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slightly different clientele than Denys, we learn of primary burials. Upon death, disclosed the Recollet, corpses were immediately interred in a circular grave in a flexed position, following which the relatives and friends "bury ... everything which these possessed while on the earth, in the belief that each article in particular renders them the same service in the Land of Souls that it did to its owner when alive." Denys saw graveside mourners toss in "bows, arrows, snow-shoes, spears, robes of Moose, Otter, and Beaver, stockings, moccasins, and everything that was needful for him in hunting and in clothing himself.... At a time when they were not yet disabused of their errors, I have seen them give to the dead man, guns, axes, iron arrow-heads, and kettles, for they held all these to be much more convenient for their use than would have been their Settles of wood, their axes of stone, and their knives of bone, for their use in the Other world." To which he appended, ruefully, "there have been dead men in my time who have taken away more than two thousand pounds of peltries." One can imagine the dismay of these Frenchmen as they stood by watching the dirt being heaped over these precious pelts. What an utter waste, it must have seemed to them. In the early years, whenever they remonstrated with the Indians for this folly, they were rebuffed, "although they have been told that all these things perished in the earth, and that if they would look there they would see that nothing had gone with the dead man." So insistent were the French that one gamy Indian, at least, agreed to accept the taunt. Opening a grave, he started sifting through the decayed furniture when he came upon a badly oxidized copper kettle, which he snatched up and tapped. Finding "that it no longer sounded, (he) began to make a great cry, and said that some one wished to deceive them. 'We see indeed,' said he, 'the robes and all the rest, and if they are still there it is a sign that the dead man has not had need of them in the other world, where they have enough of them because of the length of time that they have been furnished them.... But with respect to the kettle,' said he, 'they (the deceased) have need of it, since it is among us a utensil of new introduction, and with which the other world cannot (yet) be furnished. Do you not indeed see,' said he, rapping again upon the kettle, 'that it has no longer any sound, and that it no longer says a word, because its spirit has abandoned it to go to be of use in the other world to the dead man to whom we have given it?'" Denys and his cronies thought this was hilarious, and rejoined by presenting the man with an old, worn-out kettle that turned out to be just as dumb as the first one. Convinced that they had now stumped him, they challenged him to explain the apparent discrepancy. "'Ha,' said he, 'that is because it is dead, and its soul has gone to the land where the souls of kettles are accustomed to go.' And no other reason could be given at that time," reported Denys in apparent disgust. The Indian, for his part, was probably just as frustrated at the stupidity of the French, on whom he had wasted a brief lesson in the concept of "soul loss," a common belief among North American Indians. According to this view, an object died upon being deprived of its soul, usually by means of sorcery. Soulless people and material objects continued to function or

look alive, as the case may be, but in reality they were dead. Indians often attributed illness to soul deprivation and engaged shamans to retrieve the errant member. Evidently copper kettles became dumb and no longer rang when tapped where bereft of their spirits; likewise, broken canoes "and all other things out of service" were considered "dead" by the Micmac. Clearly there was nothing misleading or disingenuous in the Indian's exposition. Yet it was all for naught. Denys and his friends may have lost a battle, but ultimately they won the war. "Nevertheless," he later confided, "they have been disabused of that in the end, though with much difficulty." We are fortunate in being able to check the details of Denys' description of seventeenth-century Micmac mortuary customs against the archaeological record, and to his credit Denys has been confirmed as a remarkably perceptive ethnographer. So concluded J. Russell Harper in a report on two mid-seventeenth-century Micmac burial sites he excavated in the vicinity of Picton Harbor, Nova Scotia, in the mid 1950's. Both pits were circular (notice LeClerc's statement to the same effect), measuring roughly six feet across by three feet deep. The floor of one of the pits. Burial Pit No. 1 in Harper's report, was strewn with twigs and branches, over which was a layer of birchbark reaching about a foot and a half up the sides. Evidence of red ocher on the bark testified to the spiritual potency of the setting. "Five layers of pelts lay above the bark on the floor" • the pelts that Denys and his cohorts so impiously mourned. "Three intact inverted copper kettles lay on the painted skin (i.e., the top pelt with flesh side up, painted red). Beneath each kettle was a very black layer of decayed organic material." Very likely this was all that remained of a food offering to the spirit of the deceased. Harper went on to enumerate the grave gifts which were found beneath the kettles: a bow, a hafted iron axe, awls, bits of cloth, "and a glazed pottery beaker." Curiously, a "moose skin covered Kettles Nos. 1 and 3, and a black bear skin, hair side down, covered Kettle No. 2." Some artifacts had been placed between the kettles, somewhat filling the interstices. Afterwards, when all was in place, "earth had been added until the kettles were covered, then a birch bark sheet laid over the fill at a depth of-1" from the grave floor" with evidence of the lower and upper sheets having been stitched together to form a tidy envelope. Finally, earth and stone fill were heaped over the carefully prepared bundle.

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