SYMBOLS OF THE FRENCH PRESENCE IN NEWFOUNDLAND:
BRETON CROSSES AND CALVARIES – 1680 TO TODAY

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Symbols of the French Presence in Newfoundland:
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by

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Abstract

Crosses and calvaries are strong cultural landmarks on the Petit Nord. Those distinctive features are not, however unique to Breton fishing rooms in Newfoundland; few have been recorded elsewhere in the province. They appeared in the landscape of the Petit Nord as early as 1680. Over time, at least thirty crosses and calvaries were built by the fishermen in that region. Two monumental crosses and a calvary are still standing in Cap Rouge Harbour, although these particular monuments were rebuilt by the French Navy in the 1930s – years after the end of the French fishery in Newfoundland.

The cognitive processes that led the Breton fishermen to build crosses and calvaries in the Petit Nord landscape are deeply rooted in the Breton Catholic traditions. Social and political contexts in Newfoundland from the seventeenth to the twentieth century also explain the presence of such cultural identity markers in the Petit Nord. In this thesis I document the symbolic meanings as well as the functions of these monuments to answer my main research question: Why over centuries did the Breton fishermen build crosses and calvaries in the Petit Nord region?

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Soyons reconnaissants aux personnes qui nous donnent du bonheur; elles sont les charmants jardiniers par qui nos âmes sont fleuries.

Marcel Proust

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Chapter 1: Introduction

For the last few years, Dr. Peter Pope has worked on an extensive archaeological project, studying the Breton fishermen present seasonally in northern Newfoundland between the sixteenth and early twentieth centuries. The main goal of the SSRHC-funded *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord* is to document the presence of the Breton fishermen in the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland over the four centuries of their fishery-based occupation. The cod fishery, although a very old industry in North America, has a history that is not well known in Canada. Today, many people are unaware of the fact that for centuries tens of thousands of fishermen came annually to Newfoundland, to fish cod to feed hundreds of thousands of people in Europe.

Fishermen from Brittany, in France, came to Newfoundland years before the official discovery of Canada by Jacques Cartier in 1534. The documentary record indicates that Europeans were fishing cod in the Petit Nord region of Newfoundland since the early sixteenth century. Certain documents mention Breton, Basque and Norman fishermen in *Baie de Cap Rouge,* located in the Petit Nord in 1541, which means that this area has been utilized by the Bretons for almost 400 years (Pope 2008). Annually, ships were leaving Brittany in April and arrived in Newfoundland in June (de la Morandière 1962). Between 150 and 300 ships would come to the Petit Nord each year to fish cod. The crews participated in an onshore fishery in small open boats, so seasonal shore installations, such as fishing stations and stages, were needed (Pope 2008). These

installations were used for the salt processing of cod so that it would keep for several months, until it was delivered to Europe the following fall (de la Morandière 1962).

Once the commercial cod fishery had begun, competition for shore space in the Petit Nord developed; despite its international dimensions, the salt-cod fishery was a vernacular industry (Pope 2003b). Traditional regional connections were often developed, which means that ships from particular European harbours often returned to preferred harbours in Newfoundland (Pope 2006:9). This is particularly true for the Petit Nord, which over time –from the early sixteenth to the late nineteenth century, was occupied by fishermen who came from Brittany. Therefore, four centuries of Breton occupation in northern Newfoundland have certainly created a specific landscape that can largely be associated with this specific group of people. Over time, the Breton fishermen built stages, paths, cook rooms, bread ovens, crosses, calvaries and cabin. These features created the landscape that we can observe archaeologically in the Petit Nord.

My MA thesis focuses on a distinctive feature present in French fishing rooms: Breton crosses and calvaries. They are symbols of the Breton presence in the Petit Nord region of Newfoundland, over a long time. My objective is to compare the archaeological record of *in situ* crosses and calvaries in the Petit Nord with the historical documentation referring to those monuments in this region, as well as in Brittany. By studying historical documents and archaeological evidence, I will document these vestiges of the past. My aim is to understand why Breton fishermen built crosses and calvaries on the Petit Nord between the seventeenth and the early twentieth centuries. Also, I would like to answer

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some questions about the cultural and religious beliefs of the Breton fishermen who were established there. What kinds of crosses were they? What were the origins of these crosses? What were the symbolic meanings surrounding these crosses? Did the crosses have utilitarian functions (landmark, milestones, scenes of cult, etc.)? Or were they symbolic (religion, identity, discovery, etc.)?

The cross is a symbol present in many cultures and many religions. In the Christian tradition, the cross on which Jesus died remains the sign of total salvation. Crosses are at the center of the Christian world; most churches have been and are still built on a cruciform plan. Christians or at least Roman Catholics, often own a crucifix as well as rosary beads, which include a little cross. In Roman Catholic liturgy, the cross is also the sign by which priests give the benediction, which reunites the mystery of the Holy Trinity to the Redemption by pronouncing the name of three divines persons and drawing a cross (Carpentier 1981; Porter 1984; Simard 2004).

A calvary is a cross with Jesus or symbols associated with the death of Jesus on it (Saunders 2003; Simard 1995). Following biblical history, Jesus Christ was crucified on a wooden cross on a small hill to be found just outside Jerusalem (Perroy 1906; Porter and Trudel 1974:35). This hill was known as Golgotha. Golgotha comes from the Hebrew and means skull. In French the word *calvaire* and in English *calvary* are used to designate the hill at the summit of which Jesus Christ died (Porter and Trudel 1974:35). The representation of Jesus Christ on the cross was and still is the image that most strongly symbolizes his sacrifice for mankind. Over time, many monumental crosses with or

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without a body on them were built in places such as along the roads, on the seaside and in cemeteries, in Roman Catholic territories around the world (Déceneux 2001; Porter 1984; Simard 1989).

Through a review of the literature, it is possible to define some functions and symbolic meanings of crosses and calvaries. Crosses and calvaries were constructed as acts of devotion to God and had two primary functions. First, a cross was meant to ask for help and protection. Secondly, crosses and calvaries were built to thank God for the protection of people. These expressions of the Catholic religion are evidence of a spiritual presence in a specific time and place. Formerly, traditional life was organised around these symbols and they were used "*pour le mitan*" (the half way mark between two villages). Sometimes, crosses and calvaries were used as milestones or landmark because there were no other signs to guide people. Finally, some crosses and calvaries were erected to mark a new territory; a new discovery. For example, the cross built in 1534 by Jacques Cartier in Gaspé functioned to take possession of this a country that was new to him for God and for the King Louis XIV in France (Carpentier 1981; Déceneux 2001; Porter 1984; Simard 1989, 1995). Also, these objects of Catholicism that have been placed along the roads or on the seaside are evidence of daily life and most of them have been erected in memory of a person, for a prayer that has been heard by heaven or for a special event (Simard 1994).

Crosses and calvaries are common for the staurocentric piety in much of Europe and are an important Roman Catholic tradition in France, especially in Brittany.

Therefore, it is not surprising to find mention of those monuments in early documents of Newfoundland's Northern Peninsula. These distinctive features of French fishing rooms can still be observed today, by anybody who visits this region, because some still stand. These landmarks are generally situated on ancient beach terraces, looking down from inland on the work areas below (Pope 2008). We can observe these landmarks today in Crouse Harbour where two crosses and one calvary are still *in situ*. Two crosses are located in Northeast Crouse (EfAx-11) and the calvary still stands at Dos-de-Cheval (EfAx-09), the French fishing room "Champ Paya." To give a context for these monuments, which were rebuilt by the French Navy in the 1930s, as well as the archaeological remains of several crosses and calvaries uncovered at Dos-de-Cheval and Northeast Crouse in 2007, as well others survey noted in other fishing stations during the summers of 2007 and 2008, I will first discuss the historical background of the Breton presence in Newfoundland. Then I will summarize briefly both theoretical approaches I have used to interpret the Breton crosses and calvaries in the Petit Nord. My third chapter is a review of the previous literature which provides an overview of form, functions and symbolism of those monuments in Brittany, France. The three following chapters concern the archaeological remains of crosses and calvaries recovered from archaeological excavations and surveys during the summer of 2007 and 2008. Finally, my last chapter will be a discussion concerning my interpretations of those Breton monuments in the Petit Nord.

