

# AMERINDIAN TRIBAL NAMES IN NORTH AMERICA OF POSSIBLE BASQUE ORIGIN

Peter Bakker

Aarhus University

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The last decades have brought to light a lot of information on the early history of European-Amerindian contact. Some of the most sensational discoveries concern the importance of Basque fur traders, who had set up trading networks with the Natives of what is now Canada in the 16th century in Eastern Canada, long before the arrival of the French settlers in the early seventeenth century. The Basques were already in North America in the first decades of the 16th century, before Jacques Cartier (as were Portuguese, Breton and British fishermen as well). If Basque was not the first foreign language in use by Aboriginal inhabitants of the Northwest of North America, it was certainly the first to have an impact on their languages.

The maritime culture of the Basques was one of the most important ones in Europe in the late Middle Ages, when they travelled to the Mediterranean, Ireland, the North Cape and the European coast for trade and fishery. It was their search for cod and whales which brought them to North America in the first decades of the 16th century, where they set up whaling stations along the Labrador coast, and later that century also along the Saint Lawrence River and the Maritimes. Trading with the Natives, in particular the Micmac and Montagnais, was also a major industry, especially in the second half of the 16th century.

The evidence for this is encountered in historical documents (Barkham 1980, 1988, Huxley 1987, Turgeon 1982, 1985, 1990), in archaeological findings (Tuck 1987, Turgeon et al. 1992), in linguistic borrowings from Basque in Northeastern languages (Bakker 1989a) and in the former existence of a Basque based trade language (Bakker 1989b) in the Northeast as well as Iceland (Bakker et al 1991). It appeared that Basques were important pioneers in the contacts with the Natives. The early presence of the Basques in Northeastern Canada is further reflected in the existence of scores of

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<sup>1</sup> Comments by Nicole Beaudry, José Mailhot and Charles Martijn contributed greatly to the final form of this paper. I hereby acknowledge their help.

It is an honour to dedicate this revised version of a paper originally published in French (Bakker 1994) to Rudolf De Rijk. He was my teacher of Basque grammar. Not only was he always helpful with his comments on matters related to the Basque language, he also stimulated me to submit a paper written as an undergraduate student for publication. This paper on Basque morphology (Bakker 1984) was my first academic publication. In that way he was instrumental in the course of my academic career.

Basque toponyms in Canada (Egaña Goya 1992). Further the presence of the *lauburu* on Micmac popular art may be linked with this trade (Bakker 1991b).

The Basques traded most intensively with the Montagnais of Southern Labrador and the north shore of the Saint Lawrence, with the Micmacs of Nova Scotia and Gaspesia in the 16th and early 17th centuries. Basque trade continued on a lesser scale into the 18th century, especially with the Inuit of Southern Labrador. Most of the latter trade took place on the northwest coast of Newfoundland (for sources, see Barkham's work and Turgeon's work, as well as Bakker 1989b, 1991c and 1996). Certainly, Basque fishermen were pioneers in the fur trade, laying contacts with different Native groups. Despite the fact that a lot of documentation has been uncovered (much of it unpublished, some printed in Huxley 1987), the history of the Basque fur trade still has to be written.

