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BASQUE TOPONYMY IN CANADA

by Miren Egaña Goya*

Résumé: Par la comparaison des toponymes figurant sur les anciennes cartes et ceux que nous avons pu relever dans les routiers basques de Martin de Hoyarsabal et de Piarres Detcheverry, nous cherchons dans ce travail; (1°) à établir une liste aussi complète que possible des noms de lieux basques, attestés dans les documents et cartes basques des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles et situés en Terre-Neuve, sur la côte sud du Labrador ou sur les côtes de Golfe nommées *Gran Baya*; (2°) à étudier l'éventuelle évolution linguistique de ces noms. Ces témoignages de l'exploration et de la pêche basques mettent en évidence l'origine d'un assez grand nombre de toponymes encore en usage au Canada. Il est intéressant, aussi, de retrouver ici la trace de *zeria*, vieux mot qui désigne encore de nos jours la baleine dans certains des dialectes basques.

Abstract: By comparing the toponyms used in early maps with those we have found in the Basque pilot books of Martin de Hoyarsabal and Piarres Detcheverry, our study aims (i) to draw up the fullest possible list of Basque place names found in Basque documents and maps of the 16th and 17th centuries, and located in Newfoundland, on the south coast of Labrador, and on the coasts of the Gulf called *Gran Baya*, and (ii) to examine the linguistic development of these names. These witnesses to Basque exploration and fishing reveal the origin of quite a large number of Canadian place names that are still in use. It is also interesting to note traces here of *zeria*, an old word that still means "whale" in certain Basque dialects.

* * *

On both sides of the Pyrenees, where they descend into the Atlantic Ocean and form the border between France and Spain, the Basque people have dwelt since before the arrival of the Celts and the Romans. They are above all distinguished by their non-Indo-European language which few outsiders have penetrated¹, but they also have a proud maritime tradition extending to the Middle Ages. Besides transporting wool, iron, and wine from their hinterlands to Flanders and England, sailors from this brief stretch of coast called Biscay

hunted the resources of the sea in a search that eventually led them to the shores and cod-fishing banks of Newfoundland. Precisely when Basque mariners first touched the New World is keenly disputed, especially so since one source gives the date of 1372². It is certain that by the sixteenth century they were intensively fishing the waters of Newfoundland, and that, soon after, they penetrated the lower St. Lawrence estuary in a pursuit of various resources.

Very few of these Basques passed the winter in Terra Nova, much less settled there. Nonetheless, they named the places they frequented, and we can retrace their place names in the maps and pilot books of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These place names, some of which may still be recognized, contribute to our understanding of the role of the Basques in the history of the region, as well as in the expansion of renaissance Europe. This study draws upon numerous maps, and in particular those prepared by the Basques Denis de Rotis in 1674, Piarres Detcheverry in 1689, and the house of Hirribarren about 1715³. Various scholars have used some of these maps, summarized in the table on pages 68-69, but without isolating the Basque element in them.

None however have compared them to the *rouliers* or pilot books of two Basques, Martin de Hoyarsabal and the same Piarres Detcheverry. Hoyarsabal's book, *Les voyages aventureux de Capitaine Martin de Hoyarsabal, habitant de Çubiburu* was first published in 1579 in Bordeaux by J. Chouin, who explains the sailor's origins in complex terms that Basques of today still find meaningful: "l'Autheur de ce present livre n'est pas frâçois: mais est Basque des frontieres d'Espagne...." The work describes the sea-roads and havens of western Europe as well as Newfoundland and the south coast of Labrador. The book of Detcheverry, *Liburu hau da Ixasoco nabigacionecoa...*, published in Baiona (Bayonne) by Fauvet in 1677, is set entirely in Basque and consists of Hoyarsabal's work in translation and Detcheverry's extensive original additions. This work has the distinction of being the first technical work in the Basque language and dates from the period of the main classical works of Basque literature.

Turning to the place names, three regional toponyms stand out as having a larger historical significance: *Gran Baya*, *bakailua* (together with *zeria*), and *Nouvelle Biscaye*. *Gran Baya* ("Great Bay"), most often refers to the Strait of Belle Isle. Sometimes, however, *Gran Baya* was the larger water bounded by Labrador in the north and Newfoundland in the east, including the Strait of Belle Isle. In other cases yet, it appears that the Gulf of St. Lawrence itself was considered as the *Gran Baya*. The name appears in numerous documents in the

archives of Bordeaux, Tolosa and Oñati, as well as the works of Hoyarsabal, Detcheverry and the Basque mapmakers. The majority of the toponyms we found are in this area, which seems to represent in general terms the Basque conception of their sphere of interest in Terranova during the 16th century.

