Is The Warminster Site Champlain's *Cahiagué?*

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The association of the Huron Arendarhonon *Warminster site with Champlain's* Cahiagué is *one of Ontario archaeology's most venerated sacred cows. A re-evaluation of the archaeological and historical evidence indicates that the initial suggestion of* ***such*** *a relationship was premature and subsequent support of it unfounded.*

Introduction

Since T.F. McIlwraith proposed in 1946 that the Huron Warminster site (BdGv-1) was the village of ***Cahiagué*** (Fig. 1) visited by Champlain during the summer and winter of 1615-1616 (Mcllwraith 1946, 1947), the association has generally remained unquestioned and has been used as a basis for European artifact chronologies and cultural reconstruction (e.g., Emerson 1962; Wright 1966:76; Kenyon 1969:29, 31; 1984:3,12; Heidenreich 1971:35; Noble 1971:46; Ramsden 1977:75; Knight and Snyder 1982:67; Kenyon and Kenyon 1983:61-62, 68-70; Sykes 1983). At that time, Warminster appeared to be the only possible candidate for ***Cahiagué,*** although Mcllwraith did not dismiss the possibility that an alternative might exist (Mcllwraith 1947:102). However, the recent discovery and excavations at the nearby Ball site (BdGv-3) (Knight 1978; Knight and Snyder 1982), combined with Champlain's ambiguous description of ***Cahiagué*** and Sagard's 1624 mention of Cahiagué 's successor (Wrong 1939), cast doubt on the assertion that Warminster is ***Cahiagué.*** The Warminster-Cahiagué association has become so firmly entrenched that the possibility that Ball might be ***Cahiagué*** has not been considered. Recently Sykes boldly stated that:

> "Attempts to falsify the hypothesis that the Warminster site is Champlain's Cahiagué have not succeeded, while alternate hypotheses have not fared as well. Thus, at present, the Warminster site remains the best (and only) possible candidate for Cahiagué" (Sykes 1983: 312).

As a reading of the historical evidence indicates, Sykes's premise, especially in light of his work at Warminster, is untenable.

The Candidates

Champlain's references to ***Cahiagué*** are unfortunately scanty considering that it was "the chief village of the country, which contains two hundred fairly large lodges ..." (Biggar 1922-1936 (volume 3):49). His only other descriptive reference to ***Cahiagué*** mentions that it was located 3 leagues from where 2 lakes adjoin and where the natives caught numerous fish. This geographical reference point is undoubtedly the Atherley Narrows, located between Lakes Simcoe and Couchiching (Biggar 1922-1936 (volume 3):56n) (Fig. 2). If Champlain's criterion for distance alone is considered, the proximity of the Ball and Warminster sites (1.3 km), and their equidistance from the Atherley Narrows (17 km), makes either site a possible candidate for ***Cahiagué.***

Morphologically, Ball and Warminster are quite different. Ball is a single settlement of approximately 3.5 hectares (9 acres) in extent (Knight, Connor and Cranston 1981:48), while Warminster consists of two contemporaneous palisaded sections approximately 165 m apart. Contemporaneity is based on artifactual similarities. The north village covers 3.4 hectares (8.5 acres); the south village 2.6 hectares (6.5 acres) (Sykes 1983:67, 81). Champlain's mention of 200 longhouses at ***Cahiagué*** appears to be a gross overestimation even though Sykes (1983:81) projected that there could be in excess of 100 longhouses in the larger northern village. Portions of either 86 (Sykes 1983:81) or 77 (Sykes 1983:85) distinct houses were reportedly defined from the northern village. The projection of 100 houses is probably overly generous, especially in light of the testing procedures that were illustrated (Sykes 1983: Fig. 9). It would be difficult to distinguish confidently whether house wall sections belonged to one or several distinct houses. Perhaps, also, the projection was subconsciously influenced by Champlain's account. While there is no doubt that there is an appreciable number of dwellings, it would be impossible to accommodate anywhere near 200 longhouses within the combined Warminster settlement, unless of course they were unusually small structures. Likewise, the Ball site could not contain such a number of structures. As of 1981, with approximately one-half of the site excavated, 43 houses had been identified (Knight and Snyder 1982).