Chapter 2: Historical Background

2.1 Discovery of Newfoundland; the Beginnings of the Cod Fishery

The history of the northeastern maritime regions of North America, particularly Newfoundland, has been dominated by the fishing industry (Hiller and English 2007:11) (Figure 2.1). To provide an interpretation of the history of the transatlantic cod fishery on the northeastern North American continent, requires an understanding of geography, as well as its social, economic and political context in Europe, between the sixteenth and late nineteenth centuries (de la Morandière 1962:213-214; Innis 1978:1). It is almost certain that without codfish, Newfoundland would have remained uninhabited by Europeans for a long time. Most coastal areas of the island of Newfoundland are guarded by a belt of ice for part of the year and during the remainder by fog and rain. The climate is such that the cold lasts for six to eight months a year, and in summer the sun is often covered by clouds. Even the soil of the island, which is in most places very poor, makes harvests precarious even for potatoes (de la Morandière 1962:9-12; Rompkey 2004:195-200; Thoulet 2005:102). But at the same time, Newfoundland offers rich sea resources, such as lobster, seals and cod, and that is why the island was visited by Europeans, as early as the 1500s.

The continental shelf around Newfoundland creates with the Labrador Current, the Gulf Stream and the waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence a circulation of cold waters favourable to the production of micro-organisms on which Atlantic cod feed. Therefore,

Figure 2.1 Map of Newfoundland.

Source: http://www.heritage.nf.ca/gazetteer/default.html

Atlantic cod are, or at least were, concentrated where the Labrador Current comes up against Newfoundland's promontories, shoals and islands. Due to the shelf surrounding the south and northeast parts of Newfoundland, cod had to get closer to the surface on the Great Banks as well as on coastal areas, which made it easier for fishermen to fish them in these locations (Brière 1990:2; Innis 1978:2-10; Pope 2006:9). Newfoundland and the Gulf of St. Lawrence are relatively close to Europe; so their location implies that this region would be one of the first parts of the New World exploited by Europeans, and they had soon identified economically valuable commodities such as whale oil, furs and fish (Pope 2004:13; Turgeon 1998:592). The cod fishery was by far the most important component of European commercial activity in northern North America, and it would remain for centuries much more important than the trade in fur (Pope 2004:13-14). The Newfoundland fishery for Atlantic cod was once the largest and most productive cod fishery in the world (Innis 1978; Hutchings 1995). No other industry has engaged the activities of Europeans in North America over such a long period of time. The earliest fishing stations and settlements were located in areas such as the Avalon Peninsula and the northeast coast of Newfoundland, well known in the past by Breton and Norman fishermen as the *Petit Nord* (Pope 2003b:122; 2006:9). The discovery of the abundance of cod in the waters of the northwest Atlantic Ocean contributed to the early exploration, fishery exploitation and settlement patterns of coastal communities of the northeastern maritime regions of North America, in particularly Newfoundland (Lear 1998:43).

The sea there is swarming with fish...I have heard this [Messer Zoane Cabot] state so much...These same English, his companions, say that they could bring so many fish that this kingdom would have no further need of Iceland, from which there comes a very great quantity of the fish called stockfish. (Raimondo de Soncino to the Duke of Milan, Dec. 18, 1497 in Pope 2004:11).

In the Middle Age, wind-dried cod was called stockfish, and was the first mass-produced food commodity. Cod is a stable, light, and high protein food to feed European populations. Wind-dried cod was easy to process and to transport on long-distance voyages. Norway, Iceland, North Sea and the English Channel provided to Europeans large quantities of stockfish from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries (Pope 2004:11). "Who developed the salt dry cure for cod is now forgotten, but the same method was used by Breton fishermen in France to process hake in late-medieval times. So, processing fish into a salt-dried food suitable for ocean transport to distant markets is much older than the Newfoundland fishery industry" (Pope 2004:11).

When I was in Brittany during the fall of 2007, I observed that in many municipal buildings (city hall, archives, museum, casino, etc) of the seaport of St. Malo there was a portrait of Jacques Cartier, who people consider as the great sea captain who discovered Canada. There is some evidence in the *Voyages* that suggests that Jacques Cartier had visited both Brazil and Newfoundland years before 1534 (Leacock 1914:12). Before leaving for his first trip, Cartier knew that in 1508 a sea captain, Thomas Aubert, had

brought seven Amerindians for display in Rouen. Even his own wife, Catherine des Granches, was in 1528 the godmother of Catherine de Brézil, who was a Brazilian aboriginal, brought to St. Malo from a trading expedition. Obviously, when Cartier left St. Malo in his quest to find goods and routes to Asia in 1534, he knew that a North American continent had already been discovered. So, once Cartier and his crew reached Newfoundland in 1534, they were not surprised to meet French fishermen who had seasonal fishing stations along the northeast coast of Newfoundland (Conrad and Hiller 2001:40-41; Cartier 1993: xi-xii; de la Morandière 1962:222-224; Innis 1978:23; Leacock 1914:13-16). During his second voyage to Canada in 1535, Cartier encountered a Breton crew fishing at St. Pierre, off the south coast of Newfoundland. He also met some Breton ships that dominated the shore fishery of the Burin Peninsula of Newfoundland (Pope 2008). In the early 1500s St. Malo was a seaport town already engaged in the northwest Atlantic cod fishery. Thus, when Cartier left the harbour of St. Malo in 1534 for his voyage to North America, he was already familiar with the New World (Cartier 1993: xi-xii; Innis 1978:23-26; Leacock 1914:12-16).

In fact, the knowledge obtained by Cartier, from the Breton and Norman fishermen, was due to the discovery of North America at the end of the fifteenth century by the Venetian John Cabot (Briere 1990:1-2; Matthews 1973:66). Originally, Cabot's crew were trying to find a northwest passage to the Far East; however they landed in 1497 somewhere between Cape Breton Island and the Strait of Belle Isle (Pope 1997a:5-6). Cabot, who was sent by Henry VII from England, was the first to come to North

America since the Norse expeditions about 1000BP. (Brière 1990:1-2; Conrad and Hiller 2001:38-40; de la Morandière 1962:215-216; Innis 1978:14). At the end of the fifteenth century, Cabot propagates the news that there was a wide variety of fish on the Grand Bank and along the coast of Newfoundland, as well as in coastal areas such as Nova Scotia, Maine and the entrance of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The Atlantic cod (*Gardus morhua*) has always been the most plentiful fish available in those regions (Brière 1990:2-3; de la Morandière 1962:1; Matthews 1973:65-73; Turgeon 1986:134-135).

It is the Azorean Portuguese and English mariners who were, at the turn of the sixteenth century, the first to make documented transatlantic voyages to fish in Newfoundland waters. In 1502 the *Gabriel* of Bristol brought home the first recorded cargo of Atlantic cod fished in North America (Conrad and Hiller 2001:39; Innis 1978:11-12; Pope 2004:13-6). Even though English mariners were the first to arrive in Northwest Atlantic Ocean waters, it was not until the mid-sixteenth century that they began seriously to fish cod in Newfoundland. Until 1565, only few English were fishing in Newfoundland, they found it more convenient at that time to fish cod in waters closer to Britain (de la Morandière 1962:219-220; Pope 1997b:15).

Breton fishermen appear to have come for the first time to Newfoundland perhaps as early as 1504 (Innis 1978:15; Pope 2007:7; Pope 2008; Turgeon 1987:136). Following that and with the help of Breton pilots, which played an important role in the early development of the transatlantic cod fishery, Basques were also fishing cod around the island in the 1530s (Brière 1990:2; Innis 1978:15-16; Pope 1997b:15-16). The sixteenth

century pilot Pierre Crignon credited the Bretons and Normans with the initial

exploration of Newfoundland's south coast, as well as the northeast, as far as Chateau in

southern Labrador. This would include the region later known as the Petit Nord, the east

coast of Newfoundland's Great Northern Peninsula (Figure 2.2). Some historical records

suggest that Bretons, Normans and Basques crew were fishing at Crouse in 1541 (de la

Morandière 1962:224-225; Pope 2007:6; Turgeon 1987:136). Even though Normans and

Basques were fishing on the Petit Nord, it is the Bretons who dominated the productive

fishing industry in that area through the 1700s and 1800s (Bretagne 1640; de la

Morandière 1962:391-393; Anon. 1764, 1765a, 1765b, 1784; Pope 2007:6). Still today,

the domination of Breton fishermen can be observed through the toponymy of the

Labrador coastal area of the Strait of Belle Isle and the east coast of the Newfoundland's

northern peninsula (de la Morandière 1962:226-229; Innis 1978:24; Pope 2003a:14-16).