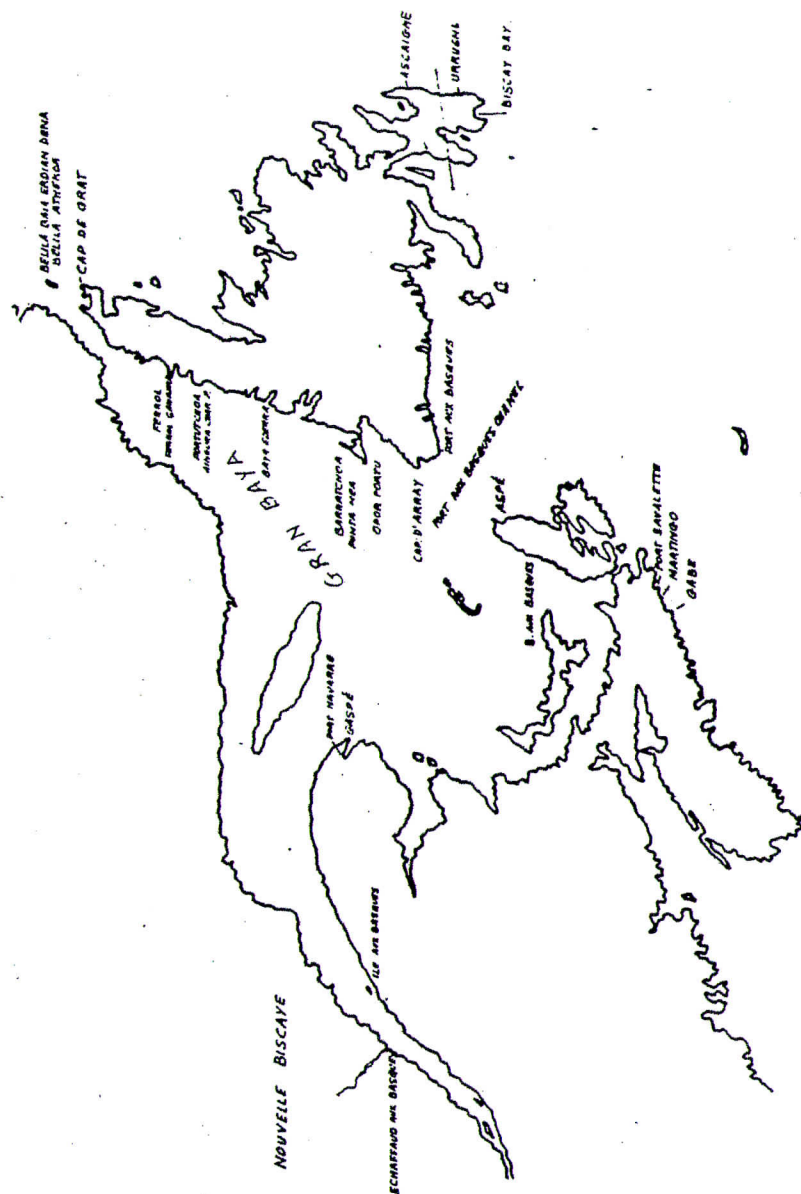
The second general toponym is derived from the Basque word for "cod", *bakailua*, which designated the southern shores of Gran Baya and the Atlantic coast upon which the cod was dried by fishermen of various origins. Today the name survives only in *Baccalieu Island*, just off eastern Newfoundland, but in the maps of the time it appears as a general term for the coasts of Terranova. This Basque word entered the international maritime vocabulary about the year 1500, and its significance in the New World is described by Fournier in 1643:

"...ces terres sont appellées du nom d'Isles de Bacaleo, comme d'un nom assez connu. Or on ne peut douter que ce nom leur esté donné par les Basques, qui seuls en toute l'Europe appellent ce poisson *Bacaleos* ou *Bacallos* et les Originaires le nomment *Apagé*⁴."

The significance of the cod in designating Newfoundland is not surprising, considering that already in 1516 Pietro Martire d'Anghiera wrote, concerning the second voyage of Giovanni Cabotto (Jean Cabot):

Is ea littora percurrrens quae Bacalaos appellauit.... Bacallaos Cabottus ipse terras illas appellauit: eo quas in earum pelago tantam reperit magnorum quorundam piscium: tinnos emulantium: sic vocatorum ab indigenis...." [He, in following those coasts which he called *Bacalaos* ... Cabot himself called these land *Bacallaos*, for he found such an abundance of certain great fish in their sea, which rival tuna, so called (*bacallaos*) by the local people.]

From the fifteenth century onwards, *bakailua* and its variants were constantly used on maps, regardless of the origin and language of the cartographers, denoting not only fishing banks, but also land areas adjacent to the North Atlantic, mainly in northeastern Canada. Johannes Rusch (1508) indicated *In Bacalauras* for a point in southern Greenland. In 1529, Diego Rivero located the *tierra de los bacallaos* similarly and noted an island as *I. de bacallaos*. In Petri Apiani's *Cosmographia* (1551), the entire area north of Cuba is referred to as *Baccalaurum*. It appeared as *Bacalaos* on Petrus Martir's map of America (1534). Mercator's map of 1538 called it *Baccalaurum regio*. In the 1540 Basel edition of Ptolemy's *Geography*, *terra nova sive de Bacalhaos* is represented as a large island joined to Iceland. Pedro de Medina (1545) called the north-eastern part of America *Bacallaos*. In his map entitled *Tierra Nueva* (1548),



Map I. Basque Place Names in Canada

Giacomo Gastaldi called a large part of the North American continent *Tierra de Bacalaos*, as did Ruscelli in 1561. In 1560 P. Forlani and G. Camocio situated the *Tierra de Bacalaos* rather toward the interior of present-day Canada, while in 1565 P. Forlani and F. Bertelli placed *Bacaleaos* in the most north-easterly point of the continent. B. Zaltieri (1566) located *Terra de Baccalos* in the south of Labrador. Cornelis de Jode (1593) attached the name *Baccalao* to Newfoundland and *Ilhe Bacaileo* to a small island "just east of *Baccalao*". C. Wytfliet (1597: plate 18) called both Newfoundland and Labrador *Terra de Bacallaos*, and showed *Baccalieu Island* as *Y de Bacaile*. In 1609, Lescarbot used *Bacaillos* to refer to Cape Breton Island⁵.

Bianco's Atlas (1436) shows a land called *Scorafixa* or *Stocafixa*⁶ in the western Atlantic, and Proulx (1986: 22) remarks that in several maps from the middle of the 15th century there are islands in the western Atlantic variously called *Stockfisch* or *Bacalao*, that could possibly be identified as Newfoundland. In 1511 Maggiolo simply called Newfoundland *terra de pescaria* ("land of fishing").

In an anonymous Portuguese map of 1520, *Bacalnaos* is located in northeastern America, but in the accompanying description this is referred to as *pesciu* (fish). Verrazano calls the Bacalao area of Newfoundland by a different name for the cod in 1529: his label *Terra nova sive le molue* uses a common 16th-century spelling of the French *morue*. Writing of the Basque province of Gipuzkoa in 1571, Garibay commented:

... van cado año sus naturales con muchas naos destos puertos para Terranova... y vuelven cargadas del pescado llamado Vacallao, del qual aun la tierra mesma de Terranova es llamada de otro nombre, tierra de Vacallaos. *[Every year its natives go in many ships from these ports to Newfoundland... and they return loaded with the fish called Vacallao, wherefore the land of Newfoundland itself is alternatively called Tierra de Vacallaos.]*

Several times in the work of S.R. Dudley (1661), the word occurs, e.g., *I. Bacalao*, *B. di Bacalao*, *C. di Bacalao* ⁷. Finally, in a 1710 document from Donibane Lohitzune (Saint-Jean-de-Luz), hereafter referred to as *Mémoires* of 1710, Basque sailors advanced their claim to fish in Newfoundland in the following terms:

Ce fut dans le progrès de ces pecheries et en donnant chasse aux baleines sur ces bancs qu'ils decouvrirent la terre de cette isle qui presentement se nomme par toutes les nations Terre-neuve;

pour avoir été decouverte la premiere de toutes celles d'occident à laquelle ils donnerent alors le nom de Bacallao de celuy qu'ils avoient deja donné à ces poissons qu'ils avoient trouvé en sy grande abondance sur ces costes, comme qui diroit terre des morues en leur langue.