On the basis of cartographic evidence and intensive archaeological survey undertaken in the region (Knight 1978:53), and considering the extent of our

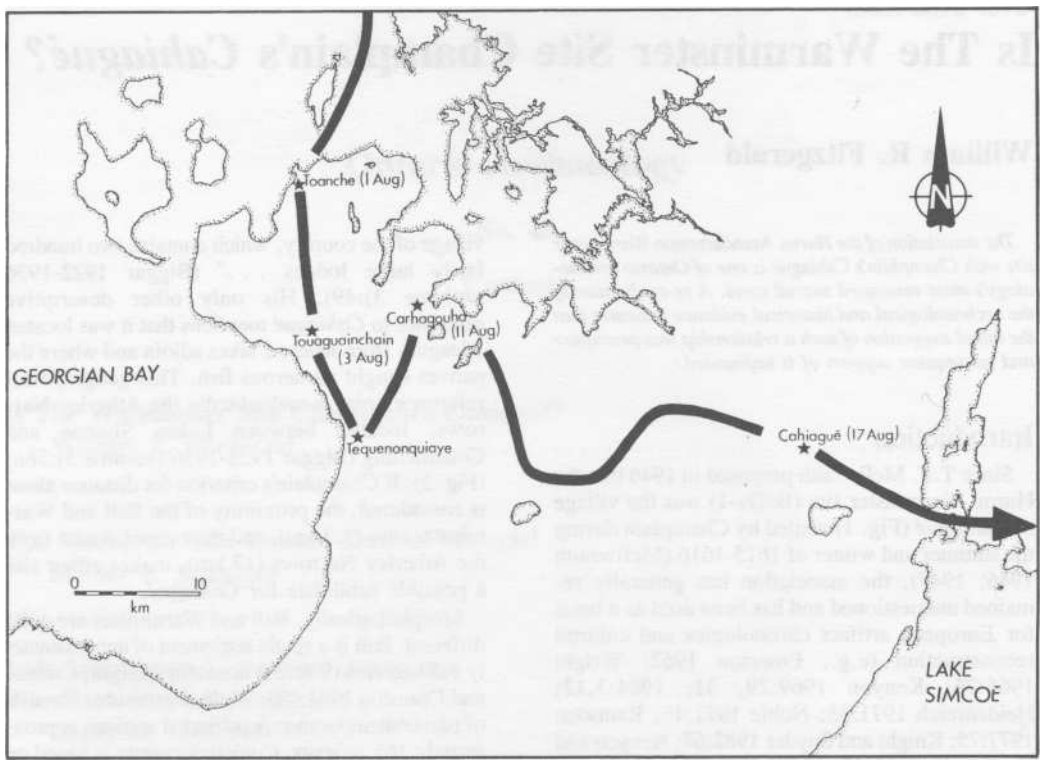

Fig. 1
Champlain's August 1615 journey through Huronia (after Trigger 1976:302).

knowledge of glass bead chronologies, there can be little doubt that either Ball or Warminster are the only two likely candidates for *Cahiagué.* Based on glass beads in particular, and the European assemblages overall, Ball clearly predates Warminster. Using the glass bead chronologies of Kenyon and Fitzgerald (Kenyon 1969, 1984; Fitzgerald 1982, 1983; Kenyon and Fox 1982; Kenyon and Kenyon 1983; Kenyon and Fitzgerald 1986), the Ball site glass bead sample contains examples from Periods 1 and 2 (Table 1), while Warminster contains Period 2 varieties exclusively (Table 2), suggesting that Warminster was the settlement that immediately succeeded Ball.

If Ball and Warminster were successive occupations, the fact that the combined Warminster occupation is substantially larger than Ball must be accounted for. There are at least two possible explanations; either there was a greater house density at Ball, or additional settlers were incorporated into Warminster. Based on settlement evidence, the latter would seem more probable.