Aboriginal languages of four different families are, or rather were, spoken in the relevant area. Inuktitut or Inuttut, the language of the Labrador Inuit or Eskimos, is still spoken in Labrador, but no longer in Southern Labrador and Northern Newfoundland where it was in earlier periods. This language is a member of the Eskimo-Aleutan language family. The Island of Newfoundland was inhabited by the Beothuk until the beginning of the 19th century when the last speaker of Beothuk died. On the basis of the language material (four word lists), a definite genetic affiliation with other languages of the area cannot be established, despite some similarities with Algonquian languages. It is therefore considered an isolate. Algonquian languages are spoken not only by the coastal peoples of this area, but also far inland. Only the coastal Algonquian languages are relevant. From Maine in the USA to Eastern Quebec and Southern Newfoundland the Penobscot, Maliseet-Passamaquoddy and Micmac speak Eastern Algonquian languages —of which Penobscot just became extinct. In Labrador and along the north shore of the Saint Lawrence River, Montagnais was and is spoken, which is a Central Algonquian language, not intelligible to the speakers of the Eastern Algonquian languages. Along the Saint Lawrence River, Iroquoian languages are spoken. Saint Lawrence Iroquoian became extinct already around 1600, whereas Mohawk is still spoken. The Hurons, also speakers of an Iroquoian language, were important traders. It is unlikely, however, that the Basques had much direct contact with either Iroquoian speakers or Beothuk speakers. There were some with Inuit, and most contacts were with the Algonquians, notably the Micmacs and Montagnais. An overview of intertribal contacts and the languages used in those can be found in Bakker & Grant 1996.

In this paper I want to discuss one aspect of the Basque-Amerindian contacts which has not received much attention thus far: the ethnonyms for Amerindian groups in the Northeast which are of possible Basque origin. If these etymologies are the correct ones, this again reflects the pioneering status of some of the Basques, as these different tribal names were transmitted to the French settlers. In this, the role of the Micmacs as the main trading partners of the Basques is also important. They provided the Basques with information concerning neighbouring nations, and this is also reflected in the tribal names. The Basques, for example, took over the Micmac ethnonym for the Inuit. It is *Eskimalak* in Basque, in which the suffix *-ak* is the Basque plural marker and *-l* is the Micmac plural marker.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Contrary to common belief, the name means "speakers of an unintelligible language" (Mailhot 1978). This etymology is not universally accepted, however, and Goddard (1984) argues for a Montagnais etymology rather than Micmac: *assime:w* "snowshoe netter", which was first applied to non-Eskimos.

## Ethnonymy

Ethnonymy in the fur trade is an aspect which received very little attention thus far, especially for the earliest period, when the fur trade was virtually a monopoly of the fishermen from the Basque Country and Brittany. The first contacts between Europeans and Indians were made by anonymous fishermen who ventured on the coast for trading with the local inhabitants in the first half of the 16th century. In these contacts, the names for the local tribes developed for the first time in Basque-Native interaction, after which some of these names found their way into colloquial usage.

Virtually all of the names for Amerindian tribes in North America are not the name they use for themselves. The Montagnais call themselves *Ilnu* or *Innu* (plural *Innuat*), the Eskimos call themselves *Inuk* (plural *Inuit*), the Attikamek call themselves *ne:hiraw* (plural *ne:hirawak*), the James Bay Cree *iyiyuu*, the Mohawks call themselves *kanyękkehá:kaŋ* (people of the flint?), etc. In many cases, the name that is now in general use is derived from the name used by a neighbouring tribe with whom the Europeans had been in contact earlier. Via French and English they spread to other languages. Apparently these names were communicated by certain Native groups to Europeans before actual contact with their neighbours was made. For the names mentioned here, *Montagnais* is probably from Spanish or French (at least the first attestation is a Spanish language Basque document; Isasti 1850, written in 1625, referring to the 1580s). Furthermore, a word resembling *Eskimo* is used in quite a few Algonquian languages. It most closely resembles the Micmac word *esgimow*. *Cree* is probably Algonquin Ojibwe and *Mohawk* is from an Eastern Algonquian language (see the relevant sections in the *Handbook of North American Indians*). Determining the etymology of these tribal names is a tricky question in quite a few cases.

In the Northeast, some tribal names could very well be of Basque origin. Elsewhere I argued that the tribal name *Iroquois* is a Basque word (Bakker 1990, 1991a), and I will here discuss a number of others. I will first briefly repeat my argumentation for *Iroquois*. Then I will propose etymologies for some other tribal names. These do not all make as much sense as one would hope, and alternative and better etymologies remain possible. The method used is also somewhat unusual: as many of the tribal names have no known etymology in any of the local Native languages nor in French or English, Basque is historically the most likely source. It appeared possible to find Basque etymologies. At any rate, for hardly any of the names to be discussed here a satisfactory etymology has been proposed as yet and in many cases there is a possible Basque etymology which would make sense. I want to introduce those here to open the discussion.