On maps of southern Labrador, an area where the names derived from *bakailua* do not occur, we find 16th-century place names derived from an old Basque word for the whale, *zeria*. In the Basque country, *zeria* with its variants *seria*, *seroie*, *seri*, *seroikume* were recently revealed to still exist in coastal dialects from Donostia (San Sebastian) to Hondarribia (Fuentarrabia)⁸. The first record we have found is in a map drawn by Bartholomeo Columbus in 1506; part of the south coast of Labrador is called *Serica* (Nunn 1928: 21, fig. 4). In 1546 P. Desceliers transcribed it as *B. de Seria* on his world map, he too situating it on the south coast of Labrador. According to Prowse, (1936-42), it is recorded as *B. de Serra* on maps by Mercator (1541), Deliens (1541), Homem (1554), Velho (1561), and Ortelius (1570), and as *b. de sisian* by Letestu in 1555. The map by Vallard (c. 1547), an anonymous Portuguese work, and van Deutecum (1594) note the same name as that of Desceliers, but in the form *b. de serra*. The persistence of the corruption from *seria* to *serra*, originally due no doubt to a simple misreading, suggests that successive mapmakers copied the word without knowing its meaning. Like *bakailua*, *zeria* appears to have belonged to a common maritime vocabulary borrowed from the Basques. The existence of *zeria* along the south coast of Labrador complements *bakailua* elsewhere, filling the general picture of Basque economic interest in Terranova.

The third place name of historical importance is *Nouvelle Biscaye*, designating a large territory on the north side of the St. Lawrence River, below the present site of the city of Québec. The first to employ the name was Champlain in reference to a bay in the St. Lawrence ("Montaignes que sont dans les terres; baye que j'ai nommée la nouvelle Bisquaye", Champlain 1612). In his *Carte géographique de la Nouvelle France...*, which accompanied his written works (Paris: Jean Berjon, 1613), Champlain named the mainland *Nouvelle Biscaye*, and to the north of this toponym he designated *mont pyrenees*. On the St. Lawrence Champlain constantly encountered the Basques who, besides fishing and whaling, seem to have been active in the fur trade with native peoples. The Basque fur trade was a source of chagrin to Champlain, who had obtained an exclusive charter for this trade from the king of France. We find this place name — given to the region by non-Basques — only in the 17th century, and it is the only place name which extends into the interior of the land.

According to Prowse (1936-42, 34, 136, 212, 961, 962, 973), many cartographers adopted this place name after Champlain, e.g. Delaet (1630:

Nouvelle Biscaye), Ruesta (1654: *Nueva Vizcaya*), Roggeveen (1675: *Nouvelle Biscaye*), and Coronelli (1689: *Nouvelle Biscaye*). We do not find this place name on Champlain's 1632 map, even though it was noted by Prowse. For the modern (1933) *Cape Basque* or *Basque Road*, Prowse (1936-42: 1939, 1963, 1969, 2015, 2021, 2024, 2027) recorded the following 17th-century variants: *Nouvelle Biscaye* (Jacobsz, 1631, and Visscher, 1660), *Nouvelle Biscaie* (Jansson, 1657 and Blaeu, 1659), *Nobelle Biscaye* (Petavjus, 1659), *New Biscaie* (Hollar, c. 1670). We have found an additional attestation of *Nouvelle Biscaie*, in the area that Champlain called by this name, on the map entitled *America Septentrionalis*, prepared by Johannes Jannssonius and published in 1638 in Amsterdam⁹.

* * *

We turn now to the local place names which we present in the general order followed by the map of Piarres Detcherry. They begin with *Chafaud aux Basques* near the mouth of the Saguenay, and continue down the estuary and along the south coast of the Gulf and the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia, before leaping to Cape Race and passing counter-clockwise around Newfoundland, including the south coast of Labrador.

1. **Chafaud aux Basques**, on the left bank of the St. Lawrence just west of the mouth of the Saguenay River, is the westernmost point where we can find the name *Basque*. It appears first in the journal of Champlain's expeditions: "...cela va jusqu'à l'anse aux Basques ... de la pointe aux Allouette ... l'on va au Cap de Chafaut aux Basques" (Champlain, 1612). Maps that record this name, variously as *Chafaut aux Basques*, *Echafaut Basque*, *Scaffold Basque*, or *Echaffaud aux Basques* are: anonymous (1695), Le Cordier (1696), anonymous (c. 1713), Deshayes (1715), de Fer (1715), van Keulen (1717-23), Lotter (1700-34), Bellin (1744, 1755, 1761), d'Anville (1755), Pellegrin (1755), Jefferys (1759-75), Carver (1776). *Chafaud aux Basques* occurs also on the anonymous *Carte Basque de l'isle Terre-neuve de La Cadie et Canada* in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, derived from Detcherry's map of 1689.

De Barres in 1781 notes *Basque fishery* near the Saguenay. This confirms the meaning of *échafaud* ("scaffolding") in the context of the cod fishery of the period: the cod were dried on scaffolding, known in English as *flakes*.

2. **Ile aux Basques** is a small island on the south shore of the St. Lawrence, in front of Trois-Pistoles (Québec), where we have archaeological evidence of a hearth for melting whale blubber, and of Amerindian-Basque trade in the 16th century (Turgeon, 1992). This name, with the variants *I. au Basque*, *I. aux Basques*, *Basque I.*, *Basques I.* is found on the same maps as

Echaffaud aux Basques (see 1, above), as well as on that of Detcheverry and an anonymous map entitled *Carte de Golfe de St. Laurent jusqu'à Québec* (1719). It also appears in the *Mémoires* of 1710:

...les vestiges des vigies et des fonderies qu'ils y avoient etablies et une des Isles qui se trouve située à environ 80 lieux avant dans la riviere de Quebec, conserve encore le nom de l'isle aux Basques, quoy qu'ils ayent discontinué depuis très longtemps d'y faire la pecherie des Balaines...