2.2 Transatlantic Cod Fishery; Social, Economic and Political Aspects Over Time

To provide a greater understanding of the transatlantic cod fishery on the Grand

Bank, as well as coastal areas such as Newfoundland, it essential to take a look at the

social, economic and political events that happened over time in Europe (Turgeon

1987:136). The abundance of fish in those regions became common knowledge to

Europeans soon after the return of the earliest voyages of discovery to the New World.

Fishermen had visions of baskets filled with cod or boats bumping and ploughing with

difficulty through great multitudes of fish. At the beginning of the sixteenth
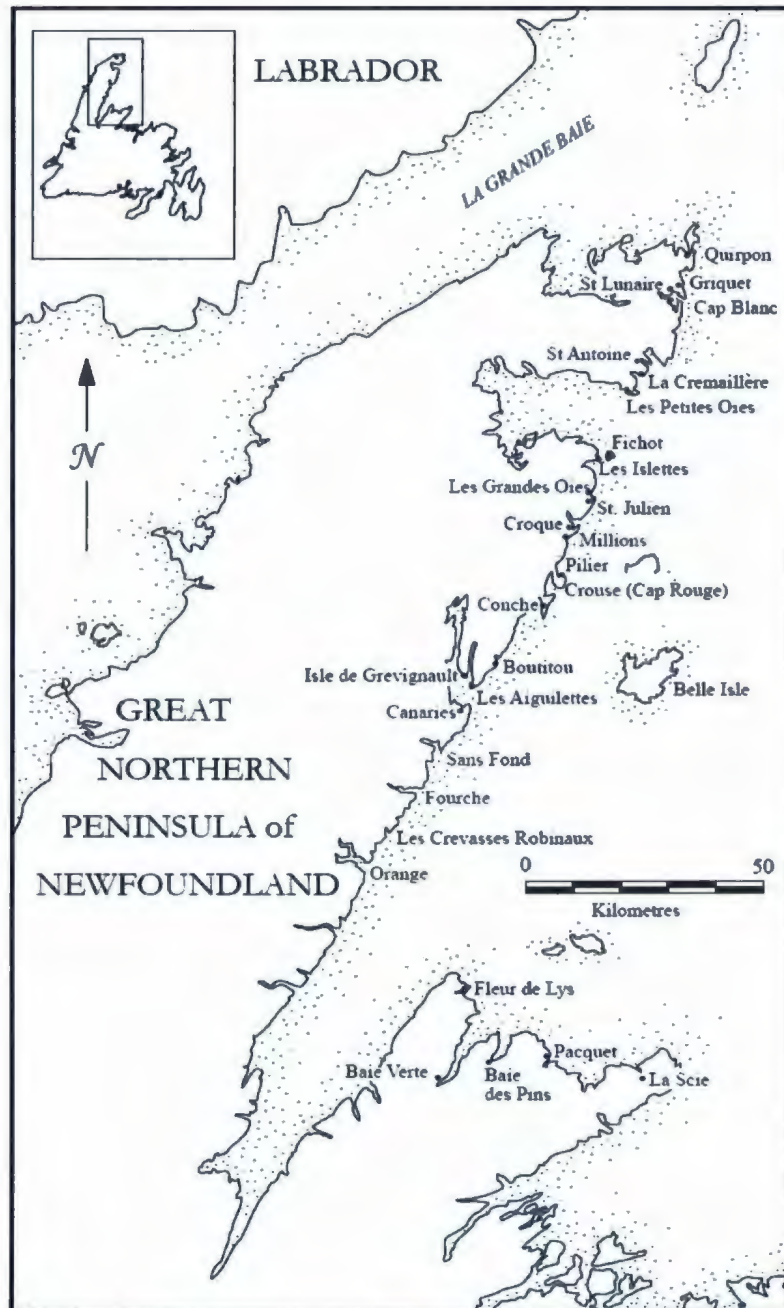
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Fishing stations of the Petit Nord, c 1640-1832
Ed Eastaugh for Archaeology of the Petit Nord

Figure 2.2 Map of the Petit Nord region.

Source: Ed Eastaugh for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord.*

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century, those visions must have been as glittering as those of gold or silks in Asia and

Central America (Lear 1998:44). At that time the European continent, including England,

was Roman Catholic and during the fasts of the Church the pickled herring of Holland

was the principal food (Matthews 1927:1).[1] The consumption of fish was immense; the

religious rules were at that time well respected by the whole population. There was about

150 days of abstinence every year but, if the European coastal population had easy access

to fish, it was not the same for the population living inland (de la Morandière 1962:219;

1966:25; Turgeon 1985:261). So it is not surprising to read in archival documents that the

news of new fisheries communicated by Cabot and the voyagers who followed him,

caused a great excitement in the fishing industry throughout Europe (de la Morandière

1962:25).

At the end of medieval times in Europe, a favourable conjuncture characterized by

an augmentation of the population as well as the growth of cities, an increase in

agricultural and manufactured products, and an intensification of exchange and

consumption, explain why the fishing industry in the New World could benefit from

economic growth in that period (Brière 1990:3; Turgeon 1987:135). A larger demand for

fish, which represented a great expression of Renaissance prosperity, was a key factor in

contemporary expansion of fisheries and in technological advances of fishing industries

in the New World (Pope 2004:12). From a social perspective, the inshore cod fishery

offered the young men of the countryside a great job opportunity (de la Morandière

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[1] From the fifteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church allows the rights to eat fish, eggs and dairy products during the fasts of the Church in addition to vegetables and fruits. Only meat was still forbidden (Turgeon 1987:165).

1966:25-31; 96-97). De la Morandière notes that soon after the beginning of shore-based cod fishery, the leaders of this industry observed that cod-processing did not require a mariner's or fisherman's skills, which meant that untrained rural men could work in inshore Newfoundland's cod fishing industry. The port towns that specialized in the dry cod fishery were those who could attract a great number of backcountry workers (de la Morandière 1962:95-97; 1966:26-27).

Colbert, the great French administrator of the late seventeenth century, was not particularly interested in the Newfoundland fishery. However, Colbert was interested in maritime power, so he did not ignore the importance of Newfoundland in France's maritime commerce (Hiller 1996:1; Pope 1995:21-22). From an economic point of view, Newfoundland's fishery was Europe's main activity in the New World during the sixteenth century, if not later (Turgeon 1986:523). Cod would guarantee healthy and cheap food to the Mediterranean and Caribbean markets. Colbert was conscious about the importance of the French fishing fleet. He states in 1678 "...les bastimens marchands, particulièrement tous ceux qui vont aux pesches de Terre-Neuve et du Nord (baleine), apportent un grand profit et beaucoup d'argent dans le royaume" (Turgeon 1985 :262). Colbert also regarded the shore-based cod fishery in Newfoundland as part of his colonial policy, aiming to integrate Newfoundland and Canada into French colonial Atlantic commerce and to eliminate the Anglo-Americans of Acadia. Colbert was also hoping that the cod fishery would promote triangular commerce between the Canada, the Caribbean and France. So, to make sure that the Newfoundland cod fishery would reinforce his

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colonial and integration politics, Colbert negotiated the restitution of Acadia by the Treaty of *Breda* in 1667. He also built a fort in *Plaisance* – on the south coast of Newfoundland, to protect French fishermen against pirates and English settles. Although Colbert adopted these goals for the fishing industry in the New World, he did not pursue this wide project with the same determination and enthusiasm that made his name in some other domains (Brière 1990:222-224; Turgeon 1985:262-265).

Even though the economical aspects were still non negligible during those two centuries, there appeared in the years following 1650s a strong political idea that would determine the way in which fishing industries would be exploited from then on in North America, especially in Newfoundland (de la Morandière 1962:213-214). During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries war between France and England was almost endemic. The two countries fought for the hegemony of Europe for about 180 years! Because England is an island, the war was waged principally at sea. At that time period, Newfoundland's inshore fishery was carefully examined by the navy of each country; both considered the salt dried-cod fishery as the best and more productive source of mariners (Brière 1990:219-220; de la Morandière 1966:31-33; Hiller 1996:1; Turgeon 1985:264). At the end of the seventeenth century, both French and English governments obliged ship-owners who participated in the Newfoundland cod fishery to take aboard each expedition one novice for five crew members. The goal was to train as many mariners as possible to fight against the enemy (de la Morandière 1966:32).