### *Iroquois*

In Bakker 1990, 1991a I argued that *Iroquois* is of Basque origin, an etymology which was reviewed positively by a number of Iroquoianists (e.g. Snow 1996) and Algonquianists (e.g. the late Gordon Day in a personal letter). Both had looked for an etymology, but none of them had turned out satisfactorily. The word *Iroquois* was used

first in the early 17th century in French sources.<sup>3</sup> Attempts to establish its etymology had failed, as the word is not known in any Indian language of the area (Goddard 1978b).

In the 16th century, the Basques had established regular trade relations with several Amerindian nations, notably the Micmac. The French, when they came in the early 17th century, had peaceful contacts with the Algonquians (notably Micmacs), but not with the Iroquois, who are traditional enemies of the Micmac, in fact of most other Algonquian speaking nations. In communicating with the French, the Micmacs at that time used pidginized Basque (Bakker 1989b, 1991c) and the first French visitors found this pidgin well established and learned and made use of this pidgin to communicate with the Natives (often thinking it was the Indian language).<sup>4</sup> The pidgin consisted of mostly Basque and Micmac elements, but also of Montagnais. One name given by the different Algonquian nations for the Mohawks can be translated as “cannibal monsters”, showing their inimical relation with the Iroquoians.

It is not surprising that the etymology that I proposed also shows a negative attitude towards the Iroquois. I think it is derived from the Basque stem *hil* or *il* meaning “kill, die, dead” and a suffix *-ko* (plus the suffixed article *-a*), which is used in Basque to denote geographical origin, for instance *kanadakoa* “Canadian”. In many pidgins there is a productive ending denoting ethnic origin and in the Basque pidgin it is *koa*, actually the locative genitive *-ko* with the suffixed definite article *-a*. In combination, this would mean something like “killer people” in the pidgin. I further showed that the change of /l/ to /ɾ/ is very natural in the Northeast, that the form *bilo* for *hil* is attested from a contemporary Basque pidgin from Iceland (early 17th century) and that the Basque dialectal variation between *hil* and *il* was also reflected in the variation between *hyroquois* and *iroquois*. In other words, there is an exact semantic and formal match, making this etymology likelier than any other one proposed.

### *Tarrantine*

The idea of Basque etymologies for tribal names in the Northeast is not new. Siebert 1973 already derived *Tarrentine*, the early English term for the Micmacs,

<sup>3</sup> After the publication of my etymology, Charles Martijn pointed out to me that Richard Hakluyt (1969: 246) preceded Champlain’s 1603 use of *Iroquois* in the margin to Cartier’s travel account, where he called the Richelieu River “The river of Irrouacas”. Ganong (1964: 211) had already identified Hakluyt’s source as French (more properly Basque) traders, saying that Hakluyt “must have had (...) *R. of Irrouacas* for the Richelieu, from the French traders, their names, of course, reflecting local usage.” If this *irrouacas* would be the same word as *Iroquois*, I would guess it consist of the same root *bilo* “die, kill”, plus a Basque and Algonquian plural ending *-ak*, and perhaps again a Spanish plural ending.

<sup>4</sup> A 1710 Basque archival document, written by fishermen from Saint Jean de Luz, states literally the following:

Des les premiers tems auxquels les Basques faisoient les pecheries des ballaines et des morues dans le golfe de St Laurens, ils firent — amitié avec tous les sauvages de cette contrée, et lierent commerce avec eux, particulièrement avec une nation apellée Esquimaux, qui a toujours été et qui est encore intretable pour toutes les autres nations, et comme leur lingages etoint absolument differens, Ils formerent une espece de langue franque composée de la Basque et des autres differentes langues de ces sauvages, par le moyen de laquelle ils sentendoient fort bien tous; les personnes qui ont fait les etablissement des colonies françoises du Canada, et de la partie septentrionale dela Cadie, y trouverent ce langage etably depuis long tems la premiere fois quilz y arriverent (Cited from Mimeault 1987: 211).