3. **Gaspé.** Today a place name prominent in the Canadian imagination, *Gaspé* appears quite late, being first recorded on maps as *Honguedo*. The form *Gaspei* is found on the map of van Deutecum (c. 1594), and *Gaspa* on several 17th-century maps, e.g., those of Moll, Thornton, and van Keulen. Both Delaet and Champlain call in *Gachepé*, while Lescarbot, Coronelli and Visscher use the form *Gaspay*. The spelling has evolved into the present-day form *Gaspé*, whence also the name of the entire peninsula, *la Gaspésie*.

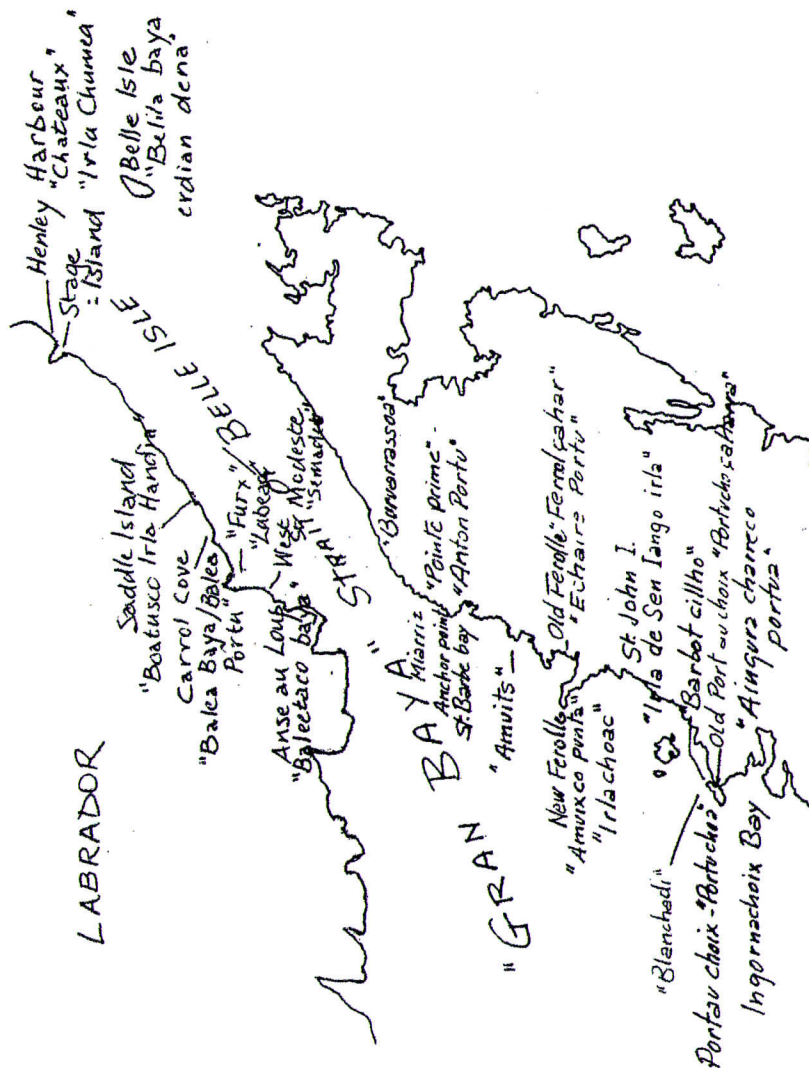
In his *Nabigacione coa*, Detcheverry wrote of Gaspé: "Caispecoec harat grata equiten baitute... Caispeco puntac badu irla chume bat [*The people from Caispe prepare the fish there... the point of Caispe has a small island*]." It appears we have a form derived, in a normal manner from *gerizpe/kerizpe*, meaning "shelter"¹⁰. Denis de Rotis also uses *Gaispe* in his 1674 portulan. However, we observe that Detcheverry (1967: 135) employs the more classic *geriza*: "...lehenbicico punta meharraren guericerat [... in the shelter of the first narrow point]."

4. **Aspé**, located at the north-eastern tip of Cape Breton Island. We immediately recognize the root (*h*)aitz, common to all dialects of Basque, followed by the suffix *-pe* "below, under, at the bottom of."

This place name within the town of Busturia, in the Basque province of Bizkaia, was discussed at length by Michelena (1964: 44). In the year 1051 the monastery of Santa Maria de Axpe is referred to as *sancta Maria de Izpea*, *subtus penna* ("below the rock"), the oldest attestation of a Basque toponym to be accompanied by a translation. The Cape Breton example appears as *Aispe* in the anonymous *Carte basque de Lisle de terre neuve* probably of the 17th century, as well as in the map drawn by Detcheverry at Plaisance, Newfoundland, in 1689. The cartographers who record the name in spellings closest to the Basque word are Hack (1684), who gives *Ashpe*, Bellin (1744), Coronelli (1689), Chaviteau (1698), and Lotter (1755), who note it as *Achepe*, and finally others such as Franquelin (1699) who give *Daspe*.

5. **Port Navarre**, on the shores of Gaspé Bay. The etymology is self-evident, Navarre being one of the historic Basque regions.
6. **Orignac.** *R. de l'orinac* is found in the southern part of the *figure du Port Royal en la Nouvelle France* prepared by Lescarbot in 1609. The term *orignac* seems to have been taken from the Basque *orein* "deer", appearing here with the plural determinative suffix *-ak*. The word has become common usage in Québec as *orignal* "moose".
6. **Port de Savalette.** "Ganong reports: port mentioned by Lescarbot, not far off Canso, probably Whitehaven: name of a fishing captain" (Prowse 1936-42). Whitehead adds (1986: 229): "En 1607, Lescarbot rencontra un capitaine basque nommé Savalet qui, depuis 1564, pêchait tous les ans dans un port à quatre lieues au sud de Canso."

