

Beltrami transcriptions

Beltrami, J.C.; *A Pilgrimage in Europe and America: leading to the Discovery of the Sources of the Mississippi and Bloody River; with a Description of the Whole Course of the former and of the Ohio*; vol. II; Hunt and Clarke, London, 1828; CIHM microfiche facsimile edition 1982.

[CIHM = Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions]

Beltrami, Giacomo Costantino, 1779-1855

[Note: Beltrami's idiosyncratic spelling is retained within the quotes.]

[Beltrami's "pilgrimage" takes the literary form of a letter home, written by him to a woman he addresses only as "Madam". He sometime refers to her "my dear Countess" and the individual is probably his wife.]

[Beltrami employs the term "savages" just as French writers of this period and earlier used the term "sauvage." Today this word has a purely negative meaning, but it was not necessarily the case in Beltrami's day, as in fact he does sometimes employ the combination term "noble savage." The Latin root of the word "savage" means "to save" or more fully "to be saved out" with the implication that the individual has been in some way "saved" from a type of corruption which is implicit in civilization. In modern English it has come to mean "violent", but this was not originally the meaning, and from the context in which he used the word, Beltrami appears more often to be using the word in the more ancient sense of the term. (One meaning of the word "sauvage" in modern Canadian French means "rescue".) The reader is welcome to make their own judgment on this point as Beltrami's usage is sometimes ambiguous.]

[Writers of this early modern period (1600-1900 roughly) were notorious for evoking classical references to ancient Greece or Rome, and sometimes other Mediterranean civilizations. It was an indication of learning, and, as their readers were more than likely to have partaken of the same education, the metaphors and similes invoked were commonly understandable. As an Italian, Beltrami invokes such terms even more often than would be the case for French or English writers of the same period. It is therefore sometimes difficult to follow what exactly is his meaning without reference to a dictionary of Classical Mythology, but fortunately in an Internet age where the reader is in doubt they can readily look it up. Wherever I can, I have tried to provide in bracketed editorial comments an explanation of how I think he is applying such terms.]

[To be sure, however, this is not always possible or clear and the reader is once again invited to make their own interpretations. For example, in a passage where Beltrami speaks of "awakening his Arguses", my Dictionary of Classical Mythology gives nearly a dozen possible meanings ranging from listening to sea-lore, to launching a ship, to something akin to "letting sleeping dogs lie." He uses this metaphor several times, apparently in the context of an informant or receiving information though I am still unsure of what he meant.]

[Part of the charm of Beltrami is that he is such an enthusiastic outsider. He views everything he encounters with a fresh mind, but at the same time he is no idiot. And, unlike American, Canadian, English or French writers, he has very little axe to grind (albeit he does have a dislike of the English.) He may be accused for taking in information with a little too much naivete. The reader may find Beltrami a little quirky, partly because of his Italian romantic spin on things, and partly because of his spelling. As the American historian Bernard de Voto observed, in the fur trade and old west eras there was “freedom of spelling.” Beltrami certainly partakes of this freedom. In Canadian and American historical writing there are many bewildering duplications of spelling, but there are also some conventions and limits to how varied the spelling – particularly of aboriginal words – can be expressed. Beltrami is under no such constraint and the reader is cautioned when encountering a strange Beltramism to consider that he is spelling aboriginal words in phonetic Italian. Consider that he spells Iowa as “Yahowa.”]

“Few rivers, I think, afford such diversity of pleasing objects as the Ohio. The most lively fancy and the most profound meditation find perpetual food and exercise, and one may be in turn a poet, a political economist, and a philosopher, and always a wondering admirer. Thirty years ago all this extent of country washed by the Ohio, which has been only recently formed into states and incorporated with the union, was inhabited only by ferocious beasts, or by people still more ferocious ; especially the part comprehended in the states of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.”

“It was the property and the abode of the Sawanoes, Miamis, Piankiciawoes, Wayaoes*, Kaskasias, Delawares, and Illinois ; nations which have been partly annihilated and partly incorporated with the Owatawas, the Sawkis, the Foxes, &c. The river Alleghany was inhabited by the Senekis, a part of whom have merged in the Six Nations; and Kentucky itself when Boon first penetrated thither with a company of Virginia huntsmen, in 1770, was marked by no track, no path, except those which had been made by the savages, the buffaloes, wolves, bears, and panthers. It was in Kentucky, after the forests were felled and the bosom of the earth laid open, that were found those gigantic monsters which excite the wonder of an observer in the museums of Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Cincinnati. They extremely resemble the elephant, and modern naturalists have given them the name of Mammoth.”

Beltrami; pp. 86-87

[In several places the original Beltrami handwritten journals were either illegible, or omitted a name altogether where Beltrami perhaps thought he might discover it a later date. The editor of the 1828 English edition of Beltrami chose to render these simply with a string of asterisks – *****. Wherever possible we’ve tried to provide the missing name or term in square brackets. The reader is of course invited to question this.]

“The Owisconsin is a large river, which flows from the east. At three hundred miles from its mouth it communicates, by means of a portage, with the Foxes' river, which falls into Green bay, in lake Michigan. This river is therefore the principal channel of the fur trade carried on by all these savage countries, by way of Michilimakinak and the lakes, with Canada and New York ; of which the village of the Prairie du Chien, at the distance of six miles higher on the same eastern bank, is a considerable entrepot.”

“After passing through a space of about six hundred and seventy miles of desert, this village comes upon one as by enchantment, and the contrast is the more striking as it bespeaks a certain degree of civilization ; French is the prevailing language, and strangers are well received. It takes its name from an Indian family whom the first Frenchmen met there, called Kigigad, or dog, for almost all the savages are distinguished by the name of some animal, which is often their peculiar Manitou.”

“The Americans ought to regard this village as one of the most interesting scenes of the last war against the English. This is the only place where the Anglo-savage army observed the terms of a capitulation during that war.”

“The American garrison, which general Clark had placed there in a wretched wooden fort, named fort Crawford, in order to neutralize as much as possible the influence and intrigues by which the English emissaries in these forests endeavoured to increase the number of the allies of Great Britain, after having opposed an heroic resistance, was forced to surrender, but on honourable conditions. Of these, the principal was intended to prevent the massacres so often perpetrated by the savages, their commilitones, upon defenceless prisoners who confided in the faith and sanctity of treaties.”

“The English colonel [probably Lt. Col. McKay but Beltrami might also mean Robert Dickson] who commanded the expedition kept his promise, although acting under the famous general ***** [possibly Isaac Brock] who saw with the utmost indifference the tomahawk and knife of these barbarians daily reeking with American blood. I wish I knew the name of this respectable officer, that I might hold it up to public admiration.

“Cikago [Chicago,] Pigeon-roost, French town [River Raisin,] forts Milden and Meigs, were the scenes of cruelty which would make you shudder. The heart of captain Wells was roasted and eaten; the whole body of a surgeon [?] was served up as a banquet to a numerous party of guests; nor could even the innocent children whom nature held concealed in the bosoms of their mothers, escape the relentless fury of these cannibals. Such was the horrible scene of massacre and slaughter, that Thecumseh, the general of king George, and the brother of the great prophet whom I mentioned to you upon the Ohio, felt himself more than once compelled to exclaim, ‘Stop! In the name of the Great Spirit, our brothers are sufficiently avenged.’ Not only did this barbarian savage show himself less cruel than ***** [?,] but at the battle of the Thames [Moraviantown,] where general Harrison triumphed over this sanguinary army, he died the death of a hero, while ***** [General Procter] fled like a coward, abandoning both the Indians and his own soldiers to the fury of that vengeance, the whole weight of which ought to have fallen upon himself. His horse, the interpreter of his conscience, saved him from that ignominious end, which ought to have served as a warning to all monsters who trample under foot the laws of nations and the claims of humanity.”

“I am convinced that the people of England have never known these horrors, or they would have held them up to public execration. They will perhaps thank me for the information.”

Beltrami; pp. 169-172

[The execution of this US “Captain Wells” and the cannibal feast was mentioned in many sources, and we have described it in an earlier chapter. Gilpin and Richardson did not

name the officer in question, and we shall accept Beltrami's naming of the victim. Richardson mentions the protests given by both Tecumseh and by the Dakota over this incident, and that it led to a falling out with the Wyandot Huron. The mention of dividing up a "surgeon" however does not appear consistent with the other available accounts (which mention only a single victim) and one has to wonder if Beltrami didn't perhaps mistake the word "sturgeon" instead.]

"The Prairie du Chien is the rendezvous of a number of Indians who come there in autumn to lay in winter provisions, and in spring to settle with their creditors, who receive skins in payment. They are much more punctual than the whites would be if they had no other guide than the law of nature, nor any other argument than their bow and arrow, their knife and gun. I also saw there some of the Winebegos, who are distinguished from all the other Indians by their gloomy and ferocious countenances. They are regarded as the most malignant, and in fact they were most intimately connected with *****. Their chief, Mai-Pock, paid his court to him by always appearing before him with a necklace composed of the ears, noses, and scalps of Americans. I saw him, but refused to shake hands with him; an expression of contempt the most severe and humiliating an Indian can receive. He it was who regaled his friends with human flesh."

"It is supposed that this nation came from the northern parts of Mexico; and, indeed, they speak a language peculiar to themselves, and are the only friends of the Sioux, who seem also to have emigrated from Mexico. They roam and hunt towards the sources of Rocky River, upon the Owisconsin, Fox River, Green Bay, and upon lake Michigan. They are divided into seven tribes, who disperse their small summer encampments upon these rivers. Their number is about sixteen hundred. The first Frenchmen that arrived among them called them Puans, from the disagreeable odour that exhales from their bodies."

Beltrami; pp. 172-173

[The French word "puan" was applied to a river venting into Green Bay, Wisconsin on the western bank of Lake Michigan. The river, and not the people, was noted for its particular odour, particularly when drying up. The Siouan people living next to the river became known by their neighbours as "the people who live by the Stinking River" which became rendered in Aunishanabeg languages as "Winnebago". The French is a corruption from this. The Winnebagoes refer to themselves as Ho-Chunk. It is not clear from where Beltrami derived the assertion that the Winnebagoes "came from...Mexico" as opposed to other Siouans; although there is a general Siouan-Iroquoian tradition that the language family immigrated northward from the Gulf of Mexico. By the context of time and space it may be that Beltrami is contrasting the origins of the Winnebago to their immediate Aunishanabeg neighbours, rather than to other Siouans. The Winnebagoes would have been the first Siouans he met. According to this generalized tradition, the Iroquoians split eastward around the Alleghenies and the Siouans split westward onto the Great Plains accounting for the general division in the language family. Possibly Beltrami had heard a version of this tradition, though otherwise it is difficult to see why he would have singled out the Winnebagoes so.]

“I met there some of the Menomenis, whom the French distinguish by the name of Folie Avoine; because, with more prudence than most other savages, they collect in summer a quantity of wild oats, which grow in great abundance upon lake Hinlin, the Kakalin, and the river La Cross, where they hunt and often pitch their tents, which much resemble those of the Saukis, Foxes, and Winebegos. They have nearly the same habits and customs, but are considered more industrious and less barbarous. In the last war, they repeatedly refused to join the standards of the English. They replied to the emissaries who endeavoured to persuade them to enlist, ‘What have the Americans done to us, that we should go and plunge our tomahawks into their bosoms?’ This is a savage lesson to civilized people. Their number does not exceed twelve hundred.”
Beltrami; pp. 173-174

[There is a hint of disingenuous propaganda about Beltrami’s comment on the alleged neutrality of the Sac and Fox during the War of 1812. At various times the Sac and Fox polity provided combatants to both sides as well as affecting at other times a neutrality. They were admittedly not so clearly identified with the British as were, for example, the Dakota or Shaunee. It is however understandable that in the 1820s when Beltrami visited the “Old Northwest” that aboriginal communities which found themselves on the American side of the border would have been anxious to convey the notion that they had remained loyally attached to the cause of the United States.]

“I cannot take leave of the Prairie du Chien without mentioning the many civilities I received from Mr. Roulet, an agent, and one of the principals of the South West Company.”

“The Americans generally consider the Canadians as ignorant. Whether this be true, I know not ; but I do know that I invariably found them very polite and obliging, even among the lower classes.”
Beltrami; p. 174

[The South West Company was of course the front company formed by members of the Northwest Company and British Army Intelligence such as Robert Dickson to operate within former British territories now deemed to fall within the boundaries of the United States. It is however a little surprising to find it still operating at this late date, falling after the merger of the NWC and HBC in 1821. There was a gentlemen’s agreement for a time concerning joint operations by the amalgamated HBC and the American Fur Company in the upper Midwest and it is possible that this post was part of that period. Conversely, as Beltrami clearly identifies its operators as “Canadians”, it may also have been a continuation of the front organization, though now being operated by the amalgamated HBC. A hint that Beltrami was somewhat aware of these fur trade politics is that he follows this entry inexplicably with two paragraphs about the nature of relations between Catholics and their heretical offshoots.]

[While traveling by riverboat westward on the River Racine, Beltrami commented on his crossing of what had been formerly during the War of 1812 the frontier of the “Sioux.” As he is travelling from east to west, it is understandable that he is taking his

information first from Aunishanabeg informants about the Siouans, and so they are represented in the following passage as “invaders” of territory which was only wrested from them by the Aunishanabeg in the previous century.]

[Most of Beltrami’s quaint spellings, as has been said, seem to derive from his phonetic Italian rendering of aboriginal words. In the following passage we have these instances (eg. “Wabischiouwa” = Wabasha) but we also have one instance operating the other way. Major Lawrence Taliaferro was a prominent Italian-American officer of the US Indian Department. His name is here spelled with what is either Beltrami’s proper period Italian as “Tagliawar,” or, it is one horrendous instance of typographical error.]

[Historical researcher Sara Childers informs me that oral history of the upper Red River area has it that the major’s name was pronounced Taw-li-ver. This would be consistent with Beltrami’s spelling if the “g” were pronounced as an aspirated glottal stop, and the “w” were pronounced as a “v” sound in modern English. It would certainly indicate that Beltrami’s “Tagliawar” is much closer to the preferred pronunciation than is the written text rendering of the name as “Taliaferro” which adds an extra syllable.]

“A little higher on the same side, is a large prairie, called la Prairie aux Ailes, at which begins the tract inhabited by the Sioux. The Great Wabiscihouwa [Wabasha,] who is regarded as the Ulysses of the whole nation, has pitched his summercamp there. It is also the commencement of major Tagliawar’s jurisdiction. The Indian tribes whom we have already seen are under the inspection of two other agents of the government, established at Rocky Island, and at the Prairie du Chien.”

“The Sioux are the most numerous and powerful of all the savage nations of North America. It appears, indeed, from their language, that they are not natives of the country, but have established themselves in it by conquest: and, indeed, they are to the Aborigines what the Greeks were in Asia, the Romans in Greece, the Goths in Italy, and the English in the East Indies.”

Beltrami; pp. 179-180

[Beltrami’s comparison of the “Sioux” to his list of famous historical conquerors is in our view completely unsubstantiated by historical evidence. The Dakota themselves may like to regard themselves as fierce conquerors. There may be some truth to the legends that the various Siouans advanced northward from the Gulf of Mexico thousands of years ago. However, so far as the frontier between Siouan and Aunishanabeg was concerned in the centuries between 1500 AD and 1850 AD, it was the various Aunishanabeg (Ojibway) forms that were the invading hordes and the Siouans who steadily lost ground throughout the period. Even Ojibway Mdewin tradition, as I understand it, holds that their ancestors migrated westward from the Atlantic seaboard. It is also conceded that there may in fact be no beginning or end to these alternate conquests and reconquests, and that who precisely is aboriginal is a matter of perspective in the moment.]

