

REVIEWS

Basque Whaling in Labrador in the 16th Century. Jean-Pierre Proulx.
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INTRODUCTION

JEAN-PIERRE PROULX's 108 page paperback, *Basque Whaling in Labrador in the 16th Century*, is published in the Parks Canada series titled "Studies in Archaeology, Architecture and History." The author is an in-house historian for the Canadian Parks Service. Divided into an introduction (6 pp.), three chapters and a conclusion (2 pp.), the book's chapters are headed as follows: Chapter I "The Basques in Labrador in the 16th Century" (12 pp.), Chapter II "Methods and Technology of the Whale Hunt" (42 pp.) and Chapter III "Whaling in the Basque Economy" (15 pp.).

At first glance the publication has some of the hallmarks of a well-researched work: 232 notes and a 26-page bibliography (though the latter is disproportionate with the 70 pages of text, particularly as over half the works listed are never mentioned in either the text or notes). However, closer consideration of the booklet by a discerning reader, especially by anyone fully familiar with the history and historiography of the Spanish Basque provinces in the 16th century, will quickly dispel this initial impression.

There are two fundamental problems with the book. First, it suffers from extensive poor scholarship: a plethora of incorrect information, the misreading and misinterpretation of Spanish manuscript records and of French, English and Spanish secondary sources, contradictions, crucial omissions and faulty citations. Second, in putting together his book Proulx has engaged in questionable practice, namely the unacknowledged use and misrepresentation of the published works of

others. Such low standards in an official publication should be of concern to Canadian scholars if not to members of the public at large. The appearance of this small book raises important questions regarding government funding of scholarly research and the peer assessment and review process for Canadian Parks Service manuscripts. These issues have already been highlighted by the reviewers of earlier books published by Parks Canada (or with its co-operation).¹ I would ask readers to consider the two parts of this critique: I) Unethical practice and II) Poor scholarship.

I) QUESTIONABLE PRACTICE

Proulx's short introduction begins with an incomplete two-paragraph 'review' of previous work on the Basques in Atlantic Canada in the 1500s which leaves out the main contributions so far made to the subject. Only five articles or books are included: two now-outdated articles by Markham (1882)² and Innis (1931)³ and two books and an article by Quinn,⁴ Cell⁵ and Gilchrist⁶ respectively which only minimally refer to Basque whalers. No discussion or assessment is made of the more relevant works by the principal scholars in this small field.

Among the more important works which Proulx omits from this 'review' — even though he makes unacknowledged use of it in his book — is the recent (1987) volume *Los vascos en el marco Atlántico Norte. Siglos XVI y XVII (The Basques in the North Atlantic in the 16th and 17th centuries)* edited and co-authored by S. Huxley Barkham.⁷ Yet the eleven contributions contained in the book — including four chapters by its editor⁸ — make it the single most significant volume to date on Spanish Basque whaling in Labrador and the North Atlantic in the 16th and 17th centuries. Nor for that matter does Proulx discuss in his 'review' any other of the publications on this topic by S. Barkham or this reviewer. These omissions are surprising both because of the obvious relevance of these works and because S. Barkham's research in Spain, publications and correct identification *in situ* of the Basque whaling sites of the Strait of Belle Isle (Labrador) in the 1970s led directly to the underwater and land excavations at Red Bay (Labrador), now the location of a new National Historic Site.⁹ Proulx might also have discussed the work of J. Bernard and L. Turgeon in France and some of the older French and Spanish literature.

In his "Introduction" the only pointer given by Proulx to publications by S. Barkham or by this reviewer is in a note that instructs the reader to "see bibliography". But in the bibliography neither the 1987 volume edited by S. Barkham nor her contribution to the book (not to mention certain articles by her of which Proulx has also made unreferenced use) are listed under her name. What is more, Proulx wrongly ascribes the editorship of that book to its publisher (Enrique Ayerbe).¹⁰

Even more surprising in view of his incomplete 'review' and of this misrepresentation of S. Barkham's work, Proulx describes Markham's four page 1882 article as being "among the few studies that have attempted a thorough investiga-

tion of European whalers, especially Basques, in what are now Canadian waters” even though Markham says nothing at all about Basque whaling in the north-west Atlantic! This evidently unsound judgement misinforms the reader and coupled with a far from objective and full review gives the impression that little previous work has been done on the subject.

Added to these errors and omissions, throughout his book Proulx directly refers to documents in a number of Spanish archives, which might lead most readers to believe that his publication is based on his own original archival research in Spain. However, the majority of the 51 Spanish archival references in the book are for specific information on Basque whaling in Labrador in the 16th century previously published (although this is not acknowledged) by this reviewer or by S. Barkham, or for documents catalogued by the latter. The evidence of Proulx’s unreferenced use and misrepresentation of previously published work is clear and extensive as the following selected examples illustrate.

i)- On pages 5, 21 and 53 Proulx refers to the earliest original wills known to have been written in what is now Canada (for two Basque sailors who died in Labrador in 1577 and 1584). These documents were found over twenty years ago in a Spanish archive by S. Barkham and subsequently discussed by her in several publications¹¹ (the 1584 will was published in its entirety in English in 1982¹² and in Spanish in 1987),¹³ but Proulx does not cite any of these works here. Instead he either gives no reference for his information (p. 5 — the first two sentences of the book — and p. 21) or simply cites the original Spanish archival reference (p. 53). Thus, as Proulx gives no indication that these significant documents were previously published and discussed by another person he gives the impression that they are being discussed for the first time.¹⁴

ii)- On pages 38-39 (and elsewhere) Proulx describes at length data from two detailed lists of provisions and whaling equipment taken to Labrador on two Spanish Basque ships in 1566, giving as his only source the Spanish archival reference. He disregards the fact that these unusual lists were found over two decades ago by S. Barkham who discussed them in print in 1973¹⁵ and subsequently transcribed and published the complete documents in 1982¹⁶ and 1987.¹⁷

iii)- On page 52 (note 81), Proulx writes: “one document tells us that in 1564, Francisco de Janregueta [sic for Jaureguieta] and Simon de Azcoitia had a conversation in the port of Sonbrero ‘*junto a la cabina que tenyan fecha para el derritir de las ballenas*’ (‘beside the cabin they had made for the boiling down of the whales’). For this information Proulx cites another original Spanish archival reference. He does not mention that this witness’ statement among hundreds of lawsuits was previously published by S. Barkham in two 1978 articles (one in English and one in Spanish)¹⁸ as well as in 1987.¹⁹ For example, in the 1978 article in English she wrote: “in 1564 Simon de Azcoitia from Guetaria, a harpooner on another of Elorriaga’s ships ... mentioned that he had been talking to Francisco de Jaureguieta of Orio when he was standing <beside the cabin that they had made for the boiling down of the whales they kill >”. It would have been standard practice — here and in the other similar instances — for Proulx to have referenced previously published research, citing alongside the

archival reference the phrase “previously cited [or published] in” As this is not done most readers would infer that Proulx is discussing the results of his own archival work.

iv)- On page 46 Proulx writes: “historical records clearly show the existence of two whaling periods in the area, the autumn period being by far the most important”, giving as his only “historical record” the archival reference to a lawsuit over whaling in Labrador. Yet — as in the above cases — Proulx does not mention that having located that lawsuit in the 1970s, S. Barkham had already discussed in 1987 the statements it contains about Labrador whaling seasons under a heading specifically entitled “The two whaling seasons”.²⁰

v)- On page 18 (note 34) Proulx gives data (and the relevant Spanish archival reference) previously assessed in S. Barkham’s 1977 article “Guipuzcoan Shipping in 1571 with Particular Reference to the Decline of the Transatlantic Fishing Industry”²¹ (data also contained in her 1987 book²²). But neither publication is listed under her name in Proulx’s bibliography.

Other archival data or research findings published by S. Barkham and apparently used by Proulx are simply left unreferenced. For example, Proulx’s section on “Insurance” (p. 75) contains the following unreferenced passage which can be found almost word for word on page 142 of S. Barkham’s 1987 book (section entitled “Insurance and Financing for the Fishing Industries”):

between 1565 and 1573, the average rate for protection throughout the voyage was 15 percent on the hull and 14 percent on the cargo; for protection one-way only, the rates were 10 percent and 9 percent respectively.