This name is lost in the middle of the 18th century. The Basque spelling of this captain's surname would be *Zabaleta*, and the form *Savalette* reflects the influence of the French linguistic norm upon a Basque toponym. French does not distinguish between the Basque consonants [s] /z/ (voiceless apico-alveolar fricative) and [s] /s/ (dorso-alveolar fricative) in word-initial position, with the result that either may be written *s* or *z*. The locative suffix *-eta*, common in Basque, has undergone the paronymic attraction of the French diminutive suffix *-ette*. *Port de Savalette* is recorded by the following cartographers: Lescarbot (1609), Champlain (1612, 1613), Delaet (1630), Blaeu (1640), Boisseau (1643), Visscher (1660), Roggeveen (1675), Coronelli (1683), van Keulen (1717), and Seller (n.d.).
7. **Martingo.** Near Port de Savalette we find another Basque name in the 17th-century cartography of the area. *Martingo* appears on at least eighteen maps, by Franquelin, Detcheverry, Decouagne, Du Coulombier, Lotter and others. De Rotis notes it as *Martin*. There is no doubt that this is a proper name, formed with the Basque locative genitive *-ko/-go* but lacking the possessive object¹¹. On period maps, both Port de Savalette and Martingo are located in Acadia, close to Canso (Nova Scotia).
8. **Gabe.** This place name appears near Martingo, but only on the maps of the Basque school of Donibane Lohitzune (Saint-Jean-de-Luz). It may originate from the term *Gave* (*gabe* in local pronunciation), which in a considerable area of Béarn and the northern Basque provinces designates the streams descending from the Pyrenees to the Adour river.
9. **Escatari, Escatadi Irla**, today *Scatarie Island* on the east coast of Cape Breton Island, is recorded on several maps until the late 18th century. Detcheverry uses the term *escatari* as a common noun to describe a steep coast or a line of cliffs. The rotation of *d / r*, habitual in Basque, appears written in both forms.



Map II. Basque Place Names: Labrador and Northern Newfoundland

(On Maps II and III, spellings from Basque sources are indicated between quotation marks.)

10. **Baxes aux Basques**, on the northwest coast of Cape Breton Island, was recorded by Le Cordier in 1696. *Baxes* in Spanish translates as “shoals”.
11. **Basques Cove** is the name for a small bay on the north-west coast of Cape Breton Island on the 1809 map signed by Cary I. It was also noted by Des Barres in 1778.
12. **Ascaigne**. Moving from Cape Breton Island to the Avalon Peninsula near Placentia (and Placentia in turn recalls the name of two villages in the Basque Country), *Ascaigne* recalls the village named *Azkaine* (Ascain) in the Basque province of Lapurdi (Labourd). The Newfoundland name appears on the *Carte particulière des environs de Plaisance* (c. 1718), as the entrance to a small bay northwest of the Fort of Placentia: “Entrée de la petite baye nomée Rivière d’Ascaigne”.
13. **Biscay Bay**. Today we find a *Biscay Bay* on the Avalon Peninsula. Recorded by Popple (1739), Mitchel (1755), Bellin (1744), Lotter, Thornton, and others, it also appears as *Biskin Bay* in an English sailing direction of 1733¹².
14. **Renews**. This town on the Avalon Peninsula is recorded by Detcheverry as *Urrunnus* and *Rounouse*, and by De Rotis as *Urrugnus*. Decouagne, Verrier, and Thornton note it *Rougnouse*. In the *Mémoires* of 1710 from Donibane Lohitzune (Saint-Jean-de-Luz), it appears as *Ourrougnousse*:

Ils donnerent aux ports de cette cote orientale de Terre-neuve des noms en leur langage; entre les quels celui qui’ils donnerent a Ourrougnousse ainsy nommé du nom d’un Bourg scitué proche de S. Jeandeluz à environ demy lieu de distance appellé Ourrogne...¹³

The French spelling indicates a palatalization of the intervocalic /n/ to /ny/, so that the present-day form of *Renews* in fact closely approaches the Basque pronunciation of this name.
15. **Baccalieu Island**. See discussion on *bakailua*, above.
16. **Cap de Grat**, in northeastern Newfoundland. According to the *Mémoires* of 1710:

Ils donnerent aux ports de cette cote orientale de Terre-neuve des noms en leur langage; entre les quels celui qui'ils donnerent a Ourrougnousse ainsy nommé du nom d'un Bourg scitué proche de S. Jeandeluz à environ demy lieue de distance appellé Ourrogne...¹³

The French spelling indicates a palatalization of the intervocalicñ /ny/, so that the present-day form of *Renews* in fact closely approaches the Basque pronunciation of this name.

...est cap de grat l'un des trois principaux caps de l'isle de Terre-Neuve scitué dans la partie septentrionale, ce nom etant tiré de grata qui en langage Basque signifie un lieu d'établissement pour les travaux de la peche des Bacalaos...

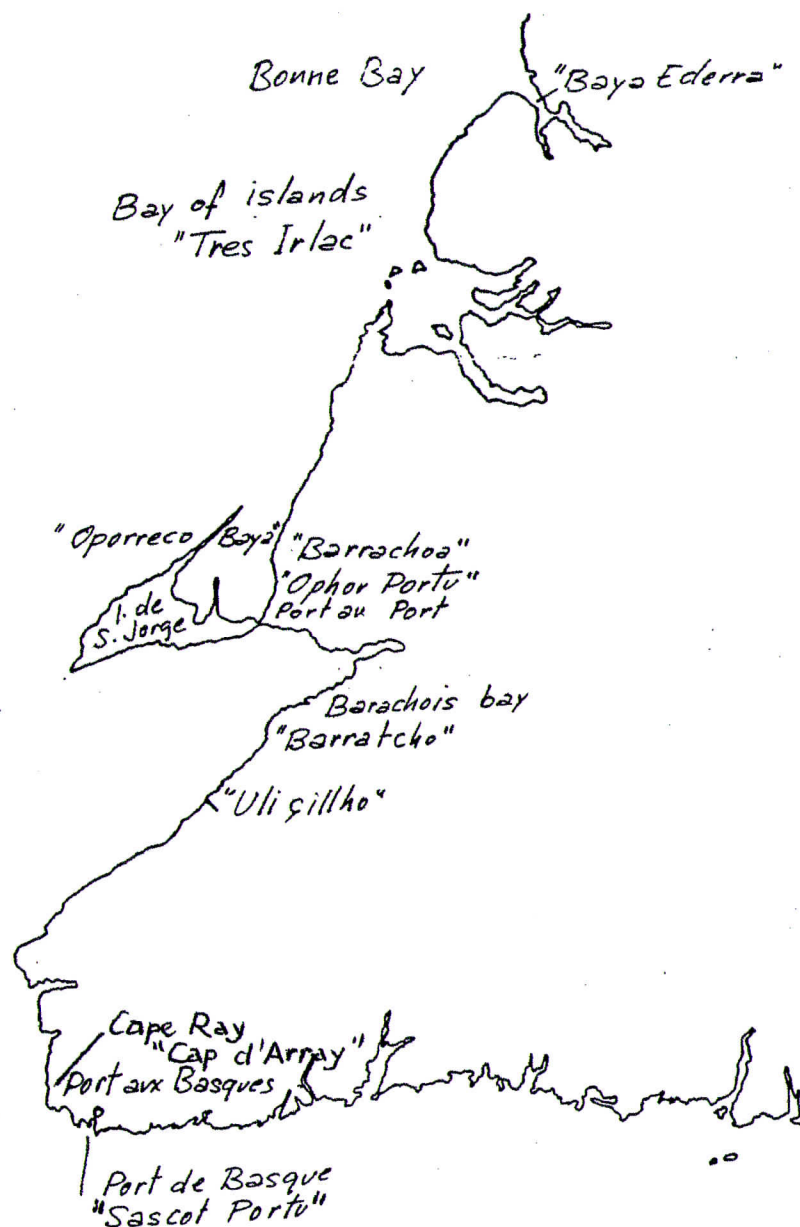
Detcheverry (1677: 133) also notes "...grata eguitera [*to prepare the fish there*]."

