Chapter 1

Representing the Tupinambá and the Brazilwood Trade in Sixteenth-Century Rouen

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Abstract

In her article, "Representing the Tupinambá and the Brazilwood Trade in Sixteenth-Century Rouen," Amy J. Buono analyzes a pair of bas-relief *enseignes* ("house signs") from the façade of a half-timber house on the Rue Malpalu in Rouen. These large oak panels were produced around 1550 for a wealthy ship owner, and show the indigenous inhabitants of the coastal forests of Brazil in the act of harvesting, preparing, and lading brazilwood onto European ships. The panels—given their unusually large scale and superb artistic quality, their narrative format, and their thematic relationship to their owner's livelihood, to Rouen's economic and cultural lifeblood, and to the emerging geopolitics of France—provide unique evidence concerning the inscription of early New World colonialism on the fabric of daily life and the physical environment of Rouen.

Introduction

From the time of Pedro Álvares Cabral's arrival in Brazil in 1500, European interactions with the Tupinambá indigenes of coastal Brazil were intimately connected to the exploitation of brazilwood ("*Caesalpina echinata*") and other natural resources. Dyewood from a very similar species ("*Caesalpinhi sappan*") had been imported from India since the thirteenth century, which required a voyage of about four months around Africa and back. By contrast, it took only forty days to collect and return with an equivalent load of the Brazilian species, resulting in enormous financial savings. The Portuguese crown quickly established a monopoly on the felling and importing

of brazilwood, inaugurating the first commodity cartel of the tropics. By the 1540s, French merchants from Normandy challenged that monopoly by establishing trading outposts dedicated to the acquisition of the inexpensive dyewood, desperately needed by the expanding cloth industry in Rouen. The French monarchy responded slowly to these escalating commercial and territorial conflicts, necessitating a Norman campaign of persuasion toward active French national engagement in Brazil.

This article focuses on a wooden house in Rouen that shows Tupinambá laborers and French sailors in the act of chopping down and lading brazilwood, in order to examine the formation of local narratives concerning Brazil. In the course of my discussion, I will also look at two other contemporaneous representations of the brazilwood trade as integral to Franco-Tupinambá interactions. The first is a map from Jean Rotz's atlas, the *Boke of Idrography*, that also shows the harvesting and lading of brazilwood. The other is an illuminated manuscript that depicts a Franco-Tupi performance with a reconstructed brazilwood forest beside the Seine in Rouen. By examining the commercial, political, and colonial dimensions of France's relations with the Tupinambá, I hope to elucidate how France's subsequent activities in Brazil were bound to Norman commercial interests and communal identity.

The Sixteenth-Century Brazilwood Industry

Despite King Manuel I's attempts to control access to Brazil, the financial incentives of this cost-efficient source of dyestuff stimulated France to establish its own territorial presence (Merchant). Brazilwood dye, given the high demand among the bourgeoisie and nobility for highly saturated red linen, silks, and satins, was a highly lucrative commodity in northern Europe. Rouen, which provided powdered brazilwood for use elsewhere, as well as finished cloth, stood to profit enormously from a French foothold on the coast of Brazil. Weavers in Bruges, Liège, and other cities in the Low Countries employed brazilwood dyes in finishing linen, velvet, and fine wool, as well as for the coloring of tapestries in northern France and Flanders, while the wood itself was an important resource for furniture makers in France (Vogt). By the beginning of the sixteenth century, Rouen was a major producer of luxury cloth, including silk and velvet; one of Europe's most important producers of red dyes and inks; a crucial port for the importation of brazilwood (to be pulped for producing dye) and alum (to stabilize and fix the dye); and the commercial center for French voyages to the New World (Benedict, *French*; Brunelle; Bottin).

In regard to dyewood, for example, Olive Patricia Dickason has determined that there were 226 brazilwood trading licenses in Normandy alone by 1533 (132; Brunelle 16-18). The growing demand in Europe for brazilwood, an affordable source of dyes ranging from red to purple, and a subsidiary trade in feathers, animal skins, exotic live animals, medicines, and indigenous slaves fueled France's early economic interests in Brazil and its competition with the Portuguese crown for commercial control of its natural resources (Metcalf; Buono, *Feathered*; Buono, *Crafts*). French traders engaged in direct exchange with Tupi communities in Bahia, Brazil

from as early as 1504, within four years of Pedro Alvarés Cabral's initial landing at Porto Seguro. Captain Binot Paulmier de Gonneville of the Norman port of Honfleur—possibly in connection with the merchant Jean Ango of Dieppe—landed in 1504 on the coast of Brazil in his ship *L'Espoir*, returning to France in 1505 with the Carijó native, Essomeriq (Dickason 133). Some scholars have argued that French merchants may have been trading along the Brazilian coast even before Portugal's official discovery of the region in 1500 (Wintroub, *A Savage* 21-22).