[After all, Beltrami in a day prior to modern archaeology and DNA testing, could not know that the Greeks for example, came “originally” from central Asia, or that we all come from Africa. (A viewpoint with which which I realize immediately most of my aboriginal informants will disagree.)]

“The Great Wabiscihouwa [Wabasha II, son of the general] came on board the steam-boat with his suite of *patres conscripti* [literally “conscript fathers”, an archaic Roman term for senators and here probably meaning “elders”] and the customary high ceremonies were gone through between him and his father,— the name which the Indians are taught to apply to the agent of government. Major Tagliawar [Taliaferro] accordingly gave them plenty of shakes by the hand, and smoked the calumet of peace and amity, and I was the ape to this troop of comedians.”

“Wabiscihouwa, though wrapped in a wretched buffalo's skin, had perfectly the air and aspect of a man of quality. His countenance, his arched eyebrows, his large nose, which he blew with great noise though without a handkerchief,—the motion of his right hand, with which he frequently stroked his forehead and chin,—his thoughtful air, — his eyes fixed as if entranced, — and his imposing manner of sitting, although on the ground, all marked him for a great statesman; he wanted nothing to complete the resemblance but an embroidered coat, a large portfolio under his arm, and spectacles.”
Beltrami; p. 181

[The modern reader may raise eyebrows at Beltrami’s observation about being “the ape to this troop of comedians.” It does not necessarily mean that he was showing disrespect. “Comedy” as an Italian of Beltrami’s era might use the term means theatrical performance. It can mean something humorous but not necessarily so, just as we may speak of a “tragic comedy” today. The original meaning in Latin of the word “comedy” is that of a familiar or comfortable performance. He is definitely poking fun at himself however when he compares himself to an ape, meaning that he is imitating his betters without fully understanding what it is that they are doing, just as a trained ape might perform with actors upon a stage, but would not understand the importance or gravity of the performance.]

“The tents of the Sioux are quite different from any we have seen. They are in the form of a cone, covered with skins of buffalos, or elks; the smoke goes out at the top, and almost all are painted in hieroglyphics.”
Beltrami; p. 181

“This encampment is about one hundred and fifty-four miles from the Prairie du Chien. From this encampment as far as lake Pepin, a distance of about fifty miles, the country is pleasant, and diversified by hills, plains, meadows, and forests. The only two considerable rivers which flow into the Mississippi, within this space, are those of the *Buffaloes* and the *Cypewais*: they descend from the east, and are navigable to a considerable distance up the country.”

“Near the mouth of the latter begins lake Pepin, which is only a deep valley filled by the Mississippi. But before we enter it, my dear Countess, let us give our attention and sympathy a moment to a subject which is interesting, from the proof it affords of noble qualities in the savages.”

“A rock, which projects over the eastern side of the lake, precisely where it begins, is remarkable for the same physical and historical features as of the Leucadia. There, the Muse of Mitylene, who was more distinguished for her learning than her beauty, precipitated herself [jumped to her death] as the only means of curing a passion,

which Phaon requited with contempt; here, Oholoaitha [Beltrami has now apparently switched from Greek myth to his phonetic rendering of American aboriginal names and terms,] who was beautiful but not less unhappy, resigned a life which was become insupportable to her separated from her loved and loving Anikigi.”

“If I did not write letters on my rambles, I would write her history, out of which I might make a novel; but a few facts are sometimes much more valuable than whole volumes decked out with fiction.”

“The tribe of Oholoaitha was surprised by a hostile band, of which the father of Anikigi is the chief. She escaped the massacre, but was made prisoner. Brought up in the house of the victorious chief, from the age often to that of eighteen, the most impressible period of existence, her heart was touched with sentiments of gratitude and love for his son, who had saved her life, and who returned her affection with equal ardour. On the conclusion of a peace, of that kind which both savages and non-savages so often confirm with their lips and belie in their hearts, she was restored to her tribe, and at the same time demanded in marriage for Anikigi. Her father, a barbarous Sioux, and an irreconcilable enemy, obstinately refused to comply with the request of the good Cypewais, who wished at once to gratify his paternal tenderness and the passion of his son, and to consolidate the peace of the two families and of the two nations. Poor Oholoaitha, seeing the obstinacy of her father, gave herself up to despair, and took the fatal leap: she precipitated herself from this rock, the very day her father intended to sacrifice her to a union which she detested. Heaven knows how many noble minds are concealed under this rude exterior, notwithstanding the vices which their contact with civilized nations has already planted in their hearts.”

Beltrami; pp. 183-184

[It is a well documented process that sometimes a real historical figure is compared to a mythological one, and that attributes and events of the two are confused, or even repeated. The British archaeologist Geoffrey Ashe maintains that this type of process occurred with the legends of King Arthur where the history of a real Romano-Celtic war chief was overlaid by legends of an ancient hero-god. Ashe makes the point that while this does create confusion for the historical researcher attempting to sort out exactly what is what, it should also be borne in mind that the comparison would not have been made in the first place if the historical figure had not by word, thought or deed invited such a comparison. He recommends that the researcher should attempt to understand the meaning of the comparison rather than to simply discard it.]

[In the passage following, Beltrami has apparently made just such a confusion. The Walking Buffalo (Tatanka-mani) to whom he refers to is an historical figure whom he places in an historical context within the War of 1812 period. However, he cannot be one at the same individual as the mean king-father of the legend he has described above, because this same legend was related to Johnathan Carver when he visited the very same precipice on Lake Pepin in 1758-1759. This of course does not preclude the possibility that the daughter of the real Walking Buffalo also killed herself in the same way as had the princess in the legend.]

“Four or five miles above the termination of the lake towards the west, we met with another tribe of the Sioux, whose chief is named Tantangamani [Walking Buffalo,]

celebrated as one of the bravest warriors of his nation. He was one of the most ferocious agents of Proctor [British 1812-era brigadier general, Henry Procter,] and the unnatural father of the unhappy Oholoaita.”

“He came on board the steam-boat to shake hands with major Tagliawar [Taliaferro.] He is an old man of hideous aspect, bent under the weight of years and atrocities; but still, the scars with which his naked body was covered, — the dignity with which he wore his buffalo-skin, hung on his shoulders like the clamis [?] of the Romans, — his bow and quiver slung across his back, — a club, which added to the imposing gesticulations of his right hand; — and his Indian followers, who, with an air of pride and independence, formed a circle around him, gave him more *éclat* [flash] and majesty than are possessed by sceptered kings amidst the splendour of heartless pomp, decked with the spoils of their subjects, surrounded by base slaves who flatter to deceive them, and by mercenary Praetorians, who, like the Romans of Jugurtha and Vitellius, sell themselves to the highest bidder.”

“He spoke with frankness, though dissimulation is by no means uncommon even among the Indians.”

“ ‘My father,’ said he to the agent, ‘I thank the Great Spirit, that he has granted me another year to behold you once more; for you see that I am very old, and expecting every instant to go to inhabit another earth. I again repeat, that I have been the fierce enemy to your nation, because I had bad advisers, who made me believe that you were coming to deprive us of the liberty of hunting, and to kill our wives and children. But from the time we promised you our friendship, our hearts have been as white as this — (pointing to the agent's shirt.) Give us some assistance; (this is the *amen* of all their speeches) for in this season we can obtain nothing by hunting, and you know that we have no other dependence; be our friends, smoke with us, and in a few days I will pay you a visit at the Fort.’”

Beltrami; pp. 186-188

“I tried to obtain his bow and quiver, by flattering him [Walking Buffalo] with the notion that I would immortalize his name by shewing them to everybody in my own country (the moon), and whatever others I should pass through; but finding that this sort of Paradise had but little attraction for him, I offered him in exchange some tobacco and gunpowder. Upon this he immediately grew generous, and gave them to me. Red people give nothing for nothing, any more than white ones.”

Beltrami; pp. 188-189

[Whether Beltrami understood the nuance of Plains treaty behaviour, or even plain courtesy, his offer of “tobacco and gunpowder” was significantly more important than a transparently foolish boast that he’d make the chief famous on the moon. Beltrami appears to have been insatiable about collecting aboriginal memorabilia, a considerable portion of which has ended up forming major collections in at least two Italian museums.]

“Twenty-two miles higher, at a place called the Marsh, on the same shore, is another tribe of Sioux, governed by Chatewaconamani, or the Little Raven [“Walking Crow” in Dakota, but usually rendered in English as “Little Crow”.] He was gone on a

hunting excursion with the principal part of his warriors; — or on the track of the enemy; for when they have no beasts to kill, they kill each other. Perhaps they would prefer to amuse themselves in this way with the whites; but the Americans are become too powerful, and have stationed military posts between their tribes. There is no union among these Indians; and, if I mistake not, the United States think it would be dangerous to them if there were.”

“War with the savages will ever be defensive. Victories obtained over them would have no other effect than to drive them into their forests, where they are impregnable; whilst the Americans would see their cities and their villages, their fields and cattle, laid waste by fire and sword.”

Beltrami; p. 191

“On the 19th we stopped to take in wood. I was told of a cavern, which was only at a short distance from there, and about twelve miles above the encampment of the Marsh.”

“A small valley on the east leads to it. Cedars, firs, and cypresses, seem to have been purposely placed there by nature, that the approach might bespeak the venerable majesty of this sacred retreat. The entrance is spacious, and formed in lime-stone rock, as white as snow. A rivulet, as transparent as air, flows through the middle. One may walk on with perfect ease for five or six fathoms, after which a narrow passage, which however is no obstacle, except to those apathetic beings whom nothing can excite, conducts to a vast elliptical cavern, where the waters of the rivulet, precipitating themselves from a cascade, and reflecting the gleam of our torches, produced an indescribable effect. You climb to the top of a small rock to reach the level of the bed of this Castalian spring, whose captivating murmur allures you onwards, in spite of the difficulties which impede your progress, and you arrive at its source, which is at the very end of the cavern. It is calculated that it is about a mile in length.”

“The ancients had yearly lustrationes, to purify themselves, their cities, fields, flocks, houses, and armies. The Peruvians used them nearly for the same purpose. The Catholic church has its rogationes, by means of which it implores the same mercies of the true god; and in like manner the savages assemble yearly in this cavern, to perform their lustrationes ; and, what is more remarkable, at the same season, that is to say, in the spring ; and in the same manner, by water and fire, as the Catholics, the Peruvians, and the ancients. They plunge their clothes, arms, medicine bags, and persons, in the water of this rivulet; they afterwards pass their arms and clothes, together with their medicine bags, through a large fire, which was not extinguished at the time of my visit. This ceremony is always accompanied with a dance round the sacred fire, in a mystic circle, like the medicine dance. It appears that this lustratio is their corporeal purification.”

“The cave is appropriated to other ceremonies in the course of the year. The Indians assemble there to consult either the Great Manitou or their particular Manitous; and their chiefs, like Numa Pompilius, can make their nymph Egeria speak whenever they want to prevail on a reluctant people to obey them. They perform all their lustrationes before they consult the oracle, as the Greeks did before they entered the cave of Trophonius. The Sioux call this cave Whakoon-Thiiby [wakan meaning sacred in Dakota, but the second word is unclear,] or the abode of the Manitous. Its walls are

covered with hieroglyphics: these are perhaps their ex-voto [to “voice out” as in to speak from a vision] inscriptions.”

“This cavern has one great advantage over those of antiquity; credulity is not here an object of traffic [commerce.] Some religion there must be everywhere, and the one freest from this vice is perhaps the best.”

Beltrami; pp. 191-193

“On the 20th we arrived here, where I could not excuse myself from lodging at the colonel's, the commandant of the fort. The extreme politeness with which he opposed my wish to shut myself up, in some independant little room, at first excited my suspicion that his object was to keep a stricter watch upon me; and I confess that I was so malicious as to laugh at this idea, and to make it a subject of laughter to others; but I have since had reason to believe that his intention was to pay me respect, for which I am truly grateful. If any restraint is occasionally imposed upon n\y curiosity or my enquiries, it is only the effect of that petty jealousy which is to be found everywhere, and particularly in republics; unless they are afraid that I am come to make myself master of these savage regions.”

“In America you meet with nothing of that hideous police which impedes and molests every movement all over the continent of Europe; and if every individual American choose to exercise the functions of a police officer in his own person, his only object is to know if you are rich, (primo); what rank you hold in society, — for it is utterly false that they are indifferent to that consideration; — what your political opinions are; what business brings you to America; and a number of other trifles, which are rather gossiping than inquisitorial. In America, people are as free and independent as the air they breathe.”

Beltrami; pp. 194-195

[dated] “Fort St. Peter, Mississippi
June 10th 1823.”

“Let us return to our steam-boat, which has marked a memorable epoch in this Indian territory, as well as in the history of navigation generally.”

“I know not what impression the first sight of the Phoenician vessels might make on the inhabitants of the coasts of Greece; or the Triremi of the Romans on the wild natives of Iberia, Gaul, or Britain; but I am sure it could not be stronger than that which I saw on the countenances of these savages at the arrival of our steam-boat.”

“When they saw it cut its way without oars or sails against the current of the great river, some thought it a monster vomiting fire, others the dwelling of the Manitous, but all approached it with reverence or fear.”

“All the persons on board were in their eyes something more than human. Major Tagliawar, the agent, was astonished at the extraordinary marks of respect with which he was received. The Indians thought he was in the company of spirits; — it matters little whether they took us for gods or devils, for savages pay equal reverence to both; nay, they pray more to the evil spirits than to the good; for, say they, the latter, who are perfectly good, can do only good, but we must take great care not to offend the wicked,

that they may do us no harm. If this is not orthodox, it shews at least that the savages are not bad logicians.”

Beltrami; pp. 199-200

“This fort [Snelling] is in latitude 45". The river St Peter falls into the Mississippi near the promontory upon which it is built ; the two streams make it a peninsula, the former washing it on the S. S.W. side, the latter on the N.E. The fort commands them both admirably, and is delightfully situated. On the south and east it has beautiful and diversified country, and on the north and west immense prairies, whose monotony is relieved by little lakes and groves. This is the last military station of the United States on the north-west of their territory.

“Although these frontiers cannot be invaded by a foreign power, unless its armies fall from the skies, yet, being a central point to a great number of Indian tribes, it is a very important post; chiefly as a means of preventing the English from gaining any fresh influence over their commerce or their minds. This is probably the reason that the garrison consists of six companies, and is commanded by a colonel, who is also the military chief of forts Edward, Armstrong, and Arthur, which, on emergency, could send succours to, or receive them from this.”

Beltrami; pp. 200-201

“Every fort built on the Indian territory has an extent of nine square miles. These lots have been sold or ceded by the Indians to the United States. Though these contracts are perhaps defective in the two imperative conditions required by the law de emendo of the Justinian code, that is to say, pretium aequum et consensus (sine quibus non,) yet it ought to be said, to the honour of the American government, that by this act of acquisition it has shewn that it recognizes the respect due to the property even of savages, who utterly disregard it themselves. Moreover, the chief sovereignty of all this territory belongs to the United States directly, in virtue of the treaty of 1783 with England, and that of 1803 with France.”

“The first conquerors are the only people who can be accused of usurpation, and as they were justified by bulls, it follows of course that nobody is to blame; or, if anybody, it can only be the Indians, as being the weakest.”

Beltrami; pp. 202-203

[The point Beltrami is making with the Latin legal principle cited above is not that this is a fair standard, but that it is a minimum standard. The Latin phrase translates roughly as: a fair price and consent (without which there is no validity). A sine qua non is a qualification which, if not met, invalidates the legal condition being sought. The Emperor Justinian, (described either as late-Roman or early-Byzantine) who promulgated the legal code to which Beltrami refers, was an absolutist divinely-mandated monarch. Therefore, the point Beltrami seeks to make is that if an absolutist like Justinian could establish fair price and consent and necessary conditions to a legal sale, that it behooves enlightened republics that much more to treat their citizens (or wards) with an equal or greater respect.]