Proulx also makes unacknowledged use of publications by this reviewer. For instance, Proulx’s section “The Victuals” (pp. 38-40) is almost entirely from this reviewer’s *Aspects of Life aboard Spanish Basque Ships during the 16th century, with Special Reference to Terranova Whaling Voyages*,²³ while Proulx’s section “The Crews” (pp. 40-45) also relies heavily on text and archival data from that report.²⁴ Elsewhere, Proulx leaves unreferenced specific statements taken from other publications by this reviewer. For example, Proulx’s unreferenced statement “some [galleons] like the *Santa Ana* of Joanes de Portu were as much as 650 *toneladas*” (p. 25) is from page four of this writer’s 1981 *Report on 16th Century Spanish Basque Shipbuilding, c.1550 -c.1600*.²⁵ Similarly, Proulx’s unreferenced statement “generally speaking, with ships of over 200 *toneladas* the length of the keel proper was equal to or slightly less than double that of the midship beam. As for the length overall, it was 1.6 times that of the keel” is expressed in Barkham’s discussion of the dimensions of 16th century Spanish Basque ships in three publications (based on research in Spanish archives).²⁶

Besides misrepresenting and not acknowledging previously published research, Proulx further conveys the misleading impression that the 51 archival

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references he cites are from his own original research in Spain in the following ways:

i) by adding statements such as “we have only indirect information from trials....” (p. 38) and “our documents state...” (p. 56) when discussing published information used without acknowledgement;

ii) by explicitly stating that “this publication is the fruit of the research conducted principally by the Historical Research Division of the Canadian Parks Service” (p. 10);

iii) by listing six Spanish archives purporting as if they were the sole source for the 51 documentary references he gives (these are listed in the bibliography under ‘S’ for “Spain” and ‘T’ for “The Basque Country”!).

This last point is misleading for two reasons. First, because at least two of these archives, the *Archivo del Consulado de Burgos* (ACB) and the *Archivo General de Simancas* (AGS), should not be listed at all, the former because Proulx does not refer to *any* document from that institution,²⁷ and the latter because the *only* document he cites from it (G.A., volume 75, file 13) was discussed in publications by S. Barkham (see above point v). Second, because the material cited by Proulx from at least three of the other four archives is not the outcome of his own original or extensive research in those centres.²⁸ This documentation having been pre-selected and catalogued, and either microfilmed or summarized by other researchers (principally by S. Barkham working for the National Archives of Canada).²⁹ Moreover, this documentation includes much of the material from publications by S. Barkham and this reviewer of which Proulx makes unreferenced use.

Proulx has no doubt looked at this publicly available microfilmed and summarised documentation, but the point is: is it standard referencing practice to present previously published manuscripts or passages from these as if he had located them and as if he were publishing them for the first time? Similarly, is it standard practice not to reference the National Archives when citing Spanish archival material consulted on N.A.C. microfilm? (Many of Proulx’s references are actually mistaken or incomplete.³⁰)

Proulx engages in questionable practice in a variety of other ways. For instance, on page 19 he quotes without acknowledgement S. Barkham’s own words and information from an interview published with questions and answers in 1975. Yet, instead of mentioning his real source, he credits her published words to the interviewer (Lasa). Answering one of Lasa’s questions S. Barkham stated: “*I have [compiled] a list of more than 175 captains and officers of ships who went to Canada before 1580...*”. Proulx simply *transforms* the answer to read: “*Basque archives list the names of 175 captains...*” and credits the interviewer for the information. What is more, Proulx does not give as his reference the published

interview from which he has taken the statement but cites a completely different article by the interviewer (published five years later).³¹

This miscrediting of information coupled with a wrong reference is reprehensible, particularly in a National Historic Sites publication. However, there are still other similar examples. On page 76 (note 48) Proulx again credits an interviewer for a statement made by S. Barkham in another published interview, while on page 19 Proulx writes: "*in 1575, as many as 11 whalers came to stay in Red Bay,*" crediting a newspaper article by Zumalde for the information. However, Zumalde himself cites S. Barkham for that statement saying: "Selma [Barkham] has been able to document, for example, *the presence in 1575 of 11 ships anchored in this port [of Red Bay].*"³²

While engaging in such practice nowhere does Proulx provide an objective and impartial account of S. Barkham's work in the field of Basque whaling in Labrador in the 16th century. Instead, his "Introduction" gives a misleading and flawed description of S. Barkham's 1977 research in the Strait of Belle Isle which located the principal 16th century Basque whaling establishments. Why, for instance, is no mention made of the role of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society?³³ Proulx also discusses the different 16th century names found by S. Barkham for these sites but does not mention here or in any of his 232 notes her seminal article "The Identification of Labrador Ports in Spanish 16th-Century Documents" which in 1975 correctly identified these establishments for the first time.³⁴ Barkham's research in Spain can more appropriately be summarized as having located extensive primary documentation in Spanish archives (parish records, notarial documents, lawsuits, etc.) which had not previously been used for work on the Basques in Canada. Analysing this documentation, besides ascertaining that a considerable Spanish Basque whale fishery (and cod fishery) had taken place in Canada in the 1500s (in terms of specific numbers and tonnages of ships), she conclusively identified the main whaling locations (primarily in the Strait of Belle Isle and not, for example, in New Brunswick as had been suggested by Ciriquiain Gaiztarro³⁵). She was also able to document the overall chronology and evolution of this industry and key aspects of its structure and organization and of the daily life of whalers in Labrador ports, as well as to identify a number of ships wrecked in specific Labrador harbours.³⁶

II) POOR SCHOLARSHIP

Apart from the practice outlined above, Proulx's book contains seemingly endless errors and deficiencies. The following are some of the most glaring examples.

1) Misreading and misinterpreting Spanish manuscript records

On page 64 Proulx writes that "historical documents describe [whaling] voyages during which the crew voluntarily overwintered" but then presents us with wrong

evidence. Referring to a specific document from a lawsuit, Proulx states: "on January 19, 1572, Dominica de Aya affirmed that her husband Juan de Berrobi could not testify because he was still in Terranova".³⁷ However, this is wrong on two counts. First, the woman did *not* testify that her husband was in *Terranova* but that he was in Llanes in north-western Spain! Second, the husband was not being sought after to testify as a witness. The officials of the port of Guetaria simply wanted to know where he was so that "if he had obtained any testimony [from witnesses that *he* wanted to call in his defence in the lawsuit]... he should present them within the next three days."³⁸ Proulx has misunderstood the straightforward text.

Similarly, Proulx states that when the cargo from a whaling voyage was distributed "the third and last portion of the cargo was paid to the crew" (p. 72). Yet the document he cites contains no reference whatsoever to the distribution of cargo. What it really mentions is that three partners (Domingo de Ayçarna and captains Arriola and de Portu) had financed the cost of equipping a ship for whaling in 1596 one third each.³⁹

This type of misinterpretation of the written word, that appears to stem from a poor command of 16th century Spanish paleography and of the Spanish language in general, recurs a number of times. For instance, on page 52 Proulx writes that the practice of anchoring whaling ships in Labrador harbours "in tight rows one behind the other" "is confirmed by a document according to which the ships owned by Joanes de Galarraga and Domingo de Olascoaga were anchored one next to the other" in 1580. Proulx's statement contains two errors: Olascoaga was only the captain on that voyage and *not* the owner of the ship, and the year was *not* 1580 but 1589. Furthermore, Proulx's reference is also wrong as there is no mention of these two ships being next to each other in the document he cites.⁴⁰

2) Misinterpretation and misleading use of French, English and Spanish secondary sources

The above, as well as a variety of other misreadings, are not interpretative differences that this or any other reviewer might have with Proulx's text; they are clear and important errors. Yet, just as Proulx has fundamental problems interpreting Spanish manuscript records he also has difficulties with printed French, English and Spanish secondary sources. On pages 29-30, citing page 219 of a publication by Duc  r  , Proulx writes that, according to records of the town of Bayonne, privateers "were roving the waters off *Terranova* as early as 1528". However, the only privateer mentioned by Duc  r   is not one "off *Terranova*" but one which in 1528 "captured from the Spanish two big and magnificent ships laden with wheat and other merchandise" apparently in the *Bay of Biscay*.⁴¹ These seem to have been two of the countless vessels involved in the important trade of cereals to northern Spanish ports which were captured by corsairs off France and Spain. This mistake is repeated on page 15. (Furthermore, Proulx gives 1982 as the date of Duc  r  's

publication without informing the reader either in the text or in the bibliography that this is a 1982 facsimile edition of the 1899 original.)

On page 69 Proulx misinterprets a statement by Turgeon in writing that “it has been estimated” that 4000 men “made up Basque whaling crews in 1571”. Turgeon actually refers to the *combined* crews of both the cod fishing *and* whaling fleets and not to men on whalers alone.⁴² (This error is also made on page 18.) Similarly, on page 51 Proulx misreads 16th century witnesses’ accounts of the sinking of the ship *María* in Labrador in 1572, published by S. Barkham.⁴³ These describe the ship as “well moored” in harbour and yet Proulx erroneously says “it would appear that the whaling ship was itself actively involved in the hunt. Thus it seems that the *Maria* was shipwrecked in 1572 while engaged in the chase”. (This is one of a number of misinterpretations of S. Barkham’s work.) More inexplicably, Proulx contradicts himself five pages later by saying: “this would imply that the whaling ship took an active part in the hunt. This was not the case in the 16th-century whalehunt in Labrador”.

Unfortunately this is not where these flaws end. In his section on “The Departure and Crossing” of whaling ships to *Terranova* Proulx writes:

In the 16th century, the Basques were a deeply religious and very superstitious people. When the time came for the ships to leave on a lengthy expedition a variety of incantations were used to ensure success of the enterprise. (p. 45.)