As Alida Metcalf has discussed, such exchanges established a system whereby the French and the Portuguese were the two primary European actors exploiting the natural resources of Brazil in the early modern colonial theater of the Atlantic (55-58). The Portuguese established trading posts in Brazil run by commercial agents, merchants called *feitores* ("factors"), while the French decided against formal settlements and instead put in place *truchements*, Norman interpreters who remained behind to join indigenous communities and facilitated trade between the (nonresident) Norman merchants and the coastal Tupinambá communities (Metcalf 60-62; Wintroub, *A Savage*; Dickason). Shawn William Miller has estimated the quantity of brazilwood imported in the sixteenth century at around 8,000 tons of wood per annum, with Tupi fellers cutting down over two million trees to supply European merchants (95-96). Local knowledge of brazilwood forests and brazilwood pulping techniques must have been transmitted from the local Tupi populations to the *truchements*. These interpreters, in turn, would have passed this information along to Norman sailors and merchants arriving in Rio de Janeiro. Through the agency of these Norman *truchements*, sailors, ship owners, and merchants, Rouen gained a dominant position in the European market for dyewood. The cloth and dye industry, from wealthy merchants and manufacturers to more humble fullers and dyers, resided primarily in the Rouen parish of Saint Maclou, attractive by its proximity to the port and a source of readily available fresh water (Delsalle 387).

The dyewood trade would transform Brazil's coastal landscape and the social fabric of the Tupi. Before turning to the images discussed in this essay, it is worth a brief reminder that Rouen's own landscape and communal life were affected by the same industries. The textile industry and its various trades—drapers, hosiers, fullers, and dyers—were largely distributed along the banks of the Robec River, which provided the fresh water necessary to each of their individual contributions to the industry. With rapid expansion of the industry in the sixteenth century, the heavily utilized water of the Robec became a source of dispute among these professional trade groups. To give an example, the dyers working with red dyes, such as madder, cochineal, and brazilwood, and those specializing in blue tints both needed clear, fresh water free of colorants, as did the fullers and others (Delsalle 371-72).

In December of 1513, residents of the different professions agreed upon a strict rotational schedule of the Robec's water. Dyers could empty their tanks only during a three-hour period in the morning, followed by a two-hour period to allow the current to carry the colored water to the Seine. Thereafter, the drapers and fullers would have clear water for their own tasks (Delsalle 371-72). Visitors to Rouen

would thus have had the unusual experience of witnessing the Robec turn different colors over the course of the day. The Robec, running parallel to rue Malpalu, where the house sign was originally located, flowed past the cloth mills and dyeworks into Rouen before emptying into the Seine. It entered the larger river at the point where commercial ships docked and unloaded their cargoes. Rue Malpalu was thus an ideal location for those involved in the brazilwood trade and the cloth dyeing industry.

The Isle-du-Brésil Panels

Two sculpted panels, from the Hôtel l'Isle-du-Brésil ("House of the Isle of Brazil") at 17, rue Malpalu in Rouen, depict indigenous inhabitants of Brazil—the Tupinambá of the coastal forest—in the act of harvesting, preparation, and lading brazilwood onto European ships along the coast of Brazil (Hamy; Denis, *Uma festa* 36-37; see figure 1). These enormous oak bas-reliefs, produced sometime between 1530 and 1550 and today on display at the Musée des Antiquités de la Seine-Maritime, thus depicted one of the emerging foundations of sixteenth-century Rouen's economic prosperity. The two panels form a single horizontal frieze, roughly a half-meter in height and almost four meters in width, that decorated the façade of the half-timbered house probably belonging to a wealthy ship owner or merchant specializing in the brazilwood trade (Hamy; Delsalle 372; Dickason 135; figure 2). The period owner of 17, rue Malpalu is unknown. Both Hamy and Lucien-René Delsalle suggest the owner to have been a merchant or ship owner in the brazilwood trade. Olive Patricia Dickason has alternatively suggested that it may have served as a house for indigenous Brazilians visiting Rouen (135). The frieze is the earliest publicly displayed celebration of Rouen's commercial interests in Brazil and the only known representation of Brazil to be permanently on view in the city. As such, it provides us with important insights into the process of constructing local, regional and national interests in an emergent colonial enterprise.