[With regard to the source of sovereignty, Beltrami is no modern. He sees authority flowing from the divine right of kings, and expressed in treaties which may include the disposal of indigent populations living within the claimed territories.]

[The Italian jurist's position on conquest is interesting, and one must assume that Italian law had ample precedents of conquest history upon which to draw. As Beltrami expresses it, once a sequence of conquest is set in motion there are no longer any property rights, excepting those that might apply to the original owner. The justification for rule by the United States (or Canada) put forward by Beltrami, is that the conquered territories were taken from aboriginal invaders who had themselves taken them from a previous, though unspecified, group of aboriginal owners.]

[As a devout Catholic, Beltrami adds the caveat that any conquest can be justified if it has a papal bull issued for the purpose – as was the case with the colonial expansions of Portugal and Spain. One wonders how he reconciled this with the papal bull to protect the rights of indigent people?]

[Beltrami himself was of course a judicial official of monarchial government in Italy and it is interesting how that must have coloured his views with respect to the origin of sovereignty. The notion emerging in the new democracies since the French Revolution was that sovereignty derived from the people. The notion tenaciously holding ground, left over from the absolutist monarchies was that sovereignty was derived from God through the person of the monarch. At the time of Beltrami's own judicial career Italy was divided into a dozen petty states with as many different political experiments. At any given time half or all of these petty states could be under foreign occupation, usually French or Austrian. Beltrami's personal experience of politics would have been that might *is* right. The French had come into Italy with promises of democracy but Italians who believed this were cruelly betrayed. Beltrami would not live to see the *resorgimento* – the union of Italian states into one constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy in the 1870s.]

[This is a constitutional collision of basic principles which distorted all of the relations between aboriginal people and the emerging democracies of Canada and the United States. These newly emergent principles should have in all cases awarded primary sovereignty to the local natives. The contradiction of the time was that all too frequently principles of absolutist monarchy were applied in dealings with subject aboriginal populations. The only common constitutional thread was that of Beltrami's practical observation that it was always the victim's fault of he was conquered.]

“Let us return to the savages, my dear Madam; we will first try to ascertain the number of their bands, the distribution of their tribes, their ordinary haunts, their population and warlike force.”

“The Sioux are subdivided into six bands, the Madewakan Tuam, or people of the Spirit's lake. The Wakapetohan, or people of the Leaf. The Wapecothee, or people of the Plucked Leaf. The Sissisthoana or Sussistons. The Yancthoana, or Yanktons. The Pitowana, or the Titons. The former is divided into seven tribes.”

“ON THE MISSISSIPPI.”

“The tribe of the Prairie aux Ailes, or Memynoe, governed by the chief Wabiscihouwa, or the Leaf, of whom we have already spoken, is about... 400 strong.

“Tribe of the Gange, or Gremignieyas, — chief, Tatangamani, or the Red Wing... 200”

“Tribe of the Marsh, or Ciakantanga, — chief, Cetauwacoamani, or the Little Raven... 500”

“Tribe of the Great Avenull, or Wakas-ka-atha, — chief, Wamenitanka, or the Black Dog... 400”

“Tribe of the old Village, Othoetouni, — chief, Tocokoquipeseni, or Panisciowa... 400”

“Tribe of the Prairie des Francais, or Theawatpa,— chief, Sciakape, or the Six... 500”

“Tribe of the Battue aux Fievres, or Wuiakaothi, — chief, Ki-han, or Ited Qwilliou... 150”

“The second band forms one single tribe, it is always wandering, but generally makes a halt near the Rapids of the St. Peter; its chief is the Wopokian, or the Little Stag. Number... 1000”

“The third band also consists of a single tribe likewise always wandering, it is often seen on the Canon river ; its chief is the Kariwassician, or French Raven. Its number is... 150”

“The fourth is divided into two tribes, under two chiefs, Akant-hoo, or the Blue Spirit, and Tatankanathi, or the Standing Ox. They wander about the river of the Blue Earth, or Makatohose. Their number is... 3000”

“The fifth is composed of eight tribes, all wandering about the sources of the St Peter towards the Red river, about the country which lies between these two rivers and the Missouri, &c. The Wanatha, or the Plunger, is chief of the first, the number of which is... 1800”

“He is however a sort of chief sovereign of the Yanctons, and has as great an influence over the whole Sioux nation, from his valour and his exploits, as Wabiscihuowa, from his cunning and policy.”

“The chief of the second is the Tuimohaconte, or the Little Beaver Killer. Number... 1800”

“The third, the Ciaka-hapi, or the Lancer... 500”

“The fourth, the Thaona-hape, or the Running Original... 800”

“The seventh, the Wawaka-han, or the Broken Leg... 1000”

“The eighth, the Waha-koon, or the Medicine Man... 1000”

“The sixth, or the band of Tytons, consists of two tribes, which wander over the country about the Missouri. They are very powerful. The chief of the one is the Cianothepeta, or Heart of Fire, and of the other Ciakahapapi, or the Drummer. Their numbers are calculated at about... 28,000”

“[Total]... 44,950”

[xxx ask Dakota for translations of these names xxx]

“The Assiniboins, a savage people, who wander over those vast prairies which extend from the northern sources of the Missouri to near Hudson's Bay, and who are known under the general appellation of the people of the plains, might likewise be considered as Sioux ; for, from the information I procured through the same channel, — information which throws great light on the origin of their names, — it appears certain that the Sioux and they were formerly one nation.”

“A great nation, which came from Mexico, established itself on this side the Cypowais mountains, which separate the sources of the Missouri from the sources of the Colombia, and New Mexico from the western frontier of the United States. These Indians were called Dacotas.”

“One finds Helens everywhere. The Dacotas had theirs, and she was the cause of as great evils as the beautiful Greek.”

“Ozolapaida, wife of Winahoa-appa, was carried off by Ohatam-pa, who killed her husband and her two brothers, who came to reclaim her. Discord and vengeance arose between these two tribes, the most powerful of the nation.”

“The relations, friends, and partisans of each, took up the quarrel; one act of revenge begat another, until the whole nation was drawn into a bloody civil war, which eventually divided it into two factions, under the names of Assiniboina, the partisans of the offenders family, and Siowae, those of the offended; — like the Bianchi and the Neri, the Uberti and the Buondelmonti, &c. &c.”

“When they wanted greater extent of country they split into two nations, the Sioux and the Assiniboins: but separation and distance did not put an end to their wars, which continued for a long period of time; it is but lately that they have made peace. The event which gave birth to their divisions happened, according to their calculations, about two hundred years ago and the identity of their language, manners, and habits, adds weight to their respective traditions.”

“I can vouch for the authenticity of these details, though they are perfectly new and totally unknown even to the garrison of the fort.”

“The Assiniboins always keep together in large bands. When they hunt the buffalo, which is almost their only means of subsistence, they assemble in great numbers, and sometimes form an encampment of a thousand tents. They are supposed to be about twenty- five thousand strong.”

“The military force of the red men is generally in the ratio of a fifth of their population. This is the body which they call the men of war; but on emergency they all fight, — men, women, and children.”

Beltrami; pp. 209-211

“The Sioux are all united by a confederation, but their tribes are independent of each other. Each tribe makes war at its own discretion, and deliberates about its own affairs. They all assemble in a general council on those occasions solely which interest the whole nation. In this case each tribe sends a deputy by whom it is represented in the wood or forest where they hold their meeting. If the resolution of the council is of any importance, and deserves to be registered and transmitted to posterity, a tree serves them

as both register and archive; they engrave hieroglyphics, relative to the subject of their deliberations, with a knife or hatchet on its trunk, and each deputy.”
Beltrami; p. 211

“These meetings are called councils, and all the tribes or deputations, headed by their respective chiefs, come annually, — generally at this season,—to offer, or to renew, their assurances of peace and amity with the United States. They likewise come to treat of affairs peculiar to each band, or to each tribe respectively, and to make their complaints (if they have any to make) of the traders: they receive any annuities yet due to them from the ceded lands; but their great motive for coming is, to lay their necessities and their miseries before the government, and to receive the presents which it has annually made them for some years past of gunpowder, lead, tobacco, and other articles of necessity or ornament. The object of these presents is, probably, to counterbalance the effect of the captious bounties of the English. Perhaps these measures, which appear liberal and philanthropical, are merely politic; but whatever be the causes, we must admire the effects when they are beneficial to mankind. If the first conquerors of America had employed similar means, their conquests would perhaps have been more secure, and they would have spared the Indians the sufferings, and themselves the infamy, of their bloody victories. It will perhaps be objected that it was the policy of the time to slaughter the savages in a mass, whereas it is now sufficient to look on and let them destroy one another: but it may be permitted to question whether nature or religion sanction conquests which can be obtained at no other price than human butcheries.”

Beltrami; pp. 214-215

[Beltrami expresses some judicial concern over the American practice of conducting treaty meetings without any visible secretary. Previously he had raised the issue of the validity of American “treaties” with natives, where one side has little or no volition. Here he raises the issue of the lack of verifiable record. He alludes to American disapproval of his own wish to take notes.]

“This is all I have been able to discover as to these different jurisdictions, in the cautious silence which reigns around me.”

“It certainly is not agreeable to have takers of notes about one, so that I am not in the least surprised at the reserve of these gentlemen, nor at the impediments they throw in the way; but they labour under a strange mistake if they fancy that people will come such a distance, and into such a country, only to shake hands with them and say ‘How do you do?’ They ought to have too good an opinion of themselves to think I can enter into any rivalry with them; it would be madness in a poor and solitary rambler to pretend to compete with national expeditions, provided with sextants, graphometers, savants, money, men, horses, flotillas, &c. And, if they are as clear-sighted as they appear jealous and distrustful, they might discover that my character and principles would not allow me to commit them by any indiscretions.”

“The council-hall is, as it ought to be, a great room built of trunks of trees. The flag of the United States waves in the centre, surrounded by English colours, and medals hung to the walls. They are presented by the Indians to their Father, the agent, as a proof that they abjure all cabal or alliance with the English. Pipes, or calumets, and other little

Indian presents, offered by the various tribes as pledges of their friendship, decorate the walls and give a remarkable and characteristic air to the room.”

“A table without an inkstand,—for it would be a breach of politeness to write in the presence of those who are ignorant of the art,—three or four seats for the agents, the interpreter and any spectator who may not like to sit, like the savages, on the ground, compose the whole furniture.”

Beltrami; pp. 216-217

“As soon as the tribe returns to its home in the woods, the chief distributes the presents; and those who have killed the greatest number of enemies in the year,—those who have given other proofs of valour,—those who have proved themselves most unwearied and skilful in the chance, are proportionately rewarded. The chief himself is always the last, whatever be his merits, and if nothing remain for him he utters no complaint. The kings among these people think only of their subjects, and they and their families are the poorest among them. If you see a savage, simple in his deportment, sober in his habits, and distinguished by a certain Spartan plainness in his attire, you may conclude that he is a king or a king's son.”

“Wabiscihuowa, [Wabasha II] who, though he has not the vices of Agamemnon, has his rank and title; the King of kings of the Sioux was perfectly astonished, and would not believe his ears when I told him that it was not quite usual among our chiefs to give all to their subjects, and leave nothing for themselves; that, indeed, the very reverse sometimes happened. ‘How,’ said he to me one day, ‘you are then more barbarous than those you call barbarians, if your civilization teaches you only to be either stupid slaves or unjust chiefs! We are right then in thinking you inferior to ourselves.’ I had the mortification to be obliged to hold my tongue before untutored Truth.”

Beltrami; pp. 220-221

“I was forcibly struck with the resemblance of the chief Wamenitouka [Wambi Tonka = Big Eagle] to that famous statue of Aristides in the museum at Naples, which has so often held me captive for hours to see, — almost to hear, — him harangue the corrupt Athenians. In the chief Cetamwacomani [Walking Crow = Little Crow I] I beheld that of Cato predicting to the Romans that their vices, their luxury, and their avarice would soon reduce them to slavery.”

Beltrami; p. 222

“There is great dignity and magnanimity in the silence they observe with regard to the traders, who are not ashamed to cheat them in every possible way. This is one powerful cause of their constant and encreasing hostility to civilized people. The Red men, who are most in contact with the whites, are uniformly the worst. The Red women are completely corrupted by their intercourse with the white men. They have all the vices of both races ; nor can they find a single virtue to imitate in men who come among them only to sate their sensuality and their avarice.”

“The North West Company, that is, the English, did worse. In the infancy of the United States, when they had succeeded in getting possession of all the trade with the Indians, they constantly tried to sow discord between the different nations, in order that the rumours of their ferocious wars, and the dread of the tremendous dangers, might deter

all competitors from the fur trade ; and by this means they obtained the absolute monopoly of it. They were certainly excellent disciples of the British cabinet.”
Beltrami; pp. 224-225

“The Cypowais is one of the most powerful Indian nations, though very inferior to the Sioux. It must indeed necessarily be weaker, from its being more dispersed, and the confederation among its parts less perfect. These are the true aborigines of the country, and their language is pure Algonquine.”

“They are scattered over those immense regions from lake Ontario to the lake Winepeg, near Hudson's Bay, a tract of about two thousand miles from east-south-east, to north-west. It is difficult to calculate the circumference of the country over which they roam. A great part of the Cypowais inhabit the English possessions. Those who came hither live in the American territory, on the high lands of the Mississippi.”
Beltrami; p. 227

“The assemblies of this nation in the council hall, were more noisy than those of the Sioux, because they were divided into two parties, one of which wished to retain the chiefs now in power, and the other to elect new ones.”
Beltrami; p. 229

“General Cass, governor of Michigan territory, undertook, I think three years ago, an expedition across the lakes and country of the savages, in search of the sources of the Mississippi, which Mr Pike had left in great uncertainty; and after fixing them at Upper Red Cedar lake, passed by this fort on his return. He was accompanied by some Cypowais chiefs ; and to enhance the glory and utility of his expedition, he used every effort to make peace between them and the Sioux. He succeeded ; but the peace was, as usual, as transient as the smoke of the calumet which celebrated it.”

“Major Tagliawar, animated by a philanthropy which does him honour, and by a truly paternal love for his untutored children, took advantage of the great number of Cypowais now congregated here, solemnly to renew it. The great hall of the council was full. The Sioux, headed by their chiefs Catewacomani, Wamenitonka, and Penisehiouwa, were seated on the right. The Cypowais, with their chiefs Kendouswa, Moshomene and Pasheskonoepe, on the left.”

“After mutual accusations and excuses concerning the infraction of the treaties; after some fatherly reproofs and counsels from the Father [Governor Cass], Wamenitonka, assisted by a war-chief, lighted the great calumet of eternal peace and amity. It devolved upon the Sioux to present it first, since it appeared they had been the first to profane it by their perfidy. The grave and dignified figure of Wamenitonka greatly contributed to the majesty of the ceremony; on this occasion he assumed a sacerdotal kind of air. He consecrated the calumet, turning the tube first horizontally to the east and west, then perpendicularly to heaven and earth, thus invoking the Great Spirit, or the sun, and the good and evil spirits. He then sent it by the chief of his warriors, to the chief delegated by the Cypowais ; he gave it to Pasheskonoepe, the oldest chief, who, after handing it to the agent of government, smoked it himself, and all did the same in rotation, according to their respective ranks. I performed the part of witness; and certainly I

witnessed a monstrous act of perjury. The Cypowais repeated the same formalities towards the Sioux, after which all shook hands, as a pledge of their reciprocal good faith. The ceremony closed with whiskey, which the good Father distributed to them. The calumets remained as pledges of the sanctity of the treaty, in the hands of the two representative chieftains, who act, I fancy, on that occasion, as keepers of the seals of their respective nations.”