from Basque. The name *Tarrantine* was shown to be derived from Basque *tarantari* meaning "babbler, chatterer". The name *Tarrantine*, however, was used almost exclusively in English sources, first in 1607 as *tarentyns* (Eckstorm 1945: 75). It was not used in French sources, and the way this supposedly Basque name would have come to be used by the English is hard to imagine, in the absence of English-Basque contacts of any significance. A Native intermediary language, perhaps Maliseet or Etchemin, would have been possible, as they also had some contacts with both Basque traders and English speakers.

There is, however, also a possible Native etymology. William F. Ganong, in a letter to F. H. Eckstorm dated March 12, 1912 (published in Eckstorm 1945: 75-76) suggested the "Etchemin" word *tlunkwa* or *tluntwa* "trade" as a source. If this is indeed a real word, it is a historically plausible etymology,<sup>5</sup> since the Micmacs were important traders for the tribes to the south.

### *Etchemin*

The identity of the Etchemin is somewhat controversial. The tribal name *Etchemin* was frequently used in French sources from the early 17th century and it seems to have covered the Maliseet, Passamaquoddy and Penobscot, three groups speaking Algonquian languages. It is known that the Etchemin spoke an Eastern Algonquian language and that they lived south and west of the Micmacs in the early 17th century. The only language recordings under the name *Etchemin* (in Lescarbot 1907-1914, 3: 114) however, do not match with the modern languages Maliseet or Passamaquoddy, or any one language of the area (Goddard 1978a: 70-71). The fact is that the area between the Kennebec and Saint John Rivers, then inhabited by the Etchemin, is in more modern times is occupied by the Maliseet-Passamaquoddy.

Champlain was the first to mention them in 1603, when he met some Etchemins in the company of Algonquins and Montagnais in Tadoussac at the north shore of the Saint Lawrence River. In 1604 Champlain visited Etchemin country: "We proceeded to a river on the mainland, called the river of the Etchemins, from a tribe of Indians so named in their own country."

Biggar, in a comment on Champlain, stated that *Etchemin* "was obviously a form of the word *skejim*, still in use as the equivalent of Indian" (Biggar 1922: 269). Although Champlain's wording suggests that he had heard the name from the Etchemin themselves and therefore that it was their own ethnic name (cf. Wherry 1979), the widely diverging forms of /oskičín/, /skičín/ and /skedčím/ on the one hand (being the word for "Indian") and /ečemě/, /ečemin/ on the other hand, intimate different roots for the two words. This etymology must therefore be rejected. This is also the opinion of Erickson (1978), who wrote: "The term *Etchemin*, recorded in Tadoussac, is of unknown origin; it may have been Algonquin or Montagnais but is not a rendering of *skičín*<sup>6</sup> "Indian" in modern Maliseet-Passamaquoddy".

<sup>5</sup> It is not in the dictionaries of Maliseet-Passamaquoddy that I consulted.

<sup>6</sup> Chamberlain (1899: 27) gives *o-ski'-tchin*, "an Indian".

Other early forms include in 1603 *Estechemains* and *Estechemins* (Champlain 1870, II: 49; II: 8); in 1612 in Latin *Etheminguenses* (Pierre Biard in 1612; Campeau 1967: 210, 211, 212) and in 1616 in French *Éteminquois*, *Etechemins* and *Étéminguois* (Pierre Biard in Campeau 1967: 479; Thwaites 1896-1901: III 69).

The only other published etymology by an Amerindianist that I have seen is one of Albert Lacombe in Baraga's dictionary of Ojibwe (Baraga 1878; see also the introduction by John Nichols on page ix). Lacombe writes:

“ETCHEMIN, (Otchipwe), from *iyekomin*, from, *iyeko*, sand, and, *min*, berry, or, sand-berries, so the Otchipwe indians call raspberries.”

