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# The Basques in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Adjacent Shores

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**ABSTRACT.** Basque seasonal activity in the Gulf of St. Lawrence is known from 1517 to 1767. Basque sites show distinctive patterns of spatial distribution, structures, material culture, and type of activity. They follow a four-period chronology, where periods of relative equilibrium are separated by geopolitical watershed events. The distribution and nature of Basque sites vary according to these periods. For each period, we analyse a major site: Red Bay (1530–1580), Anse à la Cave (1580–1630), Petit-Mécatina (1630–1713), and Pabos (1713–1760). The material culture found on these sites reflects the evolution of supply networks in the Basque Country: a single Gipuzkoan network gives way to two parallel networks based in the provinces of Lapurdi and Bizkaia. The longevity and resilience of the Basque presence are explained by a solid grounding in the Euro-Atlantic staple trades, and by the Basques' customary role in strengthening Franco-Spanish relations.

**RÉSUMÉ.** Une présence saisonnière basque dans le golfe du Saint-Laurent est documentée de 1517 à 1767. Les sites basques montrent des schèmes distinctifs dans la distribution spatiale, l'architecture, la culture matérielle, et les types d'activité. Ils suivent une périodisation en quatre temps, où des périodes d'équilibre relatif sont séparées par des crises géopolitiques. La distribution et la nature des sites varient selon les périodes. Pour chaque période, nous analysons un site majeur: Red Bay (1530–1580), Anse-à-la-Cave (1580–1630), Petit-Mécatina (1630–1713), et Pabos (1713–1760). La culture matérielle de ces sites indique une évolution des réseaux

d'approvisionnement au Pays Basque: d'un seul réseau guipuzcoan, on évolue vers deux réseaux parallèles basés dans les provinces du Labourd et de la Biscaye. La longévité et la persistance de la présence basque s'expliquent par de solides assises dans le commerce euro-atlantique des denrées, et par le rôle coutumier des Basques pour renforcer les relations franco-espagnoles.

## The Basques in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Adjacent Shores: 1517–1767

The Basque presence in the Gulf of St. Lawrence from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries has held the attention of archaeologists and historians since the 1970s (Azkarate et al. 1992; Bakker 1989; Barkham 1978, 1987; Bélanger 1971; Egaña Goya 1995; Grenier et al. 2007; Mimeault 2011; Proulx 1993; Tuck 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1991, 2005; Turgeon 1986, 2000). Today, we possess a large body of studies focussed on specific periods, regions, or artefact types of these seasonal visitors to the Gulf. However, we find few attempts to trace and explain the spatial, temporal,

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and material culture patterns of Basque occupations over 250 years. Despite the geopolitical swings that realigned their supply networks in Europe and altered their destinations in the Gulf, Basque sailors remained a prominent feature of the pre-colonial and colonial landscape. Their significant numbers, cultural cohesion and dual nationality in Spain and France made them a unique force to be reckoned with, and they were often willing actors in the contest for strategic control of the Gulf. Occasionally rivalling the French and English, their importance was much greater than that of the Bretons and Portuguese with whom they are sometimes grouped as fishing minorities.

We have identified four major periods of Basque occupation in the Gulf. Each is characterised by a distinctive pattern in the distribution and function of sites, and reflects a specific geopolitical equilibrium in the Gulf. Each seems to show a distinctive spectrum of material culture, reflecting shifts in Basque supply networks as they also were buffeted by geopolitical winds. The continuity of Basque occupation, traversing several important watersheds, reflects the fundamental resilience of Basque transatlantic outfitting.

A problem we faced in searching for long-term patterns is that sixteenth-century whaling sites in the Strait of Belle Isle dominate the archaeological record (Figure 1). No less than 13 out of 27 sites around the Gulf with a significant Basque component fall into this category. Moreover, several sites along the North Shore and in the St. Lawrence estuary have been interpreted as an early seventeenth century extension of Strait whaling. This focus on whaling sites prior to 1630 comes at the expense of other Basque activities, especially cod

fishing. Historical data indicate that fishing sites were more numerous, widespread, and occupied for longer periods than whaling sites. The focus on whaling sites may reflect their greater visibility in the present landscape. Their masonry ovens and masses of whalebone captured the attention of amateur archaeologists at an early date. In contrast, the central feature of fishing sites was a wooden “stage” that projected over the water, whose remains and related deposits are now submerged and must be specifically sought. To compensate for this unequal representation of periods and activities, we have chosen to examine one well-documented site for each period. This approach has revealed significant long-term patterns, although more research is needed to determine the extent to which certain sites are indeed representative of their periods.

#### **A Regional View of Basque Maritime Trade and Supply Networks**

Analysis of Basque site and artefact variability requires a consideration of Basque maritime outfitting centres and the geography of their supply networks over time. The present Basque Country straddles the Franco-Spanish border and its area is similar to that of Wales or the state of Vermont (Figure 2). Only 15 percent of its territory and 9 percent of its 3 million inhabitants are in France. It is divided into seven historical provinces, three in France and four in Spain, of which Navarre forms half the country's area. All the provinces were unified under the kingdom of Navarre in the eleventh century, but by 1250, the six smaller provinces had been hived off and annexed by political entities to the north (Aquitaine) and the southwest (Castile). Subsequently absorbed into the states of France and Spain, the prov-

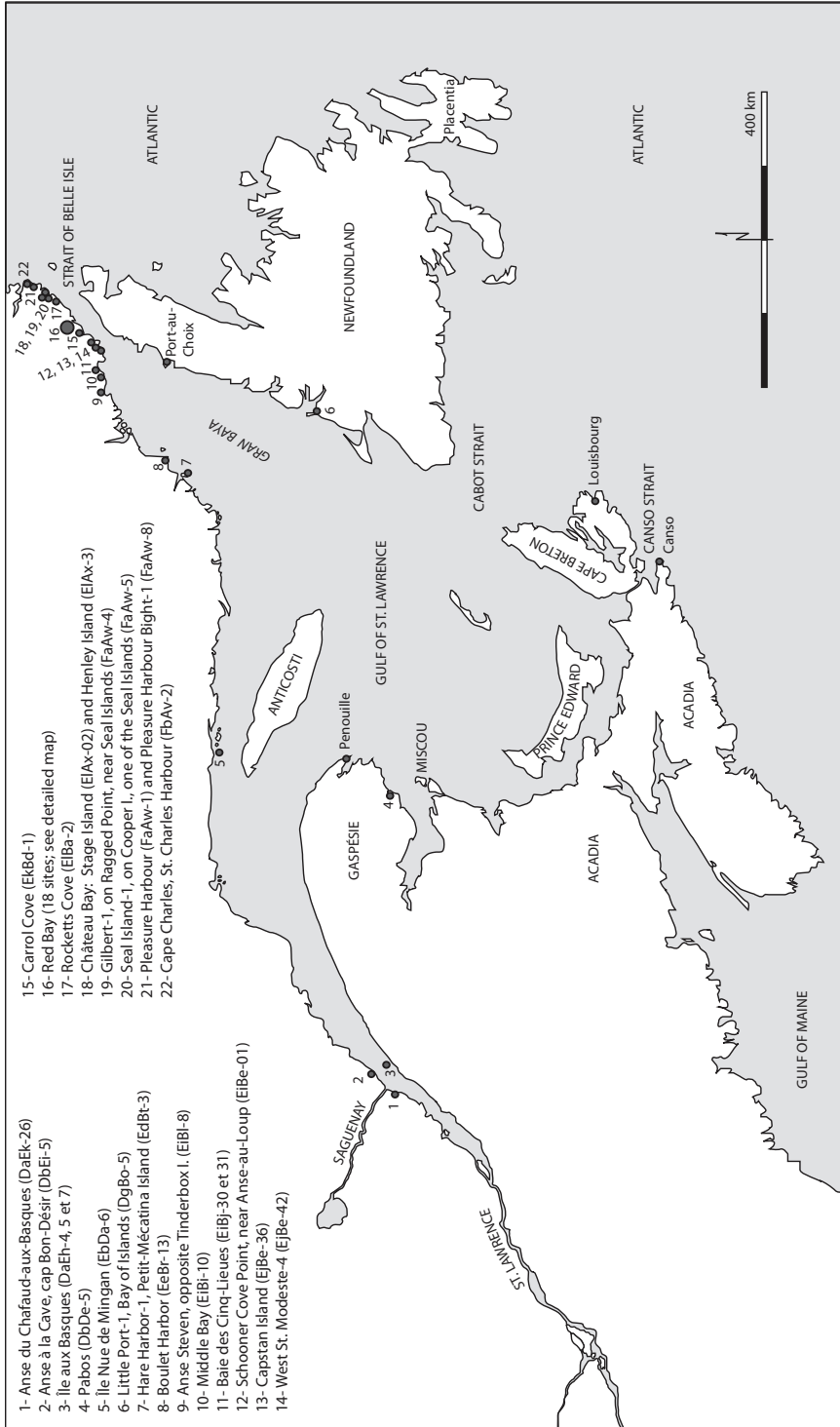


FIGURE 1. Basque sites in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.



FIGURE 2. The Basque Country, its seven provinces, and neighbouring regions.

inces retained a degree of autonomy up to 1789 in France and to the present time in Spain (Allières 1977:34–42; Heiberg 1989:1, 2, 15–20). From the perspective of artefact provenances, it is worthwhile to take these historical provinces into

account, especially the three coastal ones that each corresponded roughly to the hinterland of a major outfitting port. Their changing historical fortunes produced regional shifts in the fishery's supply networks, which are reflected in

the material culture record. While not perfect units of analysis, they are a more precise alternative to the categories of “French” and “Spanish” Basques that Canadian historians tend to adopt, but which blur the regional contours of early modern trade that archaeology is interested in (cf. Chrestien and Dufournier 1995:251).

Over several centuries beginning in the Middle Ages, the economy and demography of the Basque Country shifted from the interior to the coast. This shift progressed unevenly from one province to the other, creating differences over time in the importance of the three major outfitting centres. These differences are reflected in the variability of Basque sites and material culture in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Basque navigation arose in the eleventh century, in the context of wool exports from Castile to textile producing centres on the English Channel (Basurto 1989). The ports founded at this time, from Bayonne to Bilbao, soon engaged in a commercial fishery. Basque crews were recorded in Galicia, Brittany (Penmarc’h), the Scilly Isles, England, Ireland, and finally Iceland, before setting sail for Newfoundland. Their cod followed the wool route to the cloth-producing centres, where it found a ready market (Barkham 2000; Egaña Goya and Loewen 1995).

Basques also acquired a unique reputation as whale hunters. Their whale oil was sold especially to textile makers, who used it to lubricate wool thread for the process of weaving it into cloth in mechanical looms. While many other uses for whale oil are known, such as lighting, caulking, soap making, and pharmaceuticals, they remained secondary to that of the textile trade, which was the whale hunt’s driving force from its medieval beginnings to the nineteenth cen-

tury (Loewen 1999:112–113; Savary des Bruslons 1742:262–264). As early as the thirteenth century, Basques were hunting whales at shore stations in Galicia and Asturia (Aragón Ruano and Alberdi Lonbide 2006; Azpiazu 2000). Their oil made its way overland to Castilian wool manufacturing towns (Figure 3). These towns, often at odds with Castile’s sheep-herding nobility, joined forces in revolt in 1520–1521. Their suppression included punitive laws that stifled manufacturing and favoured the export of raw wool to Normandy, England, and Flanders, via the Basque ports. With this shift, Basque whale oil also became an export commodity, following the same route to northern textile centres. At about the same time, the post-medieval character of other aspects of Basque material culture, such as ceramics, became irrevocable (Barrachina and Escribano Ruiz 2011). Basque whalers acquired their international renown and extended their hunt to Labrador in this early modern context, but their dominance would soon be challenged. By 1630, the textile countries of England, Holland, and Normandy were sending their own whalers to Spitsbergen, on a shorter route that undercut their Basque competitors (Azpiazu 2000; Barkham 2009; Basurto 1989:217–219; Proulx 1986). Over the centuries, developments in the European textile trade often underlay the occasionally dramatic shifts in the history of the Basque whale hunt.

Among the Basque cities today, Bilbao is the largest port, followed by San Sebastián and the combined Lapurdian ports of Saint-Jean-de-Luz and Bayonne. Historically, their prosperity varied over time, along with that of their respective hinterlands. Navigation to the Gulf of St. Lawrence hailed from all three coastal provinces: Gipuzkoa and Bizkaia



FIGURE 3. The geography of the Basque whale oil trade and known provenances of ceramics found on Basque sites in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

in Spain, and Lapurdi in France. The smallest province, Lapurdi, had a single deep-water harbour at Saint-Jean-de-Luz. Nearby, the river town of Bayonne governed an agricultural hinterland that supplied Basque ships with wine, wheat, beans, meat, animal and duck fat, honey, coppice-wood, resins, and hemp (Goyheneche 1990; Mimeault 2011). This regional outfitting trade explains some of the distinctive foods found in the diet of Basque sailors (Chrestien and Dufournier 1995; Turgeon and Dickner 1990).

To the west, Bizkaian shipping lagged in the sixteenth century, due to a lack of suitable ports. Bilbao, the province's merchant centre, lay 15 km inland on the Nervión. Its commercial footings rested on wool and iron exports. It was active in the transatlantic fishery, as shown by whaling expeditions in the 1560s and 1570s. When Bilbao became the provincial capital in 1602, it financed dyking along the lower Nervión to allow ships to reach the city, enabling its seventeenth-century rise to pre-eminence among Basque ports (Priotti 2004). Periods of Franco-Spanish conflict also augmented Bilbao's role as an outfitting centre at the expense of San Sebastián, by disrupting Gipuzkoa's traditional links with France and especially with Bordeaux. The 1553–1559 war saw skirmishes between Bizkaian and Lapurdian crews in Labrador (Loewen 1999:223; Azpiazu 2008; Harris and Matthews 1987:plate 28). During the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), the Pyrenean frontier became a veritable trade barrier, again bringing an advantage to Bilbao. Perhaps for this reason, pottery from the city's hinterland appears in Canada in the seventeenth century (Escribano Ruiz et al. 2010). Bilbao's enthusiasm for the transatlantic fishery seems to

have been conjunctural, as it was lacking again in the eighteenth century (Harris and Matthews 1987:plate 28).

Of the three coastal provinces, Gipuzkoa had the most intensive maritime economy and claimed the greatest share of the transatlantic fishery. Its capital, San Sebastián, was a centre of credit, commerce, shipbuilding, outfitting, and navigation. A dozen secondary ports contributed to its maritime muscle. According to Burgos insurance records, Gipuzkoan ships made up over half the Basque fleet on the sixteenth-century *carrera de Terranova* (Barkham 1980–1981). The province counted several deep-water ports where large ships could be outfitted, unloaded and careened, at Deba, Getaria, Orío, San Sebastián, and especially Pasajes. By the sixteenth century, most of these ports had moles equipped with cranes for loading and unloading, and for installing masts and yards. When the fishery contracted, however, Gipuzkoa was hit especially hard. In 1579–1585, a major geopolitical storm immobilised the *Terranova* fleet at Pasajes (Barkham 1987:128–136; Loewen 1999:101–118). As well, in 1713, the Treaty of Utrecht that ceded Newfoundland to England also forbade Gipuzkoan ships to fish on the island. The ensuing crisis spread misery in Gipuzkoan ports and drove sailors to enlist on Lapurdian ships. Between 1725 and 1734, Gipuzkoans formed 65 percent of all crews on Lapurdian whalers (Basurto 1989; de Gandía 1942:41–62; Loewen 2007; Turgeon 2000:174–175).