Beltrami; pp. 224-225

[It is unclear what exactly Beltrami meant by “a monstrous act of perjury.” The context suggests that he may have meant the promise of “good faith”, which he rendered in italics. This interpretation is reinforced by the next passage in which Beltrami described what happened when the Chippewa Pillager chief Flat Mouth, who was late, arrived the following day.]

“The peace was concluded on the 4th inst.; — on the 6th, war was on the point of breaking out again with the greatest fury. Eskibugekoge, or Flat Mouth, the chief who holds the same rank among the Cypowais as Wabiscihuowa among the Sioux, did not arrive till the morning of the 5th. Ignorant of the intentions of the agent, he took leave of his family and tribe with a promise that he would never touch the hand of one of those dogs of Sioux; which meant that he would never make peace with them. The first person he met on approaching the fort, before he could be informed of what had passed, was Paniscihowa, who held out his hand, warmed with the scene of the preceding evening, and was met by a disdainful repulse.”

“The Sioux, as ill-disposed as he was cowardly, immediately gave the alarm. All the Sioux who were still in the vicinity of the fort flocked together, they sent heralds at arms to the neighbouring encampments, and the next day they surrounded the camp of the Cypowais in great force. The latter had already concealed their women and children behind the ruins of the old fort, which had served as an asylum to the garrison while the new one was building: and sent a message to the Sioux that, though very inferior in numbers, they did not fear them, and steadily awaited their attack.”

“At first the agent and the colonel appeared not to choose to take any part in their quarrel. They have perhaps the power of making up a peace among them, but not of preventing a war. They reflected, however, that to suffer them to come to open hostilities, would be to permit an insult to the American flag, and a violation of their territory, declared neutral, sacred and inviolable to all Indians; more especially when they came to treat with their Father. They were therefore warned to disperse, which they accordingly did.”

“Everything conspired against my poor notes; I had already perched myself on an eminence for the purpose of enriching them with an Indian battle, and behold I have nothing to write but this miserable article! In the afternoon, Eskibugekoge shook hands in all the requisite forms, both with the Sioux chiefs and with all who had a mind.”

Beltrami; pp. 232-233

“One would say, that the pest of usurers and brokers, who are the curse of Europe and the ruin of so many young men of family, has spread to the forests and deserts of America.”

Beltrami; p. 235

“You will doubtless be astonished, my dear Madam, at the irreconcilable hatred which exists between these two savage nations. I will tell you all I know about it.”

“Territorial claims are mere pretexts; their countries, or rather their worlds, are so vast, that there is room for all ; and they hardly ever meet, unless they lay in wait for each other for the express purpose of fighting. These wars are only an inheritance they have received from their fathers. The first thing a dying Cypowais recommends to his children, relatives, friends, and all his tribe, is to preserve perpetual enmity to the Sioux; who, on their side, preach the same sort of crusade against the Cypowais. In my endeavours to trace this inveterate hostility to its sources, I succeeded also in throwing some light on the emigration of the Sioux into these countries.”

“Eskibugekoge [Flat Mouth] assured me that they (the Cypowais) had been at war with the Sioux for more than three thousand moons ; with which the great Sioux, Wabiscihouwa's [Wabasha,] statement concurred.”

“Reckoning twelve moons to a year, as they do, more than three thousand moons, adding the complementary days, bring us pretty nearly to the time of the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards. It was therefore, in all probability, at that period that the Sioux, or Dacotas, flying from the cruelties of the conquerors, invaded the country of the Cypowais, of which they have retained possession ; and the Cypowais, massacred or driven from their accustomed haunts, would naturally enough swear eternal vengeance on their aggressors. This sentiment, carefully transmitted from father to son, became a national one, perpetuated through all generations, and now blindly followed as an inspiration or a duty. And as revenge is the predominant passion of all savages, the Sioux are equally inveterate against the Cypowais, and carry on a war of instinct, equally indifferent about the cause or the effects.”

Beltrami; pp. 235-236

[There being actually 13 lunar months in a year, “three thousand moons” would work out to 230 years. Subtracting 230 from the year 1838 yields 1608 AD as the approximate year in which Flat Mouth told Beltrami that the Dakota-Ojibway War had begun. This accords very closely with the approximate start date we have taken of 1640.]

[Beltrami's introduces two errors, which are understandable given his sources, social context and the state of scholarship in 1838. Firstly, the migration story of the Dakota from the Gulf of Mexico would, I believe, have occurred much earlier. It may have occurred as late as the 1500s AD – the beginnings of the Spanish Conquest where Beltrami places it. However, I suspect that it occurred closer to the period between 2000 BC to 4000 BC. Those differences are all based on interpretation of ethno-history, oral history, archaeology and linguistic writings of others. The reader is more than justified to interpret the migration date at any point in between.]

[But the more definitive error in my opinion, is that Beltrami takes the Chippewa-Ojibway claims that they are the defenders at their word, whereas I have argued (and many Ojibway sources agree) that the territories of the “Old Northwest” were conquered from the Dakota, Sac and Fox by the Ojibway during the period under study.]

[In other words, I believe his date for the origin of the war is correct, or close to being correct, but his analysis of the causes is not. To his credit though, he is probably right on the money when he assesses the reasons for the continuance of the war.]

“Their [Chippewa women] hatred to the Sioux is still more furious and inveterate than that of the men. This is easily explained. Their camps being nearly always taken by surprise, the poor women are much more exposed to cruelty and carnage than the men; this has also the effect of making them all heroines. During the alarm of the 6th [June 1823,] they all swore, with knives in their hands, to sell dearly their own lives and those of their children, whom they hung over and shielded with their own bodies. I was deeply affected at seeing, even among savages, the force of the tenderest and strongest of all human affections — maternal love.”
Beltrami; p. 238

“Major Tagliawar had led me to entertain the hope that we should have proceeded together up the river St Peter, which has never yet been explored, the sources of which are occupied by the most wild and powerful tribes of the Sioux and as yet only vaguely defined ; while the surrounding territory abounds in buffalos, the hunting of which furnishes the genuine sportsman with the most interesting as well as curious diversion.”
Beltrami; p. 239

“A bow, which they denominate the bow of medicine, or the bow o! the Afanitous, and which is kept hung up in the Great Medicine-hut, closes the ceremony, by Ijeing successively passed through the hands of all the actors in the scene. I have a very beautiful one in my possession.”
Beltrami; p. 247

“Some chiefs, from whom I endeavoured to learn from what egg their ancestors sprung, allege that, if not pre-Adamites, as some civilized nations have actually professed to be, they are at least Antediluvians. They stated to me, with an air of confidence that, ‘when worlds were overwhelmed by a tremendous deluge, their own was spared ; and that while a wicked race was totally cut off, they beheld the sun rise every day from the bosom of those waters in which it had perished’.”
Beltrami; p. 260

“The government of the Indians is regulated merely by usages, which are, however, very frequently disregarded.”

“Each body of Indians constitutes a tribe. Each tribe, as you have already perceived, has its civil chief, who is hereditary as long as the tribe considers the honour to be merited ; it has also a military chief, whose elevation is solely the consequences of his services.”
Beltrami; p. 261

“Though the Indians are completely ignorant of geography, as well as of every other science, they have a method of denoting by hieroglyphics on the bark of certain papyriferos trees, all the countries with which they are acquainted. These maps want

only the degrees of latitude and longitude to be more correct than those of some of our own visionary geographers.”

“The polar-star is their only astronomical guide, or at least their most certain guide, when they travel by night. The course of the sun directs them by day. But even though the sun or the polar-star should be eclipsed, they are equally able to distinguish, both by day and night, the four cardinal points ; and consequently the direction which they want to follow, whether in the thickest forests or the widest prairies.”

Beltrami; p. 275

“It sometimes occurs that a troop of warriors, or young men, excited by some brave leader or some supposed inspired individual, march off against the enemy, without the authority of their tribe, or the consent of their chiefs. Only a few days since, one of these prophets, after having stated that the Great Spirit had commanded him in dream to march against a party of Cypowais, who were then scouring the neighbouring territory, threw on the ground his belt, (which the Indians consider as a Manitou, [sic]) exclaiming, ‘The first that takes up that belt shall be next in command to myself, and those who follow us will be ranked among the chosen.’ He marched away with about thirty of his tribe, and as yet no intelligence has been received of him.”

Beltrami; pp. 284-285

“Massacres extend even far beyond the scene of battle with the rapidity of the electric shock. On the 7th of June, a day of which I gave you some account in my preceding letter, a false report was circulated that Panischiowa (the chief) had been killed by the Cypowais at the falls of St Anthony. His mother, on hearing it, instantly seized a little girl of that nation who had been preserved from the period when she had been made a captive in her cradle, and who was the delight both of the family and the camp, and with a single stroke of a hatchet cleft her in two. Panischiowa, however, returned and thanked his mother for this testimony of her maternal love and of her hatred of the Cypowais.”

Beltrami; pp. 286-287

“If the two parties be equal in point of numbers, they fight openly ; if one be much weaker than the other, and possess no means of flight, they with wonderful speed dig holes in the ground with their nails, and fight within them. While some are intensely working at this operation, the rest surround and protect them.”

“When the assailants have no more ammunition, they make use of their bows ; and their manner of fighting under such circumstances is truly astonishing.”

“As their arrows, if discharged horizontally, can scarcely strike their enemy, whose head even is not perceivable without some difficulty, they discharge them in the same manner as shells are discharged from bombs ; and the parabola which they describe is often so accurate that they enter the body of the foe in their fall. I have myself seen these holes, and Indians obtaining the most brilliant and wonderful success against those entrenched in them. The angel of death is active everywhere ; but I was not aware that he could exhibit in his work of destruction such dexterity and address.”

Beltrami; p. 294

“The fatigue endured by the women in the chase exceeds all imagination. They carry the tents; they go in search of the animals the men have killed; they prepare the skins of them, and dry and smoke the flesh : every household duty is included in their department, and frequently an infant at the breast, or in the womb, adds to the burthen of their laborious life. These poor women, even when in the state of pregnancy, are not on that account the more spared. Sometimes, in order to avoid the tediousness and difficulties of parturition, they press their stomachs against an horizontal bar, their head and legs hanging downwards to the ground, and almost immediately after their delivery return to their toilsome and painful occupations.”

Beltrami; p. 296

Lake La Crosse, or Lake Trovers, near the Sources of the river St Peter, July 26, 1823.

Beltrami; p. 301

“Incessantly thwarted in my project of going farther to the north, I was upon the point of changing my direction for the south, intending to traverse by land, with a Canadian interpreter and an Indian guide, the desert tracts which separate Fort St Peter from Fort Council Bluff, on the Missouri ; to descend that great river as far as St Charles; to return thence to St Louis, and then follow the Mississippi to its mouths. It is not likely that I should have met with any obstacle to this design; for my Argus observers, considering me by this plan as apparently on my return, and through countries indifferent to them, would have lost all their anxiety and apprehension. But at this period major Long arrived at Fort St Peter, charged with an expedition to the northern boundary territories of the vast empire of the United States.”

“In this event I thought I perceived an end to all the difficulties which had till then impeded my curiosity. I participated, however, in the very great surprise manifested by the officers of the fort at the arrival of an expedition so completely unknown to the garrison.”

“The ardent desire which I had shewn of pushing my rambles farther, was naturally mentioned, and I seized the opportunity of asking permission to follow the major, simply in the character of a wanderer who had come thus far to see Indian lands and Indian people. They first set before me the sufferings, the dangers, &c. which I must encounter; but as I laughed at these childish terrors, they saw that they had no power over my mind, and that the attempts were wholly vain.”

Beltrami; pp. 301-302

“They next attacked me on what they thought my weak side,—my purse. After so long a digression from the route which was to lead me direct from Philadelphia to New Orleans, — a digression which has filled the whole time from the month of March — it might reasonably be supposed to be rather in a declining state; the more so, as the curiosities I had bought of the savages had greatly contributed to diminish its contents. But a little fund which I kept in reserve disconcerted this attack also: I even sacrificed my beautiful repeater that I might have this still untouched; and bought a horse, and all provisions that were said to be necessary, with the proceeds. I contrived, by means of a few little trinkets and articles of luxury I had with me, to give myself the pleasure of

offering some slight tokens of my gratitude to the amiable Snelling family, and to major Tagliawar, for the civilities they had lavished upon me during the two months I spent amongst them. When they saw I was determined to go, they even carried their politeness so far as to offer me pecuniary assistance with the most honourable and disinterested confidence; a thing by no means common among an extremely commercial people, especially towards a person of whom they knew nothing but what they had seen.”
Beltrami; pp. 302-303

“So many imaginary difficulties were not auspicious. Major Long did not cut a very noble figure in the affair ; I foresaw all the disgusts and vexations I should have to experience, and under other circumstances I should have known what to do. But there I was,—and the point was how to carry into effect a plan which had been continually thwarted by others, and which I could not execute in any other way. My first intention, that of going in search of the real sources of the Mississippi, was always before my eyes. I was therefore obliged to sacrifice my pride and my feeling of what was due to me, to the desire of seeing places which one can hardly expect to visit twice in one’s life, and of gaining information one can gain nowhere else; and I gave myself up to all I foresaw I should have to endure from littleness and jealousy.”
Beltrami; pp. 303-304

“We set out from Fort St Peter on the evening of the 7th instant. The expedition consisted of Major Long, as chief, an astronomer, a mineralogist, a physician, a zoologist, an artist, Mr. Renville, interpreter for the Sioux, a young Canadian, interpreter for the Algonquine language, twenty-eight men, one officer, and Mr. Snelling, son of the colonel.”

“It was divided into two bodies, one of which went by land with twenty-two horses and mules; the other embarked on the river St. Peter in five Indian canoes. The major accompanied the latter detachment, and I followed him with the intention of going sometimes by land and sometimes by water, according to the curious or interesting objects, either route might offer. It was determined that the two parties should meet every evening.”

“The river St Peter, called by the Sioux Watpà menisothe, tracing it from its mouth, has at first a S. S. W. direction; it then bends to the south, and its constant windings turn to every point of the compass; but as its course, from its sources to the place where it falls into the Mississippi, is almost directly from N. N.W. to E. S. E., I shall distinguish the two banks as northern and southern every time I have occasion to designate them.”

Beltrami; pp. 304-305

“The first evening we encamped on the southern bank, above the tribe of the chieftain Wamenitonka, or the Black Dog. [“Wambdi Tonka” is usually translated as “Big Eagle”, a famous chief of the period. “Black Dog” may have been an alternate name for the same individual.] I had seen this camp extremely populous a few days before, and now we found it a desert; hunger had roused these savages from their habitual indolence, and had driven them to hunt deer and buffalos in more distant forests and prairies. A hut which was shut, and which we opened, afforded us some shelter from the musquitos

which attacked us on every side, and against the rain which has attended us ever since our departure. Behind the oak-bark which slightly fastened the door, we found, hung like a curtain, a deer-skin which the savages looked upon as the guardian Manitou of their house. When they return they will probably choose some more trusty Swiss, and the deer will lose their confidence and his own divinity at the same time.”

“The encampment of Panischiowa on the easternbank, where we stopped to breakfast on the morning of the eighth, was equally deserted, and for the same reason; but the chief, who is as lazy as he is gluttonous, had retired to the neighbourhood of the fort, to revel in Capuan luxury, and to shelter himself in that sacred and inviolable land from the incursions which the Cypowais [Chippewa,] justly indignant at his conduct on the seventh of June, might make upon his castle.”