During the eighteenth century, the evolution of diplomatic and militant struggle

for Newfoundland can be divided into three parts: 1713 Treaty of Utrecht; 1763 Treaty of Paris; and 1783 Treaty of Versailles. Under the reign of Louis XIV (1643-1715), France had conquered an immense territory in northeastern America. This French colonial empire, known as New France, included regions known today as the maritime provinces of Canada (Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, the part of Gaspé, New Brunswick, Labrador and much of Newfoundland). Despite the fact that part of the island of Newfoundland was English territory at that time, France did not recognize the sovereignty of Britain over the island. Until 1713, Britain had only been able to affirm its rights over the east coast –from Cape Race to Cape Bonavista; the rest of the island was occupied by French fishermen. However, the wars at the end of Louis XIV's reign had not been glorious for France, and in 1713 the Treaty of Utrecht gave Newfoundland and Nova Scotia definitively to Britain. French permanent settlements in Newfoundland now became illegal (de la Morandière 1966:32-36).

The loss of the island of Newfoundland was a big issue for France in the eighteenth century. Such a loss would mean that French fishermen would not be allowed to fish cod anymore in those waters. The whole social and economic system in France would suffer from this loss (de la Morandière 1966:32-36; Hiller 1996:1-3; Pope 2006:20-21). It was also essential for France to protect the sea routes to Canada, at least those that were associated with cod fishing in Newfoundland. Louis XIV obtained from Britain the right for French fishermen to use harbours and fishing rights along the French Shore, which included the famous region known as the *Petit Nord* (Brière 1990:225-226;

de la Morandière 1966:33; Hiller 1996:3) (Figure 2.3). However, with the Treaty of Utrecht, French fishermen were forbidden to stay during winter or to build any kind of buildings, besides *chaufaud*, *galets*, flakes, and cookrooms, which were necessary for drying of fish (Hiller 1996:3).

Until 1756, calm and peace reigned in Newfoundland; however the years following 1756 saw several conflicts and wars between Britain and France. During the mid-eighteenth century only few French fishermen came to Newfoundland to fish cod (Brière 1990:229). In 1763, both Britain and France signed the Treaty of Paris, in which France definitively lost the whole of Canada (de la Morandière 1966:36). From the vast colonial empire that France had conquered during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in North America, only the French Shore of Newfoundland and the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon remained after 1763 (Trudel 1963:428). Thus important fluctuations in the saltfish industry of both France and Britain occurred throughout the eighteenth century. Those fluctuations were due to the war, when French migratory fishermen were unable to travel safely across the Atlantic Ocean (Ryan 1986:33). From the beginning of the sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries, the French fleet had always been about twice the size of the English fleet in Newfoundland. But for the first time in the 1750s, the English cod fishery began to surpass the French fishing industry (Hiller 1996:1; Pope 1995:21-24; 2003:124; Turgeon 1985:258). In conformity with the Treaty of Paris, Breton fishermen came back during the spring of 1763 to fish cod at the Petit Nord; however, they were surprised to find there a large number of English establishments. The

Figure 2.3 French Shore boundaries between 1713 and 1783.

Source:http://www.heritage.nf.ca/exploration/images/frshore_1700_finished.gif

English presence along the French Shore was due to the Seven Years War; during that period the number of English settled in Newfoundland had grown from about 3500 settlers in the 1730s to about 7300 settlers in the 1750s. Due to the absence of French between 1756 and 1762, English settlers had moved and settled themselves along part of the French Shore (Brière 1990:229; de la Morandière 1966:36-38; Matthews 1973:151-158). From then on the government of Britain hoped that French fishermen would stop fishing in Newfoundland's waters. However, these optimistic assessments were soon proved wrong. Despite the rules established by both Treaties, Utrecht and Paris, by the 1770s France was producing as much fish as before the Seven Years War and the French fleet had grown to its previous size (Hiller 1996:8-9). This phenomenon can be explain by the French government's decision to support the fishery at Newfoundland through the imposition of tariffs on foreign fish, and the encouragement of fish sales in the domestic market (Brière 1990:230-239; de la Morandière 1966:37). From both the economic and the social point of view, the seasonal, shore-based cod fishery in Newfoundland was an essential industry under the reign of Louis XVI (1774-1792).

In 1783 a new treaty was signed by France and Britain. The Treaty of Versailles provided to French and English migratory fishermen, as well as Newfoundlanders, well defined zones in which each would have exclusive fishing access (de la Morandière 1966:38-39; Hiller 1996:15) (Figure 2.4). The Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars abrogated the Treaty of Versailles signed in 1783. But the treaties concluded in 1814-1815 restored the French rights to a migratory fishery in Newfoundland. However, when

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French fishermen came back in the late 1810s, the French Shore, region including the Petit Nord, had changed. During their long absence from Newfoundland, the French Shore had been developed and settled by Newfoundlanders, English and Irish. During the late wars the resident fishery had vastly expanded on the island. Because Newfoundland was a colony of British settlement; the common assumptions on which the treaties had been based in 1814-15 were now irrelevant for the French fishery (Hiller 1996:15-18; Matthews 1973:209-217).

Despite those events, France's fishermen kept fishing on the French Shore until the Entente Cordiale in 1904 with Britain (Pope 2007:6).[2] From the beginning of the 1800s, however, the social, economic and political aspects of the cod fishery in Newfoundland changed, as the French shore-based fishery on the island declined. Due to the decline of fish stock in the waters of Newfoundland's coast, French crews had successive years of poor seasons. Numerous conflicts between Anglo-settlers and French fishermen on the French Shore led to decisions by French ship-owners to stop fishing in Newfoundland. By the mid-nineteenth century, the French population was no longer following the rules established centuries before by the Catholic Church about 150 days of abstinence, and consumption of fish had declined. In Brittany, farmers from the backcountry refused to be involved anymore with cod fishery; the soil was less ungrateful, so work and harvest were much better. Until 1815, the cod fishing industry was the best source of mariners for the French Navy, but with the end of the war between England and

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[2] France and England signed the *entente cordiale* on 8 April 1904. The treaty settled litigious colonial issues between the two countries. (Sanderson 2007:32).

Figure 2.4 French Shore boundaries between 1783 and 1904.

Source:http://www.heritage.nf.ca/exploration/images/frshore_1800_finished_aug28.gif

France, and the development of the steam ship, both France and England did not have to invest in mariners from the cod fishery anymore (de la Morandière 1966:39-41).

2.3 Breton Fishermen: A Vernacular Fishing Industry on the Petit Nord

Over time, the way in which the early modern transatlantic fishery was organized in Europe had practical implications for exploitation of the coastal resources in Newfoundland. Both the French and the English migratory, shore-based, dry salt-cod fishery industries were vernacular industries (Brière 1997:47; Pope 2003b:122; 2008). Soon after the beginning of the cod fishing industry in Newfoundland, traditional connections were developed between ports in the Old World and Newfoundland harbours; this meant that ships and crew from particular European ports often returned to the same known harbours along the North American coast (Brière 1990:4; Pope 2003b:122).

English fishermen fished on the east coast between Cape Bonavista and Cape Race, the so-called English Shore, as well as on the Avalon Peninsula. French fishermen used the rest of the Newfoundland coastline, but were concentrated mostly in two areas: the French Shore, a region located from Cape Bonavista to Quirpon, which included the Petit Nord; and on the *Côte du Chapeau Rouge*, which corresponds to the south shore of Newfoundland -the area known today as the Burin Peninsula (de la Morandière 1962:273; 290-291; Hiller 1996:1; Janzen 2007:45). Returning to regions they already knew was a common practice for European fishermen. Familiarity with a specific region made cod fishing easier; fishermen knew the harbour, the shoals and the habits of the cod. Also, there was obvious advantage for a cultural group to stay together, so they could help

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each other (Pope 2003b:124; 2006:9). The distribution of harbours occupied by Breton fishermen in successive occupations in the Petit Nord region is an excellent example; this phenomenon can be understood as an expression of regional shifts in the vernacular organization of the early fishing industry in Newfoundland (de la Morandière 1962:391-401). Between the beginning of the sixteenth and the late nineteenth centuries, Breton fishermen had created distinct maritime cultural landscapes along the coast known as the Petit Nord of Newfoundland (Pope 2008). Who were those Bretons who came, perhaps as early as 1504, to fish cod in the Petit Nord and soon developed a vernacular fishing industry linking Newfoundland and Brittany?