17. **Irla Xumea, Irla Haundia.** These two names, cited in Detcheverry's *Liburu hau da ixasoco nabigacionecoa* and meaning "small island" and "big island", reflect the frequent toponymic use of adjectives to modify generics. The first place is Stage Island, a tiny speck in Henley Harbour (Château Bay), whose Basque name originates in the dialect of Lapurdi (Labourd). The second, Saddle Island, is in Red Bay (Boittus), *haundia* meaning "big" in Basque. Both places are in southern Labrador, facing the Strait of Belle Isle.
18. **Belle Isle.** *Belila baya erdian dena*, in Detcheverry's pilot book, means "Belle Isle which is in the middle of the bay". It is not typical of the Basque language to use more than one word to denote a place, still less to include a verb in the designation.¹⁴ The modifier *baya erdian dena* is evidently added to distinguish this name from that of Bell Island — found along the northeast coast of Newfoundland — since to a Basque, as to a French-conditioned ear, the two names are apparent homonyms. Detcheverry also uses *Belila athecoa* "belle isle of the portal" for the same place, the "portal" referring to the entrance to *Gran Baya*.
19. **Balea Portu, Balea Baya, Baleetaco Baya**¹⁵. The first two of these forms in Detcheverry, meaning "whale harbour, whale bay", refer to a single place, Carrol Cove, near Red Bay on the Labrador coast. Red Bay itself appears as *Boatus, Boitus, Butus*, etc. in the cartography, documents and pilot books of the 16th and 17th centuries. Extensive archaeological evidence of whaling activity during the 16th century has been found in Red Bay. The place name *Baleetaco Baya* "bay of whales" is situated somewhat further along the coast and seems to correspond to today's *Anse au Loup*.
20. **Ingornachoix Bay**, on the northwestern coast of Newfoundland. This is recorded by Detcheverry as *Aingura Charreco portua* / *Anngurachar*, both in his manual and on his maps. Variants are found in the work of other Basque cartographers: *Oinguracar* (De Rotis, 1674); *Aingurachar* (Chaviteau, 1698); *Angouachoa* (anonymous, c. 1713); *Aingura choua* (Basque anonymous, n.d.); *Havre Higournachat* (anonymous, 1733). In the anonymous map of c. 1680, attributable to the cartographic school of Donibane Lohitzune (Saint-Jean-de-Luz), it appears translated as *Mechant Ancre* "bad anchorage." The form of the modern name has evolved from the original Basque in two ways. First, we note the disappearance of the initial vowel, which forms a normal diphthong with the second in Basque but not in English or French. Second, we note the ending of the name in *-choix*, a solution that may indicate the influence of other place name endings such as *-choa*¹⁶, transposed more readily into French as *-choix* than as *-char*.

21. **Port au Port.** According to Bélanger (1971) and Arrinda (1977), the forms *Opor Portu, Ophorportu* (Detcheverry), *Opphor Portu* (De Rotis) correspond to *Port au Port* on the west coast of Newfoundland. The explanation offered in the 1710 *Mémoires* "... ophor portu, qui signifie vase a lait, par rapport au calme qui y regne..." seems implausible. However, P. d'Urthe in his dictionary of 1715 gives for *opor* the obscure French equivalent of *cofinand* and the Spanish *tipo de barco de madera* ("kind of wooden boat") (Urkizu 1989, I: 309). The general sense would be thus "harbour for ships", which seems more appropriate to us.
22. **Barachois.** This term has retained its literal meaning, "a small bar" (Basque *barra* + *-txo* + *-a*, with *-txo* being a diminutive suffix and *-a* a determinative) in Canadian toponymic usage, both as a generic and as a specific, on the coasts of Québec, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. Its meaning was explained by Prowse in his study of early Canadian toponymy, and its form has undergone analogical influences from French (to yield *Barachois*) and English (*Barasway*).
23. **Cape Ray**, formerly *Cap d'Array*, forms the far southwestern tip of Newfoundland. Detcheverry gives it as a Basque word, *arraï / arrain*, meaning "fish". A different interpretation is found, however, in the 1710 *Mémoires*: "...Cap de ray qu'il conserve encore, tire du terme Basque 'arraico' qui signifie poursuite ou aproches en..." North of Cape Ray, along the west coast of Newfoundland the so-called *Côte des Basques* begins (La Roncière 1984: 269). In close proximity, we note on contemporary maps — as in Hoyarsabal (1579) and Detcheverry (1677) — the place names *Port aux Basques* and *Port aux Basques Channel*, forming the southern entrance to the Gulf of St Lawrence.
24. **Burin.** We believe that *Burua* (in Detcheverry's pilot book), *Burie* (on his maps) may be *Burin* in southern Newfoundland. In naming a cape Detcheverry commonly employed *burua*, meaning "head" in Basque and used to name prominent geographical features such as the summit of a hill or the headland of a point or cape.