Beltrami; pp. 305-306

[“Wambdi Tonka” is usually translated as “Big Eagle”, a famous chief of the period. “Black Dog” may be a nickname for the same individual. Beltrami keeps using the word “manitou” to denote a guardian spirit, although this is an Ojibway word. It is unlikely that the deer hide served the purpose Beltrami claims for it, and it is far more likely that it was a practical exercise to keep out drafts or to insulate in colder weather or merely as art. Beltrami’s reference to a “trusty Swiss” may be a reference to mercenary guards such as those that still serve the Vatican today and which were more common in his own day. “Capua” was since Roman times noted as an extravagant vacation spot, and hence his relative contrast of the fort as “Capuan luxury” to the Dakota camp.]

“The chief Siacape has his summer encampment on the east bank. The huts of this tribe are of a singular construction. The walls and roof are of oak bark, interwoven with split rods in so solid a manner, that the most violent hurricane could scarcely penetrate them. Everything here was also deserted. We found only a dog hanged, and thus consecrated to their penates or tutelary deities. To render the offering more acceptable, they had decorated his head with a plume of killow of which I stripped him to enrich my savage collection.”

Beltrami; pp. 306-307

[“Penates” were household or domestic gods of the Roman period, which would correspond to how Beltrami has been using the word “manitous”. It may be commented that Beltrami is not so much understanding the native customs that he sees, as he is applying his knowledge of ancient Roman religion to interpret aboriginal customs.]

[“Killow” is an old word for graphite, the so-called “lead” in a lead pencil. This makes little sense unless Beltrami is simply trying to describe a colour.]

“On the opposite shore of the river, a meadow studded with little thickets and scattered with bones and tumuli, like those I remarked at St. Louis and elsewhere, is an image of the Elysian Fields of antiquity; and though one tread on a wild soil, and bones of savages, the pathetic character of the spot strikes one with involuntary veneration, and the mind is agitated by varied feelings which carry it far into other worlds. Here I saw a most singular union: one of these graves was surmounted by a cross, whilst upon another

close to it a trunk of a tree was raised covered with hieroglyphics, recording the number of enemies slain by the tenant of the tomb, and several of his tutelary Manitous, Here presenting a fresh hint to those who are fond of system-making on the subject of the religion of these people, to be cautious in their inductions.”

Beltrami; pp. 307-308

[“Elysian Fields” are a kind of Roman or Greek heaven, a pleasant afterlife. Beltrami’s comment about being “cautious in their inductions” is advice that he should well have followed himself.]

“In the evening we halted at the Indian camp of the Battue au fief, where I witnessed a most curious contrast. A woman in the deepest affliction was tearing off her hair, which she offered as a sacrifice to the manes of some relative, whose lifeless remains were stretched upon a scaffold; while a group of savages were eating, drinking, singing and dancing around another body, exposed in the same manner to the view of passengers, like those of the heroes of antiquity. Here again I must beg you to observe the extreme difficulty of forming any accurate opinion as to their usages or ceremonies.”

Beltrami; pp. 308-309

[A “manes” is a type of Roman ghost, a spirit of a dead person.]

“We saw hieroglyphics engraven on a tree; they signified that the tribe of the Red Hawk (the Sussitons) had passed that way with their chief. Everything was recorded; the number of men and of women, — whence they came, — whither they were going; — where they had been hunting, &c. By this means the Indians reciprocally convey much useful information; in the present instance, here was an avviso [advertisement or notice] to others not to throw away their trouble on ground which had just been beaten. [hunted] This passage is a labyrinth; and had we not been accompanied by Mr. Renville, who had quitted the canoe party to act as guide, we should not easily have found our way out. The forest extends over the country towards the Missouri to an immense distance. We emerged from it on the west, where we found a vast and magnificent prairie, called by the Indians Wayo-Theè, or the Arrow. A great block of granite, which is visible from a considerable distance on the left, serves the wandering savages at once as a temple and a tutelary deity in their hunting parties. It was painted with a nose, eyes and mouth, as the sun and moon frequently were among civilized nations, until Maria, the preceptor of Copernicus at Bologna, and Bianchini, robbed them of these features. All the tribes which pass that way go to pay it homage and offerings.”

Beltrami; pp. 309-310

“At the spot where we encamped, Mr Renville, who has the most perfect acquaintance with the Sioux, being born and having lived among them, pointed out to me a very singular thing: an Indian Hypocauston, or Sudatoria [Roman heated rooms and saunas]. When their physicians wish to throw a patient into a perspiration, they shut him up in a little hut between four massy stones of different colours, heated by fire, which they regard as so many divinities. The red is the god of war, the black of death, the green of health, the white of fine weather. The patient remains there until he gives notice, by

fainting, that he can stay no longer; it would be a sacrilege to utter a single syllabic in order to be let out. It often happens that he is stifled in this manner, particularly if the priests of the Grand Medicine have any reason for wishing to get rid of him.

An Indian Esculapsius [legendary and semi-divine Roman physician] is like those of antiquity, both high-priest and physician, so that he is armed with double shears to cut short the life of his superstitious patients. There were also other traces of offerings, which equally indicated the multiplicity of their Manitous.”

Beltrami; pp. 310-311

“...The major feared the Sussitons, who are not very friendly to the Americans, but we were too few to make any effectual resistance against a horde of Indians of the most warlike and formidable tribe, and too many for an expedition which had no hostile intentions, and which was already reduced to have its daily portion of food doled out.”

“I have told you, that they were afraid of the Sussitons. Not to let your curiosity languish, I must tell you the reasons, were it only to throw additional light on the Indian character, and on the resistless power the passion of revenge exercises over them.”

“One of these Sussitons lost two relations who served in the last war under the English banners against the United States. He resolved to revenge himself upon the two first Americans who fell into his hands. But as some time elapsed without any such opportunity for vengeance occurring, he set out with his cousin; they made a landing by night at Rocky Island, near Fort Armstrong, seven hundred miles from their own haunts; there they lay in wait, and seized the moment when two soldiers of the garrison were walking at some distance from the fort, and killed them both with two well-aimed muskets.”

“The government, under pretence of holding a council and giving presents, allured a band of the Sussitons to Council Bluff, and seized two of them, who were never seen again. A government founded upon wise and liberal laws ought to be more generous than savages ; but either it had no other means of reprisal and of punishment, without engaging in a murderous war with the whole Sioux nation, or its agents acted in an arbitrary and unauthorized manner.”

Beltrami; pp. 312-313

[Beltrami has frequently indulged in aboriginal myth, and as frequently referenced Roman or Greek myth. Here is taking a nugget of real events and turning it into a myth. The type of incident he describes is one repeated often in eye-witness accounts of the period of all sides. Nor is modern society free of such “sacrificial” victimization. One single such event would not have accounted for American-Dakota tensions, and this type of event is more a symptom of bad relations than a cause.]

“In the middle of this terrestrial paradise we found an Indian sarcophagus, about fifteen feet in height. Here Mr Renville shewed us the direction, towards the south west, in which the river of the Blue Earth, Mushatohose- Watpd, falls into the St Peter. This is the highest point of the river reached by Father Hannepin [Hennepin] and other travellers after him.”

“The river of the Blue Earth is very celebrated among the Indians. They perform an annual pilgrimage to it, to collect the blue earth of its banks, of which they make dye and paint. At some distance from its sources, in the direction of the Missouri, they dig up a kind of red stone, which hardens on exposure to the air; of this they make their sacred calumets. It is said that these two spots are inviolable, and that the most implacable enemies meet there in peace; but this is a mere fable. The Indian never lays aside the pursuit of vengeance: if ever he refrains from the open expression of it, it is only when he is withheld by superior force.”
Beltrami; p. 314

“I was told that the English emissaries came here [the Red Wood, near a Brandy River] to offer prayers and incense, and to invoke the protection of this savage divinity, when, during the last war, they stirred up the Sioux against the United States. It is worth while to observe, that the pious British cabinet was accusing Bonaparte of apostacy to Islamism at the very time it was playing the part of the knavish teacher of idolatry in America.”
Beltrami; pp. 316-317

“We now reached a valley of the most lovely and interesting character. Never did a more striking illusion transport my imagination back to the classic lands of Latium and Magna Grocia. Rocks scattered, as if by art, over the plain, on plateaux, and on hills, were at a little distance perfect representations of every varied form of the ruins of antiquity. In one place you might think you saw thermal substructures, or those of an amphitheatre, a circus, or a forum; in another, the remains of a temple, a cenotaph, a basilicon, or a triumphal arch.”
Beltrami; p. 317

“A numerous party of that tribe of the Sioux called the Wakapetohan, or people of the Leaf, who were encamped there [south of St. Peter’s, Minn.], came to meet us and invite us to a feast. I was very sorry that the haste in which it was prepared had unfortunately deprived us of the dish of etiquette — a dog — which they had not had time to flay and season. The hunger by which we were tortured made us feel this as a most cruel privation. We devoured whatever they gave us, and everything appeared to me delicious, even some roots which they call prarie-potatoes, and which I had before thought detestable.”
Beltrami; p. 321

“The major pronounced a speech, which appeared probably very good to his government, whose power, greatness, and generosity, he greatly extolled ; but very bad to the Indians, since it concluded with the information that he had nothing to give them ; and accordingly neither the chiefs nor anybody else made the slightest answer. When the interpreter explained to them that ‘the United States were composed of twenty-four fires, (meaning thereby twenty-four states,) without reckoning the district of Colombia, in which is the seat of the grand congress and of the grand general administration, and the residence of the great father, the president ;—that they were peopled with so many millions of men, who were thriving by means of commerce and agriculture, and lived

in wealth and plenty,' &c. &c. — some yawned, others looked contemptuous; and when he added that 'the expedition was going to trace the remote boundaries of the American territory,' all looked greatly annoyed. Even savages, it seems, are not very fond of seeing other people play the master in their country."

Beltrami; pp. 321-322

[camps at White Heron River]

"We landed at the only hut; it is an establishment formed by some Scotchmen, who have deserted the English North-West and Hudson's Bay Companies. Mr. Renville is one of the partners."

"As these gentlemen naturally come in competition with the South-West American Company, they must have sunk at the very outset under the weight of its powerful jealousy; but with the address and cunning for which their nation is so pre-eminent, wherever money is to be made, they have got some Americans to join them and to lend their names, and have christened this the Fur Colombian American Company: they have consequently obtained a licence to trade from the superintendant of the savages. In spite of all their dexterity, however, I think they will be obliged in the end to capitulate with the South-West Company, and to put themselves under its protection."

"This situation is extremely advantageous for the fur trade; the traders are quite in the midst of the Sioux, and can push their speculations up to the Missouri and the Colombia, provided that the Russians, who have taken possession of the mouth of the latter river, will let them."

Beltrami; pp. 323-324

[xxx doublecheck following facts xxx]

[Notwithstanding Beltrami's notions of the state of fur trade competition, the Southwest Company was by most contemporary accounts already dead. (Hence the reason why Rainville had to operate as an independent.) He did not seem to understand that the Southwest Company had simply been a front for the Northwest Company. The Columbian Fur Company was one of the two main American competitors, and the other was John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company which managed to gobble up what was left of the Southwest Company. Beltrami's reference to the Russians controlling the mouth of the Colombia is puzzling in that they had long since been run off by the various British and American concerns. In fact, the one battle during the War of 1812 fought on the Pacific Coast was between the Nor'westers on behalf of the British, and the American Fur Company on behalf of the USA. Beltrami seems to have picked up a great deal of rumour, all of it having some original source, but not of all it equally recent. His news about the various fur competitors seems to be about ten to twenty years out of date by the time he wrote these passages. A hint of the problem of Beltrami's sources is revealed in the next quote where he acknowledges his suspicion that not all of his informants have been completely honest.]

“I am likewise deprived of the satisfaction of informing you of the exact geographical position of this place (Lake Travers,) for the major carefully concealed it from me: he no doubt had his reasons for this, which I shall not enquire into.”
Beltrami; p. 324

“The great Wanathà, [Wanaata II] whom I introduced to your acquaintance when I gave you the numbers of the Sioux, came to receive us on our arrival, and invited us to a feast. He had been informed of our coming before-hand, so that a dog had been immolated, and already smoked on the altar of the god of hospitality. Famished as we were, we should have thought it delicious, and should probably not have left even that portion which the Indians distribute after the banquet among the physically and morally diseased, as a remedy for all evils, had not the flesh of the buffalo carried off all our votes. I ought here to remark to you, that the dog, on whatever occasion they sacrifice it, is always an offering to the Manitou, and the eating of it is no less an act of devotion, just as the priests of antiquity lived jollily on the victims offered by true believers on the altars of their divinities. We should therefore have given great scandal by the preference we showed for buffalo flesh, had we not fortunately been at the table of a king, who like most kings, was not over scrupulous in religious matters, except where his interests required that he should be so.”

“The major preached him a sermon, as academical as the former, touching the sublime qualities, physical and moral, of his government — for I must do the Americans the justice to say that, as to modesty, they have not in the least degenerated from that which distinguishes the mother country. But as the conclusion of this harangue was not more satisfactory than that of the others his majesty did not even deign to look at him; and while the interpreter was explaining the doctrines of political economy, he amused himself by laughing, with an air of right royal nonchalance, with his highness the hereditary prince [possibly Wanaata III], who was lying on the ground by his side.”
Beltrami; pp. 325-326

[At this distance one wonders whether Beltrami was being sarcastic or serious about his remark on “modesty”. It is clear though that Beltrami perceived a certain disdain on the part of Wanaata for Major Long.]

[On page 328 Beltrami’s address begins with the assertion that he is at “Selkirk Colony, Bloody River, August 10th, 1823.” This chapter more than any of the previous ones displays a pro-American and anti-British bias, even going so far as his curious refusal to call the Red River by its name. His information about the nature of the HBC Charter we suspect must have been provided by Major Long, or perhaps by Rainville, and while his constitutional criticisms of the HBC Charter are quite cogent, his geography is appalling. We can recall that in his previous chapter he noted that Major Long had prevented him from actually establishing the geographical position of Lake Traverse. He begins this new chapter by telling his wife that he is “moving towards the cool breezes of the Pole” a description more poetic than accurate. Almost immediately the party ran into a buffalo herd and Beltrami was himself able to participate in a buffalo hunt. (He is also modest enough to admit that it was Wanaata who made it possible for him to kill an animal.)]

“The surprise I felt on a near view of this animal [a bison] was equal to my pleasure in hunting it; its appearance is truly formidable. In size it approaches the elephant. Its flowing mane, and the long hair which covers its neck and head and falls over its eyes, are like those of the lion. It has a hump like a camel, its hind quarters and tail are like those of the hippopotamus, its horns like those of the large goat of the Rocky Mountams, and its legs like those of an ox.”
Beltrami; p. 330

[One might suspect from the above description that while Beltrami was indeed looking at bison, he probably had never seen an elephant, lion, camel, hippopotamus or a “large goat of the Rocky Mountains”. The comparisons make very little sense.]

“The following day we found the great chief [Wanaata II] encamped in this prairie, near the Sioux river, Ciàntapà-Watpa, which serves as an outlet to the waters of Lake Travers. He was in a new and very clean tent; he offered us the tongues and humps of buffalos, which are great delicacies, very nicely cured; but he preserved a most invincible gravity and taciturnity. Whenever we turned our eyes, we saw innumerable herds of buffalos. I begged the major to endeavour to induce the chief to give us the sight of a buffalo hunt with bows and arrows, but he replied, with his usual complaisance, that he could not stop.”