While Gipuzkoan ships formed the bulk of Basque transatlantic voyages, Gipuzkoan agriculture lagged behind the province's needs, forcing the importation of foodstuffs (*bastimentos*) and ship's provisions especially from Lapurdi (Alberdi Lonbide and Aragón Ruano

2007). Other ship's supplies were drawn from a much greater area. Historical records and provenance studies suggest that supply networks formed three concentric areas of core, peripheral, and overseas extent (Figure 4). The coastal

provinces formed the core supply area, providing primary materials for ship-building, such as oak and iron (fasteners, weapons) (Loewen 2007:267–277). Peripheral supply networks tapped into the Ebro Valley for the purchase

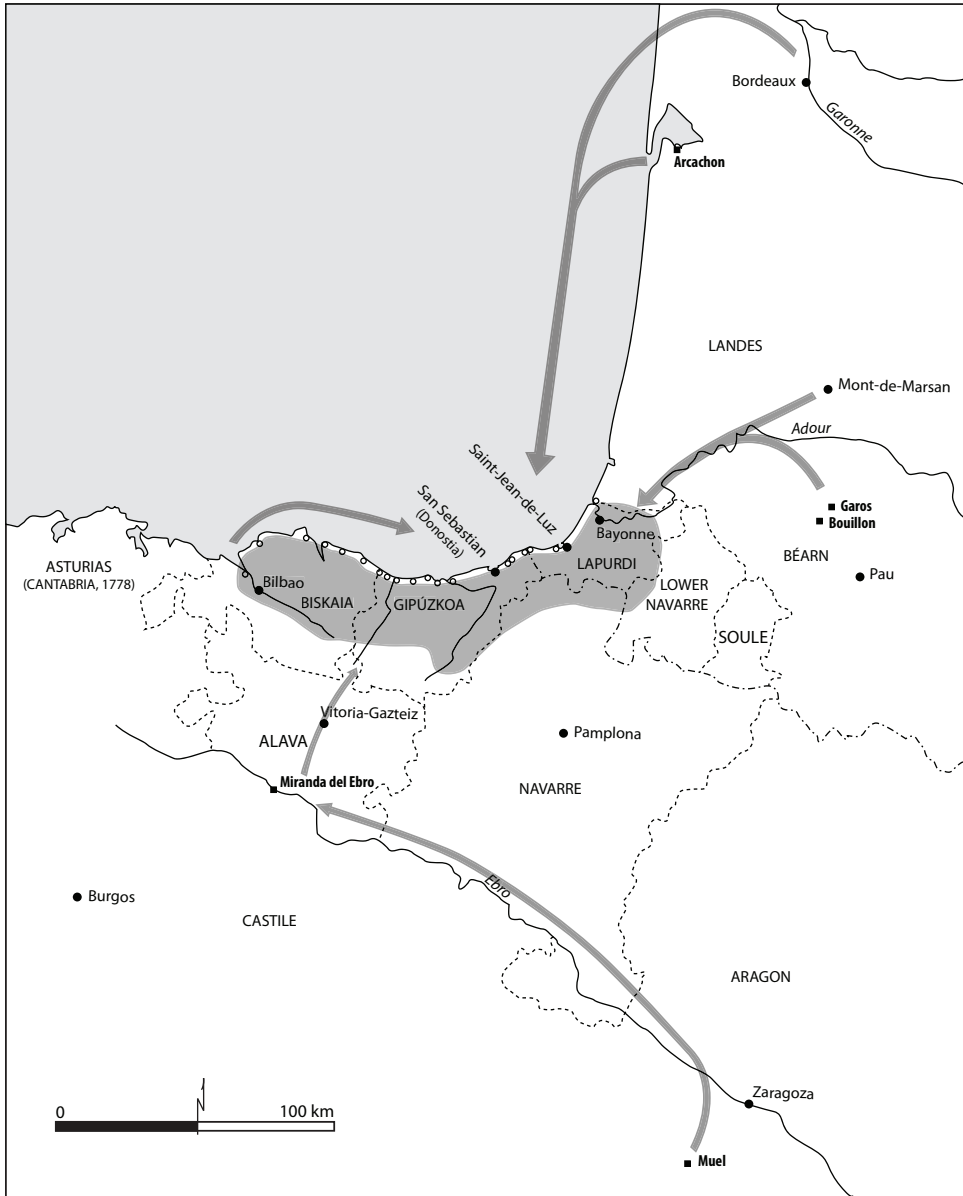


FIGURE 4. Reconstructed supply networks for the Basque fisheries.



of hemp and barrel hoops, as well as majolica from Muel in Aragon (Barkham 1987; Herzog 2011). To the northeast, the Adour Valley was a source of foodstuffs, wine, coppiced wood (withy, hoops), and other rural produce from as far upstream as Mont-de-Marsan (conserved meat, fat, cereals), the Landes (pine resin products), and the Pyrenean *gaves* (masts, ship's knees) (Barkham 1987; Goyheneche 1990). These supply areas fell within the normal Basque commercial sphere, and show the extent to which the outfitting industry could rely on established regional trade links.

However, outfitters also looked outside their immediate commercial sphere for their capital and material requirements, especially during periods of peacetime prosperity. Andalusia was a source of olive oil and fruit but the greatest external source of materials was doubtlessly the Garonne Valley, controlled by Bordeaux (Barkham 1977a, 1980–1981:97; Turgeon 1986, 1995, 2000). The city's merchants advanced loans to Basque captains, who in return spent their credit on materials produced in the hinterland. In this way, Saint-Jean-de-Luz and San Sebastián received large shipments of biscuit, beans, wheat, wine, sardine kippers, rope, and hoops during the outfitting season (Loewen 2004). The flow of materials also included more visible objects such as barrels (Loewen 1999), pottery (Gusset 2007), and perhaps roofing tiles (Myles 2007a). To capitalise on the lucrative outfitting business, a group of Saint-Jean-de-Luz merchants known as *la maison Daguerette* set up operations in the Garonne Valley, where they produced hemp, casks, and other supplies. Their agent in Bordeaux in the 1560s was a Basque roofing tile wholesaler named Roger Dalguelarrondo, who appears in numerous outfitting

contracts between Bordeaux merchants and Basque captains (Loewen 1999:218–219). Bordeaux's role in equipping Lapurdian and Gipuzkoan ships is well attested in the sixteenth century. It supplied Lapurdian ships up the middle of the eighteenth century, but its role in outfitting Gipuzkoan voyages after 1600 is not known. Such long-term shifts in Basque supply networks affected the material culture found on sites in Canada.

### Gatekeepers of the Gulf: Basque Occupations in 1530–1580

Turning now to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, our data come from 24 provincially managed sites in Québec, Labrador and Newfoundland, three Parks Canada sites (Louisbourg, Penouille, and Canso), and two isolated observations that are mentioned in the literature (Port-au-Choix and Île du Havre de Mingan). These sites fall into four space-time groups extending from about 1530 to 1760, and showing the spatial evolution of Basque occupations over time (Figure 5). The following sections are organised according to these four periods. We will first present the geopolitical context as it affected Basque activities, including the geopolitical watersheds that separate the periods. Toponymic evidence helps to circumscribe the regions that were occupied during each period. We will then assess the archaeological evidence on a site-by-site basis, with the goal of showing how the nature of the sites as well as their material culture varied over time.

Although the first known Basque voyage to Newfoundland occurred in 1517 (Barkham 1987:30; Bernard 1968:806), only in the 1530s can we discern a regional pattern of occupation. By this time, Basques were carrying out a significant cod fishery at Placentia Bay,

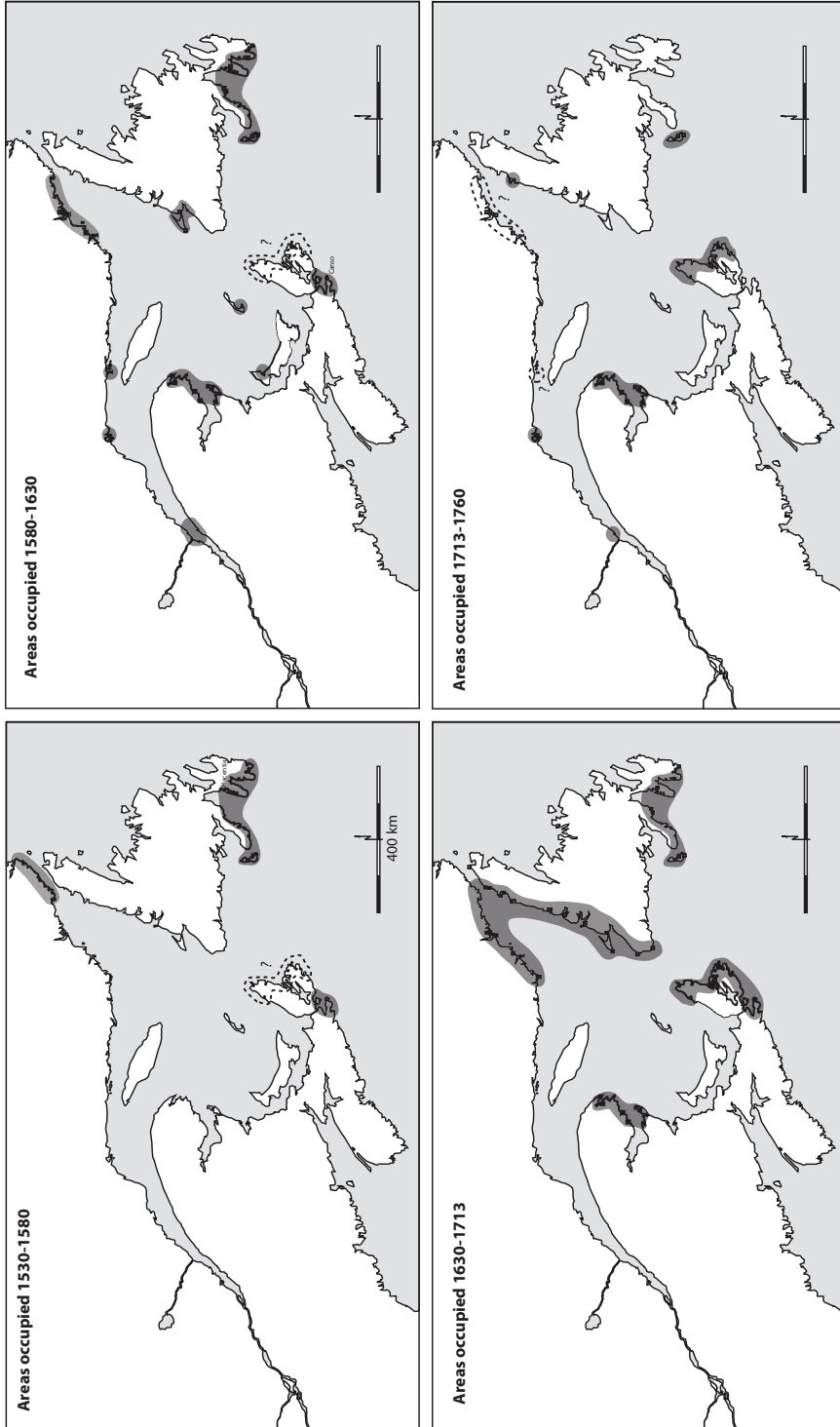


FIGURE 5. Chronological synthesis of Basque occupations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

and are also mentioned at St. Mary's Bay, Trepassey, and on the Atlantic coast at places like Renewes and St. John's (Barkham 1987; Mimeault 2011:38; Turgeon 2000). Elsewhere, Basque fishers were reported about 1535 in the Strait of Belle Isle, where a concentrated whaling industry was deployed about 1543. Still other captains were fishing in the Strait of Canso by the 1560s. In these three areas, the Basque fisheries grew to more than 200 ships and 6,000 "Spaniards" pursuing cod and whales in the 1570s (Prowse 1895:48).

Throughout this period, Basque fisheries were concentrated in the straits leading into the Gulf. The historian David Quinn (1973) remarked that this period saw a general "halt" in westward European advance, after a spate of French incursions into the Gulf in 1535–1543. This halt may have been a desired effect of a Spanish geopolitical strategy, and Basque whalers in the Strait of Belle Isle may have been prime instruments in this strategy. Prior to the 1540s, no specialised whaling expeditions are recorded, although cod fishing crews sometimes also returned with whale products (flesh, fat, oil, and baleen) (Barkham 1987; Turgeon 1986). According to judiciary evidence from the 1570s and 1580s, the first whaling voyages into the Strait occurred in 1543 and they quickly became highly organised (Proulx 2007). They were drawn by an abundance of bowhead whales (McLeod 2008) but, just as importantly, they fulfilled the geopolitical aim of controlling the gateway to the Gulf at this time of transatlantic rivalry among Spain, France, and England. Whaling ships made for an imposing naval force. They were large for their time, armed with cannon, and in Spain they formed part of the naval reserve. Key officers

could readily assume military roles. Harpooners, for example, commanded whaleboat crews and had reputations as fierce men (Melville 1851; Proulx 2007). Coopers oversaw cargo handling and were drawn from guilds that formed the core of municipal defence forces (Loewen 1999:223). Sometimes lost in the history of whaling is the strategic role played by these stout ships and their equally redoubtable crews in projecting sovereignty to distant shores (Proulx 1986).

The beginning of intensive Gipuzkoan and Bizkaian whaling in the Strait may have been a reaction to the French attempt to colonise the Québec City area in 1541–1543. In January 1542, the Spanish Navy interrogated Basque fishers upon their return from Blanc-Sablon, concerning the movements of Cartier and Roberval in the Gulf (Biggar 1930). Burgos insurers were also aware of French plans (Barkham 1980–1981). The following year, Gipuzkoan whalers took up positions in the Strait, and their arrival coincided with the colony's evacuation (Fiset and Samson 2009). For the next 35 years, while the French shelved their explorations, the Strait was the scene of a whaling industry of unprecedented scope and intensity, centred at Red Bay, called *Buitres* (Barkham 1987; Proulx 2007). This industry remains a singular chapter of the Basque fisheries, not least for its geopolitical dimension and the international tensions it created. Whalers were aided by Spanish Admiralty subsidies for heavy shipbuilding and repairs, designed to maintain a ready naval reserve, as well as commercial policies favouring exports to the Channel countries (Loewen 1999:115–118). Their movements were controlled by the Admiralty office at San Sebastián that accorded passes to *Terranova* under

specific conditions, including their destination and the number of cannons aboard (Proulx 2007).

During the Franco-Spanish war of 1553–1559, hostilities spilled into the Strait. In 1554, ships from Lapurdi and Bordeaux, based at Red Bay, attacked and subjugated Gipuzkoan and Bizkaian crews concentrated at West St. Modeste (Azpiazu 2006:285–287; Barkham 1977b, 1987:81–84). After peace was restored, Gipuzkoan and Bizkaian whalers ramped up their numbers, while the number of Lapurdian whalers soon fell to zero (Turgeon 1995). We know of one Saint-Jean-de-Luz whaling captain, however, who resisted (Loewen 1999:223). In 1562–1563, Johannes de Gaberie overwintered with his crew at an unknown port in *Terranova*. A Bizkaian ship that arrived in spring dislodged them in a bloody battle, killing several and seizing their oil. Unbowed, Gaberie filed a lawsuit to seek redress and, in March 1565, he was in Bordeaux hiring men-at-arms and buying weapons for another expedition described as a whaling voyage. While there is no proof that he returned to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, his name or that of a relative (cf. Turgeon 2000:165) survived throughout the seventeenth century as a toponym for the Ste. Marie Islands, *Îles de Gaberie*, on the Gulf's north shore. His defiant last stand brought Basque fighting in Canada to an end, as Spanish dominance in the Strait of Belle Isle became absolute. Between 1565 and 1577, the Spanish Basque whaling fleet expanded from 18 to 30 ships and oil cargos rose from 4,200 to 6,000 tons, with the increased yield being sold to England (Loewen 1999:104, 115–117).