Brittany is situated on the west coast of France, and the Breton Peninsula is a land of subdued relief and low hills (Anson 1974:1). In 1488, the duke François II of Brittany died at Couëron; the duke had only two daughters: Anne and Isabeau. Soon after his death, war between France and Brittany began. During that period, the duchess Anne of Brittany was engaged three time with members of the French royalty. Until 1531, she managed to keep Brittany as a duchy, independent of France. However, following the negotiations of 1532 and l'Édit d'Union signed at Nantes, Brittany became part of France (Delumeau 1970:209-211; Simard 2004:70-71). The Bretons have not suffered excessively from this major event. Life must go on and the Bretons kept developing the prosperous industries they had begun during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Personal fortunes allowed some Breton ship-owners to invest in the Newfoundland fishing industry, which became by far the most lucrative industry in

Brittany (Déceneux 2001:10-11).

Over time, two different kinds of fishing industries in the maritime regions of the northwest Atlantic Ocean have been practised by fishermen. The first one was known as green cod fishery and was practiced on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. The green cod fishery was done directly aboard ships. Codfish was salted, without being dried, and as soon the crew had enough fish, ships went back to Europe to sell their cargos. Green cod was a much more perishable product than salt dried-cod (Brière 1990:4-5; Mannion 1987: Planche 21).

The second kind of fishing industry was developed in coastal areas and was a seasonal, shore-based, salt-dried cod fishery. Among the fishermen who practised the inshore cod fishery in Newfoundland, the Bretons established on the Petit Nord are those who developed and exploited this industry best (Brière 1990:4-5). Because dried-cod fishery was an inshore industry, the fishing master had to find a good harbour; which meant a good place to anchor his ship during the summer, as well as an open cobbles beach– called *graves* in French or *galets* by the Bretons, to dry fish. Those beaches were often natural but sometimes anthropogenic –improved by the fishing crew (Denys 1672; Pope 2008). Also, harbours had to be well protected for ships and beach areas needed a good exposure to the wind without being too sunny, to dry cod without burning it. Breton fishermen on the Petit Nord used boats to fish cod in inshore waters. Once their boats were full of cod, fishermen returned to shore to drop off their catches, and then the cod were processed, salted and dried (Brière 1990:31-59; Pope 2008). To land their catches,

fishermen used a fishing stage –called a *chaufaud* by Bretons, which was a rough wooden

wharf with an enclosure against the weather at its seaward end. Also, to connect the work

areas (*chaufaud*, *galets*, cookrooms, crosses, etc.) the Bretons built ramps and walkways

(Pocius 1992:64). The anthropogenic organization of such features in the maritime

cultural landscape of the Petit Nord is known as a fishing room –in French *station de*

pêche (Pope 2007, 2008) (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5 Fishing Station used by French fishermen in the Petit Nord.

Source: Planche 114 from Duhamel du Monceau's Traité général des pesches et histoire de poissons (1769).

Chapter 3: Theoretical Approaches

Crosses and calvaries added by the French fishermen over time to the landscape of the Petit Nord are both symbolic and functional. Those monuments became an integral part of the landscape of this coastal region of Newfoundland. Cognitive and landscape theories in archaeology are applied here in order to examine my main research question: why did Breton fishermen built crosses and calvaries on the Petit Nord between the seventeenth and the early twentieth centuries? Landscape is often regarded as the materialization of memory, fixing social and individual histories in space. Research in cognitive science suggests that human memory constructs rather than retrieves (Knapp and Ashmore 1999:13). Knapp and Ashmore suggest that a "landscape is neither exclusively natural nor totally cultural -it is a meditation between the two; people actively create and transform landscape by dwelling within it" (1999:20-21). Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* suggests that the routine social practices within which people experience the world influence the way in which they understand their environment (Bourdieu 1990:52; Lane 2000). Knapp and Ashmore notes that often people mark a place with ritual, symbolic or ceremonial landmarks; so these places create and reflect a specific socio-cultural identity (1999:14-15). Bradley suggests "that the erection of monuments alters the visual character of a landscape and transform its meaning without radically changing the topography" (1993:23-24). Cognitive and landscape theories are essential to discuss the cultural and religious beliefs of the Breton fishermen who built crosses and calvaries in the Petit Nord landscape.

3.1 Cognitive Archaeology

Archaeologists have not always tried to imagine what motivated the thoughts and actions of people in the past, and the few early efforts to understand how past people understand their worlds were unstructured and speculative. During the last decade, however, archaeologists have attached more importance to cognitive approaches than they had in the past. Meaning, mind, ideology, structure and cognition are important to the understanding of past societies. Many archaeologists now recognize this fact and are working to construct, develop, and define cognitive archaeology.

Archaeological cognitive theory is a broad topic in archaeology and one of the most recent to be defined. Until the early 1980s, most archaeological theories were philosophically positivist and methodologically rigorous. The emphasis was on material remains. Subsistence behaviour was seen as the infrastructure of cultural systems. At that time, archaeologists dehumanized history, by forgetting to include in their works the values, ideas, beliefs and cognitive processes of the people utilizing the material culture (Shanks and Hodder 1998:69). The first works of cognitive archaeology emerged in the early 1970s, with the publications of J. Fritz and R. Hall (Flannery and Marcus 1998:36). But it is only with Flannery and Marcus in 1976 that a real effort to include different aspects of cognition in archaeological studies evolved. Flannery and Marcus studied the Zapotec Indians and tried to understand this past civilization by combining cosmological beliefs with traditional analysis of their subsistence and settlement (Flannery and Marcus 1998:36).

Flannery and Marcus suggest the following definition for cognitive archaeology:

> Cognitive archaeology is the study of all those aspects of ancient
> culture that are the product of the human mind: the perception,
> description, and classification of the universe (cosmology); the nature
> of the supernatural (religion); the principles, philosophies, ethics, and
> values by which human societies are governed (ideology); the ways in
> which aspects of the world, the supernatural, or human values are
> conveyed in art (iconography); and all other forms of human
> intellectual and symbolic behaviour that survive in the archaeological
> record (Flannery and Marcus 1998:36-37).

This is a holistic and ambitious definition and, in some points, it is difficult to distinguish the difference between archaeology in general and cognitive archaeology. For the most part, cognitive archaeology attempts to concentrate on cosmology, religion, ideology, and iconography. Therefore, it is possible to summarize these four aspects in the following definitions:

> 1) cosmology is a theory or philosophy of the origin and general
> structure of the universe 2) religion is a specific set of beliefs in a
> divine or supernatural power to be obeyed as the creator and/or ruler of
> the universe; 3) ideology can be defined as the body of doctrine, myth
> and symbolism of a social movement, institution, class or group of
> individuals with reference to some political or cultural plan; 4)

iconography refers to the making of an icon by physical construction

or to the analysis of the icons themselves (Flannery and Marcus

1998:37-43).

Archaeologists often use the term "iconography" to refer how ancient people represented

religious, political, ideological, and cosmological objects or concepts in their art

(Flannery and Marcus 1998:43).

Archaeologists attracted by the cognitive approach attempt to incorporate in their

research all the available information about knowledge and symbolic aspects of the past

societies they study. Archaeologists would like a greater recognition of the role of

ideology and the potential to know symbolic meanings in material culture (Tilley

1989:187-189; Whitley 1998:17-18). Archaeologists who adopt this approach focus on

symbolic meaning, religious studies, and analysis of human development and cognitive

skills. Archaeologists who use the symbolic approach think that those practices and

cultural symbols are important for studying cultural meaning. Symbols of material culture

have therefore become great tools of communication for the people that utilize cognitive

theory. Cultural meaning can be defined by the relationship between individuals and

material culture, and all the interactions produced by these relationships (Preucel and

Hodder 1996:308).

Despite the fact that meaning, mind, ideology, structure and cognition have an

important place in understanding past societies, some critiques of cognitive archaeology

have been formulated by archaeologists who are not adepts of this particular approach.

First, some people challenge how cognitive archaeology can deal with contextual meaning. Second, they challenge how the archaeologist can understand a mind which is of the past. Two answers have been formulated to address these challenges: first, cognitive archaeology must focus on mentalities and meanings that are universal. Secondly, to understand symbolic meaning in past contexts, archaeologists need to refer to ethnohistoric texts and oral tradition (Preucel and Hodder 1996:308-309).