A reference by Sagard in 1624 indicates not only that *Cahiagué* was abandoned between 1616 and 1623, but also that it had separated into two villages:

> "The chief town [i.e., *Cahiagué'],* formerly contained two hundred large lodges, each filled with many households; but of late, on account of lack of wood and because the land began to be exhausted, it has been reduced in size, divided in two, and rebuilt in another more convenient locality" (Wrong 1939:92) (brackets added).

Sagard's statement that *Cahiagué's* successor was reduced in size would appear to refute any contention that Ball was *Cahiagué* since Ball is smaller than Warminster. However, Sagard was never in *Cahiagué,* and it is likely that he relied on Champlain's description of house numbers which, as mentioned previously, is likely overestimated. Warminster would have seemed reduced in size to Sagard if he believed that *Cahiagué* had contained 200 houses.

The *Arendarhonon* village visited by Champlain could have been occupied at least as early as the 1590s if his and Sagard's Huron site durations of 30 years referred to the larger villages (Biggar 1922-1936 (volume 3):124; Wrong 1939:92-93). In light of recently refined glass bead chronologies, it is reasonable to attribute the Ball assemblage,

TABLE 1
Ball Site Glass Bead Varieties: 1981 and 1982 Collections

Bead Variety (Kidd and Kidd 1970)	**No**	**%**
Ia5	11	36.7
Ib'2	1	3.3
IIa15	2	6.7
IIa31	6	21.0
I1a55	1	3.3
IIb18	1	3.3
IIb19	1	3.3
IIbb23	1	3.3
IIb'l-*	1	3.3
11g4	1	3.3
IIg-* *	1	3.3
IVb29-***	1	3.3
IVb-****	1	3.3
Frit core	1	3.3
	30	99.7

* 10+ stripes
** indigo blue, red stars and stripes streamers in white eye
*** elongated
**** indigo blue football, white core, 4 each of alternating red and white stripes

represented by both Period 1 and 2 varieties, to *circa* 1590-1620.

Trigger (1976:304) initially expressed reservations about the Warminster-Cahiagué association. Based on Sagard's account of the *Cahiagué* fission, he believed that the Warminster site represented the split successor villages of *Cahiagué,* not *Cahiagué* itself. The relatively recent discovery and investigations of the Ball site tend to support such a contention. If this is the case, the Warminster site dates later into the 1620s and perhaps as late as the 1630s. Also, in 1615, Champlain was at-tempting to establish more intensive trading connections with the Huron. Hence the relatively large quantity and variety of European goods at the Warminster site might reflect the greater extent of trade after 1615.

Cahiagué's unnamed successor moved sometime before 1639. It was named *Contaréa,* by the Hurons (or St. Jean-Baptiste by the Jesuits) and was abandoned in 1647 for fear of Iroquois attacks (Trigger 1976:736). This settlement has been associated with BdGu-5 (Fig. 2); however, too little is known of this site to confirm such a relationship. It is interesting to note that within eastern