Rather than provide corroborative information from primary records Proulx wrongly interprets two passages from secondary sources about *coastal fishing* in Spain to create non-existent ‘evidence’ about *Basque whaling*. Thus, in the next sentence he quotes a statement by Ciriquiain Gaiztarro (1961) about the blessing of fishing boats, suggesting that it relates to whaling whereas it in fact concerns the *inshore coastal bream fishery off the Spanish Basque coast!* (Ciriquiain Gaiztarro himself is quoting data collected by Azkue in the late 1800s about coastal fishing in the 19th century).⁴⁴ Proulx then transforms a quote from Ugartechea y Salinas (who — although Proulx does not say so — is citing the same data about coastal fishing from Azkue’s old publication as cited by Ciriquiain Gaiztarro). Ugartechea y Salinas’s original text reads:

So that the [local] fishery would be more abundant, in former times the nuns from the convent of Dominican nuns [*las monjas del convento de las dominicas*] used to give the sailors small pieces of the robe of the Virgin of the Rosary which they tied to the nets [*que ellos ataban a las redes*], and St. Peter’s wort⁴⁵ (Reviewer’s underlining)

Proulx changes this statement and links it with whaling (even though the author is specifically talking about coastal fishing) by quoting him as saying “hunt” where he says “fishery” and by leaving out the key words “which they tied to the nets”.

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What is more, Proulx mistranslates the Spanish words for “Dominican nuns” as “Dominican monks”, further indicating a poor command of that language. Thus, Proulx’s altered quote reads as follows:

To ensure a successful hunt, the Dominican monks would give the sailors a piece of the robe of the Virgin of the Rosary, and to ward off the witches the monks provided St. Peter’s wort....

This changing of meaning (and mistranslation) of statements by other writers so as to present supposed ‘evidence’ about Basque whaling is difficult to understand in an official publication purporting to have scholarly status.

3) Erroneous dates and chronology

The accuracy of dates does not appear to matter in the book either. For example, Proulx refers four times to a particular lawsuit saying in each case that it concerns a “1580” whaling expedition.⁴⁶ This is incorrect as the lawsuit, which began in 1591, is about whaling ventures in 1589 and 1590. On page 28, he would have us believe that a ship owned by Andrés de Alçola “went down at Fuenterrabia in 1596” although Alçola’s ship actually sank on July 1st, 1571!⁴⁷ Likewise, on page 60 Proulx writes of “a trial held in 1575”, but the lawsuit he cites has nothing to do with 1575, having begun in 1597 over a whaling voyage in 1596.⁴⁸ Then, on page 41 Proulx states that “as a rule there were 25 men per 100 tons” on Basque *Terranova* whaling ships in the 16th century, citing as his source a thesis by Turgeon.⁴⁹ The latter, however, specifically refers to ships in the mid-18th century and not in the 1500s. On page 27, again citing Turgeon,⁵⁰ he misleadingly writes that “one historian has estimated that the maximum lifetime of these ships in the 16th century was 13 years”. Yet Turgeon is referring to 17th and 18th century ships.

Among other errors relating to dates there are some, however, of greater consequence. For example, on page 77 Proulx claims that “by 1620 the southern Basques ceased going to Labrador altogether”. This is untrue as there are documented Spanish Basque voyages to Labrador in 1622, 1624, 1625, 1626, 1627, 1629, 1630, 1632 (etc.):⁵¹ Such a mistake reflects Proulx’s unfamiliarity with the wide range of Spanish manuscript records for Labrador whaling in the early 1600s. But even if he has not researched such important sources, is he unaware that there are three published documents concerning one of these voyages (two of the documents actually written in Labrador in 1630)?⁵²

It is bemusing that Proulx can categorically tell the reader that “by 1620 the southern Basques ceased going to Labrador altogether” when there is incontrovertible archival and published evidence to the contrary, all of which he simply ignores. This is akin to claiming in a supposedly well researched publication that World War I ended in 1926. An error of this magnitude — along with the array of other mistakes which seriously undermine Proulx’s book — is particularly worrying as

Proulx is Parks Canada's historian for the new National Historic Site on Basque whaling at Red Bay, Labrador.

4) Further erroneous information and unfamiliarity with Spanish manuscript records

Proulx's unfamiliarity with Spanish archival sources is reflected in further instances throughout his book. For example, on page 19 he wrongly states that "by 1565 the original name 'las partes de Terra Nueva' had been replaced by 'la provincia de Terranova'", while in the misguided opening paragraph of his last chapter he makes the equally false assertion that notarial records "constitute the sole source of information about the whaling trade in the 16th century". Later, when he states that "in Spain the [whale] oil came in at Bilbao... and to San Sebastián" (p. 76) he omits the other points of entry.

Among other erroneous information can be listed Proulx's suggestion that Martin de Hoyarsabal was a "cartographer" who "named" Boytus (now Red Bay) (p. 21), for neither assertion is correct. Likewise, on page 31 Proulx is in error when discussing the small open whaling boats and the size of their crews. Quoting once more from Ciriquiain Gaiztarro, Proulx states: "descriptions of the boats vary considerably from one writer to another. For example, in the early 17th century Martínez de Isasti wrote that they could carry 12 to 15 men, whereas... Ciriquiain Gaiztarro mentions three men". However, by quoting from Ciriquiain Gaiztarro's useful but often unreferenced book (collated largely from bibliographic material) Proulx simply copies one of his errors. Proulx has failed to realize (or to check) that the two published documents cited by Ciriquiain Gaiztarro are in fact not for whaling but for cod fishing and that it was normal for the small boats taken to *Terranova* for cod fishing to be crewed by three men.

Another incorrect statement copied by Proulx can be found on page 17. Quoting Bélanger's book (also mainly based on bibliographic sources) Proulx asserts that Thévet's *Le Grand Insulaire et Pilotage* dates from "around 1550" when in reality it dates from 1586.⁵³ The mistake is compounded by the fact that Proulx presents this error (and a quote by Bélanger from Thévet's work about men from Bayonne and Spain whaling "near Tadoussac" up the St. Lawrence) as his 'supporting evidence' for the misguided assertion that:

in the 1550s, historical annals prove beyond a doubt that the ports of Pasajes, Renteria and San Sebastián were outfitting many ships every year for whale hunting off Terranova and even up the St. Lawrence River.

Proulx's erroneous dating of Thévet's work by almost four decades is obviously *not* proof that these men were up the St. Lawrence "in the 1550s". Yet he would have the reader believe that it is proof "beyond a doubt". What is more, he cites no

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“historical annals” for his “many” whaling ships from “Pasajes, Renteria and San Sebastián”. What “annals” is he talking about?

As a result of his indiscriminate use of often erroneous and undocumented secondary sources, from which he repeats errors and unfounded conjecture without apparently having researched the issues himself, Proulx has perpetuated many easily avoidable mistakes and passed them on to the Canadian public along with his own litany of errors. One of the most misleading aspects of Proulx’s work is that its presentation as a well researched official publication lends it false credibility. Indeed, on the book’s back cover it is claimed that “based on recently discovered archival documents” his small volume puts “into question the traditional interpretation of Canadian history in the 16th century”. Yet most readers are unaware that this creditation is undeserved. The Canadian public should not be misled by questionable scholarship wrapped in the image of serious scholarly research.

Given the number of shortcomings in the book and the constraints of space, I shall highlight, as a case in point, Proulx’s pages 67-69 where more flaws occur in almost every sentence. On page 67, Proulx asserts that “Notarized deeds of the southern Basque region in the years between 1550 and 1590 contain *several dozen* contracts relating to shipbuilding or to supplies of timber, nails or other materials” (my italics). In reality, however, notarial archives contain at least several *hundred* such contracts for these four decades. One line later Proulx writes:

In his *Navegantes Guipuzcoanos*, published in Madrid in 1903, the historian Ramon Seoane y Ferrer lists 46 contracts for the province of Guipuzcoa alone.

Yet Seoane y Ferrer’s small book (mostly drawn from secondary sources) was published in 1908 (not 1903), while the author neither lists nor publishes any contract of this type. He simply gives the names of “some ships” (and of their builders and owners) in an unreferenced and incomplete Appendix III.⁵⁴ Neither of the publications that do include 16th century Spanish Basque shipbuilding contracts (transcribed from notarial archives) are mentioned here by Proulx.⁵⁵

Also on page 67, Proulx leaves out of his list of “main” shipbuilding centres in the Spanish Basque region not only San Sebastián (Guipúzcoa’s principal port-city and a major shipyard location) but also the “main” shipbuilding port-towns of Portugalete, Lequeitio, Ondárroa, Motrico and Fuenterrabía. And yet he includes Zarauz and Guetaria which according to documentary evidence witnessed the building of relatively few ships. A few lines later, without adducing any evidence, Proulx writes that “hemp [for Basque shipbuilding] came from the north”. This ignores the numerous manuscript records which clearly demonstrate that large quantities of hemp for Spanish Basque ships came from *inland* Spain — to the south! Indeed, in 1573, the royal superintendent of shipbuilding and forests on Spain’s north coast noted: “there can be no lack of iron and cordage... as [in

Spain] nature has supplied them abundantly".⁵⁶ Equally unfounded is Proulx's claim in the same sentence that timber for what he simplistically calls the "Basque region" came "from the Pyrenees and the Bayonne area." This was not the case in Spanish Basque port-towns where — as hundreds of documents show — local timber was the staple product used.⁵⁷ Besides disregarding documentary and published data this statement is also one of many instances in the book in which Proulx wrongly equates Spanish with French Basques, failing to consider the major distinctions between their economies.