The circumstances that brought the industry to a close further reveal the geopolitical dimension of sixteenth-century Basque whaling in the Strait. Various

authors have sought to explain the end of intensive whaling in the Strait by invoking a cooling climate, overhunting, Native intimidation, declining profits, the Burgos insurers' bankruptcy in 1572, and the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 (cf. Barkham 1980–1981:94–95; Loewen 1999:102; Proulx 2007:36; Turgeon 1998:593–594). While most have assumed a progressive decline, Proulx (2007:34) has shown that Basque whaling in the Strait fell abruptly about 1579, from a high of 30 voyages per year before this date and only 13 known voyages for all of the 1580s. The reason for this sudden decline appears to lie in the English reaction to Spanish supremacy in the Strait of Belle Isle. From 1566 to 1577, English imports of Basque oil had risen tenfold, from 200 to 2,000 tons, attaining a third of all cargos. As “Catholic” oil flowed into Barnstaple, Dartmouth and Southampton, English sailors began to threaten Basque crews, while merchants in London began planning their own whaling voyages to Muscovy (Loewen 1999:117). In 1578, the English captain Anthony Parkhurst surveyed the Newfoundland fisheries. In his report to Parliament in the fall of the same year, he estimated the number and tonnage of Basque whalers in the Strait and recommended fortifying Belle Isle and Chateau Bay in order to seize dominion over the fisheries (Hakluyt 1599:132–134).

No doubt aware that English oil imports were subsidising Spain's control of the Strait, Parliament acted by abruptly closing its ports to Spanish oil on the first of February 1579, with the intent of crippling the Basque whaling fleet (Archivo General de Simancas, Valladolid, sección estado, L831, 15 January 1579). Analysis of the embargo's effect suggests that the 1578 season was indeed

ruined, forcing the cancellation of the 1579 season as outfitters ran out of capital. Basque outfitters sought to restart the hunt in 1582, but the Admiralty office at San Sebastián refused passes to *Terranova* and instead directed Basque ships to the West Indies, to counter losses suffered to English and Dutch privateers. The outfitters countered with lawsuits, stalling their ships in Pasajes, but ultimately complied (Barkham 1987:128–136; Chaunu and Chaunu 1977:244–245; Loewen 1999:101–103, 114–118). The loss of whale oil exports created a severe imbalance in Guipuzkoa's foreign trade, forcing provincial authorities to restrict the outflow of currency in 1581 and to an even greater extent in 1584 (Alberdi Lonbide and Aragón Ruano 2007:228–232). The embargo's bitter aftermath was still felt in 1585 and brought the golden age of Basque whaling in the Strait to an end. These events cast a geopolitical hue over the entire Basque whaling enterprise in Labrador and shed light on the halt of French navigation into the Gulf after 1543. The whalers' arrival in the Strait of Belle Isle in 1543 and their retreat in 1579 may be among the most significant watersheds in Canada's sixteenth-century history. Other findings indicate that the iconic date of 1588, the English defeat of the Spanish Armada, had no incidence for the Basque fishery in Newfoundland, as the damage had already been inflicted a decade earlier (Chaunu and Chaunu 1977:244–245; Loewen 1999:103). At about the same time, the Basques also abandoned ports on the Atlantic coast of the Avalon Peninsula, which came under English control as far south as Renewes.

From an archaeological perspective, very unequal attention has been given to the three areas occupied by the Basques before 1580. No cod-fishing site from

this period has been excavated in southern Newfoundland (from Cape Race to Miquelon) or on Cape Breton Island, compared to 11 whaling sites that have been investigated to varying degrees in the Strait of Belle Isle. As a result, nearly all our knowledge of sixteenth-century Basque activity stems from whaling contexts.

In the cod-fishing area of southern Newfoundland, especially around St. Mary's and Placentia Bays, several place names still recall the Basque presence: Renewes, Biscay Bay, Barachois Bay, Point Barachois, Great Barasway, Little Barasway, Placentia, Point Verde, Spanish Room, Burin (Buru), Cap-aux-Basques, and Petit-Barachois (Barkham 1987; Egaña Goya 1995). The age of most of these names is unknown, since the area remained a destination for the Basques until 1713 (de Gandía 1942:41–62). However, Placentia existed in the 1530s, possibly in reference to Plentzia in Bizkaia, as did Renewes, originating from Urrugne in Lapurdi. Despite the high archaeological interest of this entire region, excavations are limited to Placentia, where they have focussed on a later seventeenth century occupation (Crompton 2010; Simmonds 2010).

Near the Strait of Canso, a Saint-Jean-de-Luz captain named Savalette, or Zabaleta, fished from 1565 to 1607 at Charlos Cove on Tor Bay (Laverdière 1870:3:129; Pioffet 2007:224). On the eastern Cape Breton coast, several place names such as Petit-de-Grat, Arichat, Gabarus (Gabarous Barachois), Baleine Harbour (Balena Bay), Scatarie (Escatari), Spanish Bay, Ingonish, and Aspy Bay (Aspé), suggest an ancient Basque or Gascon presence, as does Barachois on the west coast. The age of these place names is often shrouded in time, in this region where the Basque fishery

continued until 1756. Historical studies remain silent about Basque fisheries in sixteenth-century Cape Breton, and no archaeological site from this period has been identified.

The situation is entirely different in the Strait of Belle Isle. The Basque toponyms of Batel (Battle Harbour), Puerto Nuevo (Pleasure Harbour), Xateo (Chateau Bay), Buitres (Red Bay), Puerto Bretón (Carrol Cove), Baya de Ballenes (Schooner Cove), Los Hornos or Labeeta (East St. Modeste), Samodet (sometimes transcribed as "Sombrero," corresponding to West St. Modeste or L'Anse-au-Loup), Balsamon (Blanc-Sablon), Gradun (Middle Bay), Canada Pequeño (Saint-Augustin), Brest (Vieux-Fort), and Babaçulho all appear to date from the sixteenth century and

most were the scene of intensive whaling activities (Azkarate et al. 1992:88–90; Barkham 1977b).

Whaling sites in the Strait of Belle Isle dominate archaeological study of the 1530–1580 period and, indeed, they account heavily for all archaeological knowledge of the Basques in the Gulf. The structures and material culture of the Strait sites form a fairly homogeneous ensemble. Red Bay reveals the most intensive occupation, as befitted the 15 ships and 900 sailors who came here each summer in the 1570s (Loewen 1999:10). Excavated over 20 years, Red Bay's principal vestiges are strewn along the north side of Saddle Island (Figure 6). The main site is to the north-east and its central features are eight ovens for transforming blubber into oil,

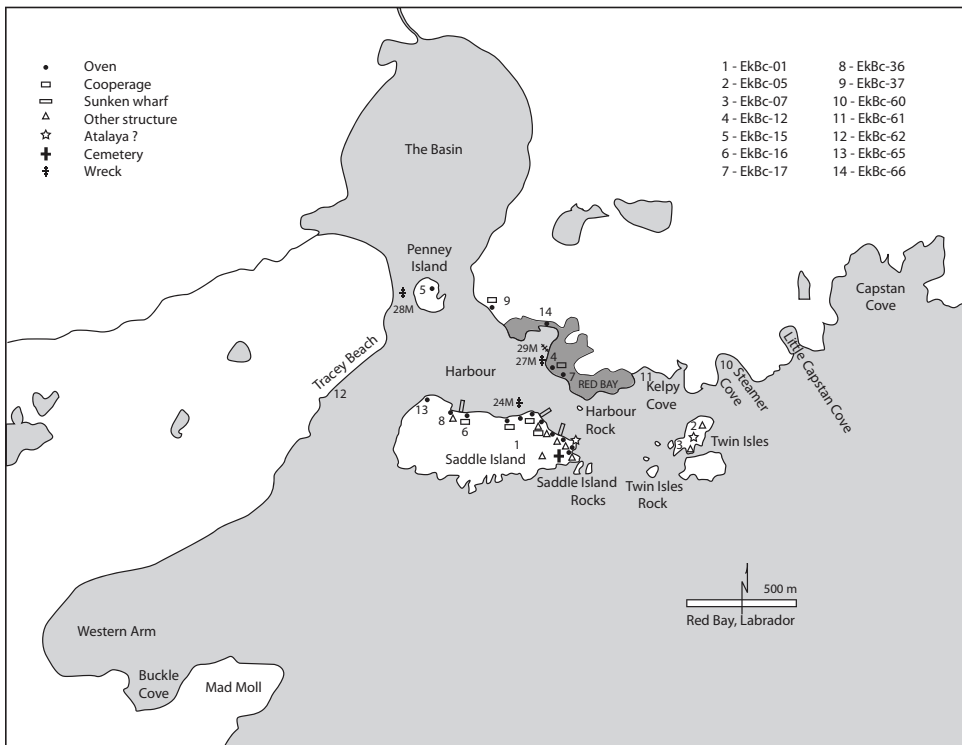


FIGURE 6. Basque sites at Red Bay, Labrador.

each containing from one to six hearths (EkBc-1). Associated with the ovens are three cooperages, four middens containing food remains and wood debris, two submerged piers or ramps, about ten secondary structures, a lookout or *atalaya*, and a graveyard with 142 bodies. To the northwest lies the site of Saddle Island West (EkBc-16), containing an oven with six hearths, a cooperage, a lodging, and a dock. The sites named Adam's Point (EkBc-36) and Coast Guard Building (EkBc-65) each include an oven with several hearths, bringing the number of ovens on Saddle Island to 11 (Curtis 2009; Tuck 1987, 1989, 1991, 2005; Tuck and Grenier 1989).

The complex of sites on the north side of Saddle Island extends underwater in the form of stratified wood chips, and whale and cod bones (Grenier et al. 2007:1:194–198). The submerged portion of the site includes the wreck of the *San Juan* of Pasajes, a 250-ton whaler that sank in 1565 with a full load of whale oil. Three whaling shallows lay beneath the whaler (24M, according to the Parks Canada system of marine sites). Other underwater sites at Red Bay hold the remains of four more sixteenth-century ships and boats, making this one of the most important archaeological concentrations of early ships in the world. The study of the underwater archaeology at Red Bay is a landmark contribution to Basque archaeology (Grenier et al. 2007). Analysis of the *San Juan* hull remains focuses on shipbuilding in the Basque Country, while other chapters cover the history of sixteenth-century whaling in the Strait and the material culture found with the wreck (ceramics, metals, casks, and shoes). The most diagnostic elements for the study of other Basque sites have proven to be the ceramics (including those from the land

excavations), the forged nails, the casks, and stratified underwater deposits of wood chips, cod bones, and other debris.

Twin Island, just east of Saddle Island, contains two small sites. One has a rectangular structure of unknown function (Twin Island 1, EkBc-5) and the other, surrounding a pond used as a midden, includes an *atalaya* and a small shelter (Twin Island 3, EkBc-7) (Curtis 2009:6; Tuck 2005:21). In the northern arm of Red Bay harbour, Organ's or Penney Island (EkBc-15) was the site of an outlying station, perhaps used during the height of activity at Red Bay. Its only known structure is an oven with six hearths, of which only the central ones show signs of use (Curtis 2009:5; Tuck 2005:3). A small boat was found underwater to the west of the island (28M) (Grenier et al. 2007).

Other sites lie on the mainland, in the heart of the present town. The great majority have not been excavated due to development along the shoreline. Red Bay East (EkBc-17) was a large station with two ovens with four and seven hearths respectively, as well as a cooperage. Extensive tiles and stratified deposits, as well as the site's ideal position in the harbour, suggest that this site was used throughout the Basque occupation. Supporting this idea are many repairs to the ovens and the diversity of ceramics and glassware, more numerous than elsewhere in Red Bay (Curtis 2009:6; Tuck 2005:5–7).

Three other areas of Red Bay have been tested. The first, Red Bay West 1 (EkBc-37), includes the remains of a cooperage and probably a larger complex. Part of the town (EkBc-12) is littered with many roofing tiles, suggesting the former existence of a station whose remains have been disturbed by the town's development. Fowler Wharf

(EkBc-66) contains a multi-hearth oven that remains unexcavated (Curtis 2009:3). In all, archaeologists have uncovered at least 14 ovens at Red Bay, corresponding approximately to the number of ships that converged here at the height of whaling in the 1570s (Loewen 1999:105). Finally, around the bay, Steamer Cove (EkBc-60), Kelpy Cove (EkBc-61), Tracey Beach (EkBc-62), and Boney Shore all contain whale-bones along the shoreline. The wrecks of two large ships (27M and 29M) have been surveyed near the mainland (Grenier et al. 2007:1:201–224).

Numbering more than 50,000 artefacts, the Red Bay collection is large and varied. It includes tiles, architectural hardware (especially nails), cooperage and whaling tools, fishing instruments, games, food remains, coins, clothing items, shoes, weapons (swords, projectiles), and other personal objects. The pottery includes vessels for storing, cooking, and serving food. The numerous cooking pots represent a diagnostic feature of Basque sites. Gusset (2007) has divided the coarse earthenware into six types, identified as RB1, RB2, RB3, RB4, RB5, and RB7 (Table 1). Based on ongoing research, the six types appear to originate from Seville in Andalusia (RB1), Portugal (RB2), the Garonne Valley of southwest France (RB3, RB5), Provence or southwest France (RB4), and, very broadly, France or Spain (RB7). In addition, the diagnostic ceramics include two types of stoneware from Lower Normandy (RB13) and the Béarnese portion of the Adour Valley (RB16). Finally, the ceramic collection includes tin-glazed majolica fragments of porringers, jars, pitchers and plates, with or without blue, green or lustre decoration. This Iberian faïence has been attributed to the production centre of Muel

in Aragon, located in the Ebro Valley southeast of the Basque Country (Álvaro Zamora 2002; Herzog 2011; Myles 2007b). It is clear that “Basque” ceramics—that is, the spectrum of ceramics that is diagnostic of early Basque sites in Canada—in fact originated from a wide geographical swath of the Atlantic coast, from Seville to Normandy, although Bay of Biscay provenances are the most frequent. Some Red Bay ceramics, notably tin-glazed pitchers, compare well with Basque productions (Ibabe Ortiz 2002:11; Myles 2007b; cf. Barrachina and Escribano Ruiz 2011). The Red Bay collection also contains a significant number of glass objects of remarkably fine quality, a finding that is echoed on several Basque sites. Recovered fragments are mostly stems and bases of flare-shaped stemware drinking glasses, some with a moulded décor. Other fragments are decorated with milk-coloured filigrees in the “Latticino” (or *lattimo*) style, popularized by Venice workshops and imitated by glassworkers on both sides of the Pyrenees, in Midi-Pyrénées, and Catalonia (Deagan 1987:143, 149; Delmas and Gelé 2011).

Apart from Red Bay, 12 Basque sites have been identified on the southern Labrador coast. Located at the eastern end of the Strait, Chateau Bay has two arms that embrace four main islands named Whale, Henley, Castle, and Stage (Figure 7). Archaeologists from the Basque Country have investigated two whaling sites. The first is situated on the east side of Stage Island (ElAx-2), and is the only Labrador site apart from Red Bay to have been extensively excavated (Azkarate et al. 1992; Vera Hernandez et al. 1986). Near the shoreline, an oven with at least four hearths and a wooden platform is associated with a cooperage located farther inland. The



TABLE 1. "Basque" ceramics from Red Bay.