This is a very problematic etymology. Ojibwe as a source is impossible since the Ojibwes were not in contact with either Europeans or Etchemins when the name was already in use. Also, it is not explained why these Ojibwes would call the Etchemin people (with whom they were not even in contact) after raspberries. In the third place, the forms *etche* and *iyeko* show no formal similarity whatsoever. This etymology must therefore be rejected.

The etymology of *Etchemin* may very well be Basque. The first part of this tribal name matches exactly with the Basque word for “house”, *etxe* /etʃe/. One important cultural difference between the more southern Maliseet-Passamaquoddy and Penobscot on the one hand and the more northern tribes such as the Micmac, is that the southern groups used log-houses for at least part of the year. Champlain's scout who was sent to the Etchemin stated that “they have large villages and also houses in the country”. (Biggar VI, 1936: 43-44, cited in Wherry 1979: 184) Erickson 1978 writes:

Harper (1954: 27) suggests that these rectangular buildings [in the Etchemin village Ougidi at the mouth of Saint John River in 1603, P.B.] were possibly larger versions of the rectangular houses sometimes constructed by the Penobscot, who “built a wall of four or five tiers of logs as in a log cabin, and erected on this a roof of birch bark supported by poles. Long poles from each of the top corners were bound together in the center with spruce roots or cedar bark cords.

From a cultural point of view therefore, the fact that these southern people were distinct from the Micmacs in that they built wooden houses, may have triggered the use of as name referring to these houses. Thus far, I only explained the first part of the name *etchemin*, *etxe* being the Basque word for “house”. What does *min* stand for?

The pronunciation may be a problem. If it was pronounced as a modern French speaker would, it would sound like /mɛ/, which is not a possible Basque word. If the vowel were not nasal, it could be /mɛn/. There is a Basque word *men* or *mende* meaning “power, capacity, authority”, which makes but little sense. For the possibility of *mendi* “mountain” as a source, this cannot be rejected out of hand. *Etxemendi* is a common family name in the Basque Country, and perhaps one Basque sailor/trader Etxemendi was a regular visitor to the Etchemin river or so. In fact, this etymology was suggested already in 1914 by a Québec author (Doucet 1914: 43): “*Etchemin* viendrait de *Etxemendi*, qui veut dire, selon M. Francisque Michel, maison sur la montagne”. *Etxemendi* indeed means “mountain house”.

If we suppose that the word is not pronounced as /men/ but rather as /min/, there are more possibilities. The Basque word *min* /min/ literally means “pain”. There is even a Basque word *etxemin* meaning “nostalgia, homesickness”. Despite the close

phonological match, it is hard to conceive why people would call themselves or other people like this and it is therefore an unlikely name for an Amerindian nation.

There is another possibility, however. In the Basque pidgin used by the Micmacs, several words starting with “b-” or “p-” in Basque, start with “m”. Examples are Basque *balia* “whale”, pidgin *maria*; Portuguese *pássaro* “big bird”, pidgin *macharoa* (for other examples and for the precise sources of the pidgin words, see Bakker 1989b, 1991c). I have no explanation for this phonological change, but Basque dialect differences most likely play a role here: similar phonological variation is found in Basque dialects (Michelena 1961). If we think of *pin* or *bin* as a possible Basque source for the *-min* part of *Etchemin*, then it is not a problem to come up with a source: the Basque word *pinu* or *pino* (obviously borrowed from Spanish *pino*, and the same root as in English *pine*) means “pine tree”. This would make sense only if pine wood, or wood resembling pine trees, were indeed used for these Etchemin wooden lodges. The sources are not explicit here. It has to be pointed out, however, that the word *pinelpino* may stand for different species of tree in different dialects. Linguistically, the disappearance of the final vowel of Basque *pinu* in the word *Etchemin* is not explained. Despite these two minor problems, a Basque etymology for *Etchemin* seems plausible, both for historical and linguistic reasons, although it is hard to adopt one of the various possible etymologies.