“I let him [Major Long] go on: and Mr. Renville prevailed on the chief to satisfy my curiosity. We galloped towards a meadow which was perfectly black with them. My horse, who now regarded neither rein nor voice, plunged into the centre of the herd, dividing it into halves, and turned several of them. The chief, who followed me with Mr. Renville, let fly his arrow and shot a female buftalo; she still endeavoured to escape, but the motion of her body in running caused the arrow to sink deeper into the wound, and when she fell the whole barb had entered.”

“Never did I see attitudes so graceful as those of the chief. They alternately reminded me of the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius on the Capitol [a famous equestrian statue in Rome], and that of the great Numidian king [a Roman ally also favoured with an equestrian statue]. Altogether it was the most astonishing spectacle I ever saw. I thought I beheld the games and combats of the ancients. I played nearly the same part as the Indians of former ages, who thought the first European they saw on horseback was a being of a superior order; while the chief with his quiver, his horse, and his victim, formed a group worthy the pencil of Raphael or the chisel of Canova. I was so enchanted by this living model of classical beauty, that I forgot my part in the chase, and was only aroused to a recollection of it by the voice of the chief, who pointed to a young buffalo, which I fired at and killed. His majesty did me the honour to say I was an excellent shot.”

Beltrami; pp. 330-331

“On the 27th at noon, we reached the confluence of the Sioux river, and what is called the Red river; and here I must detain you a moment to point out a geographical error, or rather fraud.”

“Charles II, king of England, by a charter of the year 1670, granted what did not belong to him; and as men willingly profit by abuses which favour their views, he

sheltered himself under the authority of Borgia [Pope Alexander VI], that is to say, under the right of discovery, which that infamous pontiff had proclaimed. Sanctioned by such a principle and such a charter, prince Robert [Prince Rupert] and his associates, under the name of the Hudson's Bay Company, appropriated not only the exclusive fur trade of these countries, but also all the lands lying near or beyond Hudson's Bay; though that bay had been discovered by the Danish navigator Auschild, before Hudson visited it, and though parliament refused to confirm the charter.”

“They afterwards affected to consider this property as extending to the sources of the Red river, and over all the lands washed by the various rivers which fall into it ; and as the course of the Red river was not long enough and did not receive a sufficient number of tributary streams for the wishes of these gentlemen, they baptized the river we are now considering under the same name; and geographers, who often lay down maps without having been out of their own parish, or with venal instruments, have sanctioned the cheat. According, to them there are consequently two Red rivers, at no great distance, the one of which flows into the other. This then into which the Sioux river falls, is not the Red river, but the river Neguiquanosibi, as the Cypowais call it, or the river of the Otter’s-tail, from its having its source in the lake of that name. The Sioux know it under the name Kakawenapi-Watpà, or the river of the Falls, from the number of them which occur on its issuing from the lake.”

Beltrami; pp. 333-335

[The paragraphs above present a curious mix of constitutional insight, a few facts, some minor historical errors, some interesting ethnographical history, and an astonishing confusion of geographical error mixed with legal misinformation – for which a judge ought to have known better.]

[Pope Alexander VI may have indeed codified a “doctrine of discovery” but as an excuse for taking someone else’s territory it is found throughout recorded human history and is certainly many thousands of years older than the infamous Borgia pope. Moreover, Protestant England did not as a rule resort to papal legal precedents, although one must concede that Charles II was something of a secret Catholic. More importantly, and Beltrami touches on this without actually grasping the point, Charles II was the last of the English kings to attempt absolutism. His father Charles I had literally lost his head over his own stubborn adherence to absolutism – the principle that an absolute monarch can make laws irrespective of anything or anyone else. Charles II came to power in the compromise which ended the English Civil Wars and the interregnum of Cromwell military dictatorship and was therefore somewhat more circumspect about attempting to apply absolutism, but, it is true that in issuing the HBC Charter he had again raised the ugly spectre of absolutism.]

[The offending clauses of the HBC Charter were the infamous provisions that the HBC might claim all of the lands drained by waters flowing into Hudson’s Bay. What these rivers might or might not be called was irrelevant to the HBC claim. The Red River as we know it, and therefore all of its tributaries, flows into the Hudson’s Bay. Lake Traverse is itself the southernmost headwater of the Red River, and drains through the Bois de Sioux River to meet the Otter Tail River where modern American maps give the official commencement of the Red River.]

[The legality of the HBC Charter was challenged before the ink was even dry, and in fact, even contains a codicil which subsequently Canadian courts have determined meant that it did not include the Red River after all – but not for any of the reasons stated by Beltrami.]

[Two constitutional problems arose with this claim of the HBC Charter: one concerning the limits of absolutism; and the second to do with the abovementioned codicil.]

[Firstly, as Judge Beltrami correctly intimated, and as the Privy Council of the United Kingdom itself determined, the King had no power to grant what he did not in fact own. The succeeding Hanoverian Dynasty in the last days of the reign of George III issued the foundational constitutional document the Royal Proclamation of 1763 which repudiated the “doctrine of discovery” and replaced it with a protocol requiring the voluntary adherence of any aboriginal populations. Beltrami, writing in 1823, is therefore flogging a horse which had been dead some sixty years already. Since the American Revolution in 1776, it is the United States and not Britain which has maintained the “doctrine of discovery.”]

[Secondly, the relevant codicil mentioned above contained a caveat that the HBC Charter did not extend to any territories which were already claimed by either France or Spain. As the French had already established a presence in what is today southern Manitoba for a generation before the issuing of the Charter, it could not, even according to Charles II, extend to include the Red River. This is an obscure legal-historical fact which the Hudson’s Bay Company preferred to ignore, but which the Northwest Company (of which Rainville had been a member) often cited in its own legal battles with the HBC.]

[What British legal opinion concluded after Charles II, and well before Beltrami wrote his travelogue, was that Charles could issue a licence which restricted British subjects within these territories, but which could not set aside the legitimate claims of other sovereign nations. Prior to 1763 this meant only Spain and France, but after 1763 it also meant aboriginal nations. (This actually applies today in Canadian constitutional law because it affects where HBC Charter Provisions respecting aboriginal nations do or do not apply. Ironically aboriginal claims are stronger wherever the HBC Charter did not run.)]

[Therefore, while Beltrami was within his rights of fair comment to say that the HBC attempted a fraud by ignoring the claims of others, the issue has nothing whatsoever to do with the naming of rivers. The Red River and all of its tributaries by whatever names they may be called, flow into Hudson’s Bay. Beltrami is simply repeating old gripes of former Nor’westers such as Joseph Rainville. The salient fact of the matter was that by 1823 when Beltrami visited Lake Traverse, the Dakota of the region had been forcibly incorporated into the United States and they would never be allowed any other option. The relevant legal principle being applied, which Beltrami alluded to before when he mentioned the Justinian Code, was not the “doctrine of discovery” but that “might makes right.”]

“Night overtook us, and the distant fires of the camp were our only guide to the expedition. On our arrival we found it in great consternation. Our companions had met a

band of Sioux. The major thought he read hostile intentions in their faces; he even thought they had threatened him; — of course everybody else thought so too — like Casti's courtiers, who perfectly agreed with his majesty that it rained torrents, though the sun was then shining in all its brilliancy. It was incumbent on me, therefore, to be very much alarmed too; and, for the first time since I had been in America, I girded on my sword in a warlike manner. But as in spite of the major's indiscretion in telling these Indians that we were behind with our horses, (the greatest temptation to their cupidity) they had not attacked us, which they might have done with the greatest ease; and as he had stationed four or five sentinels round the camp, who made noise enough for three times their number, I thought the danger could not be very great, and lay down quietly to sleep under a cart. At midnight, however, I was awakened. The camp had begun its march, or rather flight. The major's agitation was not yet calmed, nor did we halt until the 28th at noon, when we stopped on the banks of the Otter's-tail river, at the point where the Wild Oats river, or Sau-Watpà, falls into it from the west. During the night we had crossed two other small rivers, which descend from the east, the Perelle, or Wayecei-aoshu-Watpà, and the Strong Wood river, or Ciontanka-Watpà. The heat was terrible, and we felt it the more from the extreme coldness of the nights. Fahrenheit's thermometer sometimes reached 94, 96, and 98, in the day, and fell to 58 in the same night."

"I reposed again under the shelter of a cart, for in the woods the musquitos are perfectly devouring. To crown all, I could not bathe; the river is so muddy that one sinks up to the neck in the bottom."

"The Indians, who gave us such a breathing, were the very same who had feasted us at the lake of the Big Rock. I rather think the fright they threw the major into was in revenge for his giving them nothing but boring speeches. If they meant it so, they had every reason to be satisfied; for from that time forward he would not suffer us to hunt buffalos, for fear of irritating the Indians; and in order to station advanced posts and vedettes [lookouts] round the camp, he had levied a general conscription on the whole party, which lasted till within a day's march of Pembinar [Pembina]."

"You would have laughed heartily, my dear Countess, to hear me call 'Who goes there?' and 'All's well,' when I was sentinel. The geese who saved the Capitol did not give the word better. I never thought it would be my lot to mount guard in English — but it is the fate of us poor Italians, when under arms, to use all watch-words but our own." Beltrami; pp. 336-338

[The reference to "the geese who saved the Capitol" is an ancient Roman legend about how all the human guards failed to give warning, but invading Celts scaling the Capitoline Hill were revealed when they upset a flock of domestic geese. According to the tradition the geese were given a special protective status thereafter.]

[One does appreciate Beltrami's humour at Major Long's expense regarding his panics and startled flights from the very same Dakota with whom he was supposed to be making peaceful contact. The reference to "Casti's courtiers" who would agree that the sun shone or it was raining depending on whatever their master wanted to hear is a clear allusion that Major Long's judgement was, in Beltrami's opinion, not entirely sane.]

"On the 31st of July we reached the real Red river, which descends from the east from the lake of the same name, and receives, fifteen miles below the spot where we

crossed it, the Otter's-tail river, miscalled the Red river by the Hudson's Bay Company, the sources of which are to the S.S.E. of its confluence.”

Beltrami; p. 339

[Beltrami has made another reference here to the curious theory he exposed earlier that the naming of the Red River somehow had a bearing on the HBC Charter claim. One wonders if Beltrami understood the concept of a watershed or if for him the very nature of landscape could simply be changed by the application of a name. Given that he was a judge this may be reason for his fixation on terms and names.]

“Geographers tell us that it takes its name from the red sand or gravel which covers its bed; but there is nothing red about it. The origin of its name is widely different: red, to be sure, had something to do with it, but a red arising from very different causes.”

“This river, and the lake from which it springs, form the frontier line which separates the territory, or pretended territory, of the Sioux from that of the Cypowais, or at least the line upon which they have always met and still most frequently meet. It may easily be imagined then that the waters of a stream so situated, must have often been ‘red with the blood of the slain,’ and that it has thus received from both the contending parties the name of the Bloody river, — in the Sioux language Maniscia-Watpà; in the Cypowais, Sahaguaigney-Sibi. The lake is in like manner called the Bloody lake.”

Beltrami; pp. 339-340

[One is reminded of anthropological studies which demonstrated that language can influence how people actually perceive colours. To Beltrami the Red River is not “red” and he resorts instead to a bloody legend. The reference to blood being shed may or may not be true – it was after all the 1820’s era frontier between Dakota and Ojibway – but to anyone born or raised on the prairies, the Red River is indeed reddish when contrasted to other rivers bearing different soils such as the various “Whitemuds” carrying whitish clay. The best placenames have more than one meaning.]

“On the 2nd, we crossed the river called the Two Rivers, Nipa-Watpà; and on the 3rd arrived at the celebrated colony, called Pembear, from the name of a river which descends from the west and falls into the Red river at this spot.

The Indians call it Wettacia-Watpà.”

Beltrami; p. 346

xxx

[The following section, spanning from page 346 to page 359 in Beltrami is a remarkable mix of eye-witness observation, disinformation and fair comment on the Selkirk Red River Colony and the merger of the Northwest and Hudson’s Bay companies. Beltrami’s two main sources of information, according to his own text, are Major Long of the US Army (a representative of the US Government) and Joseph Rainville jr. (a former Nor’wester.) It would be fair to attribute the grosser distortions of politics, history and geography to these two individuals. However, Beltrami as a jurist

with a keen analytic mind, albeit possessing an anti-English bias, does provide his own unique view on the legitimacy of the rival claims and conflicts. It is strange that Beltrami accurately describes the rough geography of Lake Winnipeg and the Red River, but at the same time states that the international border was at 50 degrees when in 1815 it was fixed at 49 (surveyed in 1821,) where it remains. As he explained earlier, Major Long prevented him from taking accurate compass bearings and one is led to wonder if Long wasn't deliberately fudging the location of the border in preparation for some future land grab by the United States. Beltrami is shown Pembina, but did not apparently travel northward. This allowed Long to claim that what Beltrami witnessed at the Pembina represented the failure of the Selkirk Colony, whereas Beltrami never actually entered the post-War of 1812 colony centred at the Forks. Selkirk's other colonies are misrepresented as abandoned failures when in fact only one of the four was ever abandoned, that being the one in Michigan which was burnt to the ground by American troops in the War of 1812. It is an open question as to how much of the following is really Long, Rainville or Beltrami.]

[start on bottom of Beltrami p. 346]

“This colony, or its skeleton, has been the scene of every species of fraud, crime, and atrocity. It is one of those hideous monsters which avarice and selfishness give birth to wherever they direct their steps.”

“It is a pity, my dear Madam, that I am not a traveller dans les r gles; I should have a fine field for eternal narrations in these remote settlements, which are as little exposed to the view of morality or authority as of the world at large; but as it is, I can give you nothing but a slight sketch. You will be the better able to judge of the incidents I am going to relate to you, if I first trace out the scene of action.”

“The Red river divides the colony, which extended to this spot [Pembina, ND] but which began sixty miles lower down, directly on the north, near the place where the river of the Assiniboins falls into the Red river from the west. From this confluence the Red river flows on thirty miles farther, still in a northerly direction, and falls into lake Winipeg. This lake at its farther extremity in length, (which is three hundred miles from the south to the N.N. W.) discharges itself into Hudson's Bay by a great outlet or natural canal, which flows to the N. N. E. for about two hundred miles, and which the English called Nelson river, from the captain who first built a fort at its mouth.”

“The Hudson's Bay Company, in spite of the great concessions it had claimed and obtained in virtue of the charter I have mentioned, had not...”

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“...extended its commerce much above lake Winipeg before the year 1806: but its members, jealous of the thriving state of the North-West Company, which, as you have seen in my third and fourth rambles, was daily gaining ground, at length devised means to check its progress and to push their own speculations. The project of a colony was

found to offer the most certain means of accomplishing both these ends. The times were propitious; for a great number of people were quitting England, Scotland, and Ireland. It was the policy of the English government to favour the scheme, in order that this torrent of emigrants might not encrease the population of the United States, already a source of alarm to England.

“But to impose on the credulity of adventurers and speculators, something brilliant must be got up to dazzle and excite the imagination. Accordingly, lord Selkirk, a Scotch earl, of high birth and great fortune, was made choice of, and pretended to be associated in the enterprise. He was publicly given out to be possessed of greater wealth and higher qualities than he actually possessed; he was proclaimed a tender father of other colonies formed by him in Canada; colonies which (par parenthese) had all failed [sic.] In 1811, the company pretended to sell him a vast tract of land on the Red river. To this land their title...”

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“...was still worse than that of Charles II, inasmuch as the charter granted only ‘the lands within the entrance of the streights commonly called Hudson's Streight;’ nor had the aboriginal inhabitants ever given their consent to the occupation of them.”

“This farce was very well calculated to impose on the blind; but the North- West Company, who were very clear-sighted, and had their agents in the very centre of government, were not so easily gulled. They quickly perceived that the great lord was only a puppet moved at the will of the Hudson's Bay Company. They beheld this scheme in the light of a premeditated attack upon their interests, and an attempt at establishing an exclusive and arbitrary monopoly.”