Type	Paste	Forms and Decor	Provenance	Other sites
<b>RB1</b>	Buff. Surface creamy white, buff, orange-yellow and sometimes whitish. Gauvin (1995): 1.1.1.15. Brassard and Leclerc (2001): 1.1.1.1. Hard paste, reddish orange. Mica inclusions. Surface brownish red. Gauvin (1995): 1.1.1.2. Brassard and Leclerc (2001): 1.1.1.3.	Amphora. No glaze. Various forms for storage, preparation and service. No glaze.	<b>Andalusia.</b> Seville.	Petit-Mécatina, Anse à la Cave.
<b>RB2</b>	Paste firing brownish grey. Quartz and mica inclusions. Gauvin (1995): 1.1.1.12. Brassard and Leclerc (2001): 1.1.2.8.	Flat-bottomed cooking pot, two handles. Fluted strap handles. Décor of vertical applied strips, printed with a knurl. No glaze.	<b>Estremadura (Mérida) or Portugal.</b>	Mingan, Petit-Mécatina, Île aux Basques.
<b>RB3</b>	Paste firing brownish grey. Quartz and mica inclusions. Gauvin (1995): 1.1.1.11. Brassard and Leclerc (2001): 1.1.2.4.	Flat-bottomed cooking pot, two handles; spouted pitcher. Often no glaze, but also with green glaze. Strap handles not fluted. Jug, two-handled jug, bowl.	<b>France, probably Southwest.</b> Gusset (2007): Southwest or Provence. Brassard and Leclerc (2001): Cox. Régaldio (personal communication 2010): Sadirac.	Château Bay, Blanc-Sablon, Middle Bay, Anse Steven, Petit-Mécatina, Mingan, Anse à la Cave, Île aux Basques.
<b>RB4</b>	Paste white, uniform and smooth. Gauvin (1995): 1.1.1.11. Brassard and Leclerc (2001): 1.1.2.4.	Flat-bottomed cooking pot, two handles; spouted pitcher. Often no glaze, but also with green glaze. Strap handles not fluted. Jug, two-handled jug, bowl.	<b>France, region unknown.</b> Gusset (2007): Southwest or Provence.	Blanc-Sablon, Middle Bay, Anse Steven, Petit-Mécatina.
<b>RB5</b>	Red-orange paste	<b>RB5.1:</b> no glaze. <b>RB5.2:</b> green glaze. <b>RB5.3:</b> yellow glaze. <b>RB5.4:</b> clear glaze.	<b>France, Southwest.</b> Gusset (2007): Southwest or Provence. Brassard and Leclerc (2001): Rouen, Rhône-Alpes or Southwest. Monette et al. (2010) exclude Rouen, Provence, Charente.	Middle Bay, Anse Steven, Petit-Mécatina.
<b>RB7</b>	Red-orange paste	Pitcher, jug, jar, bowl. <b>RB7.1:</b> pale brown mottled glaze. <b>RB7.2:</b> partial greenish glaze. <b>RB7.3:</b> clear glaze.	<b>France or Spain, region unknown.</b> Gusset (2007): Southwest, Provence or Spain.	Middle Bay.
<b>RB13</b>	Stoneware. Surface dark, red-brown to grey-black. Variable body: Bessin and Cotentin; burgundy; Domfront: beige to brownish beige. Gauvin (1995): 1.2.1.4. Brassard and Leclerc (2001): 1.3.1.2.	Pot, bottle, vial. No glaze.	<b>Normandie.</b> Bessin, Cotentin, Domfrontais.	Omnipresent.
<b>RB16</b>	Stoneware. Pale brown to beige, sandy texture. Brassard and Leclerc (2001): 1.3.1.3. Chrestien and Dufourneau (1995). Majolica. Buff paste, or reddish in one small pitcher (EkBcl:29).	Two-handled cooking pot, pot. No glaze.	<b>Béarn.</b> Caros and Bouillon.	Portau-Choix, Petit-Mécatina, Mingan, Louisbourg, Placentia, Pabos, Penouille, Canso.
		Porringer, place, pitcher. White tin glaze. Décor painted blue, green, lustred.	<b>Aragon.</b> Muel.	Middle Bay, Petit-Mécatina.

Note: Based on types identified by Gusset (2007).

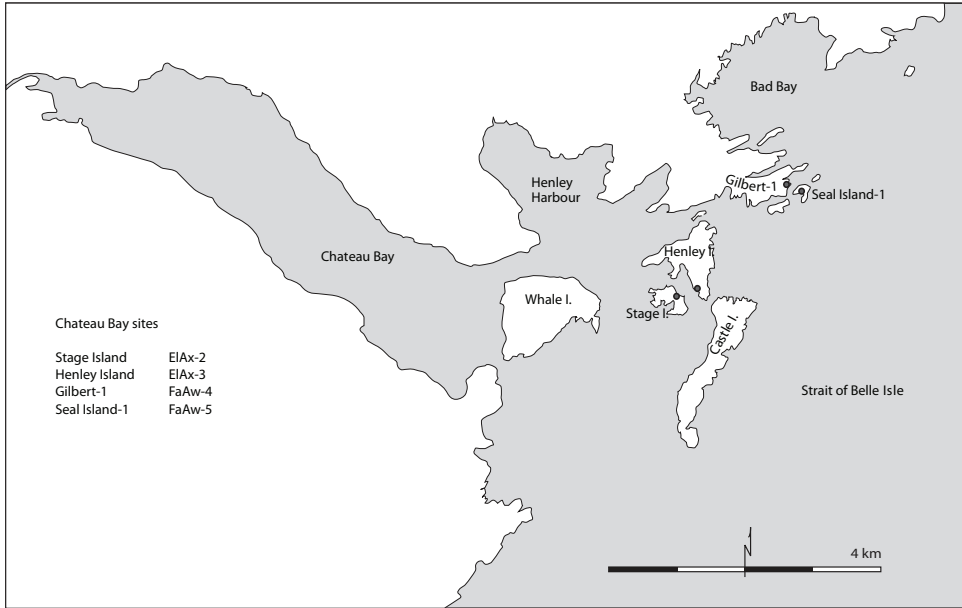


FIGURE 7. Basque sites at Chateau Bay, Labrador.

two structures were formerly covered with red roofing tiles. The cooperage had a roof made of baleen framing and a floor made of staves and planks. Recovered artefacts include two double-handled cooking pots (type RB3), handles belonging to pitchers or jars (RB5), and French or Spanish coarse earthenware (RB4, RB7). Other artefacts include Norman stoneware containers, fishing instruments, pieces of woollen cloth, leather shoes, and shards of majolica and fine drinking glasses. The second site in Chateau Bay, on the south side of Henley Island (ElAx-3), is less favourably located in a place where offshore rocks required the construction of a wharf extending to deeper water. A recent rockslide prevented archaeologists from learning the site's extent, and test pits brought up only tiles. Site archaeologists have suggested that Henley Island may have been a small secondary station, occupied when the main site on Stage Island

became too crowded (Auger and Stopp 1987; Azkarate et al. 1992:101–152; Stopp and Rutherford 1991; Vera Hernandez et al. 1986:86–87).

Eight other sites are known in the Strait of Belle Isle (Figure 8). All have been tested in an exploratory fashion, using methods ranging from visual reconnaissance, surface collecting, and shovel testing to the trowelling of square pits from 50 cm to 2 metres in size. Whalebones and roofing tiles were found at Rocketts Cove 1 (ElBa-2), southwest of Chateau Bay. About 2 km northeast of the principal Chateau Bay sites, two stations may form part of the same complex. These are Gilbert 1 (FaAw-4) on the mainland and Seal Island 1 (FaAw-5) on Cooper Island, one of the Seal Islands. Visible ovens lie parallel to the shoreline and testing has shown roofing tiles, nails, burnt fat, whalebones, moulded glass, and ceramics including Norman stoneware and

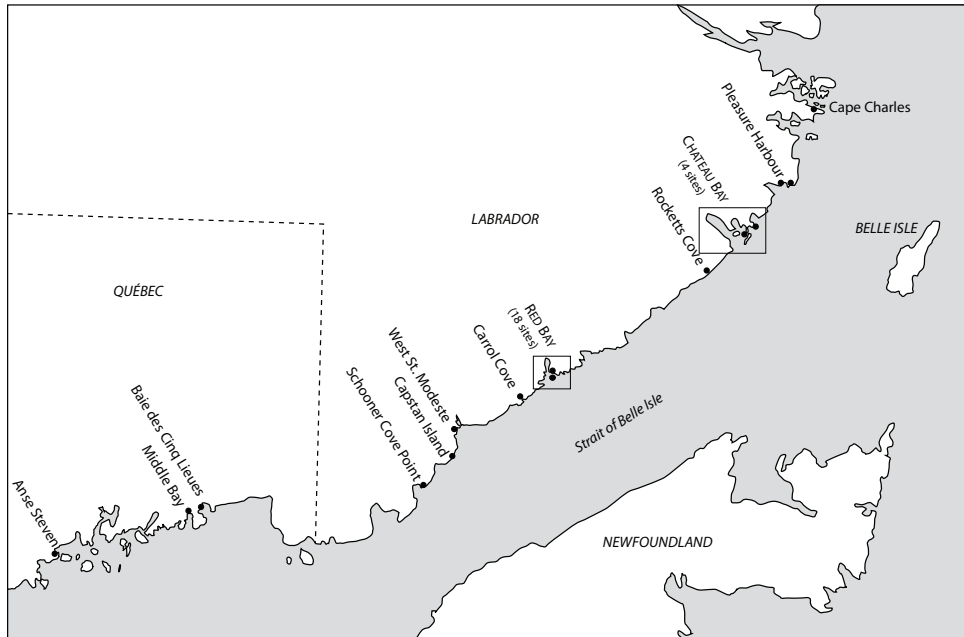


FIGURE 8. Basque sites in the Strait of Belle Isle, Labrador and Québec.

coarse earthenware corresponding to Red Bay types (RB2, RB3, RB4, RB7) (Auger et al. 1991:134; Auger and Stopp 1987:181–186; 1989:32–33; Stopp 2003, personal communication 2010). Finally, Chateau Bay contains the underwater remains of a sixteenth-century ship, surveyed by Parks Canada in 1978 (Grenier et al. 2007:1:9).

Moving further east toward the Atlantic, at Pleasure Harbour (FaAw-1), a good haven about 12 km northeast of Chateau Bay, numerous tile fragments are visible and testing has revealed an oven with at least five hearths, a pavestone work area, and a wooden platform attached to the oven's inland side. Given the oven's large size, other structures are presumed to lie nearby (Azkarate et al. 1992:167–174; Vera Hernandez et al. 1986:87–89). Nearby, Pleasure Harbour Bight-1 (FaAw-8) holds a large quantity of whalebones (Marianne Stopp, per-

sonal communication 2010). Finally, about 18 km from Pleasure Harbour, the most easterly Basque site is on the north side of Cape Charles (FbAw-2), at St. Charles Harbour. It also contains ovens built parallel to the shoreline and test pits have revealed roofing tiles, building hardware, traces of blackened fat, whalebones, moulded glass, Norman stoneware, and coarse earthenware (types RB2, RB3, RB4, and RB7), all comparable to the Red Bay material (Auger 1991:134; Auger and Stopp 1987:181–186, 1989:32–33; Stopp 2003, personal communication 2010; Vera Hernandez et al. 1986:84, 88–89).

Turning to a group of sites toward the western end of the Strait, Capstan Island (EjBe-36), West St. Modeste-4 (EjBe-42), and Carrol Cove (EkBd-1) all show large quantities of roofing tiles, whalebones, and baleen remains. Their extent remains unclear, as only prelimi-

nary testing has been carried out, but certain sites appear disturbed by erosion and human activity (Auger and Stopp 1987:55, 127–129, 1989:32–33; Marianne Stopp, personal communication 2010; Tuck 1981:75–77). Schooner Cove Point (EiBe-1), situated between L’Anse Amour and L’Anse-au-Loup, also has the remains of an oven lying parallel to the shoreline (Keenleyside 1984:248, 253).

Most Basque sites in the Strait are characterized by structural features related to the transformation of whale blubber into oil. They contain visible remains of stone ovens, scattered roofing tiles made of coarse reddish earthenware, blackened rocks, traces of burnt fat and whalebones. They were built in protected coves deep enough for mooring ships, towing whales to shore and the disposal of carcasses. They occupied flat areas of ample size, near the water’s edge (Barkham 1978:15–16; Tuck 1987:52, 2005:2).

The masonry ovens, the central features of whaling sites (Figure 9), are made of local stone and imported clay that was hardened by heating and the accidental admixture of whale fat that subsequently calcified. They contain up to seven circular hearths, disposed in a

linear fashion parallel to the shoreline. They would have enclosed large cauldrons made of riveted copper plates. Each hearth had a low aperture on the shore side, to feed the fire and to draw air. Some show no signs of blackening, perhaps because they were kept in reserve for cooling or protecting oil, or simply to avoid having to rebuild or repair aging hearths. They may signify that the whalers hoped to return, which recalls the industry’s apparently abrupt end. Behind the row of hearths, there was often a wooden deck, or raised platform, where workers sliced blubber and drew off oil from the cauldrons. Postholes indicate the presence of a frame structure covering the oven and the deck, and numerous tiles reveal the style of the roof (Figure 10). Tuck writes that these tiles were a traditional symbol of ownership and belonging for the Basques, signalling to new arrivals that these sites were spoken for (Tuck 1987:52, 1989:40, 2005:3–4). Relatively few objects are associated with the ovens and platforms, considered a single feature called a “tryworks.”

Whaling sites usually include a separate structure for cooperage, an essential activity carried out near the



FIGURE 9. Engraving of an oven at a whaling station. H.-L. Duhamel du Monceau, *Traité général des pesches*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1777).



FIGURE 10. Roofing tile, with stamped marks, found at Petit-Mécatina (EdBt3). (Courtesy Vincent Delmas, photographer.)

oven. On some stations, a cooperage serviced several ovens. Cooperages appear as a dense tile deposit, numerous forged nails, postholes, cask pieces, and cooper's tools. The building's wooden frame structure is poorly preserved. Domestic activities took place in these workplaces, without being restricted to a specific area. At once workplace and habitat, the cooperages often yield the most abundant and varied material culture of whaling sites. In addition to tools and other professional and personal objects, they contain the typical Basque-associated range of French and Iberian coarse earthenware (types RB1, RB2, RB3, RB4, RB5 and RB7), Norman and Béarn stoneware (types RB13 and RB16) and Aragonese majolica, as well as Venetian-style drinking glasses, with or without stems and likely of Catalan or Occitan origin. Material culture from cooperages displays a higher socioeconomic status than that from humbler dwellings found on several sites, covered by baleen or sailcloth (Gusset 2007; Lalande 1989a:9–11; Loewen 1999:7–8; Myles 2007a; Niellon and McGain

1989:24, 63–69; Ruralys 2008:7–8; Tuck 1987:52–53, 2005:12, 19).

Finally, whaling sites contain extensive cetacean remains. Bones and baleen have washed ashore from shallow waters where carcasses were towed. Initial zooarchaeological study suggested that Basques killed similar numbers of right and bowhead whales, leading to ideas about how whalers planned their sojourns to coincide with two distinct migrations. Since these species are rare or absent in the Gulf today, their bones raised questions about the effect of sixteenth-century hunting and the Little Ice Age on their disappearance (Barkham 1987; Cumbaa et al. 2002). However, genetic study has since shown that Basque harpooners killed only bowheads, laying to rest ideas about whalers targeting two migrations involving two species (McLeod et al. 2008). As well, refined counts of the number of whales killed by Basques have reduced estimates of the impact of sixteenth-century whaling on bowhead populations and suggest that the species was hardest hit and pushed northward between 1771 and 1803, a time of renewed hunting and warming temperatures (Cumbaa 2007; Loewen 2009; Reeves et al. 1983).

The whaling sites in the Strait of Belle Isle, especially Red Bay, clearly overshadow other areas occupied by the Basques in 1530–1580, often for purposes other than whaling. Sites around Placentia Bay and Cape Breton Island were used above all for cod fishing. As well, cod fishers preceded whalers in the Strait of Belle Isle where, even at the height of the whaling industry, crews might catch cod in late summer as they waited for the whales to appear (Biggar 1930; Grenier et al. 2007:1:194–198; McLeod et al. 2008; Loewen 1999,

2009; Proulx 1993). Whaling stations' over-representation in our site census results from their easy detection along the Strait, based on visible surface elements such as ovens, whalebones, and roofing tiles. The Strait holds many surveyed sites, but only Red Bay and Stage Island at Chateau Bay have been excavated. The abundant evidence they yield paradoxically shows only a partial picture of sixteenth-century Basque activities, which covered a much vaster territory and especially concerned the cod fishery.