### *Algonquin*

The name Algonquin was first recorded in print by Champlain in 1603 as *Algoumequin* (Day and Trigger 1978), and as early as 1632 as *Algonquain*. The latter form is now generally used, both for the subgroup nowadays called *Algonquin* and for the broader group *Algonquian*, referring to those Indian groups who speak a language of the Algonquian family. Day 1972 and Day & Trigger 1978 derive the word from Maliseet *elakómkwik* [ɛlæɡómogwɪk] “they are our relatives (or allies)”. This is semantically a good etymology (they were allies of the Maliseet), but there are two problems. First, it differs considerably in shape from the first recorded *Algoumequin*. Second, the contacts of the Europeans with the Maliseet were much less important than the contacts with the Micmac. I want to suggest another possibility here, which has other problems —perhaps even more serious problems than the Maliseet etymology.

If we take the oldest first form *Algumekin* as basic, there appears to be a Basque word with an almost exact phonological match: *arkumeki* meaning “lambs’ meat”. The variation between /l/ and /r/ is common, since these are phonetically close. It is surprising, however, that the word contains an /l/ at all, since all local languages (including Micmac and Etchemin) in the early 17th century had /r/ but not /l/. This suggests a non-Native origin. We can say that the only real difference in form is the final *-n*. The Basque word *arkumeki* consists of two elements, *arkume* “lamb” and the noun suffix *-ki* which indicates “meat of”. In its turn, *arkume* can be analyzed as *ardi* “sheep” and *ume* “young animal, child” (the connective *-k-* here is not uncommon in Basque compounds).

Would there be any reason to call an Indian tribe after lamb’s meat? The only possibility I can think of is that some form of wild meat, in taste resembling lambs’ meat with which the Basques are thoroughly familiar, was a trade commodity between the Micmac and the people then called Algonquins, and the Basques were knowledgeable about this. The Basques may have been in direct contact with the Algonquins as well,

since they were first mentioned as present in Tadoussac in 1603, which was then a major Basque trading place.

Furthermore it is well known from Amerindian oral history and from documentation by Europeans, that the Natives supplied their visiting European guests with ample supplies of meat, both during feasts and as trade items (see for instances some of the stories in Vincent 1992, or, for a Montagnais example, the quotation from the Dutch trader Laurens Feykes Haan in Mailhot 1993: 24-25). As for the Algonquins, it is stated by Day & Trigger that they differed from the more eastern tribes in that they would not eat themselves when they were feeding visitors: "The Algonquins entertained their guests in the same manner as the Hurons, with the host tending his guest but not eating any food himself". It may be far-fetched, but perhaps it is the odd custom of presenting meat to their guests while not eating, which led neighbouring Indians to use this name for the Algonquins. The Algonquins and Basques may have met around Tadoussac around 1600, where both traded, but there is no record of specific Algonquin-Basque contacts.

The Maliseet etymology gives a more likely match from a semantic point of view, whereas the Basque etymology is better from a formal phonological point of view. At this point, it is hard to make a decision.

### **The ending *-quois* denoting ethnic origin in *Canadaquoa*, *Samaricois*, *Gaspéquois*...**

Above I suggested that the Basque ending *-koa*, used to indicate geographical origin, was the source of the ending in the pidgin which was written *quois* by the French, sometimes also *-quoa* or *-coud*. This ending is used both in pidgin sentences and also in some non-pidgin contexts. The suggested Basque origin of this ending requires that it be confirmed by other ethnonyms ending in *quois* used in the same area and the same period.

The *-quois* / *-koa* suffix is found in the following words used in pidgin contexts (notably Marc Lescarbot 1907-1914: II, 25, 312, 395; III, 124), and Pierre Biard in Thwaites 1896-1901: I, 162, 177).