Semantically charged *enseignes*, sculpted or painted images that identified a particular house such as that at rue Malpalu, were ubiquitous in medieval and early modern Europe and, as Michael Camille and others have suggested, a means both of locating particular addresses and of determining the religious, social, or professional identity of those within (Cailleux; Papine). In this case, the Isle-du-Brésil frieze distinguished this house from others on the street, served as a visual sign of the ship owner or merchant who made his living from the brazilwood trade, and asserted a communal identity for the neighborhood. The Saint Maclou neighborhood was the center of the Rouen's cloth and dye industries, which in turn were the basis for much of the city's wealth and political power. These panels thus also spoke to the larger civic identity of this maritime port.

The frieze's narrative moves from right to left. At the far right of the first panel, we see a group of nude men, women, and children harvesting brazilwood timber in the middle of the forest (figure 1, right panel). Brazilwood, or *ibirapitanga* in Tupi-Guarani, and *pau brasil* in Portuguese, were common names for a group

Figure 1. Anonymous. Carved oak panels from Rouen showing brazilwood extraction, c. 1530-1550. 52 x 221 cm. and 53 x 170 cm. Originally housed on the Hôtel l'Isle-du-Brésil. Rouen: Musée Départemental des Antiquités de la Seine-Maritime. Inv. 140.1 (D); 664 (No. Inventaire Bis).

of dense, tropical hardwoods from the Leguminosae family, which includes East Indian species also used for producing dye. When the wood is pulped and soaked, it yields a red pigment in shades from crimson to purple. Its name was first coined in the Middle Ages, long predating Cabral's encounter in 1500 (Cunha and Lima; Bueno and Roquero). The men cut the timber with axes and women aided in the preparation of the logs by stripping away the bark and sapwood with hand axes to leave the dye-containing heartwood. The removal of the bark and cortex was necessary to reduce the size and weight of the logs to twenty or thirty kilos to make them more efficient for transport and lading (Dean 45). The scene in the right panel thus explores details of the technical process of harvesting brazilwood, cast as an extraordinary tableau of a distant land and culture.

The skilled sculptor of these pieces shows little interest in detailing ethnographic specifics, indicating that these are indigenous Brazilians only by their nude bodies (a common pictorial and literary trope for Brazilians in the period) and by the labor in which they are involved (Stevens). Despite the strong focus on physical exertion, by heroicizing the Tupi bodies the artist understates the backbreaking labor involved in harvesting timber on the massive scale needed to supply the European dye market, substituting refined elegance for brute force. The Tupi are depicted in dramatic *contrapposto*—a classically derived pose, in which the weight of the figure is shifted to one leg, with the opposite arm engaged, in order to produce an effect of elegant balance—with classically proportioned and muscled bodies. Unlike period accounts of the Tupi, who are described as removing almost all facial and body hair, some of the male figures in this frieze are shown as heavily bearded, Herculean

Figure 2. Oak panels from figure 1 superimposed on a typical Rouen half-timbered house to simulate the original placement on the façade of the Hôtel l'Isle-du-Brésil. Illustration of house: Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du X^e au XVI^e siècle*. Paris: Bance-Morel, 1854-1868. 270. Public domain. https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Dictionnaire_raisonné_de_l'architecture_française_du_XIe_a_XVIe_siècle.

figures. As Frank Lestringant and Lawrence Bryant have suggested, in sixteenth-century France, heroes from antiquity, such as Hercules, were frequently deployed as metaphors to refer to the physical strength and military valor of both the French monarch and the Tupi as French military allies (Lestringant 110; Bryant 150).

The visual narrative of idealized and metaphorically Herculean labor continues as one moves to the left. After cutting and stripping the wood, three men and one woman (who holds the hand of a female child) haul the logs out of the forest and towards the ocean. Together with the youth plucking a thorn or splinter from his foot, a figure directly based upon the renowned Greco-Roman *Spinario*, these figures suggest a family group, part of the process of naturalizing Tupi labor. Here on the left of the panel, the landscape becomes still more barren, with diminutive shrubs and rocks replacing the brazilwood forest, and small clouds taking the place of the forest canopy.

Parrots—a common metonym for Brazil in the period and a commodity in their own right—are distributed throughout the panel in the trees, on the logs, on the ground, and even perching on one figure's arm. Small Brazilian animals—more par-

rots and a small wildcat or monkey—are scattered along the lower frame of the panel. Exotic animals like these were very desirable in the early-modern European market and were a fundamental feature of images of Brazil since Cabral's arrival in 1500, thus serving as clearly legible attributes of a naturalized Brazil for the Rouen viewership.