“They could not however prevent the foundations of a settlement being laid by Mr. Miles Macdonnell, and a few Highlanders from lord Selkirk's Scotch estates. This took place in 1812, near the confluence of the Assiniboin, where the North-West Company had for many years had a fort; but they [the Nor'westers] immediately set to work to undermine the new settlement in every possible way, and, in the first instance, by exciting the animosity and jealousy of the savages against the settlers. But as the savages now received a double share of bounties, and as the company discovered that half measures are good for no- ...”

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“...thing, a large meeting of the partners assembled in 1814 at Fort William on lake Superior, one of their large establishments, where they concerted a plan for the destruction of the rival settlement.”

“From its very origin the North-West Company had obliged every Canadian in its service to marry (à la mode du pays) [in the method of the country] one of the Indian

women, hoping by this means to attach them for ever to these deserts and forests, and to raise up a breed of obsequious emissaries and slaves. They succeeded; and it was to this execrable race, called the Bois-Brulés, [Burntwood] from their complexions, — of a darker brown than that of the savages; — and to leaders, the most honest of whom had been two or three times under sentence of the laws, that the execution of this plan was entrusted. From that time the mask was thrown off, and war declared on both sides.”

“I will spare your benevolent heart the recital of horrors committed by both parties, from which humanity recoils. It is sufficient to know that the colony was beaten and dispersed in the June of 1815; and that, having rallied, it was finally destroyed in the same month of the following year. Governor Semple, the successor of Mr. Macdonnell, who [Macdonell] had been made prisoner the preceding year, was massacred, together with...”

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“... twenty [specifically Semple and 19 others] of his men, and the fort taken and pillaged.”

“Meanwhile his lordship had arrived in Canada from England. He asked for troops to go to the succour of his colony, which he declared to be under the protection of government, and to arrest the offenders who had polluted the English territory by such horrible crimes. But the governor-general, who lent a more favourable ear to the golden arguments of the North-West Company than to the feeble voice of his lordship, would grant him no assistance. Lord Selkirk then instituted legal proceedings, but means were taken to place men upon the judgment seat who were parties interested in the cause.”

“Two powerful enemies may mutually injure each other, at the same time that they labour, without suspecting it, in favour of a third party, who perhaps is the friend of neither, and who keeps vigilant watch on all their errors. In this case, Machiavel, I think, advises them to unite; so thought the two emperors Alexander [Russia] and Napoleon [France,] at Erfurth, and the Hudson's Bay and North-West Companies prudently followed their example. They saw that the Americans rejoiced at their dissensions, and were ready to take advantage of them; and by an act of oblivion, concord, and alliance, they have concealed from the public and the government their crimes...”

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“...and the falsehood of their pretended rights. But who committed the massacres? The Indians. And the brutal violations? The Indians. And the pillagings, &c. &c. It was all the Indians, who had never appeared on the scene. To keep up appearances, two or three of the unfortunate Bois-Brules were given up to the authorities, who wished to make a parade of justice; for, as La Fontaine says, ‘according as you are powerful or wretched, the judgments of courts of justice will make you black or white.’ And so the affair ended.”

“The United Companies, however, found that this colony was very convenient and useful. It was a nursery for men, of whom they stood in great need for the numerous stations of their immense trade, which extends its ramifications as far as the Colombia; as well as for their transports, their internal navigation, &c. &c. These men too, they would pay as slaves, whereas Canadian labour was very costly.”

“But the English, Scotch, and Irish, had already discovered that the only fortune to be made in this colony was a bare maintenance, and that of the poorest kind; that sometimes food was not to be got; that if the soil was good, the locusts, or the storms, or the frosts, destroyed all the produce in the bud; that though only in the fiftieth degree, the cold was as intense as...”

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“...in Siberia; that men were frozen to death, and that trees and rocks were split by the frost. It was necessary therefore to look about among other nations, and they accordingly caught some good and credulous Germans and greedy Swiss, by means of the grand Prospectus, which you will find annexed.”

“A part of these poor people died of cold or of distress; others escaped, as they could, through fatigue, hunger and danger, and took refuge in the United States. I met some myself at the lake of the Big Rock, who were in a deplorable condition, as also at Fort St. Peter, where the colonel and his officers assisted them in a truly philanthropic manner, and had the goodness to allow me a share in the heart-cheering satisfaction — (the only substantial one on earth, and the best offering to the divinity) — of alleviating the sufferings of fellow-creatures. The few who remain watch, eagerly for any opportunity of escaping. But this is a step which cunning and avarice have rendered very difficult, by means which I will endeavour to explain.”

“Whenever any money makes its appearance the Company carefully get it into its possession. It has adopted a curious ‘circulating medium.’ They pay and are paid in handkerchiefs, stockings, breeches, petticoats, shirts, shifts, &c. ...”

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“...and if they make a fortune it must be all in clothes.”

“These trumpery things are fixed at an exorbitant price, so that if they could succeed (which would be very difficult) in turning them into money, they would get not more than a fifth or sixth of what they cost. It is thus rendered impossible for them to get away. These poor people have thus been reduced to a level with the savages, without sharing their advantages or enjoying their independence. This is a stretch of cunning which avarice alone could enable men to reach.”

“The colony was at first, as you have seen, established near the confluence of the Assiniboin, also called by the Hudson's Bay Company the Red river [sic]; but during the great troubles, detachments of it had been transplanted hither [south to Pembina] on

account of the greater fertility of the soil, and the greater vicinity to the buffalos. The only people, however, now remaining are the Bois-brulés, who have taken possession of the huts which the settlers abandoned.”

“Two Catholic priests had also established themselves here, but as neither the government nor the Company gave them any means of subsistence, they went away; and the church, constructed, like all the other buildings, of trunks of trees, is already falling into ruins.”

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“Their departure is the more to be regretted as not only does it deprive these regions of every source of instruction, which could be derived from these ecclesiastics alone, but the Bois brulé will relapse into their former state of barbarism, by losing whatever good they had gained from their evangelical precepts. To be just, we must admit that the French missionaries, when not Jesuits, have always and in all countries, distinguished themselves by their exemplary lives, truly conformable to their vocation. Their religious sincerity, their apostolic charity, their persuasive mildness, their heroic patience, and their freedom from all fanaticism and asceticism, in every country they have visited, deserve to be recorded in the annals of the Christian church. So long as the memory of Del Verde, Vodilla, &c. shall be held in execration by all true Christians, so long will those of Daniel, Breboeuf, &c. be regarded with that veneration with which they are so justly recorded in the history of discoveries and missions. Hence the predilection of the Indians for the French; a predilection which they find almost instinctive at the bottom of their hearts, nourished by the traditions their fathers have bequeathed to them in favour of the first Apostles of Canada, then New France, and which have travelled by way of lake Superior to this point.”

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“Lower down, at Fort Douglas, there is still a bishop, Monsieur Provencais [J. N. Provencher]. His merit and virtues are the theme of general praise. I was told that he does not mingle politics with religion, that his zeal is not the oilspring of ambition, that his piety is pure, his heart simple and generous, he does not give ostentatious bounties at the expense of his creditors; he is hospitable to strangers; and dissimulation never sullies his mind or his holy and paternal ministry. But as he cannot, of course, preach to Catholics in a manner to please the Company, it is much to be feared that the unfortunate inhabitants will soon be deprived of their excellent pastor.”

“Yesterday Charles II’s charter was mutilated nearly by one half [sic]. The Major took possession of this place. The boundary which separates the territories of the two nations was formally laid down, in the name of the Government and President of the

United States. A number of Bois-brulés were present, and seemed to ridicule the ceremony.”

“There is a great division of opinions and inclinations among them. An address which they have been recommended to present to their new masters, for a judge, a priest, &c. is still without signatures. They will be the partisans of whoever will pay them best; I think, therefore, ...”

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“... they will most probably desert to Fort Douglas; some indeed are already gone thither. The English, individually, are avaricious, but their government and public bodies, when they have an end to accomplish, know how to unite the resistless power of gold to the magic influence of their intrigues; whilst the Americans are yet very backward in this art.”

“It would be very interesting to know whereabout we are with relation to the North Pole, but the Major conceals this from me with more care than the priests of Thibet conceal their Grand Lama. I know, however, that by an agreement between England and the United States, the boundary of the two territories on this side is fixed at the fiftieth [sic] degree. We are about two hundred and sixty miles from lake Traverse.”

“I shall conclude this letter by a scene which is interesting and perfectly new. The Bois-brulés, who call themselves the free people when they are not in the service of the Company, are compelled to live the same sort of life as the savages, in order to obtain the means of subsistence; and when urged by hunger, they unite in numerous bands to hunt the buffalo, in which they are sometimes joined by the hunters in the regular pay of the Company. Sometimes their toils are fruitless, but the day before yesterday...”

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“... they returned very rich, after two months absence.”

“A hundred men on horseback opened the march, a hundred and fourteen carts, heavily laden with dried meat, formed the centre; women and children, carried or dragged by large dogs, brought up the rear; for the whole family accompanies them, and during their hunting season they all grow fat and strong; but they return to the village, and soon lose their good plight. It was a curious sight, the details of which I leave to your imagination. They ranged themselves in order of battle at the place where we were encamped, and the fair commenced.”

“Several of these poor devils soon saw their carts emptied: either the Company which had advanced him some money, or one man who had let him have powder and shot, or another who offered him the clothes he wanted in exchange; or the tinker, the carpenter, the barber, the apothecary, the tax-gatherer, all fall upon him at once. The meat

disappears, his numerous family remains around him, and the usual state of misery and famine returns.”

“The dogs deserve a few minutes of your attention. They are a great resource in this country. In winter they perform those labours on the ice and frozen snow, which the horses, who ...”

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“... perish of cold and hunger, cannot endure. During the summer, when they are not hunting and their owners have no food for them, they put them out to board with jobbers, who feed them on bad fish, with which the river abounds, and thus swell the number of creditors who await the return of the owners from the chase.”

“I have seen some very numerous boarding schools of this sort: the order and discipline which prevail there are curious and surprising; they might serve as models for some of our establishments of education. But a still more curious thing is, to see these poor animals go a-fishing themselves when they find that the dinner-bell is inconveniently delayed. They conclude that they have nothing to hope for from the head of the establishment; they therefore betake themselves to the banks of the river, and dart with the rapidity of lightning on the fish which swim near the shore, or on any which by chance may have carried off the fisherman's hook and line, and float dead upon the water.”

[end quote on bottom of p. 359]

[Beltrami's statement that the Hudson's Bay Company had not extended its trade “much above Lake Winnipeg” is of course true so far as it goes. However, his lack of knowledge of the scope of the continent of North America, and the fact that he approached the border from the US side, meant that he failed to grasp that this “much above” constituted more than 50% of the landmass of present-day Canada. Probably due to Rainville's influence, Beltrami also fails to grasp that the Nor'westers never at any time enjoyed control of the areas into which they traded, and were in fact subject to intense competition not only from the HBC, but also from Russian, American and other independent traders. To invert the statement “much above Lake Winnipeg” would equally mean that the Nor'westers were confined to a narrow strip of British North America along the international border and the upper reaches of the Hudson's Bay watershed. What Beltrami writes is therefore not untrue, but it is highly selective.]

[What Beltrami does do for posterity is to fairly represent to us what was probably the view of Nor'westers during the crucial years immediately before the HBC swallowed up the NWC. The apologists for Selkirk tend to represent him as a naive dreamer who was caught unawares by the violence of the reaction on the part of the Nor'westers against his Red River Settlement. Beltrami has presented Selkirk here as a dupe of unscrupulous investors. An alternate theory would be that Selkirk knew exactly what he was doing. After all, the empirical evidence is that Selkirk colony was ultimately successful, the Nor'westers were destroyed, and the HBC swallowed up all competition.]

The mysterious investors whom Beltrami has lurking in the background, were in the main Selkirk's own family and in-laws. I believe Selkirk did have a streak of romanticism, but I also believe that the evidence reveals he was also a pragmatist who outmanouevered his enemies.]

[When Judge Beltrami states that the HBC "pretended" to sell a large grant to Selkirk he is much closer to the historical, and ultimately to the legal, truth of the matter. The Nor'westers certainly claimed at the time that the Selkirk Grant was illegal. Subsequent legal decisions from Judge Coltman's 1817-1818 hearings down to the present-day rulings of the Supreme Court of Canada have established that the HBC did not have a right to make such a sale... not because the Nor'westers had better claim, but because Canadian aboriginal populations do. The southern half of the Selkirk Grant was lost to the United States under the terms of the Treaty of Ghent in 1815, while the northern half had to be reconfirmed by aboriginal treaties with the British (later Canadian) Crown. Beltrami (and probably Rainville) fails to mention that the United States recognized some reparations to the HBC for lands lost south of the 49th (mostly in Oregon), and did not recognize claims of the former Nor'westers.]

[Beltrami's comment about it being claimed that Selkirk had more financial resources than he possessed is both partially true and equally disingenuous. The legal battle for Red River bankrupted Selkirk personally, but again to argue empirically, the total wealth and power of Selkirk, his cousins and in-laws certainly exceeded that of the Nor'westers. Or, to put it another way, Selkirk & co. were willing to stick with the investment and see it through whereas the Nor'wester investors bailed out.]

[Beltrami is usually not afflicted with a gross lapse in logic, but he commits one he should have caught himself when he speaks of "lands within the Hudson's streight [sic]." There are no lands within Hudson's Strait, being as it is a body of water. He had previously alluded to the argument concerning whether or not Lake Traverse was within the Hudson's Bay watershed, and has already conceded that the Red River proper does indeed drain into Hudson's Bay. He has accurately described its route through Lake Winnipeg and into the Nelson River. There is therefore no excuse for him to make this mistake here.]

[Beltrami's take on the dynamic of Selkirk being used as a 'front man' for the HBC is interesting and probably falls within fair comment. He is wrong however when he implies that there was at the time any such a thing as an HBC controlling ownership outside of Selkirk and his immediate family. It was Selkirk and his in-laws, the Wedderburn-Colvilles, who had recently purchased a majority in the HBC, pushing aside the competition of the Nor'westers both inside and outside of the HBC. Selkirk's extended family and their descendants would continue to control the HBC majority shares until they divested themselves in the 1860s.]

[A more forgivable error of Beltrami's is when he states that the Red River colonists were drawn from Selkirk's estates. They were not. On his own estates Selkirk and family had resettled crofters displaced by the new agricultural practices into new industries and factory towns. It was the abandoned clients of others, including some investors in the Northwest Company, that Selkirk resettled on his North American colonies.]

[As for Beltrami's assertion that the "English government" favoured Selkirk's colonization schemes, this is gross overstatement. It would be more accurate to say that

Selkirk was barely tolerated by the Imperial Government. If it were not for the scandal of the Nor'westers mapping and business frauds which emerged at the end of the War of 1812, added to the murder convictions of 1817, it is just as probable that the British Imperial Government would have given its support to the Nor'westers instead of to the HBC. The many embarrassments inflicted upon by the Imperial Government by the Nor'westers made such continued recognition politically impossible, and the outcome was the merger of 1821. The London Nor'wester partners did well out of the merger, whereas their own Wintering partners were given short shrift. We are tasting in Beltrami a great deal of Rainville's own sour grapes.]

[When Beltrami turns to discuss the Nor'westers part in the Red River Troubles he displays some of the equitability of a judge, and great deal of European prejudice. Did the NWC as a policy require its people in the field to marry native women? Possibly. Again, resorting to an empirical argument, no successful white fur trader could operate without a native wife. The converse historical argument put forward by many historians and since (and not incidentally by every female scholar-elder whom I've encountered) is that the women conducted the trade and it was a convenience for them to acquire, however temporary, a European or white husband to facilitate relations with the corporations. For many of these women, it was seen as an advantage that their European husbands would eventually go back to Europe.]