3.2 Symbolic Approaches in Archaeology

Symbolic approaches have various roots in past archaeological theories even in Binford's New Archaeology where he discusses the technomic, sociotechnic and ideotechnic functions of the object (1962, 1964). New Archaeologists such as Lewis Binford (1962; 1964), Kent Flannery (1976) and David Clarke (1968) suggested that archaeology needed to be more scientific. All three had the same idea – a point not concerning with the amassing of facts, but rather with the relationship of those facts to interpretations. They noted that archaeologists were adept at collecting artifacts and evidence but, on the other hand, they did not often translate the material collected into a better understanding of the past. They stated that archaeologists needed to find a way to interpret how people in the past understood their worlds (Hodder and Hutson 2003:1-2; Johnson 2006:121). This aim was also accepted by structuralist theory (Friedrich 1970; Deetz 1977; Conkey 1982), which were followed by Marxist theory (Leone 1984; Shanks and Tilley 1988; McGuire 1992), evolution studies (Clark and Lindly 1990) and stylistic studies (Carr and Neitzel 1995) and finally with the major post-processual works

(Thomas 1991; Tilley 1993; Barrett 1994; Hodder 1995). Ian Hodder is probably the most important archaeologist to develop and use a symbolic approach in archaeology, by focusing on meaning and context in material culture (Robb 1998:331). Today, it is widely agreed that it is the ability to use symbols that distinguishes humankind from other species (Renfrew 2001:129). Therefore, it is not surprising to note the powerful role of the material symbol in the development of ritual and religion (Renfrew 2001:137).

The symbolic approach is one facet of cognitive archaeology. As discussed above, the definition of cognitive archaeology is broad. The symbolic approach can adopt the same definitions; however, this approach focuses more on the symbolism of material culture, mind, meaning, and structure (Tilley 1989:185). Hodder and Hutson suggest that "artifacts might mean different things in different contexts; therefore, the interpretation of meaning is constrained by the interpretation of context, which means that material culture and structure can be seen as the product of adaptation with the environment surrounding" (2003: 4-5).

In his article, "Archaeology of Symbol", John Robb suggests that there are three aspects of symbolic theory. The first concerns symbols as tokens. The most important meaning of a symbol is that it is a communication tool. Symbols can include iconography, rituals, monuments, texts and oral tradition: all of which are powerful tools of communication. Symbols as tokens represent material culture itself. Symbols as tokens can be produced, exchanged, monopolized and destroyed. Marxist archaeologists criticise this view, because for them symbols do not represent power, rather symbols form and are

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power themselves. Other general critiques of this definition of symbols as tokens revolve around the idea that it is difficult to place material culture into the minds and meaning of the past (Robb 1998:332-334).

The second aspect concerns symbols as intellectual girders. For many archaeologists, symbols form and give structure to the social and mental world of humans in the past. This view places emphasis on various analyses, for example: art, rituals, space, cosmology and technical knowledge, rather than solely the material culture. Symbols are deemed the foundation of the cultural world and cognitive processes (Robb 1998:334-336). Some critiques have been formulated to dispute the idea of symbols as girders. Processualists and post-processualists critique Hodder for his reconstruction of cultural structures. They think that it is difficult, if not impossible, to create a cognitive model of geographic variations and temporal change. Processualists and post-processualists believe that it is important to combine practical, material culture analyses with other, more cognitive analyses to understand the symbolic approach in archaeology (Robb 1998:337; Shanks and Hodder 1998:70).

The third aspect of symbols is their role as tesserae. This viewpoint results from post-processual critiques. The follower of this view rejects the idea that a dichotomy can exist between functionality and ideological meaning. The material culture can be interpreted as a physical object and also as a cultural emission. In this way, meaning is found not only in the artifact or the people who constructed the artifact, but meaning constitutes all the interactions between artifacts and people. Considering symbols as

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tesserae has wide implications, because symbolic meaning is not fixed and social life influences symbolic interpretations (Robb 1998:337-338). Some archaeologists criticize this view by discussing the fact that this approach produces a generic portrait that is difficult to apply to all past societies in the world (Robb 1998:339).

These three viewpoints on the symbolic approach in archaeology are complementary, and they can allow solid interpretations. It is possible to summarize these three view points as follows: 1) symbols as tokens focuses on the interpretation of the artifact as a symbol, 2) symbols as girders focuses on the interpretation of different processes of symbolic mind and meaning, 3) symbols as tesserae focuses on the links between the two previous views. So, how can this symbolic approach be applied to archaeology? Robb states that it is possible to find archaeological symbols, but it is impossible to find cultural things that are not symbolic (1998:331). Everything has symbolic function or symbolic meaning. In our society almost every common thing functions as a symbol: cars, houses, jobs, clothes, haircuts or perfect nail polish can be symbols of social class and power in industrial societies. But it is important that these examples be placed on the "ladder of inference", hence in correct context (Robb 1998:331). This "ladder of inference" from Hawkes focuses on the importance for the archaeologist to investigate economic, political, and social systems with symbols and ideas in context (Robb 1998:330). One needs to examine the history and context of an object in order to determine its symbolic meaning. So symbols are important in human existence and material culture is analogous to language in its capacity to order human life.

Symbolic archaeology rejects a materialist approach that ignores the meaning of the context in daily life (Leone 1998:50-51). The follower of the symbolic approach believes that symbolic systems work because it is possible to observe coherence among different kinds of cognition and meaning. Also, cognition and meaning are present in politics, religion, cosmology, ideology, identity, rituals, and material culture – almost everything that composes our life and the life of past societies (Robb 1998:330). Some archaeologists believe that all human interventions in material things are acts of symbolic construction (Carpentier 1981:15).

To apply this theory to archaeological practice, archaeologists need a methodology, but at the same time they realize that it is impossible to find a unique methodology for each context. In this way, archaeologists have to decide what methodology is most applicable to the context. Different methodologies can include representational meaning of symbols, relational meaning of symbols, phenomenological meaning of symbols, variations of form, technique and decoration, perceptual aspects of symbolic artifacts, cross-artifact styles, social connotations of artifacts, technical analysis of techniques, economic aspects of artifacts, knowledge and execution of artifacts as cultural process, life histories of artifacts, context of usage and interpretation, and ambiguity and multiciplity of interpretation. All can be used for methodology in symbolic archaeology (Robb 1998:341).

Some archaeologists believe that we are wasting our time trying to recover mental phenomena archaeologically. For other archaeologists, symbols are not relevant to the

larger systems that have structured human life over the centuries (Robb 1998:329). Some

archaeologists believe that it is impossible to use symbols in archaeology because the

symbolic meaning is immaterial, so it is impossible to find material proof of mind.

Interpretations are subjective and these archaeologists believe that real interpretations of

symbolisism are impossible, that the follower of the symbolic approach in archaeology

can only give some subjective opinions. Some people believe that the symbolic approach

is not a proper theory as it is subjective, not objective (Preucel and Hodder 1996:300-

301). Some archaeologists believe that symbolic archaeology is difficult, because

symbolic archaeology is a very broad topic. These archaeologists think that symbolic

archaeology is an approach that is too ambitious and too holistic (Preucel and Hodder

1996:300).

3.3 Crosses as Symbols

Crosses have been and still are symbols of varying meaning. Crosses can be a

symbol of religion, discovery, missions, past or faith.

3.3.1 Symbols of Religion

Crosses are in the same categories of symbols such as circles, spirals and triangles.

These four symbols are among the first symbols created by humans. It is difficult to find

clues on how to interpret these symbols used before the invention of writing. Cross, circle,

spiral and triangle have stayed in the popular imagination to this day (Carpentier 1981).

It is possible to find crosses on every continent and for every time period; crosses

are universal. In 1924, Elizabeth Goldsmith suggested that the symbol of a cross was a graphic adaptation of the human figure with arms in a horizontal position. Later, René Guénon suggested that the symbol of cross was rather a representation of the universal human and the cross was also the symbol of total space (Carpentier 1981:16-17). For the later historical period in Western society, crosses are symbols of life: active life, future life, and powerful life. More than two thousand years ago, crosses were the symbol of torture and death. Researchers found in the Hammurabi code, 1700 years before Jesus Christ, that some people practiced crucifixion as punishment. There is evidence of this practice up until the fourth century AD. The Roman emperor, Constantine abolished this practice for Christians. With the death of Jesus Christ on the cross Christians adopted the cross for the symbol of their religion. The cult of the cross became official in AD 787, when the Second Council of Nicea adopted the symbol. In Brittany, the first crosses were built on ancient dolmens already on the landscape. Monumental crosses are the origins of the road crosses popular in the French Roman Catholic tradition (Carpentier 1981:15-22).