### Open Access to the Gulf: Basque Occupations in 1580–1630

Key events in 1581 and 1632 define the second space-time of Basque presence in the Gulf. The orderliness of the first period, with its compact areas of cod fishers and whalers keeping an eye on the Gulf's eastern gateways, contrasts with the wide-ranging and freewheeling activities throughout the Gulf in 1580–1630. The whalers' retreat from the Strait of Belle Isle seems to have opened the floodgates to the Gulf's resources. Basques were among the first to move forward, taking up strategic positions at the Gulf's western entryways to the continent. A well-organized group of whalers and traders, headed by the Hoyarsabal brothers of Saint-Jean-de-Luz, set up stations in the St. Lawrence estuary as soon as 1581. Traces of this early incursion have been found on Île aux Basques and on the estuary's northern shore, between Chafaud-aux-Basques and Les Escoumins (Turgeon 1994, 1998; cf. Barkham 2003:note 49). These whaling stations were occupied for about 30 to 50 years, perhaps intermittently. According to Bélanger (1971:35, 38), the *dégrat* (whaling station) at Les Escoumins was abandoned sometime between 1607

and 1611, while Chafaud-aux-Basques was still used in 1632.

Chaleur Bay became a focus of Basque activity at the turn of the seventeenth century. Cod fishers moved in at Percé and whalers at Miscou, where Basques also operated a trading post sanctioned by the Compagnie de Caen (Bélanger 1971). The principal shareholder, a Lapurdian captain named Raymond de Larralde, or de la Ralde, was on good terms with Champlain (Hamelin 2000). In Chaleur Bay, researchers have found numerous traces of Basque-Mikma'w cultural contact. Mikma'w still preserve Basque expressions in their spoken language, the remains of a widespread former trade pidgin (Bakker 1989). At the time of Champlain, Christianized Natives, sailing in "Biscayan shallops" and bearing Basque-sounding names like Juanchou and Joannes, guarded fishing stations in winter. Called "Canadians" in period texts, they may have had a mixed Basque-Mikma'w ancestry, and Ursuline nuns at Québec remarked on their European ways. After the sack of Québec by the Kirk brothers in 1628, Juanchou and his Canadians took in the French refugees and arranged for their return to France on Basque vessels sailing from Miscou (Carpin 1995:76–81; Whitehead 1986:224–232, 1991:21–22). The Basque cartographer Pierre Detchevry (1689) placed their village on the north side of Caraquet Bay, marking it with a cross and the name of *habitation Pichiguay*, a Basque or pidgin word of unsure meaning (Stephen Augustine, Peter Bakker, and Miren Egaña Goya, personal communication 2011).

Elsewhere in the Gulf, Basque whalers and fishers pushed westward from the straits they had previously occupied. On the North Shore, whalers advanced from the Strait of Belle Isle, gaining other

ports as far west as Sept-Îles, or Chisedec, in 1626 (Azkarate et al. 1992:88; Bélanger 1971:41). One of these ports, Canada Pequeño near present-day Saint-Augustin on the Gulf's lower North Shore, was first mentioned in 1590. Considering the meaning that "Canadian" took in Chaleur Bay, we may ask whether Canada Pequeño designated a Native community with some European traits. As early as 1537, Natives at Brest (Rivière Saint-Paul) traded with Europeans and spoke Basque. However, the place-name may also derive from migratory Iroquoians who wintered in the Québec City area, known as "Canada" at the time of Jacques Cartier. These people summered near Tadoussac and sent parties as far eastward as the Strait of Belle Isle in 1534 and 1542 (Carpin 1995:76–81; Cartier 1867:48–49; Plourde 2011; Turgeon 2004:100–101). Early Euro-Amerindian contact took many forms, but Natives embraced no European item more enthusiastically than the Biscayan shallop, spurring a transformation of regional trade networks and power structures (Loewen 2012). Linkages that quickly arose along the North Shore, from the Strait of Belle Isle to the St. Lawrence estuary, suggest a dense intertwining of Basque and Native maritime knowledge, travel, and trade.

In southwest Newfoundland, two "Biscayan" ships wrecked at St. George Bay in 1591. This is the first reference to the Basque occupation of the island's west coast that would intensify in the seventeenth century (Bélanger 1971:56). As English and French captains entered the race for Gulf resources, using a mixture of ruse, muscle, and gunpowder, a climate of confrontation set in and events sometimes took on a "Wild West" atmosphere. Walrus herds on the Magdalene Islands were the object of a stand-

off between an English privateer and a Basque and Malouin squadron that had slipped discretely into the Gulf via the Strait of Canso (Bélanger 1971:54). English and Basque walrus hunters again exchanged shots on the Magdalenes in 1597 (Bélanger 1971:54; Quinn 2000). At the time of Champlain, agents of the French charter monopolies, the Companies of Caen and the Cents-Associés, confronted Basque captains trading at Tadoussac, Miscou and in Acadia. Saint-Jean-de-Luz merchants challenged the charter companies' legality in the Paris courts, arguing that Basques had precedence in the Gulf and had a customary right to free trade (Bélanger 1971:41, 49, 66, 115–120). Only in 1626 did they submit to judgements upholding the monopolies, effectively ending the Basque fur trade in New France, at least under the Cents-Associés government (Bélanger 1971:115–120). The following year, the French king decreed that fishing and whaling should remain open to all his subjects (Mimeault 2011:39, 49). Lapurdians were most aggressive in pursuing the fur trade and more openly contested the charter companies (Bélanger 1971:115–120; Turgeon 1994, 1998). However, Champlain may have suspected the Spanish nationality of some Basque captains operating in the Gulf. His web of alliances and enmities among the Basques nearly proved to be his undoing as he was the target of an assassination attempt. His views on the Basques have left a lasting mark on scholarly literature. Some authors depict Basques as wilful smugglers, possibly even Spanish nationals, operating subversively or in defiance of the charter companies, while others see Champlain's dealings with them as economically motivated, maladroit and divisive (Bélanger 1971; Egaña Goya 2010; Plourde 2003).

Neither the Basque captains nor the French colonisers could be confident that the outcome of this fluid, pivotal period would be in their favour, as both sides ardently advocated their right to trade. In 1628, however, a threat from their common English enemy unified them. Following the attack on Québec by the Kirk brothers, Basque whalers at Miscou repatriated the colonists to Europe, and Larralde led a squadron to burn down Ferryland, the English base in Newfoundland. When France regained its colony in 1632, Larralde personally travelled to Québec to take back the keys to Champlain's habitation from Louis Kirk (Garneau 1944:2:5; Hamelin 2000). With the irritants of the Champlain years finally behind them, French and Basque relations in the Gulf entered a long phase of mutual tolerance and even cordiality.

While most historians have focussed on the Basques' trading activity during this period, fishing continued unabated at Placentia Bay and Cape Breton, and expanded to western Newfoundland and Percé. Most whalers, however, left the Gulf between 1612 and 1620 for Spitsbergen, north of Norway, where herds were more abundant and travel times significantly shorter (Bélanger 1971; Turgeon 1998). By 1630, Basque interest in the Gulf was almost totally consumed by the cod fishery.

Despite the diversity and geographic range of Basque activities throughout the Gulf between 1580 and 1630, archaeological research has only targeted whaling sites in the St. Lawrence estuary and on the North Shore of the Gulf. In Chaleur Bay, no whaling or fishing station and no Basque-Mikma'w contact site has been identified archaeologically. The same can be said of fishing sites in Newfoundland and Cape Breton, and of walrus

hunting sites in the Magdalene Islands. This narrow focus on whaling on the North Shore has not, however, produced a clear chronology of Basque occupations or material culture, as the dating of most sites relies on isolated historical references. Sites in the estuary are seen as part of a transitional strategy from whaling to trading, especially between 1580 and 1600 (Turgeon 1998). On Île aux Basques, near Trois-Pistoles, three whaling sites were excavated along the southern littoral, which has an accessible shoreline. The site named Hoyarsabal is situated in Anse à la Baleine (DaEh-4) and has two horse-shoe shaped single-hearth ovens, including one with a pave-stone work area. Excavation has revealed roofing tiles and calcified fat, and food remains inside the ovens. Artefacts include coarse earthenware containers of RB2 and RB3 types (Portugal and probably southwestern France), fine glassware including bluish-green French forest glass, musket balls, a harpoon head, and glass trade beads. The beads led archaeologists to suggest a date between 1580 and 1630; however, at least one example, a turquoise annular bead about 9 mm in diameter, may be more recent according to common bead chrono-typologies (Karklins 1985; Kidd and Kidd 1970). The second site, at Anse Qui Pue (DaEh-5), has revealed a single-hearth oven, but no trace of intensive occupation and little material culture. Lastly, the site named François-Hamel, situated at Anse d'En-bas (DaEh-7), has a double-hearth oven where only preliminary testing has been carried out (Auger et al. 1992, 1993; De Varennes 1998; Fitzgerald et al. 1997; Gaumond 1961a; Lalande 1987, 1991; Turgeon 1998).

On the north side of the estuary, between Grandes-Bergeronnes and Les Escoumins, Anse à la Cave (or Cap Bon-



Désir; DbEi-5) is on a cove that drains at low tide. Its two ovens, respectively with two and three hearths, lie about 100 metres apart. The first, on a promontory extending into the St. Lawrence, had a tile roof and a raised wooden platform on its inland side. Still further inland were the remains of a tile-roofed building, divided into a main structure and an open lean-to. Artefacts (tools, whetstone) indicate that this was a cooperage, also used as a shelter and an eating area. Other artefacts are linked to trading (glass beads) and hunting (gunflint, lead balls). Similarities to Red Bay, in the form of coarse earthenware from southwestern France (RB3), southern France (RB4) and either Spain or southern France (RB7), as well as shards of glass drinking vessels and a knife, led archaeologists to suggest an occupation circa 1585–1630. The second oven, located deeper inside the tidal cove, has three aligned hearths that show traces of combustion, fragments of a copper cauldron and a shard of a Seville olive-oil amphora (RB1). Another stone structure with fire residue may relate to a work area or cooking activities. The area of this second oven is unusual in that no tiles have been found. Anse à la Cave appears to have been occupied twice, about 1585–1630 based on similarities between the first area and Red Bay, and between 1733 and 1738 by the Darragory brothers of Saint-Jean-de-Luz, whose whaling venture at this site is documented. Archaeologists are not certain, however, that the second oven area represents the Darragory operation (Bélanger 1971:40–41; Lalande 1987, 1989a, 1989b, 1990, 1993, 1994; Ruralys 2008; Gaumond 1961b, 1962; Plourde 2003; Plourde et al. 2001).

Anse du Chafaud-aux-Basques (DaEk-26), the most westerly known Basque

site, is on Baie Sainte-Catherine, in a small cove with a long foreshore that dries at low tide. It has a circular, single-hearth oven where testing has revealed wood traces possibly related to a work area. The lack of diagnostic pottery and the small amount of material culture (tiles, forged nails, leather) means that the proposed date, the late sixteenth century or early seventeenth century, relies on historical knowledge of Basque activity in the estuary during the 1580s and on the site's mention by the Jesuit Paul Lejeune in 1632 (Bélanger 1971:35; Gaumond 1962; Moss and Plourde 1986; Pinal 2002; Turgeon 1998).

The group of sites in the St. Lawrence estuary contain a rather limited body of material culture. While the tiles, ceramics and multi-hearth ovens correlate with sites in the Strait of Belle Isle, the exploratory nature of excavations in the estuary makes it difficult to compare these sites with the intensive excavations at Red Bay. The single-hearth ovens at Île aux Basques and Anse du Chafaud-aux-Basques may indicate a lesser investment in whaling technology. Of all the estuary sites, Anse à la Cave has yielded the most complete remains of a whaling station, and its structural remains and material culture also compares most closely to the Strait stations.

In the estuary, traces of Native presence have been analysed much more closely than elsewhere, but they nonetheless remain tenuous. They are not necessarily contemporaneous with the Basque occupations and, proportionally, they are no more numerous than in the Strait. Inventories from the Strait sites (not always up to date) list 33 glass beads including 27 from Red Bay, while 8 beads are listed for more westerly sites at Île aux Basques, Anse à la Cave, Île Nue de Mingan, and Petit-Mécatina. Not

included in this total are finds since 2011 at Petit-Mécatina, including some from a stratified underwater context, while ongoing cataloguing of collections from Strait of Belle Isle sites is expected to reveal more examples (Vincent Delmas, personal communication 2012). The date range of these beads, based on standard chrono-typologies, is rather broad but not infrequently later than about 1670. Except for the Petit-Mécatina submerged site, their stratigraphic position is rarely discriminatory with respect to Basque levels and features; in the moss-covered, shallow soils that overlie the bedrock on Basque sites, the stratigraphy tends to be very simple, and cultural material is often compressed into a single horizon, regardless of its date. Native features (hearths) and objects (pottery, lithics) are hard to place in a chronological sequence, or relative to Basque features. While the estuary sites are seen as springboards toward the fur trade, this interpretation relies on historical evidence (Turgeon 1998:588). It seems hazardous to suggest that trading occurred next to the whaling ovens, and the presence of trade beads and stone tools may indicate that Natives came to these sites after the Basques had left (cf. Barkham 1980; Chapdelaine et al. 1992).

In the northeast Gulf, three sites appear to show the extension of the Strait whaling complex after about 1575 (Azkarate et al. 1992:87–94) (see Figure 8). About 17 km from Blanc-Sablon, tile fragments and a few artefacts linked to a Basque occupation have been documented at the Baie des Cinq Lieues (EiBj-30 and 31), but archaeologists have found no evidence of ovens or other architectural remains (McGain 2004; Niellon 1986). Middle Bay (EiBi-10) lies 20 km west of Blanc-Sablon, near the

place called Gradun on seventeenth-century maps. Extensive excavations and testing have brought to light a double-hearth oven, a building identified as a cooperage (tiles, forged nails), a tile storage area, an anchorage for a floating wharf, and a mass of whalebones. Material culture has many similarities to that of Red Bay; archaeologists have found earthenware of RB1, RB2, RB3, RB4 and RB7 types, Norman and Béarn stoneware (RB13, RB16), porringers in lustrated and monochrome majolica, as well as fine glass. These findings led archaeologists to suggest an occupation between 1575 and 1620 (Niellon 1986; Niellon and Jones 1984; Niellon and McGain 1987, 1989). Such a date range is supported by Gipuzkoan documents naming the ports of Canada Pequeño, Babaçulho, and Brest along this coast in the 1590s (Azkarate et al. 1992:88). Anse Steven (EiBi-8), 30 km west of Middle Bay near Vieux-Fort (called Brest on ancient maps), has the remains of an oven and ceramics comparable to those from the Strait (RB3, RB4, RB5, and RB13) (McGain 2004; Niellon 1986). These three sites are convincing evidence of a westward extension of the Strait whale hunt.

Approximately 100 km west of Anse Steven, diagnostic tile fragments and a few artefacts possibly linked to a Basque occupation were found in preliminary test pits at Havre Boulet (EdBr-13). No ovens or other structures have been observed, and no date has been proposed for this occupation other than a broad inclusion in regional Basque activities (Fitzhugh and Gallon 2002). The site, located 2 km northeast of Baiedu-Mouton (Mutton Bay), overlooks a narrow channel formed by Mécatina Island. Seals migrating through the channel attracted an early twentieth-

century sealing operation whose ruins are visible. This area, on a cape known as Gros-Mécatina that divides the lower North Shore roughly in half, is called “Pointe de Marsancoa” on seventeenth-century maps, an unexplained toponym with a Basque-sounding suffix, perhaps referring to Mont-de-Marsan in the upper Adour Valley (Bakker 1989; Christian Weyers, personal communication 2011).