[Beltrami's description of Metis is "execrable" or as "slaves" is puzzling given that he is in the company of Joseph Rainville jr. (a Dakota-French metis) and is no doubt employing Metis to fetch and tote for him. He had therefore, no objection to employing such "slaves" himself.]

[I am using the word "Metis" here in the broader sense of aboriginal-European mixes, and not in the narrow and indefensible sense currently employed by the Manitoba Metis Federation to denote only those French-Aunishanabeg descendants of the Red River Colony. The current 2013 definition of "Metis" employed by the Manitoba Metis Federation, which is not supported by most other provincial or state Metis organizations, is a purely contrived modern bureaucratic definition in aid of limiting financial and member benefits. It has in my opinion no justification in history or fact.]

[Beltrami's comment about the Red River Settlement being "finally destroyed" has been rather obviously refuted by the history of the Province of Manitoba since 1815. At this writing, approximately one million people of all races live within the former bounds of the Red River Settlement river-lots and villages. The colony was seasonally abandoned due to floods, blizzards and insect plagues many times during the 1810s through 1830s, but never "finally".

[What would have convinced Beltrami in 1823 when he was at Pembina that the Red River Settlement had been "finally destroyed"? Firstly, Beltrami did not visit that portion of the Red River Settlement which lay within British North America after the border was drawn along the 49th parallel (and not the 50th as he states.) In 1821 a preliminary survey of key points along the border determined that the former NWC post at Pembina, and the 1820s-era HBC-owned buildings within it were in fact more than a mile south of the 49th parallel. The HBC was forced to abandon its claim to Pembina.]

[In W.L. Morton's *Manitoba: a History* we find on page 62 the following explanation. "In 1823 most of those who had settled at Pembina were persuaded to leave the settlement, superior base though it was for the buffalo hunt, and to settle, some at St.

Boniface, but the larger part at the old camping ground up the Assiniboine at the White Horse Plain, soon to be known as Grantown after Cuthbert Grant, leader of the métis at Seven Oaks, and later as St. Francois-Xavier. Their numbers in the colony were swelled as the rival fur posts were consolidated and relieved of their numerous dependents in the reorganization that followed the union.”]

[In other words, Beltrami was shown in 1823 the village of Pembina, North Dakota during a temporary state of partial abandonment, and was informed by American authorities that this was the core of the abandoned Red River Settlement. This was partly true, but equally not true. If Beltrami could have suspended his own prejudices long enough, he should also have seen that in 1823 Pembina was in the process of being reborn. Major Long’s mission to Pembina was to establish American military authority on the new frontier by taking over the former NWC-HBC facilities, and by setting up a customs office. Those Metis who opted for American citizenship were in the process of establishing their own centre at Pembina. The “Pembina band” drawn from Cree, Ojibway as well as displaced Hurons and Ottawa was in the 1820s reinventing itself as the Pembina Chippewa. In the 1820s through the 1850s the Pembina Chippewa would take over the role of advance guard of the Ojibway conquest of Dakota territories, under the able leadership of Little Shell I and II. Beltrami *saw* all of this, but *observed* none of it, overcome as it were by a few abandoned buildings and (we suspect) the disinformation provided by Major Long and Joseph Rainville.]

[A dependent question which arises is why, given Beltrami’s previously excellent contacts with both Dakota and Ojibway leadership, he made such a hash out of understanding what he saw at Pembina? To take just two examples of individual native leaders whom Beltrami had met, it is possible that neither Wanaata nor Flat Mouth would have wanted to volunteer much information about the true circumstances of Pembina or its prospects for the future. Rindisbacher’s portrait of Wanaata was painted at the Red River Settlement within a year of when Beltrami was at Pembina. It is conceivable that Wanaata would not have wanted to advertise to the Americans the fact that he was maintaining an ongoing relationship with the British authorities. For Flat Mouth, there may have been a natural jealousy that in 1823 Little Shell I was beginning to take over the role of general of the Ojibway advance guard. (Flat Mouth would continue to lead war parties of the Ojibway against the Dakota in Minnesota, but increasingly the lead role west of the Red River would be taken over by Little Shell.)]

[Pembina in 1823 was too much a community in flux for any of the principals to wish to explain its current status, or their future plans for it.]

[Turtle Mountain Chippewa tribal historian Charlie White Weasel (possibly a son of Patrick Gourneau?) preserved in his encyclopedic collection *Pembina and Turtle Mountain Ojibway (Chippewa) History* a local history written in 1899 by Charles H. Lee under the original heading *Long Ago*. Under a section subtitled *the Selkirk Settlement*, Lee gave his assessment of the Long and Beltrami visits to Pembina as follows:]

“Long’s expedition reached Fort Snelling July 22, 1823, and on the 9th [August] commenced exploring on the Minnesota river. Beltrami, an Italian nobleman, a refugee, then stopping in St. Paul, was permitted to go with him, [and] July 22 they arrived at Big Stone Lake. Here they met Wanta [Wanaata], a distinguished chief of the Yanktons. The

expedition arrived at Pembina August 5, [8?] 1823. This had been the upper settlement of the Selkirk colony and the Hudson's Bay Company had maintained a post there until a few months before the arrival of Major Long. When Major Long came there were about 300 half breeds at Pembina residing in fifty or sixty log huts. The next day after the arrival the buffalo hunters arrived from the chase."

White Weasel, p. 186

"Beltrami became obnoxious and left the party in the Rainy Lake region and starting out alone discovered the source of the Mississippi."

White Weasel, p. 187

"When the Selkirk colonists at Pembina learned that they were really in territory belonging to the United States, [in 1821 when NWC surveyor David Thomson reviewed its position] they, being intensely loyal to the British crown, abandoned their holdings and removing farther north, they settled at Kildenan, a few miles below the modern city of Winnipeg [Old Kildonan is today a part of Winnipeg.] A few of them, however, appear to have remained, since Swinton's geography says: 'When the United States sent a garrison to Pembina in 1865, a few descendants of the Selkirk settlers were still residing there'."

White Weasel, p. 187

[Returning to commentary on Beltrami's version of Red River Settlement history Beltrami continues with his curious mix of insight and contradiction. He states that the "United Companies" found the existence of the colony convenient as a nursery for future workers. Since the companies only united in 1821, and Beltrami was writing just two years later in 1823, it follows that while his observation may be accurate in general terms, it is also obvious that the colony did not die as he has stated. His comments about the poor living may be true when compared to the wealth of Italy or eastern United States, but a "bare maintenance" was decidedly better than starving to death in Scotland or Ireland.]

[Why Beltrami should make a contrast between "good Germans" and "greedy Swiss" is an unanswered puzzle. The two groups he must be referring to are the discharged veterans of the deWattville and desMeurons regiments whom Selkirk recruited after the War of 1812-1815. Both regiments were drawn from residents along the Rhine and Switzerland, both German and French speaking, who had served in the Napoleonic wars and then been discharged in Canada in 1815. Possibly Beltrami had previously had a run-in with Swiss mercenaries in Italy?]

[The remark about "pay as slaves" is illogical inasmuch as strictly speaking slaves are not paid. There certainly were issues about the combined HBC-NWC and its pay schemes which were to emerge in full in the 1840s so-called "free trade" issues and then before the British Parliament in 1857. Actual currency was scarce in the colony as most business was conducted either in kind or on the ledger books.]

[One can understand why an Italian would regard the weather in Red River as very much like Siberia, which it is. It is probably why Italians do not form a significantly large section of the Manitoba demographic, but even they are nevertheless represented albeit in small numbers. There is no doubt that the weather takes some getting used to.]

[Beltrami is certainly correct when he speaks of “Indians” getting most of the blame for the troubles, when in fact it was the two companies. He is partly wrong and partly right about the process of justice in the aftermath. Hundreds of people were charged, few were convicted, and none actually served time or received capital punishment. It is inaccurate however to say that the crimes were hidden as they were the subject of widespread public debate and dozens of books on both sides of the Atlantic from then until the present day.]

[The “Prospectus” referred to and reproduced by Beltrami (appended here later) must have been part of the recruitment aimed at the deWattville and desMeurons. I am unaware of it being preserved anywhere else, but accept that it is accurate testimony so far as it goes. There was no large scale German immigration to the Red River Settlement of which I am aware other than the aforementioned mercenaries – most of whom left the colony in the 1820s and resettled in Minnesota. Most German-descent Manitobans today come from either the Mennonite immigrations of the 1880s-1820s or post-1940s Germany. Peter Rindisbacher’s father was one of the Swiss officers who re-emigrated out to Minnesota, where Rindisbacher caught a fever and died. So much for better climates.]

[Beltrami is correct to place the heart of the colony at approximately 50 degrees, but why does he think he is there when he is at Pembina? One suspects a measure of USA-sponsored propaganda is at work here in the selection of what Beltrami is permitted to see and whom he is allowed to speak with.]

[Beltrami’s comments about the commercial exchange system within the colony is accurate so far as it goes, but he misunderstands the nature of the problem because he has built his original understanding of the Red River Settlement upon a false premise. The colony was an anachronism of Jacobite colonial policy dating back to the Stuart dynasty. The proprietorial colonies where a corporation established and governed the colony had been the norm during the Elizabethan era, and the Hudson’s Bay Company receiving its charter from King Charles II was one of the last of these. Though established in 1812, the Red River Settlement governance system had more in common of British colonies of a century previous and this flaw showed clearly in its internal finances. The simple fact was that there was no coined or printed money in circulation because the HBC was not a government and did not have the licence to produce any. The money, such as it was, initially consisted of “made beaver”, a semi-standardized format for preparing hides which became the measure of value through most of the HBC’s history. The trappers and fur traders exchanged “made beaver” for the goods and services which the Company traded. The manufactured items were costly when compared to American or European markets, but for the resident of the British North American prairies or far north they were a bargain because they were obtainable by no other method. There had been competition it is true between the Nor’westers and HBC, but this did not significantly drop the value of such items.]

[In 1823 the monopoly was not quite two years old and the lack of competition would not have been as yet evident. By the time Beltrami visited Pembina, beaver was already in decline and other furs and products, including forest and minerals, were taking on more significance. By 1823 the real medium of exchange was the paper transactions carried on the HBC books. Trappers and traders racked up credits on the local HBC post’s books with their furs or other products, and purchased manufactured imports with their debits.]

[A curiosity of this system, which Beltrami does not mention at all, was that ammunition was free. The company regarded ammunition as a necessary incidental investment in acquiring furs and keeping the fur trapping population fed. It was simpler to regard ammunition as a kind of loss-leader, or a cost of doing business, and so when a customer who had an account with the local HBC post came in, they were issued ammunition depending on availability and no charge was made.]

[A few pages later Beltrami will list a range of commercial services for which the Metis hunters could trade meat, but he characterizes this as some kind of theft because some hunters are left with empty carts once all their debts are paid. Did he expect a corporation, or commercial entity of any kind, to simply give its services and products away? One thing the HBC system did not have was much in the way of bankers and aristocrats. One wonders how objective Count Beltrami could be about social strata.]

[This economic system was not designed to keep settlers in the colony as Beltrami states, and in fact, it had the exact opposite effect on settlement. People readily left the colony at Red River, and the ones in Oregon, for the more lucrative capitalism of the adjacent American colonies. In 1857 Parliament would identify this particular weakness as an impediment to settlement and it would be used as an argument for ending the HBC exclusive licence.]

[What Beltrami did not appreciate was that the purpose of the system was to preserve the fur trade. The HBC investors grew rich in Europe and eastern Canada, but another effect was to preserve the independence, sovereignty and sustainability of aboriginal communities. The native communities were drawn into a global economy but they were not overwhelmed by it. Unlike the American capitalist system, it did not contain any economic incentive for removing or killing native people. The HBC wasn't benign, it was pragmatic, and that is why it distributed free smallpox vaccines instead of smallpox-impregnated blankets. It was an economic holdover from the feudal system and it was doomed.]

[Once currency was introduced, the independence of native people was also doomed.]

[Beltrami's comment about the HBC calling the Assiniboine as 'the Red River' has no historical basis to my knowledge. I am aware of no map on which it is labeled so. The Assiniboine is labeled on maps dating from Laverendrye in the 1730s. I can only speculate that this error of Beltrami's traces back to the erroneous information he received concerning the definition of the HBC Charter... the basic issue of which was whether a given waterway drained into Hudson's Bay, not what name it might be called.]

[When Beltrami states that neither the HBC nor the Church supported the two Catholic priests at Pembina, he has once again forgotten that there has been a war, a peace settlement and a new border drawn. The HBC gave financial support to the Diocese of Rupertsland, which in turn exercised a spiritual responsibility towards highly mobile Metis who were British subjects. When the border was drawn just a mile north of Pembina in 1821 the responsibility for the local residents was transferred to the Bishop at St. Paul, Minnesota. It was neither the responsibility of a British company nor a Canadian bishop to provide services to resident citizens of the United States. Beltrami may have viewed the Catholic Church as truly universal, but political reality was otherwise and the American Republic was no more anxious to have French Catholics operating within its frontier as it was to have Lord Selkirk's agents.]

[It is ironic to read Beltrami's glowing commendation of Catholic missionaries in Canada in light of the history of several centuries of sexual abuse which has emerged since the late 20th Century. It is equally ironic that he then passes to Bishop Provencher, the man whose nepotism led to the promotion and then protection of his nephew J.A.N. Provencher, perhaps one of the most corrupt Indian Affairs officials to ever hold office in Canada. It would be fair therefore to doubt Beltrami's ability to judge character.]

[Beltrami alludes to the Hudson's Bay Company being anti-Catholic and that they would block Provencher. In fact, the HBC followed a policy of permitting only two Christian denominations to operate within its territories: the Anglican and Roman Catholic. Its conflicts with missionaries when they occurred was over the missionaries distracting native people from the fur trade. The Anglicans and Roman Catholics were approved, and financially supported, because they both had a hierarchial elitist system which the owners in London – both Anglican and Catholic – could easily relate to. All other Christian denominations were blocked from operating within the HBC territories, a policy which continued up until the mid-1840s when the HBC's monopolistic dominance was on the wane. The HBC may be guilty of the kind of arrogance which Beltrami assigns to it, but the HBC also supported Bishop Provencher because he was cut from the same cloth.]

[The reference to cutting Charles II's grant "in half" was exaggerated hyperbole, and one suspects originates with Major Long. The nugget of truth here may be that the "Selkirk Grant" of 1812-1813 which defined the outer (and never realized) boundaries of the colony would have been cut "nearly in half" by the settlement of the border along the 49th parallel. However this was only a small part of the HBC Charter and the amount "gifted" (legal or not) by Charles II which was cut off by the new border would amount to something closer to 10% than to 50%. One suspects that neither Major Long nor Count Beltrami actually had any idea of the sheer scale of North America – British or American.]

[Is Beltrami being ironic or sarcastic when he uses euphemisms like "the address recommended to them"? One would like to think so, and the implication here is that the welcoming or invitational speech of the Metis had been written for them by US authorities. This raises the question as to how often such addresses, appearing in American or British sources, might be trusted. It's interesting that Beltrami notes for us that the address received no signatures.]

[Just a few paragraphs before this, Beltrami has claimed that the Red River Settlement had been "finally" abandoned. Yet in this paragraph he tells us that he suspects that the Metis will leave Pembina to take refuge at "Fort Douglas", one of the trading posts within the same Red River Settlement which he said was vacant. Either Beltrami is not troubled by such cognitive dissonance, or is unaware of it.]