In the next unreferenced paragraph Proulx asserts that because ships were often requisitioned for royal fleets "to a large extent the war fleet was the fishing fleet". His sentence should say commercial and not "fishing" fleet as many Spanish Basque ships took part in a wide variety of trades (and not fisheries) in north-western Europe, the Mediterranean, the Atlantic Islands and with the American colonies.⁵⁸ Three lines later —without providing evidence — Proulx claims that "in the 1570s, however, Basque shipbuilding began to wane" (again combining the French and Spanish Basque economies as if they were one), even though there is considerable data from notarial and state administrative archives (on far-reaching royal shipbuilding incentives and on the volume of new shipping built) which indicates that this was not the case.⁵⁹ From Proulx's unsubstantiated text it is apparent that he has not carried out the extensive Spanish and French archival research necessary to be able to make a knowledgeable reconstruction of the economies of the French and Spanish Basque regions yet he continues to make one unsound pronouncement after another. Astonishingly, Proulx cites only three French archival documents in his entire book!

The following sentence informs us that: "one of the reasons [for this decline] was the exhaustion of the timber reserves" (p. 68). Proulx's only source is a one-line statement by Innis (1931) (who himself refers back to an undocumented comment by Prowse in 1895). There is now ample documentary evidence indicating that timber supplies were still quite sufficient. Thus, in November 1584, the Guipuzcoan Assembly declared that the decline of shipbuilding and shipping activity "is not due to a lack of forests, nor of timber, because in this Province there has always been a large number of forests and a good supply of timber for shipbuilding".⁶⁰ Proulx once again has made unquestioning use of an outdated secondary source.

Proulx then states (again without any reference): "it is clear that without policies fostering the renewal of their [timber] resources, the Basque provinces could not meet the demand, given the smallness of their territory". This is erroneous conjecture for not only were there definite decrees aimed at reforestation but they were also being implemented.⁶¹ To this Proulx adds the further unsound assertion that: "now obsolete, the Basque shipbuilding industry... was about to give way to more innovative competitors, thus sounding the knell for Basque whaling" (p. 69). Extensive archival records consulted by this reviewer suggest that what happened

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was the converse: the decline of whaling, caused by other factors (see below) was partly responsible for a downturn in demand for merchant shipping. Lastly, there is no validity to Proulx's clearly unresearched claim that:

At the end of the 16th century, capital [for *Terranova* ventures] came from the large centres such as Bordeaux and La Rochelle where people were more sophisticated about business matters and more likely to contemplate far-flung expeditions (p. 69).⁶²

5) Unreferenced descriptions, inadequate citations and mistaken references

The book also contains many incomplete and unreferenced descriptions or supposedly factual statements. For example, on pages 33-35 Proulx quotes at length from a description of whaling to illustrate aspects of 16th century whaling in Labrador. But he does not inform the reader that the description really dates from the 19th century. This is followed by a specific yet unreferenced paragraph-long description of a lance which is copied almost word for word from a 19th century account published by Bélanger.⁶³ Also unacceptable is the fact that likewise no reference is given for Proulx's detailed two-page account of chasing, harpooning and killing a whale (pp. 54-56). The reader might think that it is from a 16th century Basque source but a third of the way through Proulx says "we do not know whether this method was in use in Labrador in the 16th century, or whether it was a 17th century innovation". Indeed, the description — although we are not told — is based on the above 19th century account published by Bélanger!

In the same way no source is given for Proulx's description of flensing (p. 61), for his description of practices "in Spitsbergen" in his unreferenced section entitled "Stowing the Oil" (p. 63) or for his conjecture that for "the arrival of the whaling ships" "The inhabitants [of the small Basque ports] would mount a continuous watch, and the first person to spot a ship would receive a monetary award" (p. 64). Many statements such as "Basque sources claim that these residues [from the rendering down of blubber] burnt better than wood" and "This precaution [not leaving the cauldron completely empty as the blubber melted] also added as much as four years to the cauldron's useful life" (p. 62) are not substantiated in any way.

On page 48, while describing conditions aboard Basque whalers Proulx quotes a description of food on "a trip to Brazil" but gives us no time reference. More alarming is the next page and a half in which Proulx gives an account of the responsibilities of different crew members "as described by Diego Garcia de Palacio, the author of a well-known treatise on shipbuilding dating from the late 16th century" as if it related directly to Basque whaling in Labrador — which it does not. By copying the description of the role of the captain, master and other mariners on certain commercial voyages given in Palacio's *Nautical Instruction for Navigation* — which, incidentally, Proulx fails to mention (in the text, note or bibliography) was published in Mexico — he gives wrong information. On Labrador whaling voyages, as on other types of fishing ventures, the captain was not the

“supreme authority” who “supervised all operations and manoeuvres related to navigation or to the upkeep of the ship and its cargo”. Nor was the master “responsible for the commercial aspect of the voyage”. Rather, as described by dozens of charter-parties and other documents, on these ventures the master himself — who was the ship’s owner or his delegate — was responsible for his ship while the captain was the person named by those who had chartered and fitted out the ship to oversee the whaling aspect of the voyage.

Soon after, on page 59, Proulx writes: “there are two views on the subject of where the flensing work was done” in the 16th century. Giving no reference for the first “view”, Proulx then misleads the reader. He indicates that this view “is illustrated in several works on whaling” and cites as his “several works” Sañez Reguart (1795), Ciriquiain Gaiztarro (1961) and González Echegaray (1978) (suggesting he is talking about three different sets of illustrations). Yet these illustrations (for which Proulx gives no date) are all the same: they are 18th century illustrations from Sañez Reguart’s 1791-5 *Dictionary of the Art of Fishing* which the other two authors have simply reprinted!⁶⁴ (With regard to the “second view” Proulx makes another of his mistaken references to the few manuscripts cited in the book: he mentions “a trial held in 1575” and cites folio 42 v. of the lawsuit, but the trial actually began in 1597 and that page says nothing about the “second” method.⁶⁵) Elsewhere Proulx cites Sañez Reguart’s *Diccionario* as having “no publisher” although it clearly does. A similarly ludicrous description of a publication by Ducéré as having “no place: no publisher, no date” (p. 14, note 11 and bibliography) — when it really has all three — might even be humorous in some other context. And S. Barkham’s 1974 article referred to by Proulx on page 19 as “unpublished” was quite definitely published (Proulx then omits this article from his bibliography).⁶⁶ It would also seem rather odd referencing practice that Proulx should cite a Spanish newspaper article as his source for a published early 17th century English account by Whitbourne relating to Newfoundland and Labrador (p. 59).

Other examples of inadequate or mistaken references include Proulx’s reference on page 38 to Ciriquiain Gaiztarro (p. 277) for whaling gear and “other objects”, as page 277 is an unrelated illustration! On page 72 there is no reference for the statement: “A trial held in San Sebastián in 1561 mentions dues of two percent of the proceeds of the *Terranova* hunt to be paid by shipowners to their parish”. In not citing a source Proulx gives the impression that he is presenting his own research work, yet this data was published in 1829 by Fernández de Navarrete (whom most writers cite).⁶⁷ In the same way Proulx gives no source for the statements “Toward the middle of the 16th century, a ship with a full cargo might bring back 1000 to 1500 barrels of oil, depending on its capacity” (p. 70) and “it should be mentioned that before the 1580s, whalebone fetched such a low price that it was usually left in *Terranova*” (p. 73). These and other unreferenced passages have been expressed in earlier publications by S. Barkham.

6) Unsound conjecture and substantial flaws

Beside the above types of shortcomings which riddle the book, two fundamental parts of Proulx's 'analysis' of Basque whaling in Labrador (its development and decline) are confused, misleading or mistaken.

a) Proulx's Chapter I: "The Basques in Labrador in the 16th Century"

The author's account of the involvement of Basques in coastal whaling off northern Spain during the Middle Ages and of their early presence in Labrador in the 16th century (Chapter I) opens with a number of questionable and unreferenced statements which Proulx presents as facts. Even if one skips lightly over Proulx's odd claim that during the Middle Ages Basque whalers "mastered this art [of whaling] very quickly", one must stop to take issue with what he means by "the Basques" having at that time moved ahead "of all their North European competitors", and by "the decline of the whale hunt in Northern Europe [having] coincided with the peak of Basque whaling activity in the 13th and 14th centuries" (p. 11). There are no known records (nor does Proulx adduce any evidence) from which the extent, levels and evolution of "the whale hunt in Northern Europe" or of "Basque whaling activity in the 13th and 14th centuries" can be reconstructed.