The last site on the lower North Shore is on Petit-Mécatina Island, about 30 km west of Havre Boulet. Ongoing work at the complex site of Hare Harbour-1 (EdBt-3) has revealed dating evidence spread over a wide range, from before 1610 to as late as 1730. Several ceramics show typological similarities to the sixteenth-century material from the Strait and a porringer belongs to a pre-1610 Moorish majolica style from Muel in Aragon (Álvaro Zamora 2002:2:209; Fitzhugh et al. 2011; Herzog 2011). Other elements of the site are younger, indicating a later seventeenth-century occupation. Finally, the remains of an eighteenth or nineteenth-century Inuit house confirm the durable attraction of this site sheltered by a jutting cliff. The Inuit reused iron and tiles left two centuries earlier by the Basques. Given the preponderance of post-1630 chronological markers that have been recovered to date, we will discuss Petit-Mécatina more fully in the context of the 1630–1713 period.

Finally, some 350 km further west, on the middle North Shore, the site named Île Nue de Mingan (EbDa-6) lies on the western shore of this island, on a shallow lagoon protected by an islet. A survey revealed three single-hearth ovens and one double-hearth oven. Excavations at two ovens have found marine mammal fat, the remains of a raised platform,

and roofing tiles. Diagnostic artefacts that were recovered include tools, building hardware, and pottery, notably a cooking pot from southwestern France (RB3), blue and polychrome Spanish majolica, and common French green-glazed pottery considered “late” by the site’s archaeologists. The uncertainty of chronological markers led archaeologists to suggest a broad date range from 1580 to 1670 (Drouin 1988; Fitzhugh 2001; Gaumond 1960; Guimont 1995). René Bélanger (1971:44–45), who visited the site in the 1960s, mentions the discovery of a pipe “from the sixteenth century”; in fact, if an ancient pipe were associated with this site, it would likely date after 1630 when smoking pipes became common. Our inclusion of this site in the 1580–1630 period is thus provisional. Interestingly, Bélanger (1971:44) reports that the abbot René Lévesque mentioned an oven on Île du Havre de Mingan, “opposite the present wharf”. It was made of limestone and clay and built in the shape of a horseshoe (single hearth), and was accompanied by red tile fragments and a “Spanish coin from the 16th century”. Attempts to locate this oven have been unsuccessful (Guimont 1995; Niellon 1986).

The group of Basque sites from the North Shore allows us to point out several general aspects. First, the sites were occupied less intensively than those of the Strait of Belle Isle, they contain fewer structures, and limited underwater explorations (at Petit-Mécatina) have not revealed any wrecks. As a group, they are poorly documented by period texts and their material culture is not strongly diagnostic, so that their dating is often imprecise. Occupations at Havre Boulet and Île Nue de Mingan may be later than 1630. Second, compared to the linear, multiple-hearth ovens in the Strait,

the ovens on the North Shore sites are simpler and sometimes absent (possibly destroyed). The less pronounced whaling function of these sites may indicate a less intensive occupation, a change in whaling technology, or a cod fishing vocation. Third, diagnostic artefacts such as tiles, forged nails, and certain ceramics (coarse earthenware, cooking pots, and Iberian majolica) show similarities with Red Bay types. As in the Strait, the ceramics come from production centres in both France and Spain. Of the six sites identified on the North Shore, Middle Bay and Petit-Mécatina contain the most extensive remains; these two sites are also quite divergent in nature, leading their interpretation in different directions. Whereas Middle Bay can be seen as an extension of the Strait whaling complex, Petit-Mécatina seems to represent a previously undocumented aspect of the Basque presence in the Gulf.

During this second period, Basques penetrated far into the Gulf. Cod fishers extended their range from Placentia and Canso to stations as far west as the Gaspé Peninsula. Whalers advanced along the North Shore as far as the Saguenay, before transferring most of their activity to Spitsbergen. Basque captains engaged in the fur trade in the St. Lawrence estuary and Chaleur Bay, which brought them the ire of French chartered companies at the time of Champlain. By 1630, Basques had lost their interest in whaling and were obliged to quit the fur trade, leaving them to focus on the cod fishery within the new geopolitical dispensation of New France.

### **The Cod Fishing Apogee: Basque Occupations in 1630–1713**

The period from 1630 to 1713 saw the greatest extension of New France as well as the closest cohabitation between

French authorities and Basque fishers from Gipuzkoa and Bizkaia. This is also the least known period, with the decades from 1630 to 1660 being particularly obscure, perhaps due in part to the Thirty Years' War that sporadically pitted France against Spain. Our attempt to synthesise this 83-year period relies on the study of Basque cartographers at Placentia (Egaña Goya 1995), Spanish Admiralty hearings into the Gipuzkoan fishery held at San Sebastián at the end of the seventeenth century (de Gandía 1942), the appendices provided by René Bélanger (1971), and ceramic studies comparing the Petit-Mécatina collection with reference material from Bizkaia and Alava (Escribano Ruiz et al. 2010). Having already abandoned the fur trade, Basque outfitters, mostly from Saint-Jean-de-Luz, showed only an intermittent interest in whaling (Tuck 1986:216). The appetite for cod fishing, on the other hand, flourished in each of the three Basque maritime provinces. As fishing rooms filled up in Placentia Bay, more captains moved into the Gulf, where they seem to have split into two geographical areas. Lapurdians preferred the Gulf's southern coasts where they shared stations with other French nationals. Gipuzkoans and Bizkaians headed for western Newfoundland and the Gulf's lower North Shore. Placentia, which became the French capital of Newfoundland in 1662, continued to receive ships from both sides of the Pyrenean frontier (de Gandía 1942:52–55).

Known Lapurdian outfits in the Gulf hovered between 20 and 30 ships (Turgeon 2000). Similar numbers of Gipuzkoan ships fished in Placentia Bay and a smaller contingent sailed to western Newfoundland (de Gandía 1942:41–62). Bizkaian numbers are unknown, but were likely less. In 1625, San Sebastián

sent 41 ships and 1,475 sailors to the Gulf, followed in 1631 by 1,200 men and boys (Mimeault 2011:39). The average size of a fishing ship was about 150 tons, with an average crew of 35 to 40 sailors (Turgeon 2000). The Basque seasonal population in the Gulf came to about 2,500 to 3,000 males, outnumbering the total census population of New France in 1663.

French tolerance of hundreds of Spanish nationals within the confines of its colony was a tacit recognition of Basque customary rights in the Gulf. However, Basques also benefited from a formal diplomatic tradition, known as the *Traités de Bonne correspondance*, or reciprocity treaties, that upheld commercial rights between the Basque provinces of Spain and France in times of international and especially Franco-Spanish hostility. The treaties were negotiated by the local Admiralty officials on each side of the border, then confirmed *a posteriori* by Madrid and Paris. Covering a wide range of cross-border customs, they even laid down rules for exchanging ship's flags to avoid corsairs (de Gandía 1942:52–55; Lugat 2006; Turgeon 2000:174–175). Each province ensured its own interests. For example, Gipuzkoa sent iron to Lapurdi in return of vital food products, and any interruption of this trade soon brought social unrest and currency shortages to San Sebastián (Alberdi Lonbide and Aragón Ruano 2007:221–232). Such regional trans-border diplomacy, based on cultural links and regional trade, illustrates how Basques worked to normalise and strengthen Franco-Spanish relations. In times of international crisis, the Admiralties at Sebastián and Saint-Jean-de-Luz, which arose as communal institutions in the Middle Ages and evolved into provincial offices of the national Admiralties,

channelled regional concerns into state diplomacy (Casado Soto 1988:87–93; de Gandía 1942:52–55; Lugat 2006). In the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Spanish Basque presence was similarly grounded in custom and diplomacy, and may have been welcomed by New France for the naval expertise, commercial networks and friendship with Spain that it afforded in a context of Anglo-French rivalry. Relations between French authorities and Basque fishing crews traversed the 1630–1713 period without noticeable hitches.

In the southern Gulf, the Lapurdian fisheries extended from Cape Breton to the Gaspé Peninsula. Bélanger (1971:48, 51, 53, 55) mentions Basques in the Magdalene Islands in 1663 and at Percé in 1686 and 1690, and he notes that the Strait of Canso was an important geographical reference for Basque navigators in 1674. Although we find no mentions of Basque crews on the coasts of Cape Breton, Prince Edward Island, and Chaleur Bay between 1630 and 1713, such mentions occur before and after this period. Lapurdians usually fished alongside migratory French crews, often from Saint-Malo. At Percé, a sedentary fishery was founded in 1676, forcing migratory and sedentary operations to share the available shoreline (Mimeault 2011; Nadon 2004:1–13). We lack archaeological data from the southern Gulf for this period, and it is impossible to characterize the Basque sites that we may presume to exist.

Areas occupied by Basque fishers in the northeastern Gulf are known through the work of Saint-Jean-de-Luz mapmakers between 1674 and 1713, on behalf of the French Navy (Barkham 1989; Egaña Goya 1995). In addition, the Spanish Admiralty held hearings at San Sebastián on the state of the New-

foundland fisheries in 1697, as part of the government's preparation for peace negotiations, and the minutes of these hearing are preserved in the Muñoz collection held at the Naval Museum in Madrid (de Gandía 1942:41–62; cf. Bélanger 1971). We learn from the captains' depositions that Gipuzkoan cod fishers reconnoitred and occupied a string of ports in western Newfoundland between 1590 and 1650, moving from south to north. These data indicate that Basques fished at Codroy Island, St. George Bay (Uluçilho), Red Island (Isla de San Georgio), Fox Island River (Barrachoa), Bay of Islands (Tres Irlac), Bonne Bay (Baya Ederra), Echaide Portu (Old Ferolle Harbour or Castor River), Ferolle (Amuits), Sainte-Barbe (Anton Portu), Anchor Point (also called Amuits), Cape Norman (Miaritz), and Cape Degrat. A certain Juan de Echaide, a San Sebastián captain deceased about 1657 at the age of more than 70 years, was considered to have discovered Echaide Portu, the most northerly port used at this time (de Gandía 1942:50). Saint-Jean-de-Luz mapmakers such as Denis de Rotis (1674) and Pierre Detcheverry (1689) labelled western Newfoundland as the *Côte Basque* (Barkham 1989; Egaña Goya 1995). None of the captains interviewed in 1697 mentioned ports on the lower North Shore of the Gulf, perhaps because this coast was not diplomatically sensitive at this time. However, Basque mapmakers regularly noted Gradun (Middle Bay), Brest (Vieux-Fort), Babaçulho, Canada Pequeño (Saint-Augustin), Pointe de Marsancoa (Gros-Mécatina), Vaches de Behodet (Tête-à-la-Baleine?), Harceduict (Chevery), and the Îles de Gabarie (Ste. Marie Islands). Some eighteenth-century French maps show the name *Baie des Espagnols* between Gros-Mécatina

and Blanc-Sablon (Miren Egaña Goya, personal communication 2009). The Spanish name given by the Basques to the body of water between Newfoundland and the lower North Shore, *Gran Baya*, indicates the origin in Spain of many fishing crews in this region.

In his study of the 1697 hearings into the Gipuzkoan fishery in Newfoundland, Enrique de Gandía (1942:41–62) remarked the tolerance of French authorities toward Gipuzkoan crews. Statements by about 15 captains covered the years following the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), and several witnesses affirmed that the French had never bothered Gipuzkoans fishing in Newfoundland. The captains named about 20 ports used by ships from San Sebastián of which 16 were around Placentia Bay, namely Trespaz (Trepassey), Santamaria (St. Mary's), Cunillas, Placentia, Peru de Placentia, Peru Paradis, Martinis, Nurca-chumea, Buru-andia (Burin), San Lorenzo-chumea, San Lorenzo-andia (i.e., "Little" and "Great" St. Lawrence), San Pierre, Fortuna, Miquele Portu (Micquelon), Chasco Portu, and Señoria. On the "Basque Coast" of western Newfoundland, the captains named Opor Portu, Tres Islas, Portuchoa, and Echaide Portu. Other documents studied by de Gandía show that the situation of Gipuzkoan crews deteriorated between 1698 and 1709, as the predations of English, Turkish, and *Texlinguesa* corsairs forced them to sail under the command of French captains and flags, according to an agreement between the San Sebastián and Saint-Jean-de-Luz Admiralty offices (de Gandía 1942:52–55; cf. Lugat 2006; Turgeon 2000).

Despite the large number of potential sites, archaeology has contributed little to the knowledge of this period in the

Basque transatlantic fishery, perhaps due to the difficulty of finding migratory fishing stations whose central structure, the stage, extended over water and whose remains are generally under water (Figure 11). Some data from western Newfoundland comes from a 1984 surface collection at Port-au-Choix (Christien and Dufournier 1995; Peter Pope, personal communication 2010) and from test pits near the Bay of Islands at the site of Little Port 1 (Grat Lecqua) (DgBo-5). The former holds Béarn stoneware (RB16). The latter includes fragments of brick or tile, combustion residues, Seville amphora (RB1), and tin-glazed blue-on-white majolica with a pinkish paste that

fits no major French or Iberian style and may indicate a specific provenance. As well, Little Port 1 has common French green-glazed pottery, possibly from the Bordeaux hinterland and also found on many Basque sites including Red Bay, as well as on most French colonial sites (Monette et al. 2010; Schwartz 1994; Marianne Stopp, personal communication 2010). The date range for this material culture remains broad, from 1565 to 1760 (Brassard and Leclerc 2001:16; Marken 1994). A French or Basque occupation for this site has been suggested (Schwartz 1994:19–20).

Components of Petit-Mécatina on the lower North Shore, as mentioned,

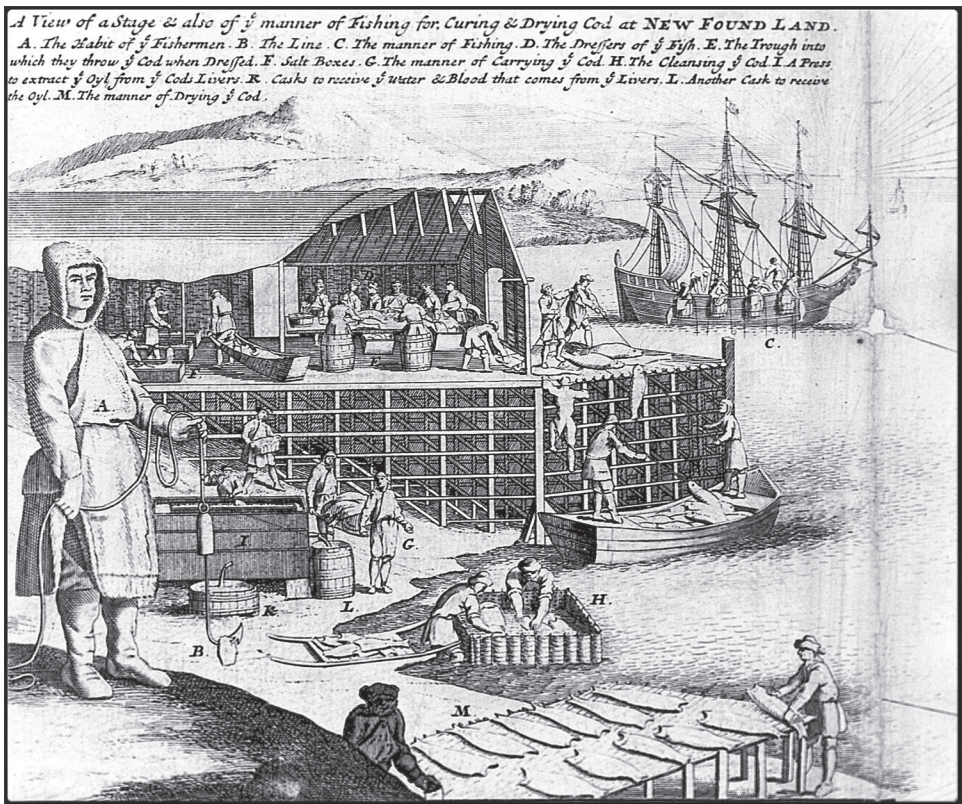


FIGURE 11. Engraving of a cod fishing stage, about 1700 (National Archives of Canada. Hermann Moll (1678–1732), engraver).

have elements that seem also to belong to this period (Fitzhugh 2001, 2009; Fitzhugh et al. 2002; Fitzhugh et al. 2003; Fitzhugh et al. 2004; Fitzhugh et al. 2005; Fitzhugh et al. 2007; Fitzhugh et al. 2008; Fitzhugh et al. 2011; Herzog 2011). Hare Harbour 1 (EdBt-3) overlooks a deep and well-protected cove in the southeastern part of the island. It is a complex site with an underwater component and building features on land, including an Inuit house imposed over older Basque remains. Land excavations have revealed two structures with flagstone floors and the remains of a wooden construction and a tile roof. These may be a cooperage and a forge, and include living areas. Around these structures, refuse heaps contain woodworking debris as well as food-related artefacts. No evidence of a tryworks has been found to date. Its absence may indicate a cod fishing function for this site, or perhaps the transformation of blubber into oil aboard ship, a technique invented by a Lapurdian captain, François Soupite, on a voyage to Davis Strait in 1636 (Cleirac 1661:153).