*Canadaquoa* "(Native) Canadian, more specifically Montagnais"; this name is completely identical to the modern Basque word *Kanada-koa*.

*Samaricois* "Breton"; this name is obviously derived from Basque *sanmalo-koa*, when Saint Malo in Brittany was the main harbour of the Breton fishermen and traders who came to North America. The first element in this name "san" is the Spanish equivalent of "saint".

*Gaspéquois* "Indian from Gaspé area, i.e. Micmac". The third name is clearly derived from the place name *Gaspé*, which has also been argued to be a Basque place name.<sup>7</sup>

*Souriquois* or *souricoa* "Micmac". The etymology of Souriquois will be discussed below.

<sup>7</sup> The following information is from Egaña Goya (1992): it was first found on a map of 1594 as *C. Gaspei*, and frequently after that in many sources. Recorded in a Basque rutter of 1677 as *Caispe*. According to Egaña Goya it is derived from the Basque word *Gerizpe* of *Kerizpe* "shelter". This is indeed a suitable name for the place.

Charles Martijn, however, has good arguments for a Micmac origin. He cites André Thevet, who wrote in 1588: "un port nommé des Barbares Gaspay..." and also Marc Lescarbot, who called it a Native name used by French mariners (Martijn 1991: 54, 56; Lescarbot 1907-1914: II, 390). The Micmac etymology would be *Gaspeig* "land's end".

*Basquoa* “Basque”. The word *Baskoa* is also used for “Basque (person)” in Basque, but the *-koa* part is (at least not today) a suffix to a geographical name *Bas*—which does not exist.

### *Souriquois, Souricoua*

The word *souriquois* for “Micmac” is derived from the Souricoua River, which was “an important trading rendezvous between the Natives and Europeans” (Whitehead 1993: 79). The word itself could be derived from Basque *zuri* “white” plus the ending *-koa*. In contrast to the others just mentioned here, *zurikoa* is not a correct word in Basque proper with the meaning “white”. It can easily be formed, however, if *zuri* is taken as a geographical name.

Another possibility is that it has to do with the fact that the Micmacs were the Native group who had the most intensive contacts with the Europeans, the White people. They could be called “those of the whites”, but it is unlikely that the Micmacs would call themselves so in contacts with Europeans. Furthermore, in Native languages the skin colour “white” is rarely if ever used in their names for Europeans before the 19th century—skin colour was more a European obsession than a Native one.

The precise reference of *souricoua* is therefore unknown, but here again a Basque interpretation is plausible.

### *Armouchiquois*

This is probably the (Nova Scotia) Micmac word *lmu:s* or *lmu:ʃ* (cf. Maliseet *olomus*)<sup>8</sup> “dog”, plus the *-koa* ending, hence something like the “dog people”. The change of /r/ to /l/ reflects a documented sound change in the native languages of the area (Goddard 1978a: 75), as mentioned before, and the initial vowel dropped. The Armouchiquois were enemies of the Micmacs, so the meaning is not surprising. In the early 17th century they dwelled on the Lower Saco River in southern Maine, an area also visited by the Micmac mariners. This form combines a Micmac stem with a Basque element.

### *Charioquois and Ochateguins (Huron)*

In the earliest period two names were used for the Hurons, an Iroquoian nation, by Champlain (Biggar 1922-1936: I, 164; 2: 57-293) which do not seem to be of Iroquoian or Algonquian origin. These are *Charioquois* and *Ochateguins* (Heidenreich 1978), both used in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. I am not aware of any attempt to etymologize these words. The first word contains the ending *-koa*, the marker of ethnonyms in the local pidgin Basque of the time. The first part is very similar to the Basque word *sarrío*, meaning “chamois”.<sup>9</sup> If the word is indeed Basque,

<sup>8</sup> I am not aware of a pre-19th century attestation of the Micmac word for “dog”, but it can safely be assumed that an initial *a-* was once present, since the Proto-Algonquian form is \**aθemwa* (cf. Cree *atim*, and Maliseet *olomus*).