Having made these fictitious affirmations Proulx then puts forward more unsubstantiated notions that coastal whaling "seems to have gradually disappeared from the Bay of Biscay beginning in the 15th century" and that "For some reason not yet understood, the Basque hunters moved out into the Atlantic at that time" (p. 12). These notions — which as with many other of the claims in his book Proulx has apparently assimilated from the often questionable secondary sources that he cites — seem to owe their origin largely to the dubious claim made in 1647 by a Bordeaux jurist, Étienne de Cleirac, that in pursuing whales across the Atlantic French Basques discovered "the lands of New Found Land, of Cap-Breton and Baccaleos, Canada or New France" "100 years" prior to Columbus and that it was one of those Basques who told Columbus how to find America!⁶⁸ What makes Proulx's undocumented conjecture and espousal of Cleirac's whimsical idea all the more extraordinary is that he fails to give due consideration to manuscript and published documentary evidence about Basque coastal whaling which fundamentally questions his assertions.

Proulx writes of the Basques "abandoning coastal whaling in the 15th century" (p. 12) (which contradicts his later statement that "a minority of whalers continued to hunt along the Basque shore even after the 15th century") (p. 13). However, the recent analysis by this reviewer of over 10,000 notarial contracts for a number of Spanish Basque port-towns during the 1500s and early 1600s has revealed numerous documents which clearly indicate that — contrary to Proulx's conjecture — there was a very active Spanish Basque winter coastal whale fishery well after the 1400s off the Basque coast as well as off north-western Spain: Asturias and Galicia. This documentation, which Proulx has not analysed, concurs with the published

1626 text of the Guipuzcoan historian, Isasti — also disregarded by Proulx — who stated that:

some mariners from Guipúzcoa from the towns of Orio, Zarauz, Guetaria, Zumaya, Deva and Motrico not wanting to go on such a long and risky navigation to *Terranova* customarily go every year in October to the coast of Vizcaya and Asturias to wait for the whales that spend the winter off the coast.⁶⁹

Nor does Proulx mention the fact that this significant 16th century coastal whale fishery co-existed with Spanish Basque whaling in *Terranova*. As S. Barkham has noted:

throughout the 16th century two types of whaling activity took place simultaneously though not at the same time of year (because of the different migratory seasons of the cetaceans). In Galicia and Asturias whaling normally took place from October to March [sometimes only four to five months]; on the other hand in the Strait of Belle Isle... [whaling] could last ... from June to January.⁷⁰

Thus, in August 1571 two men from the north-western Spanish ports of Gijón and Candás came to the Guipuzcoan port of Orio to hire up to 14 or 16 men for whaling. However, they were not able to do so as virtually all the whalers were in *Terranova* and before departing for Gijón they gave a power of attorney for the whalers to be hired upon their return.⁷¹

Although Proulx does not consider any of the above highly relevant published and manuscript evidence on Basque coastal whaling, he persists with his erroneous assumptions regarding “the Basques abandoning coastal whaling in the 15th century” and, over the course of two full pages, discusses what he calls “plausible explanations” as to why this occurred even though it clearly did not. Among some of his conjectures is the statement that:

it is also understandable that after being hunted for three centuries along the shores of the Bay [of Biscay], the whales would instinctively have moved away from the dangerous area. Whales are known to have a highly developed instinct. (p. 13.)

This is followed by yet further uninformed speculation:

the likeliest possibility is that, encouraged by their success during the winter months along the coasts of France and Spain, the Basques set off to find out where the whales congregated so they could hunt them all year around (p. 13).

As if this unsound writing were not enough, Proulx then adduces as his ‘evidence’ “the view expressed by Étienne Cleirac”, the Frenchman who in 1647 wrote of French Basques reaching America in 1392!

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Proulx's 'analysis' continues in this vein. After lending further support to Cleirac's ideas he leaves out crucial information which suggests that the Basques only reached *Terranova* in the early 1500s. For example, Proulx ignores the earliest known documented reference to a Spanish Basque *Terranova* voyage: a 1532 "cod fish voyage" by a ship from Lequeitio.⁷² He also fails to duly consider that one of the principal reasons why the Spanish Basques apparently did not sail to *Terranova* much before 1532 is that they were occupied in other maritime enterprises. For example, they were heavily involved in fishing for hake in the Irish Sea, and off south-west England (largely for pilchards). According to surveys of all the shipping registered in Guipuzcoan ports in September 1534, not one Guipuzcoan ship was involved in *Terranova* fishing that year whereas many had gone to the Irish fishery and were due back in November.⁷³ These archival data fit with the statement given in 1626 by Isasti that his compatriots had been involved in the Irish fishery and trade without distancing "themselves to *Terranova*."⁷⁴ It is, therefore, not a coincidence that this earliest known 1532 reference occurs alongside references to voyages to the Irish fishery by other local vessels in the tithe accounts of Lequeitio's parish church.⁷⁵

Why does Proulx disregard this evidence? And why does he also overlook the Spanish Basques' involvement in the early 1500s in exploratory and trade voyages to Spanish America as well as in trade with the Mediterranean? This information helps explain both why their earliest known *Terranova* voyage is only for 1532, and why the French Basques — who were excluded from trade with the Spanish Indies — were involved in *Terranova* fishing from at least 1517.⁷⁶

Proulx's following account of Spanish Basque voyages to *Terranova* before 1550 is just as poor. While he surprisingly fails to mention anywhere in his book the earliest known Spanish Basque *Terranova* venture (1532), he includes undocumented claims copied from secondary sources. Thus, in writing that men from Lequeitio "apparently frequented the island of Newfoundland starting in 1535" he simply repeats an unfounded assertion by Ugartechea y Salinas.⁷⁷ He also repeats González Echegaray's unsubstantiated claim that sailors from San Sebastián and Orío went to *Terranova* in 1526 and 1530 respectively.⁷⁸ Documentary sources for these hypothetical voyages have yet to be found but Proulx refers to them as "earlier documents" (p. 16)! Again ignoring important information, Proulx states that "perhaps *Terranova* cod was not of much interest to them [the southern Basques] before the mid-16th century" (reviewer's italics). There is no basis for this suggestion, which is followed by the equally incorrect statement that:

The Basque whalemens presumably learned from French cod-fishermen that there were whales in the waters around the New Land.

Evidently Proulx believes that during their own early cod fishing voyages to *Terranova* Basque mariners were somehow blind to the existence of whales in the

“New Land”! Both the earliest known voyages with French Basque participation to *Terranova* (1517 and after) and the earliest known Spanish Basque voyages (1532 and after) were for cod and not for whales.⁷⁹ The considerable documentary evidence suggests that it was only after their own experience cod fishing in Newfoundland and the Strait of Belle Isle that the Basques gradually began to exploit *Terranova* whale stocks. They did this first of all on mixed ventures for both cod and whales, returning apparently not with barrels of whale oil but with whale meat in brine (which did not require the more complex and costly setting up of ovens to produce whale oil).⁸⁰ Then, after a period of development they organized large-scale ‘industrial’ ventures aimed essentially at whaling for whale oil (alongside other ventures purely for cod).⁸¹

How can Proulx omit this important evolution from cod fishing to whaling and still state that Basque whalers “presumably learned from French cod-fishermen that there were whales in the waters around the New Land”? While further reflecting Proulx’s unfamiliarity with relevant archival and published material, such writing at the same time shows that he is unsure of what he is trying to say, for he contradicts the latter statement not once but twice. On page 15 he writes: “the vast schools of cod that Cabot found in 1497 are probably what drew the Basques to our shores”, while on page 24 he asserts: “they [Basque whalers] began to pursue their quarry out onto the high seas. This eventually led them to America...”.

b) Proulx’s account of the decline of Basque whaling in Labrador

The last two pages of Proulx’s mistake-ridden third and final chapter (pp.78-9) also cast serious doubts on his work. In these pages — having wrongly insisted that “by 1620” the Spanish Basques “ceased going to Labrador altogether” — Proulx embarks on an attempt to explain the decline of Basque whaling in *Terranova* in the late 1500s and early 1600s. Proulx would have us believe that the decline was due to six factors, all of which are mistaken in one respect or another. As elsewhere in the text, he adduces no evidence (other than a single reference to a lawsuit which is actually incorrect) to support his extensive conjecture. To begin with, it seems highly doubtful that rising prices (his first factor) were a direct cause in the decline. To mention just one argument to the contrary, the fact that in spite of inflation during the late 1500s and early 1600s Spanish Basque whaling entrepreneurs sought permission from the king to send ships to *Terranova* (as well as to Iceland, Brazil and Spitsbergen) suggests that they were still very much interested in whaling.⁸²