The underwater portion of Hare Harbour 1 contains several elongated mounds of ballast stones, including three large linear mounds that are perpendicular to the shoreline and are surrounded by stratified underwater deposits. These deposits, in chronological order from the sterile sand to the surface, are: a mass of wood chips and wood offcuts; the bones of whales, birds, and mostly thousands of cod; and scattered roofing tiles. This deposit sequence is similar to that of a trench excavated underwater at Red Bay, except that the cod remains are more numerous at Petit-Mécatina (Grenier et al. 2007:1:194–198).

This site has more abundant material culture than other Basque sites west of

the Strait of Belle Isle. It includes roofing tiles and forged nails that are typical of Basque sites, as well as charcoal associated with the forge. It also contains fragments of forest glass bottles, turned wood bowls (treenware), gunflints, and fishing instruments such as lead sounds and sinkers. Excavations have revealed three types of stoneware, mostly Norman but also from Béarn and the Rhine, as well as Muel majolica with monochrome, polychrome, and lustre décors. Datable objects include Dutch pipes from the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries. As well, glass beads found in one structure fit into the 1680–1730 period, based on their typology as well as datable elements in their chemical composition (Herzog and Moreau 2006). In contrast to these dates, one majolica porringer from Muel, Aragon, was made prior to 1610 and is comparable to examples from Red Bay (Figure 12) (Álvaro Zamora 2002:2:209; Fitzhugh et al. 2011; Herzog 2011). Petit-Mécatina is unusual among Basque sites on the North Shore because of its possible cod fishing function, its stratified underwater component and its datable objects.

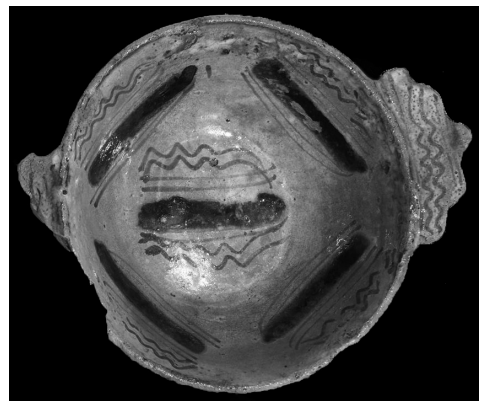


FIGURE 12. Majolica porringer from Muel, Aragon, found at Petit-Mécatina (EdBt-3). (Courtesy Vincent Delmas, photographer.)



Petit-Mécatina is unusual also from the point of view of its coarse earthenware. Herzog (2011) counts 25 distinct ceramic types, including Iberian (RB1 and RB2) and French (RB3 and RB5) types also represented at Red Bay (Figures 13 and 14). This is the largest variety of ceramics from any Basque site, and includes some types unknown at any other Gulf site or, for that matter, elsewhere in the New World. One of these may come from the Bilbao hinterland (Escribano Ruiz et al. 2010) and the ceramic collection as a whole is not dissimilar from “western” Basque sites in Bizkaia and Alava (Sergio Escribano Ruiz, personal communication 2010).

These aspects make Petit-Mécatina the most unusual of seventeenth-century Basque sites on the North Shore of the Gulf. Significantly, no period document identifies this site, located on seventeenth-century maps between Harceduict (Chevery) and the “vaches (*bajas?*) de Behodet” (Tête-à-la-Baleine).

The site highlights an otherwise poorly documented chapter of the Basque presence in the Gulf. While its material culture indicates that the Basque supply networks revealed at Red Bay survived well into the seventeenth century, the possible presence of Bizkaian pottery, not found on other sites to date, may correspond to the commercial expansion of Bilbao in the seventeenth century. For the time being, this unusual pottery forms a distinctive subset of Basque material culture. As the sole important site from this period, Petit-Mécatina opens a window on the seventeenth-century Gipuzkoan and Bizkaian fisheries around *Gran Baya*.

In summary, from 1630 to 1713, Lapurdian fishing crews frequented the Gulf’s southern littoral, while Gipuzkoans and Bizkaians made the northeast (*Gran Baya*) their favoured destination. Basques from all three provinces continued to congregate at Placentia Bay, in harmony with French authorities at Placentia. This



FIGURE 13. Amphora from Seville, Andalusia (RB1), found at Petit-Mécatina (EdBt-3). (Courtesy Vincent Delmas, photographer.)

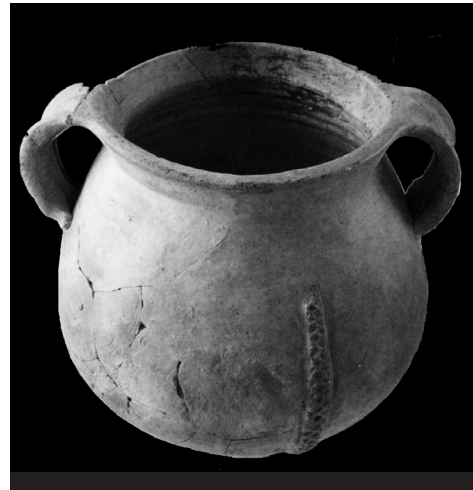


FIGURE 14. French two-handled cooking pot (RB3), with strips stamped with a knurl, found at Red Bay (EkBc-1). (Courtesy Vincent Delmas, photographer.)

long period remains poorly known, and data from Petit-Mécatina may not be representative of the entire Gulf.

### **The Fish Traders: The Basque Archaeological Signal in 1713–1760**

The final period of the Basque fisheries in the Gulf of St. Lawrence began with the Treaty of Utrecht signed in 1713 by Spain, France, and England, which ceded Newfoundland to England and excluded Gipuzkoans from landing or fishing on the island. The Treaty effectively ended Gipuzkoan and Bizkainian outfitting in the Gulf, even though individual sailors probably signed onto Lapurdian ships. Its disastrous effect on the Gipuzkoan economy confirms the importance of the former fishery in Newfoundland (de Gandía 1942). Our knowledge of the declining and changing Basque role in the Gulf of St. Lawrence relies largely on archaeological work at Pabos (Nadon 2004), the study of Béarn stoneware found on Canadian sites (Chrestien and Dufourneau 1995) and a recent work on Basque fishing and settlement in New France, focussing on the Gaspé Peninsula (Mimeault 2011).

Lapurdian crews continued to fish in western Newfoundland for many years, not only on the “French Shores” where their presence was legal but also elsewhere. In 1725, some Luzien captains gave their destinations as Cape Ray, St. George’s Bay, Bay of Islands, and Port-au-Choix. They were at Cape Ray and St. George’s Bay during the Seven Years’ War. Sporadic reports as late as 1767 show them at St. Pierre, Port-au-Choix, and Ferrolle (Morandière 1962:1:165, 2:600, 601, 604, 846). Of these stations, only Port-au-Choix fell within the French Shores. Reinforced English rule ultimately put an end to these late incursions into western Newfoundland.

With the loss of Newfoundland in 1713, “the geostrategic importance of the Gulf of St. Lawrence was [irreparably] modified, and France moved the centre of gravity of its fishery toward Cape Breton Island” (Nadon 2004:14). Renamed *Île Royale*, Cape Breton became the new centre of the French fisheries and the government was installed at Louisbourg. The Basques who followed the French to Cape Breton did so “without enthusiasm” (Bélangier 1971:51). Fishing stations were crowded and catches were inferior to those of Newfoundland. Fishing grounds were as much as 30 km from land, requiring fishers to transfer their cod to a ship stationed offshore, to be salted on board and subsequently taken to shore for drying (Morandière 1962:2:663–666). Some captains preferred Gaspé to Cape Breton. In 1725, seasonal crews from Saint-Jean-de-Luz headed for *Île Royale*, *Île Bonaventure*, *Percé*, and *Gaspé* (Mimeault 2011; Morandière 1962:2:600). At the same time, the New France government created coastal seigneuries to promote the sedentary fishery and intensify colonisation at Louisbourg, Roma on *Île Saint-Jean* (Prince Edward Island), and at Pabos on the Gaspé Peninsula (Nadon 2004:16). As colonists occupied prime fishing stations, conflicts arose with migratory fishers, forcing Basque captains to adapt their practices in order to cohabit with permanent fishing communities. Most colonist fishers were from Normandy, especially around Saint-Malo, as Basques hewed to their migratory habits and shied away from settling in New France (Mimeault 2011:57–60; Nadon 2004:1–16; Turgeon 2000).

Some Basque colonists, however, were prominent in trade networks within the Gulf that connected up with Basque ships on the Atlantic coast. The

half-Basque commandant at Brador (Blanc-Sablon), François Brouague de Martel, was an intermediary between Basque captains fishing in *Gran Baya* and a group of Québec City merchants of Lapurdian origin that included the keeper of the royal warehouse, François Foucault, and the navigator Jean-Baptiste Chevery. In the 1740s, Chevery supplied the royal warehouse with salt that he obtained from Basque captains stopping at Brador. While en route, he supplied fishing stations along the North Shore, and his name survives as a place-name near Petit-Mécatina (Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec [BANQ] 1747; Igartua 2000; Rousseau 2000). While Chevery plied the North Shore to *Gran Baya*, another colonial Basque outfitter covered the southern Gulf. Jean-Baptiste Bernatchez was a Lapurdian captain who settled at Montmagny on the St. Lawrence estuary about 1732. He supplied fishing stations along the Gaspé coast with goods purchased from Basque ships putting in at Louisbourg. Montmagny, called Village à la Caille at the time, was also the site of a commercial sheep farm. While sheep-raising was rare in New France, it was common in the Basque Country, which may explain why the hamlet of Montmagny attracted at least four Basque settlers and that the parish priest was half-Basque. The sheep farm and the Bernatchez outfitting business are presumed to be the origin of sheep bones recovered at the Gaspesian fishing seigneurie of Mont-Louis, run by three Basque associates, and at other sites along the St. Lawrence estuary (Bernatchez 2006; Bossé 2010:132, 154; Mimeault 2011:127; Pelletier 2010). These networks of Lipurdian outfitters around Québec City extended Basque material culture and culinary tastes into the heart of New France.

From an archaeological perspective, Pabos and Louisbourg had a seasonal Basque presence that appears as a distinctive element of these French colonial sites. Teasing out this Basque presence relies on a detailed analysis of site collections. Chrestien and Dufournier (1995) identified markers of a Basque presence at a dozen sites around the Gulf, including Louisbourg, Canso, Pabos, and Penouille in the southern Gulf. The markers were Béarn stoneware pots (RB16) made at Garos and Bouillon in the Adour Valley (Figure 15). These *toupiés* or *pots à graisse* were used to package and export lard and conserved meat, and could be placed over a fire to heat their contents. At Louisbourg, Chrestien and Dufournier (1995) identified more than a hundred Béarn pots, found on lots occupied by merchants engaged in supplying the fisheries. Smaller numbers of shards, collected on the surface, occurred on sixteenth-century whaling sites in the Strait of Belle Isle (Red Bay, Brador), at Basque sites from 1630–1713

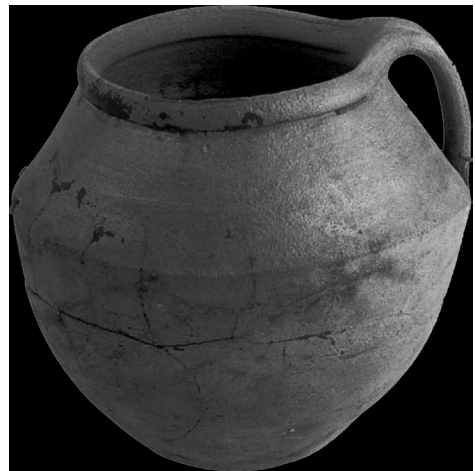


FIGURE 15. Stoneware *toupie* from Béarn (RB16), found at Saint-Sébastien. (Courtesy Xabi Otero, photographer.)

in the northeastern Gulf (Mingan, Port-au-Choix), and at Placentia where the Basques fished for two centuries. On most of these sites, the authors knew of only one or two shards.

A study of French stoneware on Québec sites confirms the low frequency of Béarn pots around the Gulf (Johnson Gervais 2011). It found 60 fragments on the Gaspé Peninsula (56 at Pabos and Île Beauséjour, the rest at Penouille) and only four fragments on the North Shore (Brador, Mingan). It also found 46 fragments in Québec City (35 at the Guillaume Estèbe residence, the rest at three Place-Royal sites). In the Maritime Provinces, the study located one fragment at Saddle Island, another at Placentia's Old Fort, two at Port-au-Choix, and four at Canso's Grassy Island Fort. Finally, it confirmed the overwhelming preponderance of the Louisbourg collection. Compared to 118 shards on all other sites, Louisbourg alone has 248 pots, based on an uncounted number of shards. Many of these collections, and all the more numerous ones, belong to the 1713–1760 period. Only Saddle Island, Port-au-Choix, and Placentia's Old Fort are certainly older.

The proposed link between Béarn stoneware and Basque fishers is based on the “regional character of French commerce in the 17th and 18th centuries” (Chrestien and Dufournier 1995:251). This meant, in practice, that merchants in ocean ports contracted out the manufacture of a wide range of products, including conserved food, to rural artisans living in the port's fluvial hinterland. They then sold these products to outfitters or exported them overseas (Monette et al. 2010). The Béarn pots and their culinary contents thus were made in the rural Adour Valley on behalf of Bayonne or Saint-Jean-de-Luz

merchants, who sold them to Basque fishing outfitters.

On sites in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Béarn *toupiés* appear alongside stoneware pots from Normandy, a region that also sent a large number of fishers, especially from Saint-Malo and Granville. Norman stoneware was mostly used to sell butter, while 95 percent of Béarn stoneware held animal fat. The authors suggest that cultural differences led Norman and Breton crews to prefer butter in their daily diet, and Basque crews to prefer lard and other animal fats (Chrestien and Dufournier 1995:264, 268–269; cf. Turgeon and Dickner 1990). While this preference may be true, Norman stoneware also occurs on Basque sites where no Norman presence is known, in the Strait of Belle Isle, and on the North Shore. On these sites, it is not a marker of Norman presence, contrary to the Basque association of Béarn stoneware. In fact, Norman butter was marketed widely throughout Europe, including the Basque Country, while the export market for Béarn lard was limited to the Basque ports. Basque fishing ships took both Norman and Béarn food products aboard, and used them in complementary ways.

Building on this idea of a Basque element within an eighteenth-century “French” site, archaeology at Pabos in the southeastern Gaspé Peninsula has revealed an example of a sedentary fishing seigneurie with a Basque migratory component (Nadon 2004). Despite the appearance of the toponym *Paboc* in the early seventeenth century, no activity was mentioned at Pabos until 1719, when a Lapurdi captain set up seasonal fishing operations (Denys 1672:221; Nadon 2004:18). When new seigneurs took possession of Pabos in 1730, they founded a sedentary fishery

and levied a tax on seasonal Basque ships (Nadon 2004:1–13, 16–18). A chaotic transition ensued, but Basques continued to go to Pabos, to fish and to trade with sedentary fishers. Between 1742 and 1756, at least 35 ships from Saint-Jean-de-Luz and Bayonne called at the place, to fish and trade for dried cod. This Basque presence occurred in a context where the majority of the Pabos population was Norman, and where the seigneurs had preferential links with Norman merchants in Granville (Nadon 2004:23–24).