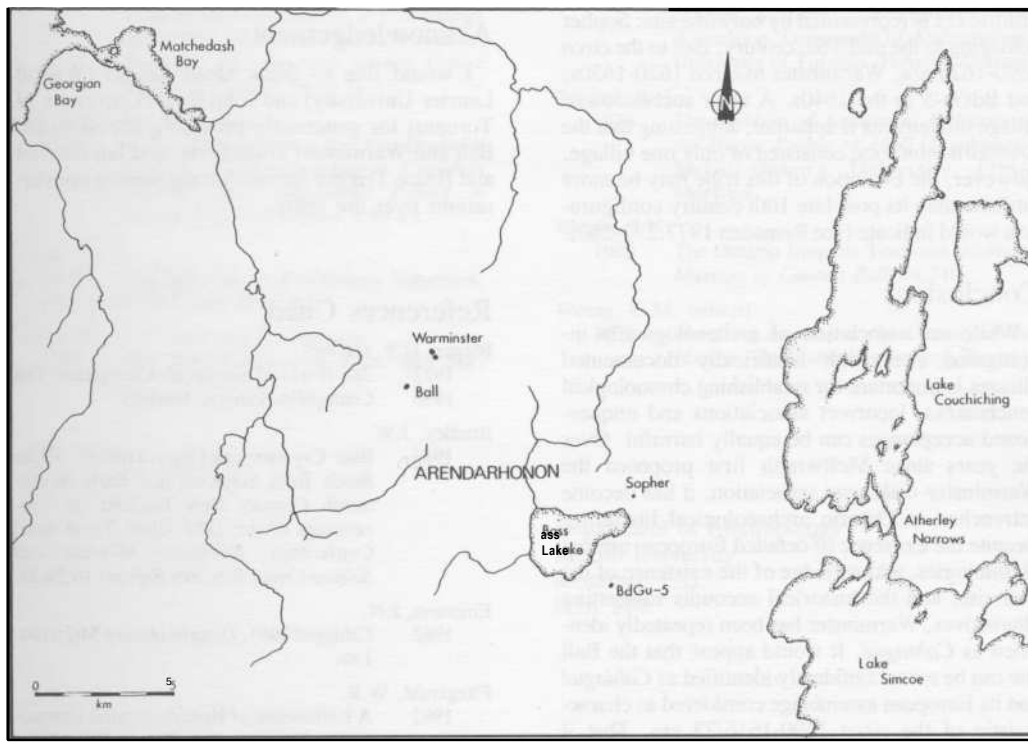

Fig. 2
16th and 17th century Huron *Arendarhonon* archaeological sites.

TABLE 2

Warminster Site Glass Bead Varieties

Bead Variety (Kidd and Kidd 1970)	No.	%
Ia5	177	41.5
1a19	23	5.4
Ia22	4	.9
Ib20	1	.2
IIal3	15	3.5
IIa15	119	27.9
IIa31	3	.7
IIa32	1	.2
IIa55	5	1.2
IIa57	44	10.3
Bahl	1	.2
Ilbbl	22	5.2
IIbb2	1	.2
IIbb6	1	.2
IIIal2	4	.9
111b9	1	.2
IIIbb 1	1	.2
Illbb3	1	.2
IVbb5	2	.5
	426	99.6

Arendarhonon territory each sub-period of the historic era is represented by only one site: Sopher belonging to the mid-16th century; Ball to the *circa* 1590-1620 era; Warminster to *circa* 1620-1630s; and BdGu-5 to the 1640s. A clear succession of village movements is apparent, suggesting that the *Arendarhonon* tribe consisted of only one village. However, the evolution of this tribe may be more intricate than its post-late 16th century configuration would indicate (see Ramsden 1977:277-280).

Conclusions

While the association of archaeologically investigated sites with historically documented villages is important for establishing chronological benchmarks, incorrect associations and unquestioned acceptances can be equally harmful. Over the years since McIlwraith first proposed the Warminster-Cahiagué association, it has become entrenched in Ontario archaeological literature. Despite the existence of detailed European artifact chronologies, a knowledge of the existence of the Ball site, and the historical accounts suggesting alternatives, Warminster has been repeatedly identified as *Cahiagué.* It would appear that the Ball site can be more confidently identified as *Cahiagué* and its European assemblage considered as characteristic of the *circa* 1590-1616/23 era. That it possesses glass bead varieties from both Periods 1 and 2 indicates that the transition between these periods occurred sometime during the village's existence. This transition can probably be dated to some time around 1604, as Period 2 beads are definitely present in eastern North America by 1604-1605. They have been found at de Monts' Ste. Croix Island settlement (Bradley 1983:38). Additionally, the terminal date of the Period 2 assemblage, characterized by beads such as those found at *Cahiagué's* split successor (Warminster), can now be more securely dated. I have previously proposed 1632 as the boundary between glass bead Periods 2 and 3 (Fitzgerald 1982) based on European economic events. That *Cahiagué' s* successor dates to the period between 1616/23 to some time before 1639 tends to support such a contention.

The identification of *Cahiagué* will undoubtedly remain a contentious issue in some people's minds; however, recent archaeological and trade goods research, and an examination of the very clear historical documents should once and for all lay to rest the Warminster-Cahiagué association. If nothing else, this re-evaluation indicates the extreme care and thoroughness necessary when such identifications are undertaken.

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