Proulx then lists five other factors but because one of these (“increases in grain prices and in ship chandlery costs”) is the same as the first, we are left with four not five. At least two of these factors are unfounded certainly as far as the Spanish Basques were concerned: “poor harvests which forced the fishermen to forego voyages that took them away from home for several months, so that they could look after the needs of their families”, and “the exodus of whalers who sought

their fortune elsewhere". Proulx is clearly unfamiliar with the considerable Spanish documentation on Labrador whaling during these decades and yet he engages in what appears to be straightforward guesswork. The two remaining factors are further examples of this genre of speculative 'analysis'. It cannot be said, as Proulx would have it, that Spanish Basque whaling in *Terranova* declined because of "numerous wars which ruined a good part of the Basque fleet". Of course war with England, France and Holland affected merchant shipbuilding. But what the documentary evidence unequivocally indicates is that during those war years whaling was affected not because the wars "ruined a good part of the Basque fleet" but because the king, who relied to a considerable extent on Spanish Basque ships and sailors for his Atlantic armadas, prevented entrepreneurs from sending readily available ships on whaling voyages. For example, *Terranova* whaling was particularly affected in 1586, 1587 and 1588 when most medium and large size Spanish Basque ships and experienced sailors were detained by royal officials in preparation for the great 1588 armada against England, and the threat of such detentions continued to undermine Spanish Basque whaling throughout the 1590s and early 1600s.⁸³ Lastly, it is wrong to suggest as Proulx does that whaling declined because of "the shrinking of the Basque shipbuilding industry". There were in fact enough ships available for entrepreneurs to send whaling. Contrary to what he claims, the decrease in number of whaling voyages (brought about by the considerable degree of royal interference and by other factors such as the decline of whale stocks — see below) was a factor in the decreasing demand for ships.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of Proulx's list of "reasons" for the decline of Basque whaling in Labrador is that he does not include what was one of the main determining factors in that decline: the undisputed diminishment of whale stocks in the Strait of Belle Isle. The Strait had been the heart of the whaling industry in the second half of the 16th century but by the early 1600s — if not earlier — whale stocks in that area had dwindled to very low levels. Thus, among considerable documentation regarding the decline is a memorandum sent by the representatives of the province of Guipúzcoa to Philip III, late in 1613, which refers to whalers "finding the whale fishery of *Terranova* very annihilated" during the previous decade, while other contemporary reports attribute this depletion to the "continuous navigation" or intensive whaling in the Strait.⁸⁴

Disregarding the decline of Labrador whale stocks and other key factors, Proulx carries his erroneous conjecture to further extremes. He tells us that "discouraged by numerous failures, outfitters were no longer willing to bank their capital on such a risky undertaking" as whaling. If this were true then why, for example, did the port-town of San Sebastián — the single most important centre of Spanish Basque trans-Atlantic whaling — complain to Philip II in September 1590 that royal officials "do not allow ships to sail to *Tierranueva*, which is the only trade left in the Ocean sea from which to derive profit"?⁸⁵ Or, why did Spanish Basque entrepreneurs carry on fitting out ships (in spite of royal interference and

requisitions of ships) for whaling in *Terranova*, Iceland, Brazil and Spitsbergen in the early 1600s?⁸⁶ Proulx then makes the claim that the decline of whaling and related industries was “followed by a massive emigration of the labour force”. What “massive emigration” is Proulx referring to? This is wild guesswork, certainly in the case of the Spanish Basques.

Finally, Proulx ends this last chapter with the mistaken suggestion that Basque whaling in *Terranova* declined “in the 16th century” (!) because of Dutch competition. He gives the unreferenced statement that: “By 1602, there were only seven whaling ships in *Terranova*” (as if it were from his own archival research whereas it seems to be taken from Prowse (1895) who like Proulx gives no source⁸⁷). Then we are told:

Various attempts on the part of national rulers to redress the situation might have succeeded were it not for the Dutch. After learning whaling techniques from the Basques, the students rapidly outshone the masters... In short, in order to compete with Dutch whaling, Basque whaling would have had to reach a level of development that was precluded by the region's deficiency in both material and human resources. *Therein lies the main reason for the waning of this industry in the 16th century.* (Reviewer's italics)

That Proulx should engage in this undocumented speculation insisting that this was the “main reason” for the decline of Basque whaling in *Terranova in the 16th century*, while disregarding the crucial archival evidence concerning the depletion of whale stocks in the Strait of Belle Isle (as well as other fundamental factors in the decline) is absurd.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This critique gives example of questionable practice by Proulx. He gives the impression that his book is based on his own original archival research in Spain whereas much of the archival material he discusses is previously published research. This misleads the reader, misrepresents the work of other researchers and flouts standard conventions of citation. Such practice is objectionable.

Proulx's book is also rife with error because of his misinterpretation of manuscript and printed sources, his apparent unfamiliarity with crucial primary sources, his frequent and indiscriminate use of often undocumented and mistaken secondary sources, poor if not incompetent scholarship, and uninformed conjecture. The result is that much of his text is fundamentally flawed.

Yet in spite of the improper way in which he has used previously published archival data without acknowledgement and of the book's low scholarly standard, Proulx's publication claims that:

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based on recently discovered archival documents ... the conclusions in this book put into question the traditional interpretation of Canadian history in the 16th century (from the back cover).

Such a claim is preposterous. First, because — contrary to the impression given — the small number of Spanish “archival documents” cited have all been previously located, catalogued or published by other researchers. Second, because much if not most of the correct documentary information he gives has already been analyzed and published (whether Proulx acknowledges this or not). Third, because Proulx’s text is peppered with — and therefore seriously undermined by — endless failings. However, having read this critique the Director General of National Historic Sites (Parks Canada), C. Cameron, concludes that: “In reviewing this case, I believe that Parks Canada’s research has been responsibly carried out, and that the publication [by Proulx] has adhered to standard scholarly practice, including practices related to attribution.”⁸⁸

Such an inadequate book should never have been published without proper peer review. This raises the concern that in the case of this publication the screening procedures within the Canadian Parks Service to vet manuscripts prior to publication were insufficient. The outcome is that Proulx’s published array of errors and misleading information is now on sale across Canada as well as abroad. Proulx is not only perpetuating earlier errors but adding new errors of his own making. Such a situation should be reviewed. Both the Canadian public and the international readership should not have been misled and short-changed in this way.

A further concern is that Proulx is Parks Canada’s historian for the new National Historic Site being developed at Red Bay, Labrador. The interpretation of Basque whaling in Labrador in the 16th century for that Site is based on this deeply flawed publication.

I believe that for two compelling reasons, the transparently poor quality of his book and his failure to satisfy normal scholarly standards, Proulx’s publication should be withdrawn from circulation. Otherwise it will stand as a sad reflection both nationally and internationally of research standards within the Historical Research Division of the Canadian Parks Service.

I would like to thank all those who have commented on earlier versions of this review.

Notes

¹J. Pritchard’s review of G. Proulx’s *Between France and New France* (Toronto and Charlottetown: Dundurn Press, 1984) in *Canadian Historical Review*, 66 (Sept. 1985), pp. 427-28, and C. Desbarats’ review of Y. Desloges’ *A Tenant’s Town: Québec in the 18th Century* (Ottawa: Environment Canada, Parks Service, 1991) and R. Chénier’s *Québec: A*

French Colonial Town in America, 1660 to 1690 (Ottawa: Environment Canada, Parks Service, 1991) in *Canadian Historical Review*, 75 (March 1994), pp. 132-34.

²C.R. Markham, "On the Whale Fishery of the Basque Provinces of Spain", *Nature*, 25 (1881-2), pp. 365-68.

³H.A. Innis, "The Rise and Fall of the Spanish Fishery in Newfoundland", *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 3rd series, section II, 25 (1931), pp. 51-70.

⁴D.B. Quinn, *North American Discovery, circa 1000-1612* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971).

⁵G.T. Cell, *English Enterprise in Newfoundland, 1577-1660* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969).

⁶Proulx cites this as: J. Gilchrist, "Exploration and Enterprise: the Newfoundland Fishery, ca. 1497-1677", in *Canadian Business History* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1972), whereas he is really referring to *Canadian Business History* edited by D.S. Macmillan and published by McClelland and Stewart (Toronto, 1972).

⁷S. Huxley (Barkham), ed., *Itasoa 3. Los vascos en el marco Atlántico Norte. Siglos XVI y XVII* (San Sebastián: Editorial Etor, 1987). Published with the assistance of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The book contains a number of typographical and editorial errors. Given that in Spain married women keep their maiden names Selma Barkham has published several articles in Spanish as S. Huxley while many of her publications in English are under the name S. Barkham. To distinguish the latter from this reviewer, Selma (Huxley) Barkham is hereafter cited in the main text as S. Barkham.