Basque fishers and traders thus formed a demographic and commercial minority at Pabos after 1730, a relation that is also reflected in the archaeological collection. Béarn *toupiés* make up 12 percent of the 635 stoneware shards, Norman pots account for 59 percent, and the remainder is of Rhenish and other origins. The 1:5 proportion between Béarn and Norman stoneware is similar to that found in Louisbourg (Chrestien and Dufournier 1995:267; Nadon 2004:83). Other artefact classes from Pabos also shed light on the eighteenth-century Basque presence in New France. Most tin-glazed faïence or majolica (107 objects) is from Rouen in Normandy and Moustiers in Provence, “two of the principal supply centres for faïence, the north and the south of France” (Nadon 2004:82–83). Spanish majolica nevertheless appears in significant quantity (9 percent), recalling the presence of Aragonese majolica on earlier Basque sites. Moreover, majolica on Basque sites is distinct from that found on Spanish colonial sites in Florida and Mexico (Deagan 1987; Deagan et al. 2010). While its provenance is unknown, it has visual similarities to tin-glazed pottery from the western Basque province of Alava (Ibabe Ortiz 1995; Ibañez

Gomez et al. 1992; Solaun Bustinza 2005; Solaun Bustinza and Escribano Ruiz 2006). Blue-on-white Spanish faïence such as that from Pabos occurs on sites throughout New France after 1713, as do olive-oil amphorae from Seville (RB1) (Brassard and Leclerc 2001:16, 66–67). The diffusion of these Iberian potteries may reflect a revival of Basque trade into New France after 1713, when Lapurdi outfitters converted from the migratory fishery to supplying sedentary fishing stations and, from there, tapped into larger colonial trade networks.

Turning to coarse earthenware, the Pabos collection is typical of New France colonial sites, with its dominance of pottery from Québec City, Saintonge, and especially the common green-glazed variety that may come from the Bordeaux hinterland. The latter variety appears on Basque sites since the sixteenth century, revealing the link between Basque captains and Bordeaux lenders (Brassard and Leclerc 2001:28–29; Loewen 2004; Monette et al. 2010; Nadon 2004:81–82). As well, a cooking pot found at Pabos recalls the *marmites* of older Basque sites (RB3); such pots were part of Basque material culture in Canada for over two centuries (Nadon 2004:134). The origin of these pots, some of which have vertical bands applied in a decorative fashion, remains uncertain. Gusset (2007) sees similarities with Provence products, while Brassard and Leclerc (2001:34–35) attribute them to Cox in the Toulouse region. Similar pots were also produced at Sadirac, near Bordeaux (Pierre Régaldo, personal communication 2010). Whatever their exact origin, a French provenance seems certain for these pots that are widespread on Basque sites, and were part of the commercial links that Gipuzkoa maintained historically with France.

Finally, Pabos has a large collection of forest glass, made in rural ateliers southeast of Toulouse. Bottles are the dominant form at Pabos while in Louisbourg, wide-mouthed jars are most numerous (Harris 1979). Nadon (2004:80) believes that the Pabos bottles indicate “a special supply mode”. We recall that older Basque sites often yield a high proportion of glass objects, often of semi-luxurious quality. More research is required to better understand the importance of *gobeletterie* on Basque sites, including their distribution from production centres near Toulouse and in Catalonia (Delmas and Gelé 2011; Riols de Fonclaire 1925).

Pabos therefore shows the joint presence of Béarn stoneware, Spanish faïence, French green-glazed earthenware, handled cooking pots, and forest glass that may reflect the “special supply mode” of Basque outfitters. Of these, Béarn stoneware is the most diagnostic Basque element in this collection that is otherwise not atypical of eighteenth-century New France. After 1713, the visibility of diagnostically “Basque” material culture diminished in favour of a typically “French” spectrum, forming an archaeological parallel to the minority status of Basque fishers in New France. However, the penetration of objects historically associated with Basque supply networks into the broader New France market also reflects a new transatlantic strategy by Saint-Jean-de-Luz outfitters. Breaking their customary reliance on the seasonal fishery, Basque merchants turned to buying cod from sedentary fishers, offering equipment and domestic goods in exchange. Their new strategy, an indirect consequence of the Treaty of Utrecht, may explain the diffusion of typically “Basque” material culture on a larger scale in New France in the eighteenth century.

In this fourth and final period, Basques were forced to react to the loss of their Newfoundland fishery. Some regrouped in the southern Gulf, where French sedentary fishers already occupied the best stations. However, most Gipuzkoans and Bizkaians simply abandoned the Gulf fishery. While Lapurdians continued to fish seasonally, they tended not to settle in New France as sedentary fishers. Instead, Lapurdian outfitters switched to the colonial trade in fish for equipment and consumer products, while continuing to draw on their traditional supply networks.

### Analysis

This overview has sought first of all an understanding of the Basque Country and its trade routes as a regionally differentiated and evolving source of ships, people, and materials destined for the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The central province of Gipuzkoa appears as the core area of Basque outfitting into the Gulf, with significant but variable contributions from Lapurdi and Bizkaia. The resilience of Basque navigation into the Gulf rode partly on this deep basin of Gipuzkoan ships and sailors that could expand into or retract from the neighbouring provinces, depending on the economic and geopolitical tide. Another source of long-term strength for Basque outfitters was their ability to find supplies by tapping into bedrock regional trade networks along the Ebro and Adour Valleys and into existing overseas networks such as Andalusia and the Garonne Valley. In this way, the outfitting trade was imbedded in the fundamental Euro-Atlantic staple trades. Basque outfitters’ ability to traverse negative conditions can be explained by their grounding in this deeper economic bedrock.

The geography of Basque trade networks explains the characteristic signature of Basque material culture, as originating in both France and Spain but with a concentration of provenances around the Bay of Biscay. Several diagnostic ceramics (cooking pots, jugs) appear to come from the Garonne Valley by way of Bordeaux, while high-status materials such as majolica and *latticino* glassware derive from overland sources in Aragon and Midi-Pyrénées. Variations on this basic spectrum developed over time, as technologies and production centres changed, and as Basque supply lines separated into French and Spanish streams under the influence of the Thirty Years' War. This separation weakened the keystone position of Gipuzkoa and strengthened networks along the Adour to Bayonne and the Nervión to Bilbao, as evidenced by the increase in Béarnese stoneware in the southern Gulf (Louisbourg, Pabos) and the appearance of Alavese earthenware in the northern Gulf (Petit-Mécatina).

Basque activities fall into four periods or "space-times" that were governed by specific geopolitical conditions. The watersheds that separate these periods had the effect of restructuring Basque activities in the Gulf. They were geopolitical crises that upset the previous equilibrium of Basque activity in the Gulf, and provoked strategies to adapt and recover. They also lay bare the Basques' evolving geopolitical role, first as agents in the sixteenth-century Franco-Spanish contest for control over the Gulf, then as free traders in the face of the French charter companies' monopolistic ambitions, and finally as the cement in the Franco-Spanish alliance against England.

An evolving archaeological picture emerges from this four-period analysis

(Table 2). The spatial organisation of Basque sites changed from a concentration at the Gulf's eastern gateways, toward a freewheeling presence throughout the Gulf, then a partial territorial separation into "French" and "Spanish" regions and, finally, the amputation of the northeastern "Spanish" region. Cod fishing remained a constant activity, while whaling concentrated in 1543–1630 along the North Shore and trading targeted the western Gulf in 1580–1630. Architectural remains at whaling sites evolved over time. Ship and boat remains occur on sites before 1580. These earlier sites also have linear ovens with multiple hearths, platforms and associated cooperages, while sites after 1580 have single, circular ovens with only an associated cooperage, as the intensity of whaling activity at each site seems dramatically reduced. Cod fishing sites show work areas such as a forge and a cooperage before 1713; later sites have a sedentary nature with domestic features. Roofing tiles occur on both whaling and fishing sites, but only before 1713; they are generally unglazed before 1630, while later tiles can be partially glazed and bear marks. Despite the presence of tiles that are a distinctive feature of Basque sites, whaling and fishing stations are quite different in terms of their architectural assemblages.

Several Basque sites have a significant underwater component. Red Bay includes large ships, whaleboats, a ramp, an abundance of whale bones, and stratified deposits of woodworking debris, cod remains, and broken tiles. At Chateau Bay, a large shipwreck and wharf anchorages were found. While an underwater survey at Anse à la Cave (Cap Bon-Désir) found no structures, Petit-Mécatina has a rich submerged component. In addition to a few whale bones,

TABLE 2. Summary of diagnostic features in each of the four periods.

	1530–1580	1580–1630	1630–1713	1713–1760
<b>Spatial distribution</b>	Eastern straits; Strait of Belle Isle, SE Newfoundland., Canso.	Wideranging; N Shore, Canso, W Newfoundland, Placentia Bay, Chaleur Bay, St. Lawrence.	Specific regions: Gipuzkoa and Bizkaia to NE Gulf; Lipurdi to S Gulf; all to Placentia Bay.	Southern Gulf: Cape Breton, Prince Edward Island, Chaleur Bay.
<b>Principal sites</b>	Red Bay; Chateau Bay	Anse à la Cave; Île aux Basques	Hare Harbour (Petit-Mécatina)	Pabos; Louisbourg
<b>Types of activity</b>	Intense whaling in Strait of Belle Isle; cod fishing in all regions.	Cod fishing; whaling on N Shore, Miscou and St. Lawrence; trade in W Gulf.	Cod fishing; rare whaling on N Shore.	Cod fishing; cod trading; isolated whaling on N Shore.
<b>Architecture (principal structures)</b>	Linear ovens, up to 7 hearths; platform; cooperage.	Round ovens, single hearth (1 double hearth); cooperage.	No ovens found to date.	Sedentary cod fishing sites. Permanent habitat.
<b>Roofing tiles</b>	Unglazed; rarely glazed.	Unglazed.	Unglazed; some glazed, marks.	Absence.
<b>Underwater features</b>	Chateau Bay, Red Bay: ships, boats; ramp; cultural strata; whale bones.	Anse à la Cave: survey found no structures.	Hare Harbour: cultural strata; linear mounds of ballast; few whale bones.	<i>Machault</i> , not related to land sites.
<b>Coarse earthenware</b>	Cooking pots, jugs, pitchers from SW France and unknown French/Spanish sources. Andalusian amphorae.	Similar to 1530–1580, but few types on a given site.	Spanish red micaceous. Plates, jugs from Alava and other sources not seen earlier.	Plates, bowls, cooking pots from SW France. All sources known. Andalusian amphorae.
<b>Clay pipes</b>	Absence	Absence	Presence	Presence
<b>Stoneware</b>	Norman, Béarn storage pots.	Béarn storage pots.	Norman, Béarn storage pots.	Norman, Béarn storage pots.
<b>Majolica (faïence)</b>	Porringers from Muel. Pitchers from Alava (?).	Porringers from Muel.	Porringers from Muel and possibly Alava.	Plates from Spanish source, possibly Alava.
<b>Glass</b>	Tinted glass; <i>laticinio</i> . Some later beads (1630–1760).	<i>Laticinio</i> . Some later beads (1630–1760).	<i>Laticinio</i> . Beads (1630–1760).	Tinted (“forest”) glass bottles, jars. No beads reported.



this site has a noteworthy series of linear mounds of ballast rock that may have been thrown overboard or supported the wooden framing of a fishing stage. It also has a large area of stratified deposits, proceeding chronologically from wood chips, to cod bones to broken tiles. Seventeenth-century artefacts are found in the middle and upper levels. The variability of underwater features depends on the type and intensity of land-based activities. Fish processing left dense, stratified deposits that can be excavated sequentially, while whale processing left scattered, though highly visible faunal remains and isolated structures such as ramps and discarded boats. Interestingly, both whaling and fishing sites contain evidence of cod processing, conducted on moored shallops or on a wooden stage that projected overwater. These stratified underwater deposits provide vital chronological data, since cultural remains on land are usually compressed into a single, undifferentiated stratum, due to the lack of sediments overlying the bedrock.

The ceramic sequence is directly related to changing supply lines in the Basque Country and the shifting geopolitical context over 250 years. Its “base line” is the Red Bay assemblage of coarse earthenware cooking pots, jugs and pitchers from southwestern France and other unknown sources in France and/or Spain. Oil amphorae from Andalusia, stoneware storage pots from Normandy, Béarn, majolica porringers from Muel, and pitchers possibly from Alava complete the Red Bay ceramic reference. Changes to the early ceramic spectrum are almost imperceptible until 1630, after which they accelerate and become dominant after 1713, leaving only a few, sometimes indirect elements of continuity with the Red Bay collection. Ceramics

from the second period (1580–1630) are few and fragmentary, but reported types do not stray significantly from the Red Bay spectrum. Significant changes occur in the third period (1630–1713) with the arrival of Alavese and other Spanish ware in the northeastern Gulf where Gipuzkoan and Bizkaian ships tended to fish. In a parallel but more advanced development, the fourth period (1713–1760) shows mostly French provenances in the southern Gulf. The Pabos collection includes some types found at Red Bay, but it is nonetheless typical of French colonial sites of the eighteenth century, including Spanish faïence and Andalusian amphorae that may be Basque contributions to New France material culture. In summary, while some Red Bay types never disappeared, the Red Bay ceramic spectrum began to break up after 1630, as new types appeared and assemblages in the northeastern and southern Gulf respectively took on a more typically Spanish or French character. The central Gipuzkoan supply line gradually gave way to two parallel supply lines on either side of the Franco-Spanish border, respectively favouring Lipurdi and Bizkaia.

Over 250 years, the most durable Basque markers are Béarn storage pots. As well, high-status majolica porringers from Aragon and fine glass and stemware in the *latticinio* style are typical before 1713. These materials were replaced by Spanish majolica of unknown origin (Alava?) and forest glass bottles and wide-mouthed jars. The presence of fine majolica and glassware may relate to a hierarchical ship-borne society where officers reinforced their rank by displaying quality tableware. Finally, our partial survey of glass trade beads shows a 1630–1760 range for datable examples, including those found on earlier sites.

The beads signal trading activities, though not necessarily by Basques, and show that Natives visited the sites of fishing and whaling stations. This preliminary finding calls for a full examination of beads from all Basque sites.

An obstacle to understanding the Basque presence remains the paucity of data from 1630 to 1713, when a unified Basque material culture appears to separate into “French” and “Spanish” regional variants. Another obstacle lies in the over-representation of whaling sites, although this is partly overcome by deeper analysis of key sites. Red Bay includes fishing data from its underwater trench, Petit-Mécataina may be primarily a fishing site, and Pabos is definitely in this category, leaving only the 1580–1630 period with no data. Nonetheless, there is a need to investigate a long-term fishing site in southern Newfoundland. As for Basque-Native trading, there is a need to discover and excavate a bona fide contact site such as the *habitación Pichiguy* or *Canada Pequeño*.

### Conclusion

The study of Basque occupations has been critical to the understanding of sixteenth-century Canada, but the Basques’ importance in later centuries has been underestimated. A key to our understanding of the Basques has been to cast them not as a sub-national cultural group, but as a well-organised commercial community and as protagonists in the Franco-Spanish relationship that was essential to their wellbeing. While they rarely settled in Canada, their presence was an essential aspect of the early modern Gulf. Their archaeological footprint varied as supply networks evolved in the Basque Country, as windows of opportunity opened and closed with regard to fishing, whaling, and trading

possibilities, and as changes swept over the Gulf’s geopolitical landscape. We hope that this overview may stimulate new research and thought in all regions around the Gulf of St. Lawrence and in the Basque Country.

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