3.3.2 Symbols of Discovery and Marker

The most important example of a discovery cross in Canada, and also in all of the Americas, is the cross that Jacques Cartier erected in Gaspé in 1534 (Figure 3.1). This cross may have been a symbol of discovery, but it is also with this cross that Cartier took possession of what was to him a new country, for God and for King of France.

On July 24, 1534, during his first voyage to Canada, Jacques Cartier raised a cross in Gaspé. With this symbolic act, he claimed possession

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Figure 3.1 Early 20th century image of the cross built by Jacques Cartier in 1534, Gaspé (Province of Québec).

Source: National Archives of Canada, C-005538.

of the territory in the name of Francis I, King of France. The Gaspé

cross bore the fleur-de-lis on its escutcheon and the name of King

Francis I (Richmond 1922).

During his first trip to Canada in 1534, Jacques Cartier built also four other

crosses. However, these crosses had a different symbolic meaning. They were likely

navigation markers. But why a cross as a marker? Cartier could have used other things –

other symbols – for marking the landscape. His choice was a result of the historical

context of this time period. When Cartier came to the St. Lawrence in sixteenth century,

it was the golden age of the French monarchy. The monarchy and the Roman Catholic

Church were indivisible. Cartier's choice of a cross for symbol of discovery and also his

use of crosses as navigation marker reflected, in part, the close association of church and

state (Carpentier 1981:25-26).

3.3.3 Symbols of Missions

After Cartier made France aware of North America in 1534, France decided to send

missionaries to convert the Indians to the Roman Catholic religion. The missionaries built

a cross referring to the Christian world in every new place they visited to convert the

Indians (Figure 3.1). Those features were highly symbolic to the Native people as well as

other European Nations who were living in New France (Porter 1984:281). Crosses in

Canada and North America quickly became the symbol of the French Roman Catholic

tradition. In historical texts and in the iconography of this time period, it is easy to

observe the presence of many crosses. This practice was probably the origin of roadside

crosses in Canada (Carpentier 1981:45; Porter 1984:280-281).

3.3.4 Symbols of the Past

The cross can be associated with the idea of eternal divinity. Different people can see the cross, and the generations may pass, but the crosses remain. People who built the crosses are long dead, but many generations have succeeded the initial pioneers of the cross. The cross proclaims the faith of its builder in the divinity that he wanted honored, and the cross is the manifestation of a centuries-old tradition (Carpentier 1981:122-124).

3.4 Landscape Theory

Like cognitive theory, landscape theory in archaeology is a recent theoretical approach. Landscapes are characterized by powerful religious, ideological, political, artistic or cultural meanings, invested in natural features as well as anthropogenic features. The archaeology of landscapes is the archaeology of space and place; landscape provides a focus by which people engaged with their world, created and sustained a sense of their social identity (Knapp and Ashmore 1999:11-15). All over Brittany, crosses and calvaries dominate the landscape. By their placement in the landscape, those monuments have different functions and meanings. Historical documents and archaeological excavations have demonstrated the presence of Breton crosses and calvaries in the Petit Nord region from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. To interpret these distinctive features of French fishing rooms in Newfoundland it will be useful first to understand the origin and concept of landscape as a theoretical approach in archaeology.

3.4.1 Changes in the Perceptions of Landscape

The word landscape come from the Dutch *landschap* and was introduced first as "landskip" into the English language in the late 1500s as a technical term used by painters (Hirsch 1995:2). Cosgrove (1984:20) suggests that the idea of painting, or imaginatively describing scenes from nature, whether wild or humanised, as the main subject of an artistic composition has a very specific history in Europe. "The ideal or imagined world as depicted in various genres of landscape painting was linked to the perception of countryside scenery and its subsequent improvement: the goal was to achieve a correspondence between the pictorial ideal and the countryside itself" (Hirsch 1992:2). In a similar way, cartographers applied analogous techniques as painting artists; they combined a detailed and carefully observed chart, with motifs of their king or patron saints as aim to communicate its commercial, political or religious topography (Cosgrove 1984:20-21; Johnson 2006:11-17).

During the nineteenth century a new wave appeared in major European cities: the development of the garden city by Ebenezer Howard (Thomas 1984:253). The main goal of Howard was to create a relationship between an ordinary life, a workaday life and an ideal life. So, the ordinary was considered as a fore grounded in order to suggest the concrete actuality of everyday social life, and the ideal was considered as a background in order to suggest the perceived potentiality thrown into relief by our foreground existence (Hirsch 1995:3). Therefore, defined in this way, then, landscapes are a representation of the relationship between ordinary and ideal social life, and painted

representation allows the artist to idealize the world around him from his own beliefs (Hirsch 1995:3-4).

In the twentieth century, landscape emerges as a cultural process instead of a conception associated only with painting. From then, the idea of landscape became dissociated from other concepts such as place, space, image, time, and representation. A new conception of space as a coherent visual structure into which the actions of human life are inserted appears (Cosgrove 1984:21). Cartographer Vidal de la Blache (1903) in the early 1900s notes that a landscape is not only a purely territorial unit; it is an expression of a type of land in which the idea exists very clearly in the mind of its people. The production of local and national maps by surveyors was tied in with the history of enclosure and must have been in the context of developing ideas of nation-state (Johnson 2006:16-17). Therefore, landscape archaeology can be defined as a way of seeing, a way of thinking about the physical world; it is what transforms "land" and its study into "land-scape" (Johnson 2006:4). The emergence of post-processualism in archaeology in the 1990s leads Barbara Bender to state that "landscapes are created by people –through their experience and engagement with the world around them" (1993:1).

3.5 Landscape in Archaeology: an Umbrella of Concepts

Archaeology is not a discipline that focuses only on the materials recovered from excavations. While archaeologists need to intensively study the material culture to understand the past, they also need to recreate the past interactions among spaces, human actions and material remains, in order to have the best understanding of the human

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presence in a region. Ingold states that human life is a process that involves the passage of time, and this life-process includes internal formation of the landscapes in which people have lived (1993:152). Therefore, concepts of human cognition, time, memory and landscape are essential to document and interpret archaeological sites, which are made of features created or modified by humans. In archaeology the conception of landscape is rather different from those developed in related disciplines such as geography, geology, history, sociology and the arts (Cosgrove 1984:13-14; Hirsch 1995:5). Landscape is viewed as a cultural concept in which every landscape is a particular cognitive or symbolic ordering of space (Cosgrove 1984:13; Tilley 1994:11-15). A cultural landscape in opposition to a natural landscape is a living process -it shapes people's lives and is constructed by them (Ingold 1993:152-154; Knapp and Ashmore 1999:1). Ingold (1993:162) suggests that landscape is also the most solid appearance in which a history can declare itself. In the late 1980s, Daniels and Cosgrove introduced a collection of essays on *The Iconography of Landscape* which includes the following definition: "a landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing or symbolising surroundings" (1988:1). In the same way, Whites defines landscape as a key term, which evokes the permanent dialectic between the physical world and human society (2002:7-2). Aston (1997:32) and Pope (2008) note that landscapes are what humans have made of the world surrounding them, which means that landscapes are socially constructed by our predecessors and are the result of countless human decisions taken by individuals in the past. Knapp and Ashmore state that "today the most

prominent notions of landscape in archaeology focus on its socio-symbolic dimensions: landscape as an entity that exists by virtue of its being perceived, experienced, and contextualized by people" (1999:1). A holistic landscape perspective allowed archaeologists to emphasize the interrelationships among people, natural and anthropogenic features, environment and time (Knapp and Ashmore 1999:2). Maria Zedeño suggests exploring the sequences of interactions that transform a place into one she called landmark and link single landmarks into an integrated landscape (Zedeño et al. 1997:126; Zedeño 2000:105-108). She states that "landscapes have life histories extending for centuries, containing landmarks of various ages and complexity" (Zedeño 2000:110). In that way, concepts of landmark, landscape and the life histories that connect them together can be used by archaeologists as a way to operationalize the idea of a "maritime cultural landscape" as suggested by Westerdahl (Pope 2008).