* * *

The names presented in the above sections do not exhaust the impact of Basque influence upon Canadian toponymy. *Miarritz, Amuits, Etchaire portu, Anton portu, Portuchoa, Portucho çaharra, Barbot cillho, Baya ederra, Tres irlac, Baya charra, Portuchar, Ur chumea punta, Ulicillo, Punta mehea* form a series of place names in the works of the mariners Hoyarsabal and Detcheverry, and require only a short etymological explanation. *Miarritz, Amuits, Placentia* in Newfoundland are transplantations of place names in the Basque Country:



Map III. Basque Place Names: Southwestern Newfoundland

Biarritz in Lapurdi (Labourd); Amuits within the city of Hondarribia (Fuentarrabia) in Gipuzkoa; and Plentzia in Bizkaia. Others represent a geographical description, such as *Portuchoa* ("little harbour", now *Port au Choix*, Newfoundland), *Portucho çaharra* ("old little harbour", now *Old Port au Choix*, Newfoundland), *Baya ederra* ("pretty bay", now *Bonne Bay*, Newfoundland), *Tres irlac* ("the three islands", now *Bay of Islands*, Newfoundland), *Punta mehea* ("narrow point", now *East Point*), *Ur chumea punta* ("little water point") and *Portuchar* ("bad harbour"). Others finally bear family names, such as *Etchaire Portu*, *Anton Portu* and *Port de Savalette*, for reasons that may resemble the use of prominent traders' names to designate places in the Canadian fur trade in later centuries.

This series of place names (except *Port de Savalette*) are all located on the west coast of Newfoundland, a concentration of Basque place names which brings us to the discussion of one particular map, the *Plan Geometral de l'isle de Terre-neuve* (c. 1717). It reflects the Treaty of Utrecht, but in many ways seems to echo a more distant past, since the general outline of the coast of Newfoundland is characteristic of a much earlier stage of cartographic precision. Moreover, the place names are completely different from those of any other map. In particular, Basque-associated place names occur on it in a systematic manner, and the map is remarkable for the number of place names that occur on the west coast of Newfoundland, which often appears featureless on other maps. The *Plan* indicates *Cote des Basques* for the west coast of Newfoundland, *R. de Bayone*, *S. Jean de Luz* and *Anse des Basques* on the same coast, and *C. des Biscayens* to the south of Labrador. Several of these names appear also on the 1736 *Carte du Golfe de St. Laurent et du Grand Banc de Terre Neuve*, where we note the spellings *R. de Bayonne*, *St. Jean de Luz*, *Côte des Basques* and *Ance des Basques* on the west coast of Newfoundland.

We may point out that in the province of Québec the term *Basque* occurs in a significant number of place names, requiring no etymological explanation: *île Grande Basque*, *île Petite Basque* (Sept-Iles region); *Cap du Basque*, *Lac du Basque*, *Montagne du Basque*, *Rade du Basque*, *Récif du Basque*, *Anse aux Basques*, *Pointe aux Basques* (Saguenay region); *Lac Basque*, *Anse aux Basques* (Chicoutimi region); *Trou du Basque*, *Île aux Basques*, *Pointe aux Basques*, *Récifs aux Basques* (Rivière du Loup region); *Anse aux Basques* (East Gaspé region); *Collines du Basque*, *Ruisseau du Basque* (West Gaspé region); *Cours d'eau Basque* (Matane region); *Ruisseau Basque* (Beauce region); *Havre aux Basques*, *Baie du Basque* (Îles de la Madeleine)¹⁷.

* * *

MODERN NAME	HOYARSABAL	DETCHEVERRY (manual)	DETCHEVERRY (map)	DE ROTIS (map)	HIRIBARREN (map)
Renews	Urrimche/Durrimche	Urrunus	Urrunus	Urrunus	
Bacallieu	Port Despere	Port Despere Chume	P. Despere		
	Bacallan	Bacallaucio Iria	Bacallau		
Cape Fogo	Banc de Bacallan	Fogasco Bancua			
Belle Isle	Cap de Fogos	Bellia Baya Erdian Dena			Belle Isle
Stage Island	Berille	Iria Chumeca (Chateaux)			
Saddle Island	La Petite Isle				
	La Grande Isle				
Carrol Cove	de Boytus	Boatusco Iria Handia			
York Point	Port de Ballenne	Balea Portu/Balea Baya	Port de Balene		
L'Anse au Loup	Furx	Labeac	Les Furs		
W St. Modeste	Samadeg	Baleataco Baya	Semadet	Balena Bay	
		Semadet	Babacholho	Pointe des Modet	
Strait of Belle Isle	Grand Baye	Gran Baya		Barbaculho	
		Buruarrassoa	Miariz		
			P. Prime		
Brig Bay		Ferrol	Anton Portu		
		Amuix	Ferrol	Ferrol	Ferrol
Old Ferolle		Ferrol/Çahar/	Amuix	Amuix	Amuix
		Etchaitre Portu	P. Dechaire		
		Amuix			
St. John Island		Ferrolgo Amuixco Punta			
Old Port au Choix		Iria de Sen Iango	Iria de St. Ian		I.S. Iean
		Portucho Çaharra			

MODERN NAME	HOYARSABAL	DETCHEVERRY (manual)	DETCHEVERRY (map)	DE ROTIS (map)	HIRIBARREN (map)
Port au Choix		Portucho	Portucho	Portucho	
		Barbot Cillho/-Chillo		Babaculho	
		Blanchadico Punto			
		Irlachoac			
Ingornachioix Bay		Aingura Charreco Portua	Angurachar	Aingurachar	
Bonne Bay		Baya Ederra	B. Ederra		Baye Ederra
		Baya Charra			
Bay of Islands		Tres Iriac	Tryois Isles		Les Trois Isles
		Oportuico Barratchoa			
		Barracheo	Barrachoa		
Port-au-Port Bay		Oporreco Baya			
		Oportuico Punta			
Long Point		Buru Handia			
Port au port		Oportu	Ophorportu	Ophor Portu	Ophorportu
		Portuchar			
		Ur Chumeca Punta			
Barachois Bay		Barracho	Barrachoa	Barracho	
		Ulicillo/Uliclho	Uly Cillho		
		Portuchar	Portucho Charra	Portu Charra	
Cape Ray		Cap d'Array			
Port-aux-Basques	Port de Bacque	Port de Basque	Sascot Portu	Sascot Portu	Sascot Portu
	Baye de Oger	Ogerco Baya			
Burin		Burua	Bouric		
			Petit Plecance		
Placentia	Plaisance	Placencia	Le Port de Plecance	P. de Plaisance	Plaisance
East Point	Amigaiz	Punta Mehea			

We can see, in conclusion, that the Basque people left a considerable number of place names as evidence of their early arrival in Canada. In examining the regional place names, we perceive that Basque mariners of the 16th century named the water of the Strait of Belle Isle *Gran Baya*, and the coast around it after the principal resources they processed there — the *bakailua* or cod, and the *zeria* or whale. Further up the St. Lawrence as far as the Saguenay we find 17th-century evidence of further Basque activity which led to the north shore and its hinterland being named *Nouvelle Biscaye* by French cartographers.