The harvesting process is shown sequentially, with the forest of standing trees gradually diminishing from right to left, replaced by a growing number of tree stumps. This is the only acknowledgment shown in the frieze of the process of Brazilian deforestation initiated by the European hunger for brazilwood (Dean ch. 3). Historical ecologists in fact trace the wholesale devastation of the Brazilian forests directly back to the sixteenth-century brazilwood trade (Câmara; Coimbra-Filho and Câmara). The right-to-left transformation of the landscape is paralleled by the transition in activity from felling and trimming of logs to their transportation to the coast.

Moving to the left panel, Tupi workers load brazilwood logs, shown neatly stacked on the shore, onto a small boat that will carry them to the larger European ship anchored offshore (figure 1, left panel). This scene is the point of contact, the moment of economic transfer, and the dramatic highpoint of the narrative. A monumental, heavily muscled Brazilian and a European sailor, both bent forward at the waist, together hoist a log onto the boat, bringing their faces close enough to look directly into each other's eyes (figure 3). Both men are identically bearded, distinguished only through their clothing or lack thereof and the substitution of a sailor's cap (with a feather) for the windblown hair of the Tupi man. Looking directly at one another, with their mouths open, the artist has depicted the two in conversation, exchanging words as well as brazilwood logs. The figures are almost mirror images of each other, both bowing at the waist, which brings their faces closer together and their hands placed in exactly corresponding positions. The inclusion of these anecdotal details subtly stresses the frieze's fictive construction of their activity as a form of mutual, rather than asymmetrical exchange. Although it is unlikely that actual Norman sailors and Tupi laborers conversed in this way, the sheer scale of the brazilwood trade must have demanded an efficient means of verbal communication, as the existence of "go-betweens" and pidgin languages confirms (Metcalf ch. 1).

To their left, a second European sailor fits another log into the bottom of the boat and finally at the far left and, judging by the scale, at some distance from the shore, a European three-masted carrack awaits the arrival of its cargo. A man in the bow points excitedly toward shore, while two elegantly dressed gentlemen carry on conversations amidships. The final destination for the ship and its cargo of brazilwood is, of course, Rouen and warehouses such as those of the owner of the house on rue Malpalu.

The marked presence of the French sailors and merchant, and the careful insistence on the brazilwood harvest and transport as a social interchange, set the Hôtel l'Isle-du-Brésil frieze apart from most other period imagery of Brazil. The pictorial narrative on rue Malpalu explicitly depicts an already established Franco-Brazilian realm, a social and natural landscape already transformed through European presence. The scene depicted by the sculptor is a profoundly different one than the Eden-

Figure 3. Detail of figure 1, right panel. Carved oak panels from Rouen showing brazilwood extraction, c. 1530-1550. Originally housed on the Hôtel l'Isle-du-Brésil. Rouen: Musée Départemental des Antiquités de la Seine-Maritime. Inv. 140.1 (D); 664 (No. Inventaire Bis).

ic wilderness described by Europeans in the first decades of contact. Rather than an endless expanse of Atlantic forest, we are shown an increasingly barren shoreline; rather than purportedly typical scenes of everyday indigenous life, we are shown a (decidedly asymmetrical) colonial community laboring for a far distant market.

Jean Rotz's *Boke of Idrography* (1542)

The *enseignes* are not our only visual source of information about the Franco-Tupinambá brazilwood trade. In the sixteenth century, maps both facilitated the brazilwood trade and communicated information concerning it. They were composites of eyewitness experience and myth-making, derived from both visual and narrative sources, and combined into one viewing frame. Early cartographic images of Brazil frequently depict Tupi workers felling and hauling off brazilwood; in the Franco-Brazilian sphere, the most notable cartographic depiction of the commodity comes from Jean Rotz, a court hydrographer (a cartographer of bodies of water) and navigator from the Norman port of Dieppe. Rotz traveled very widely, possibly reaching Sumatra in the late 1520s and arriving in Brazil in 1539, giving him the opportunity to gather cartographic and cultural information in person. His map of Brazil from the 1542 *Boke of Idrography* provides an alternative perspective on the social and commercial interaction of France and Brazil pertaining to the brazilwood trade (figure 4).

