to recognize "the inherent existence of grammatical order and structure in every language". The latter's works mark "the beginning of Italian descriptive grammar".[10]

After World War II, scholars began extending this process of re-evaluation into

[6] *Cours de linguistique générale* (1931), p. 13.
[7] New York (1933), pp. 7-8.
[8] Paris (1930), p. 13.
[9] P. 196.
[10] In *Italica*, XVI (1939), p. 11.

pre-Renaissance grammar. Louis H. Gray in his *Foundations of Language* warned that

> It is the fashion to regard all [the] early investigations with more or less of a scorn; yet a sympathetic study of them would seem to show that Greeks and Schoolmen alike recognized many of the problems which actually underlie the nature of all language, [and] ... there is far more reason to marvel at what they accomplished then to jest at their errors.[11]

Robert Henry Robins' 1951 monograph, *Ancient and Mediaeval Grammatical Theory in Europe with Particular Reference to Modern Linguistic Doctrine*, reminds us that Aristotle defined nouns and verbs much as we define morphemes today, i.e., as minimal meaningful units, when he described them as linguistic forms "having meaning" (in contradistinction to his "conjunctions" which have no meaning in isolation) and "whose parts have by themselves no meaning".[12] Robins intimates that ever since Aristotle's time, word classes have never been established *de facto* by notional or logical criteria alone but rather by a mixture of formal and notional criteria where the dosage of the two elements varied.[13] Varro even went as far as to set up his four word classes in Latin on a purely distributional basis: words with case inflection (nouns), words with tense inflection (verbs), words with both inflections (participles) and words with neither inflection (conjunctions and adverbs).[14]

As a recent reappraisal of a French grammarian's production, George R. Shipman's *The Vowel Phonemes of Meigret* is outstanding. Shipman demonstrates that this sixteenth-century grammarian's orthography is actually a phonemic record, "a set of symbols to record the gross acoustic features of his pronunciation and to reveal its significant contrasts .... For one who lived in the faint dawn of linguistic science" he concludes, Meigret "was not only the founder of French grammar, but the founder of linguistic science in France."[15]

Unbiased, if not "sympathetic", studies of various aspects of pre-nineteenth-century linguistics will have to be multiplied before a global historical restatement can be arrived at. In this sense, an attempt to discover in linguistic works of the past something more or something different from what they have been believed to contain, is not so much an attempt to rehabilitate authors but rather to rehabilitate linguistic science in its historical continuum.

Among the major areas that remain to be scrutinizied is that of the "linguistic

[11] New York (1950), pp. 428-429.

[12] P. 20.

[13] The coincidence of these criteria may be observed in a definiton of Dionysius Thrax, quoted by Robins (p. 40): "The verb is a part of speech without case-inflection, admitting inflexions of tense, person and number, signifying an activity or a being acted on."

[14] In the same vein, Hans Glintz points out that many nineteenth- and twentieth-century grammarians spoke slightingly of their Latin predecessors for their "failure" to recognize the "three basic categories" of verbs, nouns and adjectives. Structuralists now agree, however, that, in both Greek and Latin, adjectives do not constitute a class on the same level of hierarchy as do nouns and verbs; they belong to a subclass of noun morphemes, displaying the special features of gender variation and comparability. ("Die Begründung der abenländischen Grammatik ...." *Wirkendes Wort*, VII (1957), 134.)

[15] Washington, D.C. (1953), pp. 71-72.

discovery" of the New World. The discovery of "exotic" languages, so different in structure from all the languages spoken in and written in Western Europe, played an important historical rôle in the increasing realization of the relativity of human culture in general and cultural values in particular. Nineteenth-century comparative philology could not have had either the impetus or the proper material to work with, without the painstaking collating of linguistic materials which began in the sixteenth century and reached its peak in the polyglot collections of Pallas and Hervás at the end of the eighteenth.[16]

Beyond their mere antiquarian value, early documents on "exotic" languages are the ideal site for the historian of linguistic science who wishes to recapture linguistic practices at a given period. These documents reveal their authors in their characteristic attitudes, prejudices, procedures, techniques, successes and failures. Ultimately their study is susceptible to strengthen or weaken our accepted notions about pre-nineteenth-century linguistic studies.

Hence the aim of the present work: to examine historically and critically a representative sample of early descriptions of "exotic" languages in order to determine how far they display the shortcomings generally imputed to all linguistic labor of their period. The sample includes here all the printed and manuscript linguistic works (grammars, grammatical sketches, dictionaries and radical lists) of the French missionaries among the Iroquoian and Central and Eastern Algonquian Indians of New France before 1760. Specific discussion of detailed linguistic data in Chapters VI and VII will be restricted to Central Algonquian. The linguistic matters contained in the *Jesuit Relations* will be given special attention. The great mass of religious texts extant (catechistical, liturgical, biblical, etc.) written in these languages will not be taken into account.

This field, important as it may seem for historians of linguistics and Americanists alike, has scarcely been subjected to scholarly investigation.[17] There are a few eulogistic and popularizing narratives written *ad maiorem ordinis gloriam*,[18] an occasional article touching on the history of a single work of a missionary-linguist,[19] and some bibliographical and general essays.[20] A number of historical treatises devoted to missionaries, travellers and their works give passing mention to the linguistic achievements of their subjects.[21] However, the authors of these treatises rarely have either

[16] John Rowe commented recently: "The first step in the development of general comparative linguistics, as distinct from philological cultivation of one or two languages, was probably the production of learners' grammars and dictionaries of spoken languages for the convenience of travellers, missionaries and administrators." Quoted by Hymes, p. 65.

[17] Yet anthropologists and linguists have expressed some interest recently in early Amerindian linguistica. See Shirley Silver's article on Natick based on the early printed works of John Eliot and Josiah Cotton, and J. R. Krueger's recent reprinting of two manuscript Cherokee grammars from the nineteenth century, as well as works by Edgerton and Heizer, all listed in the Bibliography.

[18] See the Bibliography under Dahlmann, Lenhart, Maarschalkerweerd.

[19] See the Bibliography under Dickson, Robinson.

[20] See the Bibliography under Duignan, Hanns, Michelson, Stevens, Vinay.

[21] See the Bibliography under Latourelle, Kälin, Pouliot.