While local place names have frequently been transformed due to the subsequent influence of other languages, notably French and English, there has sometimes been such minimal change that we can readily recognize the original form, as in the cases of today's *Port au Port* (Opor Portu), *Port au Choix* (Portutxoa), *Ingornachoix* (Aingura Txar), and *Barachois* (Barratxoa). Other place names, such as *Belle Bay* (Baya Ederra), *Old Ferolle Harbour* (Ferrol Çaharra), *Baie de la Baleine* (Balea Baya), have been simply translated. Evidence of the Basque presence occurs in place names formed in other languages, in *Ile aux Basques*, *Echaffaud aux Basques*, *Port aux Basques*, *Port aux Basques Channel*, *Biscay Bay* and others, as well as in the regional term of *Nouvelle Biscaye*. No doubt all trace has been lost of many other place names that, if they had remained, would have served the enrichment of the world's cultural heritage by their testimony to the Basque presence in the New World.

NOTES

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1. In this text, the Basque names of places in the Basque Country will be used, with their often more-familiar French or Spanish equivalents in brackets, such as *Miarritz* (Biarritz) in the Basque province of *Lapuri* (Labourd). In France, the Basque country falls entirely within the department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques. In Spain, the three provinces of Gipuzkoa, Bizkaia and Araba (Alava) form the Basque Autonomous Region, administratively separate from Nafarroa (Navarre) which is nonetheless also considered part of the Basque Country.

2. The document in question was lost in a fire in the archives of Donibane Lohitzune (Saint-Jean-de-Luz), and we are left with the reference of a Dutch biologist named van Beneden, who saw the original and wrote in *Un mot sur la pêche de la baleine et les premières expéditions arctiques* (1878): "Après avoir fait la chasse dans la Manche et la Mer du Nord, les Basques vers la fin du XIV siècle (1372) cinglèrent vers l'orient (*sic*), et virent le nombre de ces animaux augmenter notablement en approchant le banc de Terre Neuve...." See R. González Echegaray, *Balleneros Cántabros* (Santander, 1978), p. 40. In a second document from 1776 in which certain Basques advance an historic claim to the Newfoundland fishery, we find a different date: "Les Basques naturellement ont été les premiers à découvrir le Nouveau Monde.... On croit que c'est en 1392 et suivant l'opinion generale 100 ans avant les decouvertes de Christophe Colomb." (*Memorial 1776*, A c 336, Archives Départementales de Pau.)
3. The maps of de Rotis, Detcheverry, and the several anonymous Basque maps are all held in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. The map named Hirribarren is in the National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.
4. G. Fournier, *Hydrographie...* (1643), facsimile, Grenoble, 1973, p. 243. The probable Basque origin of the word is exhaustively presented in J. Corominas, *Diccionario Crítico Etimológico de la Lengua Castellana* (Berne, 1954), vol. 1, p. 445. The word was first attested in Flanders in 1163, and comparative evidence of the Dutch *labberdaan* (English *haberdine*), suggests that the Flemish borrowed *bacallao* from the fish traders of Bayonne in Lapurdi (Labourd).
5. This list, compiled from maps we have consulted, far from exhausts the information to be gleaned from maps of the period. G.R.P. Prowse's masterpiece, only part of which has been published, notes many others.
6. In Germanic usage, *Stockfisch* was a synonym (or near-synonym) of *Kabeljau*/*kabeljauw*.
7. However, when referring to the fishery ("la gran banca Seccagna di Terra Nuova dove si pescano li Merluzzi" [*the Seccagna grand bank of Newfoundland, where cod are fished*]), Dudley uses the word *merluzzi* (cf. modern Italian *merluzzo*, *merluccio*). In Italian, *baccala* has the meaning of "dried salt cod."
8. Research enquiry (Donibane Lohitzune to Bermeo), M. Egaña Goya, 1987.
9. Following a 1560 expedition led by the Basque explorer Francisco de Ybarra, the name *Nueva Biscaya* was similarly used for a territory comprising the present-day Mexican provinces of Durango, Chihuahua and part of Coahila, as seen on many maps up until the mid-19th century. The prominence of Basques as colonial agents in New Spain helps us to place the lesser-known activities of the Basques in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in a broader political perspective.
10. The alternation between the voiceless and voiced occlusives is frequent in Basque, because of the relatively small difference in their values in word-initial position (Michelena 1961: 240). Further, the simple vibrant between two vowels tends to disappear, so that *kerizpe* becomes *keizpe*. It is then but a simple step to open the first vowel of the diphthong thus created, yielding the familiar *kaizpe*. Such a solution

seems more logical, given the norms of the Basque language, than a derivation from *kai-pe* or *haitz-pe*, the latter providing no explanation for the initial consonant noted in *Caispe*.

11. Michelena (1969: 9, note 1) points out the use of the suffix *-ko* as a diminutive, as in *Ochoco*, based on his study of medieval documents from the period 958 to 1222.
12. National Archives of Canada, J.G. Bell and Sir Thomas Phillips collection, Microfilm MG 53, *52.
13. I.e. Urruña (Urrugne) in Lapurdi (Labourd).
14. At the Third Meeting of Basque Onomastics in Lazarra (Estella, Navarre), September 1990, we encountered a similar rendering of a place name in the valley *Ameskoa* (Navarre), found in 16th-century documents.
15. The first and second of these forms use an apposition. In *Baleetacao baya*, Detcheverry declines the same term in the plural, using the infix *-eta-* as usual in plural formations before the declensional suffix *-ko*.
16. Cf. *Port au Choix* (Newfoundland), recorded by Detcheverry and De Rotis as *Portuchoa*.
17. This list was kindly supplied by Jean Poirier of the Commission de toponymie du Québec.

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