<sup>9</sup> What is written with <s> in Basque is an apico-alveolar sibilant, close to the phoneme /š/ (written “sh” in English and “ch” in French). In fact, any <s> in Basque can be palatalized to become /š/.

the Huron would be something like "Goat Indians". It is true that there was a Huron tribe called the "Nation des Cerfs", the "Deer Indians" (Tooker 1987: 152 n. 4). It is tempting to link these two, but this is only possible if Basque fishermen were not familiar with deer and used the name of a more familiar animal (the goat) for the newly encountered animal (deer). In fact, Basques were familiar with deer; their word for "deer" *orein* found its way into Canadian French as *original*, meaning a "moose".

Another possible source is the Basque word *sare* or *xare* for "basket" or "(hair)net", a word more common in the northern dialects of Basque. This would then be a reference to the particular hair of the Hurons. This is plausible in the light of the fact that the French name "Huron" is also supposed to be connected with the particular hair style of these people: "Lalemant explained in 1639 (JR 16: 229-233) that the name Huron was first used by some French soldiers or sailors as a nickname for a group of Indians whose haircut reminded them of the ridge of erect bristles on the head of a boar (*hure* 'boar's head, bristly head') (Heidenreich 1978: 387).

The fact that the Basques could have a name for the Huron does not necessarily mean that the two groups would ever have met. The Basques can have heard about them through their Micmac or Montagnais associates or from others (Algonquins?) trading in Tadoussac, the Basque trading place around 1600. A Basque etymology for *Charioquois* as a name for the Hurons cannot be established with certainty. I am not aware of other suggestions, and the one suggested here is plausible.

The word *Ochateguins* shows a striking resemblance to the Basque word *osategi*, with a locative *-n*. But as it means "hospital, clinic" (*oso* "healthy", *-tegi* suffix meaning "place of") this formal similarity seems mere chance.

## Conclusions

In this paper I have explored the possibility that a number of tribal names whose origins could not be established until now, can be explained as being of Basque origin. It can be added here that a Basque source (Isasti 1850), written in Spanish in 1625, but going back to information gathered in the 1580's, is among the first to mention the Amerindian tribal names *esquimaus* ("Inuit") and *Montañeses* ("Innu/Montagnais") (Mailhot 1978, Goddard 1984) —be it not derived from Basque. This also proves that different groupings were recognized by the Natives and the Basques, both for Europeans and Natives.<sup>10</sup>

The Basque fur trade with the Micmacs, Montagnais and other tribes led to development of tribal names which are sometimes completely Basque derived, sometimes Basque in combination with the local Indian languages. The following tribal names are likely of Basque origin: *Tarrantine*, *Iroquois*, *Souriquois*, *Etchemin* and *Algonquin*, and also the ending *-koal* *-quois* as in *Almouchiquois* and *Charioquois*.

The persistence of (some of) these Basque names is a consequence of the fact that the Basque-Algonquian trade languages of the area were adopted by the first French

<sup>10</sup> The Natives also distinguished between different European groupings, witness the fact that the Micmacs around 1600 used ethnonyms such as *Bascoa* "Basque", *sanmalokoa* "Breton", *Normandia* "Norman, French" (see Bakker 1989b) and also *ingrés* for "English" (Thwaites 1896-1901: III: 70). Basque uses the Spanish borrowing *ingeles*, with the predictable change of Basque /l/ into Micmac /t/.

<sup>11</sup> The words *original* and *tabagi*, for instance, are Canadian French words adopted from the pidgin into French. Both words are derived from Basque.

settlers<sup>11</sup> to North America. The French then consolidated the tribal names, some of which came to be used internationally and are still commonly used as tribal names.

The Basque-derived ethnonyms again point to the historical importance of the Basque fishermen as pioneers of European-Amerindian fur trade contacts. The names were apparently established in the Basque-Micmac fur trade in the 16th century.

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