While the Rouen panels illustrate a socially, albeit largely imaginary, reciprocal exchange via dialogue between the French and Tupi, the Rotz map detail explicitly depicts a material reciprocity, through the bartering of a bulk commodity (brazilwood) for crafted metal tools or mirrors, as early modern literature on Brazil frequently mentioned. Thevet, for example, reports that brazilwood and "parrots, doves, and cotton" were given to the Frenchmen for "hardware" (metal tools; 116-17). Along the center of the coastline, just to the right of the central wind rose, a line of Tupi men carry logs from the forest toward two Frenchmen, one in a small boat next to the shore and the other below this scene, standing behind a boundary fence constructed out of a log resting atop two posts. As in the frieze from rue Malpalu, the man in the boat is handed a log to stow for the voyage back to Europe.

Figure 4. Jean Rotz, *Boke of Idrography*, 1542. Fol. 28. Map detail of Brazilian coast from 12 double-page miniatures of maps in colors and gold, with partial foliate borders. <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=42406>. London: British Library, Illuminated manuscript collection. Licensed under CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain.

In the second vignette, we see a Tupi man with a single brazilwood log, extending his hand to receive a small object from the Frenchman. Two assistants behind him are busy with baskets containing similar items. It is unclear whether this item is a metal tool or a mirror, both described as desirable items for the Tupi. The people shown harvesting the logs in the small forest above use the very same tools depicted in the baskets. The postures and gestures of the two men on either side of the boundary fence again suggest a verbal interaction, but one that registers the process of bartering, rather than labor.

Other vignettes in the Rotz map resonate strongly with the depictions of the fabrication—and the fantasy—of a "Brazil" on the Seine during the royal entry of Henri II. These include the *malocas* ("Tupi long-houses"), figures reclining in hammocks and battle scenes that include both Amerindians and Europeans. Also included are two scenes of ritual sacrifice and anthropophagy, which belong to a different pictorial tradition. These cartographic tableaux shaped and disseminated stereotypes about Brazil and the cultures of its indigenous peoples of the sixteenth-century Atlantic forests, which persisted for centuries.

Although the manuscript *Boke of Idrography* was produced for Henry VIII, Rotz returned to France in 1547, during which time he was in regular contact with the French king, who was then in the midst of planning for his *joyeuse entrée* ("joyous entry"). Rotz, therefore, may well have contributed source material for both the sculptor of the *enseignes* and the designers of Henri's entry ceremonies. The term *joyeuse entrée* was given in France and the Low Countries for the ceremonial entry of a ruler into one of the principle towns of his or her territories (McGowan). The Isle-du-Brésil panels and Rotz's atlas depicting a brazilwood harvest and other typical scenes predate France's only period of territorial possession of sixteenth-century Brazil, when it occupied a stretch of the Atlantic coast between 1555 and 1560. Together, they help to illustrate the important position that Rouen and its cloth industry held in shaping what was to become the future direction of French political and economic ambitions in Brazil, and equally the symbolic importance of Brazil for the local economy of Rouen and Normandy.

The Performance of the Dyewood Trade

The rue Malpalu frieze and Rotz's *Boke of Idrography* of 1542 both stress the significance of brazilwood for Rouen's local economic prosperity through narratives of Franco-Tupi interactions. The spectacular *joyeuse entrée* of Henri II into Rouen on October 1-2, 1550, among the most lavish Renaissance spectacles of the sixteenth century, included a representation of the Tupi, and the harvesting of a brazilwood forest that is directed not towards a local communal audience alone (Denis, *Une fête*; Denis, *Uma festa*; Lestringant, *Cannibals* 41-43; Wintroub; Mullaney). Instead, the *joyeuse entrée* staged Brazil and the dyewood trade as matters of monarchical virtue and wise French royal policy concerning trade and colonial endeavors in Brazil.