⁸S. Huxley (Barkham), "Los vascos y las pesquerías transatlánticas, 1517-1713" (*The Basques and the Trans-Atlantic Fisheries, 1517-1713*"), in S. Huxley (Barkham), ed., *Itasoa 3. Los vascos en el marco Atlántico Norte ...*, pp. 26-210.

⁹S. Barkham's 1977 expedition to the Strait of Belle Isle (funded by the Royal Canadian Geographical Society) was followed by underwater excavations by Parks Canada (under R. Grenier) and land excavations by Memorial University of Newfoundland (under J. Tuck). See also the land excavations at Chateau Bay and Pleasure Harbour by a Spanish and Basque team of archaeologists funded by the Basque government and the Chamber of Commerce of Bilbao. Their final report published as: A. Azkarate, J.A. Hernández and J. Nuñez, *Balleneros vascos del siglo XVI (Chateau Bay, Labrador, Canadá). Estudio arqueológico y contexto histórico* (Vitoria-Gasteiz: Servicio Central de Publicaciones del Gobierno Vasco, 1992).

¹⁰Yet Selma Huxley is clearly listed in Spanish on the credits page (p. five) as the editor ("*coordinación del presente volumen*") while on pages four and five Ayerbe is clearly listed as publisher (in Spanish "*editor*").

¹¹S. Barkham, "Two documents Written in Labrador, 1572 and 1577", *The Canadian Historical Review*, 57, no. 2 (June 1976), pp. 235-38; "First Will and Testament on the Labrador Coast", *The Geographical Magazine*, 49, no. 9 (June 1977), pp. 574-81.

¹²S. Barkham, "The Documentary Evidence for Basque Whaling Ships in the Strait of Belle Isle", in G.M. Story, ed., *Early European Settlement and Exploration in Atlantic Canada* (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1982), pp. 83-4.

¹³S. Huxley (Barkham), "Los vascos y las pesquerías transatlánticas, 1517-1713", pp. 116-17.

¹⁴There is an earlier will written in Trepassey Bay (Nfld.) in 1548 but this document survives only as a copy inserted in a lawsuit. Proulx wrongly dates this will as 1549 (p. 21).

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¹⁵"Building Materials for Canada in 1566", *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology*, 5, 4 (1973), pp. 93-4.

¹⁶S. Barkham, "The documentary Evidence for Basque Whaling Ships...", pp. 90-5.

¹⁷S. Huxley (Barkham), "Los vascos y las pesquerías transatlánticas, 1517-1713", pp. 162-3.

¹⁸S. Barkham, "The Basques: Filling a gap in our history between Jacques Cartier and Champlain", *Canadian Geographic*, 96, 1 (Feb./March 1978), p. 10. See also S. Huxley (Barkham), "Vascos en Terranova. Dos cartas de afletamientos de naves en San Sebastián en 1564", *Boletín de Estudios Históricos Sobre San Sebastián*, 12 (1978), p. 194.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 93 and 113 for the full testimony given by the harpooner, Simón de Azcoitia.

²⁰S. Huxley (Barkham), "Los vascos y las pesquerías transatlánticas, 1517-1713", pp. 98-101.

²¹In W.A. Douglass, ed., *Anglo-American Contributions to Basque Studies: Essays in Honor of Jon Bilbao* (Reno, Nevada: Desert Research Institute Publications on the Social Science, no. 13, 1977), pp. 73-81.

²²S. Huxley (Barkham), "Los Vascos y las pesquerías transatlánticas, 1517-1713", pp. 51-4.

²³Ottawa: Parks Canada, Microfiche Report Series no. 75, 1981. See Chapter 1: "Provisions for *Terranova* whaling and cod fishing voyages".

²⁴*Ibid.*, see Chapter 2: "Socio-economic organization", section "Composition and classification of crew".

²⁵Ottawa: Parks Canada, Manuscript Report Series, no. 422, 1981.

²⁶*Report on 16th Century Spanish Basque Shipbuilding, c. 1550-c. 1600*; "Sixteenth Century Basque Shipbuilding: The Multipurpose *Nao*" in C.O. Cederlund, ed., *Postmedieval Boat and Ship Archaeology* (Papers presented at an international symposium in Stockholm, 1982), British Archaeological Reports International Series, 256 (1985), pp. 113-35; and "Spanish Shipping and Shipbuilding [at the Time of the 1588 Armada]" in *Armada, 1588-1988* (London: Penguin Books and the National Maritime Museum, 1988), pp. 158-63.

²⁷Certain records from the ACB are held on microfilm at the National Archives of Canada (MG 10 F2), collected during the late 1970s by S. Barkham. Those insurance policies relating to Basque cod fishing and shaling voyages to *Terranova* are discussed in S. Barkham, "Burgos Insurance for Basque Ships: Maritime Policies from Spain, 1547-1592", *Archivaria*, 11 (Winter 1980-81), pp. 87-99.

²⁸*Archivo Histórico de Protocolos de Gipuzkoa en Oñate* (AHPGO), *Archivo de la Real Chancillería de Valladolid* (ARCHV), *Archivo General de Gipuzkoa* (AGG).

²⁹S. Barkham began her own privately funded research in Spain in 1972. Subsequently she was able to interest the National Archives of Canada in the documentation she was finding. Thus, from 1973 until the early 1980s S. Barkham located, selected, microfilmed and catalogued a large number of lawsuits and other records in Spain on a contractual basis. Because of budgetary restraints these contracts were only for a limited number of months in each calendar year. During the remaining months S. Barkham researched and wrote her own publications as an independent scholar.

³⁰For example, p. 49 note 74; p. 53, notes 84 and 88; p. 54, note 89; p. 56, note 96; p. 59, note 97; p. 63, note 112; p. 64, note 117; p. 78, note 57.

³¹The true source is J. I. Lasa's interview entitled "Pescadores vascos en Terranova y Labrador", *Aranzazu*, 55 (1975), pp. 21-4.

³²I. Zumalde, "Tras las huellas de los balleneros vascos en Terranova", *Deia-Domingo* (23 March 1980), p. 4, based on publications by and interviews with S. Barkham.

³³To quote the editor of the *Canadian Geographic*: "Aided by a grant from the Royal Canadian Geographical Society she [S. Barkham] undertook an expedition last August [1977] to Labrador, assisted by members of the Graham Rowley and Barkham families and there found tangible evidence of Basque occupation". Editor's note to S. Barkham's "The Basques: filling a gap in our history between Jacques Cartier and Champlain", p. 9.

³⁴*The Canadian Cartographer*, 14, 1 (June 1977) (submitted 1975), pp. 1-9. See also J. Mannion and S. Barkham, "The 16th Century Fishery" in the *Historical Atlas of Canada* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1987), vol. 1, Plate 22.

³⁵M. Ciriquiain Gaiztarro, *Los vascos en la pesca de la ballena* (San Sebastián: Ediciones Vascas, 1979; 1st ed.: 1961), p. 184.

³⁶Awards for this work include the Royal Canadian Geographical Society's Gold Medal (1980), the Order of Canada (1981), induction to the Basque Royal Society (1981), Honorary Doctorate (University of Windsor, 1985), Honorary Doctorate (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1993).

³⁷AGG. CO. ECI, 216 (new no. 217). Proulx cites folio 4 *recto* when it is folio 6 *recto*.

³⁸*Ibid.*, fol. 6 r. Proulx also misreads the woman's name as "Dominica" (it is in fact "Domicuca").

³⁹Proulx's reference to this lawsuit is doubly wrong: he means lawsuit LCI, 219 and not 203, and the lawsuit is not as Proulx says "a trial in 1596" as it began in 1597.

⁴⁰AGG. CO. MCI, 424, fol. 34 v.

⁴¹E. Ducéré, "Recherches historiques sur les corsaires de Saint-Jean-de-Luz", in *La tradition au Pays Basque* (Paris: aux Bureaux de la Tradition Nationale, 1899), p. 219.

⁴²L. Turgeon, "Pêcheurs basques et indiens des côtes du Saint-Laurent au xvième siècle: perspectives de recherches", *Revue interdisciplinaire des études canadiennes en France*, 13 (1982) (pp. 9-14), p. 10, note 11. The data for the Spanish Basque fleet are from S. Barkham.

⁴³S. Barkham, "The Documentary Evidence for Basque Whaling Ships ...", p. 75.

⁴⁴M. Ciriquiain Gaiztarro, *Los vascos en la pesca de la ballena*, p. 9.

⁴⁵J. M. Ugartechea y Salinas, "La pesca tradicional en Lequeitio", *Anuario de Eusko-Folklore*, 22 (1967-68), p. 12.

⁴⁶AGG. CO. MCI, 424, referred to on page 43, note 56; p. 52, note 80; p. 54, note 90; and p. 60, note 104.

⁴⁷S. Barkham, "Guipuzcoan Shipping in 1571 ...," p. 74 and notes 11-12.

⁴⁸AGG. CO. LCI, 203, fol. 147 v.