Both a brazilwood forest and a Tupinambá village scene were constructed during Henri II's route into Rouen. The Rouen entry and its presentation of Brazil have been the subjects of numerous studies, with considerable attention paid to a woodcut from the printed festival pamphlet that depicts a Brazilian forest village—complete with a Tupi "king" and "queen" in a hammock—as the site of two mock battles (Wintroub, *A Savage* chs. 2 and 3). Less well known is an anonymous hand-colored illumination from a manuscript account of the event. The work, titled *Fête brésilienne et Triomphe de la rivière, Relation de l'entrée de Henri II, roi de France, à Rouen, le 1er octobre 1550* (c. 1551), shows the moment in the royal entry when Henri II crosses a bridge over the Seine to reach the city gates, through which he must pass before he officially assumes his position as ruler of Rouen and Normandy (figure 5). The king and his entourage are shown on the bridge, watching a mock naval battle between French and Portuguese ships on the Seine that enacts a military struggle for control of Brazil and its dyewood. In the green grove pictured in the left middle ground, a large group of Tupi men can be seen wearing yellow-feathered crowns and carrying spears and shields. They were part of two fictive Tupi villages, complete with log and thatch *malocas*, with a combined population of three hundred inhabitants, constructed along the Seine. Fifty of these Brazilians were actual Tupinambá brought to Rouen, wearing prized white and green facial stones, and carrying weapons. The other "Brazilians" were in fact naked Norman sailors and female prostitutes, supposedly mimicking the behavior and speech patterns of the Tupi (Le Hoy and du Gord fol. K iii(r); Wintroub, *Civilizing* 467). They were painted with the red and black body paints, *urucú* and *genipapa*, which are described in the travel accounts of André Thevet (*Les Singularitez de la France*

Figure 5. Anonymous, *Relation de l'entrée de Henri II, roi de France, à Rouen, le 1er octobre 1550*, c. 1551. Manuscript illumination. Collections Bibliothèque municipale de Rouen. Ms Y 28 fol. 62.

Antarctique, 1557), Jean de Léry (*Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil*, 1578), and Hans Staden (*Wahrhaftige Historia*, 1557). The meadows along the river were transformed into a Brazilian forest: the tree trunks and shrubbery were painted red to represent brazilwood trees and colorful fruits (both natural and artificial) were hung on them (Denis, *Uma festa* 17).

Among the many activities performed by the actors portraying the Tupi was the cutting of *ibirapitanga* or brazilwood logs in the Brazilian forest, wondrously staged in a French meadow. Once chopped down, these faux Brazil logs were carried to the river and exchanged for iron tools and weapons in a scene mimicking the colonial activities along Brazil's coast, and mirroring that seen in the Rouen *enseignes*. The "logs" were then transported across the river by Norman ships—metaphorically transforming the Seine into the Atlantic—to reach the city. The large spire at the far right of the image may represent the church of Saint Maclou, beyond which Henri II processed once within the city walls. The dramatic performance of the brazilwood trade serves to demonstrate that the economic benefits of a French alliance with the Tupi were of paramount importance to those who staged the event, the civic leaders and merchant patriciate of Rouen. The entry was financed, designed, mounted, and performed by the citizens of Rouen, who thereby advanced an argument about protecting and promoting the city's, and France's, economic interests through securing access to Brazilian dye materials. While the reconstruction of Brazil in Rouen certainly presents a metaphoric idealization of Henri II's rulership, as scholars have argued, it was in fact a subordinate concern to the economic interests of the city. Henri should, and in just a few years in fact did, fulfill the military and social duties of kingship by projecting France's economic interests into the establishment of *la France Antarctique*.

Since Norman sailors, merchants, and *truchements* already had an active presence in Brazil, the Rouen tableau both presented an existing reality and projected forward to its continuation under royal patronage and protection. The city thus deployed direct cultural and material knowledge about the Tupi, gathered from lived experience of the Tupi and Norman sailors in both the New World and Rouen. The *joyeuse entrée* was thus not merely a display of exoticism for courtly entertainment, or a simple allegory about natural kingship, but a dramatized argument in support of the economic future of Rouen. As a celebration of local industry, despite the enormous differences between a live performance on a grand scale and a carved signboard for a single house, the *joyeuse entrée* resonates with the message of the Isle-du-Brazil panels.

Conclusion

Beyond pure spectacle, such firsthand experiences from Rouen's traders helped shape the French king's reception of these economic messages and his eventual colonization of Brazil just five years later. The *enseignes* advert to the source of both personal and civic wealth, brazilwood, and offer the Rouen audience the ide-

alized depiction of labor by others, the Tupi. The rue Malpalu panels thus provide a visual construction—a magnificent signboard for the neighborhood passers-by—of the trade alliances that bound this Norman city to the Atlantic just before the formal establishment of *la France Antarctique*. The principal purpose of the *enseignes*—as well as the *joyeuse entrée*—was the glorification and active promotion of the lucrative brazilwood trade, and by implication also the cloth dyeing industry. They also set the stage for France's first colony in Brazil, during which Franco-Brazilian trade would become strained by a new sociocultural, political, and commercial dynamic between the French and Tupinambá as well as violent conflicts with the Portuguese.

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