⁴⁹L. Turgeon, "Pêches Basques en Atlantique Nord (xvii-xviii siècle)", Doctoral thesis, University of Bordeaux III, 1982, p. 113.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 296, note 38.

⁵¹See M.M. Barkham, "Spanish Basque Ship Masters and Captains on Cod Fishing and Whaling Voyages to Terranova during the early 17th Century", paper presented at the *First Labrador Straits Studies Conference*, Forteau, Labrador, Sept. 1988; and M.M. Barkham, "Shipowning, Shipbuilding and Trans-Atlantic Fishing in Spanish Basque Ports,

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1560-1630: A Case Study of the ports of Motrico and Zumaya", PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1990, pp. 205-17 and 258-60.

⁵²Found and published by S. Huxley (Barkham) in "Los vascos y las pesquerías transatlánticas, 1517-1713", pp. 185-6. They are: i) the last will of Domingo de Petriyarça, a mariner from Zubieta near San Sebastián, dictated by the dying man to captain Antonio de Yturribalzaga, of Motrico, on 6 July 1630 on board the ship *La Piedad* in the Labrador port of "Los Ornos" (now East St. Modeste); ii) captain Yturribalzaga's sworn testimony to the mayor of Motrico regarding the veracity of the will; and iii) a list of Petriyarça's clothing and personal belongings also written in "Los Ornos" by Yturribalzaga.

⁵³R. Bélanger, *Les basques dans l'estuaire du Saint-Laurent* (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1971), p. 36.

⁵⁴R. Seoane y Ferrer, *Navegantes Guipuzcoanos* (Madrid: Revista General de la Marina, 1908; reprint edition San Sebastián: Sociedad Guipuzcoana de Ediciones y Publicaciones, 1985), pp. 95-106.

⁵⁵M. Barkham, *Report on 16th century Spanish Basque Shipbuilding c. 1550 -c. 1600*. S. Barkham, "The Documentary Evidence for Basque Whaling Ships...", pp. 79-80 and 87-9.

⁵⁶See M.M. Barkham, *Shipowning, Shipbuilding and Trans-Atlantic fishing ...*, p. 167 and pp. 69-71. Also his *Report on 16th century Spanish Basque Shipbuilding c. 1550 - c. 1600*, p. 47.

⁵⁷See M.M. Barkham, "The Structure and Organization of a Merchant Capitalist Industry: Shipbuilding in Zumaya, 1560-1600" (in Spanish) in S. Huxley (Barkham), ed., *Itasoa 3. Los vascos en el marco Atlántico Norte. Siglos XVI y XVII*, pp. 211-76, based on the author's MA thesis (Memorial University of Newfoundland). Also M.M. Barkham, *Shipowning, Shipbuilding and Trans-Atlantic Fishing ...*, p. 68.

⁵⁸For a discussion of this issue see the above two works by this reviewer as well as his "Sixteenth Century Basque Shipbuilding: The Multipurpose *Nao*", and "Spanish Shipbuilding and Shipbuilding [at the Time of the 1588 Armada]".

⁵⁹M.M. Barkham, *Shipowning, Shipbuilding and Trans-Atlantic Fishing ...*, p. 141.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, pp. 67-8.

⁶²There is ample documentary evidence on Spanish Basque entrepreneurs and moneylenders in Bilbao, San Sebastián and smaller towns financing at the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th centuries "far-flung" whaling ventures not only to *Terranova* but also to Iceland, Spitsbergen and Brazil. See *Ibid.*, pp. 253-60; and M.M. Barkham's "French Basque 'New Found Land' Entrepreneurs and the Import of Codfish and Whale Oil to Northern Spain, c. 1580 to c. 1620: the Case of Adam de Chibau, Burgess of Saint-Jean-de-Luz and 'Sieur de St. Julien'", *Newfoundland Studies*, 10, 1 (1994), pp. 1-43.

⁶³R. Bélanger, *Les basques dans l'estuaire de Saint-Laurent*, p. 122.

⁶⁴*Diccionario histórico de los artes de la pesca nacional por el Comisario Real de Guerra de Marina* (Madrid: Viuda de Joaquín Ibarra, 5 vols. 1791-5).

⁶⁵AGG. CO. MCI, 424, fol. 42 v.

⁶⁶S. Barkham, "The Spanish Province of *Terranova*", *The Canadian Archivist*, 2, 5 (1974), pp. 73-83.

⁶⁷M. Fernández de Navarrete, *Colección de los viajes y descubrimientos que hicieron por mar los españoles desde fines del siglo XV* (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 5 vols., 1825-37), vol. 3, pp. 176-80.

⁶⁶E. Cleirac, *Us et Coustumes de la mer* (Bordeaux: G. Millanges, 1647), p. 151. Proulx cites a 1671 edition published in Rouen but gives no indication that this was at least the third edition. A second edition dates from 1661 (Bordeaux: J.M. Millanges).

⁶⁹L.M. de Isasti, *Compendio historial de la M. N. y M. L. provincia de Guipúzcoa* (1626) (San Sebastián: I.R. Baroja, 1850; facsimile edition, Bilbao: Editorial "La Gran Enciclopedia Vasca", 1972), p. 156.

⁷⁰S. Huxley (Barkham), "Los vascos y las pesquerías transatlánticas, 1517-1713", pp. 30, 37-9.

⁷¹*Ibid.* Document cited on p. 28, note 18.

⁷²Located by S. Barkham and discussed in the above publication, p. 28 and p. 36.

⁷³M.M. Barkham, "Old European Trades and New American Routes: The Response of Northern Spanish Shipowners and Merchant-Entrepreneurs to new Trans-Atlantic Opportunities, c. 1492 to c. 1559", forthcoming.

⁷⁴L.M. de Isasti, *Compendio historial* ..., p. 156. Isasti suggested that "this trade and navigation" ceased around 1526 "because of English opposition" but the archival evidence shows that Spanish Basque fishing of Ireland and south-west England continued well after that date.

⁷⁵S. Huxley (Barkham), "Los vascos y las pesquerías transatlánticas, 1517-1713", p. 36 for the transcribed documents.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p. 28. Jacques Bernard located the earliest known *Terranova* voyage with French Basque participation (1517) over 30 years ago and discussed it in his "Les types de navires ibériques et leur influence sur la construction navale dans les ports du sud-ouest de la France (XV^e-VI^e siècles)", in *Aspects internationaux de la découverte océanique aux 15^e et 16^e siècles* ("Actes du Ve colloque internationale d'histoire maritime", Lisbonne, 1960) (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1966) p. 202 (note 1), and in his seminal three-volume *Navires et gens de mer à Bordeaux (vers 1450-vers 1550)* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1968), vol. 2, p. 806-9 (chapter entitled "The first voyages for *Terre-Neuve*"). Bernard's transcription of the document was first published *verbatim* in S. Huxley (Barkham), "Los vascos y las pesquerías transatlánticas, 1517-1713", p. 30.

⁷⁷J.M. Ugartechea y Salinas, "La pesca tradicional en Lequeitio", p. 11.

⁷⁸R. González Echegaray, *Balleneros Cantábricos* (Santander: Institución Cultural de Cantabria, 1978), p. 55.

⁷⁹These cod fishermen occasionally brought back meat (not processed whale oil) from beached or perhaps even harpooned whales.

⁸⁰Indeed, the first known reference for a French Basque *Terranova* voyage involving whale products is for *La Catherine d'Urtubie* which in 1530 was meant to bring back 4500 dried and cured cod fish and 12 barrels of whale meat "without flippers or tail". Cited in J. Bernard, *Navires et gens de mer à Bordeaux* ..., vol. 2, p. 807, and first published *verbatim* (Bernard's transcription) in S. Huxley (Barkham), "Los vascos y las pesquerías transatlánticas, 1517-1713", p. 37. S. Barkham has explained that "the phrase 'without flippers or tail' was applied to whale meat in brine whether it was from Galicia [in north-western Spain] or from *Terranova*." *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁸¹See the sections entitled "From cod fish to whales" and "Establishing the first ovens" in S. Huxley (Barkham), "Los vascos y las pesquerías transatlánticas, 1517-1713", pp. 60-2: "It seems as though the first establishments for rendering down whale blubber may have been built at the end of the 1530s but it can not be said with certainty that ovens and other

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constructions related to the whaling industry existed before 1548 when notarial documents give evidence of various voyages aimed at obtaining whale oil". *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁸²M.M. Barkham, *Shipowning, Shipbuilding and Trans-Atlantic Fishing* pp. 134-7 and 253-60.

⁸³*Ibid.* For a detailed analysis see pp. 127-34, 249-51 and 272-5.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 253-4.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 248-60.

⁸⁷Prowse's statement reads: "In 1602, seven Basque vessels went to Newfoundland for whaling". D.W. Prowse, *A History of Newfoundland* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1896; 1st edition, London: Macmillan, 1895), p. 48.

⁸⁸Letter from Christina Cameron to M. Barkham (dated Ottawa 22 November 1994).