3.6 Maritime Cultural Landscape

Most of the time when archaeologists are doing research in coastal areas, they have the strong tendency to concentrate on the dry edges, the land, rather than on what Braudel referred to as the liquid plains of the sea (1976: 65). That could be explained by the fact that most of the time archaeologists are looking at the sea from the land. The Irish archaeologist Gabriel Cooney introduced the term "seascape". He suggests looking at the land from both the land and the sea. Cooney argues that populations living by the ocean have a different perception of the surrounding land because they see it from two different perspectives: from ashore and from aboard ship (2004:323). Like Bowen (1972),

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Cunliffe (2001) and Childe (1940), Cooney notes that there has been a long tradition of recognizing the ways in which seas connect different places and coastal areas. He suggests that "by seeing and thinking of the sea as seascape –contoured, alive, rich in ecological diversity and in cosmological and religious significance and ambiguity, provides a new perspective on how people in coastal areas actively create their own identities, sense of place and histories" (Cooney 2004:323-324).

For coastal history and archaeology the term "maritime cultural landscape" seems more precise than the term seascape (Pope 2008). It is the Danish marine archaeologist Christer Westerdahl who defines the term first as: "human utilization (economy) of maritime space by boat: settlement, fishing, hunting, shipping and its attendant sub-cultures, such as pilotage, lighthouse and sea-mark maintenance" (1992:5). Westerdahl suggests interpreting the maritime cultural landscape by taking into consideration the cognitive landscape; the mapping and imprinting of the functional aspects of the surroundings in the human mind –man in landscape, landscape in man (Westerdahl 1992:5). In the same way, the American archaeologist Maria Zedeño (2000) prefers to look at landscape by starting with a particular place and working out its relationship with both natural and anthropogenic features. Therefore, instead of doing a classification of space, Zedeño suggests "that by looking at landscape with an emphasis on interpretation of places, archaeologists will be able to incorporate the social webs that link people and landmarks over time in specific landscape", which can be applicable to the maritime cultural landscape defined previously (Zedeño 2000:98-108).

3.7 A Phenomenology of Landscape

The key concept in any phenomenological approach is the manner in which people experience and understand their world (Tilley 1994:11; Tilley 2004:1). In *Introduction to Phenomenology*, Sokolowski (2000:2) defines the philosophical concept as follows: "phenomenology is the study of human experience and of the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experience". Therefore, "phenomenology is the teaching that every act of consciousness we perform, every experience that we have, is intentional: it is essentially "consciousness of" or an "experience of" something or other" (Sokolowski 2000:8). In social theory, Foucault (1977) and Giddens (1984) have both focused their research on the use of building as social tools. Their works share the notion that social space is the product of interactions between people and the material world. In a similar way, archaeologists are concerned with understanding how people build social environment through interactions with nature. The terms cognitive landscape or behavioural cartography, use both the conceptual tools afforded by behavioural archaeology in the mapping and imprinting of places and connections among social space. As with material culture, places and space have properties, characteristics and life histories that must be brought to light before interpreting and understanding how social environments are built from nature (Tilley 1994:12; Zedeño 2000:98). Places are always far more than points or locations. Tilley (1994:14) states that "place and space have distinctive meanings and values for persons, and personal and cultural identity is bound up with place and space…then space and place are created by social relations, natural and

cultural objects; therefore, place and space are the product of an achievement rather than an autonomous reality in which things or people are located" (Tilley 1994:16-17).

The knowledge of a cultural group with a specific landscape gives place and space connected with it powers and spirit. Being able to read and decode the signs of a specific landscape allows individuals to obtain a specific knowledge of their surrounding environment. Also, because humans are part of the landscape, their activities become inscribed into it and their daily passages become biographic encounters. Therefore, all landscapes are embedded in the social and individual time of memory (Tilley 1994:26-27). The crosses and calvaries built in the past by the French fishermen in the Petit Nord region of Newfoundland are good examples of such place and space. Those monuments were part of the social life of the maritime cultural landscape of the Petit Nord. Stewart states that "maritime memorials are commissioned by a range of individuals and social groups; so for this reason memorials on the seaside speak for many voices, including the nation, local seafaring communities, sailors themselves, and maritime families" (2007:112). In the same way, Shackel suggests that a way to control and mark the landscape is to create a communal remembrance that commemorates events such as nationalist past, economic activities, and cultural identity over another group (2001:6). Places which mark space, such as the crosses and calvaries of the Petit Nord, are strong functional and symbolic landmarks in the cultural landscape of a region.

Chapter 4: Previous Literature

4.1 Crosses and Calvaries in the Christian World – From the Origin

The Crusades, the epic Holy Wars that began in 1095 and continued until after 1270, united all Christians against the Moslems, with the official objective of wresting from them the holy places where the last episodes in the life of Jesus Christ unfolded. A second objective was to facilitate the pilgrimages that the Christians had been making to the holy places since the time of the Apostles (Priziac 2002:27-28). In the thirteenth century, the Franciscans became the guides for the pilgrimages of the holy places in Palestine. Conscious of the importance of their mission, the Franciscans came to relive the events of Christ's passion to a new religious exercise: the devotion to the way of the cross.[3] It is only in the fourteenth century, however, that someone had the idea to re-create it outside Palestine (Simard 1989:233). The desire to re-create the places of Christ's passion in the most elaborate form resulted in using natural sites recalling the Hill of Calvary.[4] One of the first "holy mountains", and probably the most celebrated, was the Sacro Monte at Varallo in the foothills of the Alps in Italy. The Way of the Cross always culminated with Jesus Christ's death on the cross; which explains why the cross itself is the object of great devotion on the part of Christians (Porter and Trudel 1974:35-36; Simard 1989:241). Devotion to Christ's passion simplified it, in the sense that it came to be illustrated only by the cross. The idea of the cross as symbol of Christianity was

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[3] A way of the cross is a reconstitution of the Christ's Passion as faithfully as possible by showing each halt in his ascent to Calvary by a sing or an image (Porter and Trudel 1974:35).

[4] Porter and Trudel defined Calvary as the hill at the summit of which Jesus Christ was crucified (Porter and Trudel 1974:35).

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spread systematically by the missionaries and discoverers in all the places they went (Carpentier 1982:23-45). From the fifteenth century, the idea of erecting crosses had many followers in a Christian land such as France, especially in the region of Brittany where devotion to the calvary was highly popular.

4.2 Religious History of Brittany

The religious history of Brittany between the 1000s and the 1800s needs some explanations, to account for the role played by this kind of monumental architecture in Brittany as well as in the Petit Nord landscape. Furthermore, the cognitive processes that influenced the Breton fishermen in Newfoundland to modify the landscape of the Petit Nord by building crosses and calvaries are deeply rooted in Breton Roman Catholic traditions. The realm of Brittany was created in 845 when Nominoe overcame Charles le Chauve in Ballon, and took Rennes and Nantes. A few years later the Treaty of Angers defined historical Brittany. During the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, the development of strong religious beliefs was echoed in the Breton landscape by the construction of many religious spaces. Numerous abbeys were built in Brittany and the monks revived the faith and praised the merits of the Roman Catholic religion (Priziac 2002:27).

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Europe are associated with famines, plague and wars. During that time period, the Roman Catholic religion provided comfort to the population. Minois suggests that the fifteenth century was the apogee of syncretism in medieval piety in Brittany (1991:47-50). The Bretons were satisfied by their religion and they were not looking for a reform or worse still, a religious change to

Protestantism. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries also corresponded with the explosion of Roman Catholic religion in popular art. In Brittany, crosses and calvaries are the best examples of this popular piety (Minois 1991:53; Priziac 2002:28-30; Royer, 1991:3). Martin even suggests that there is no equivalent in Protestant or other societies of the calvaries and monumental crosses that feature as the center of each community as in Brittany (1985:313). The sixteenth century in Europe is associated with the ascent of Protestantism, which is observed in France too, but Brittany did not follow this religious wave. Instead, Brittany expressed its strong faith in the Roman Catholic religion by building churches, monumental crosses, calvaries and cathedrals, all influenced by the Renaissance. The Roman Catholic faith remained collective, instead of being individual (Minois 1991:59-63).

In the 1630s and 1640s, Catholic reform struck all over Brittany. The spirit of this new reform was quite close to Protestantism; a faith purged of profane and superstitious elements, a faith interiorised and intellectualized, austere and morally exigent. Between 1700 and 1740, Catholic churches in Brittany were totally transformed and became an institution frightened by his faithful; nevertheless still visited and largely respected by the Breton population (Minois 1991:63). Despite the efforts made by the Catholic reform movement, the religion practiced by the Bretons, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was still strongly rooted in profane and superstitious beliefs. The clergy made sure that traditions and piety were respected. Crosses and calvaries were powerful landmarks, used by to the Breton population to express their piety (Simard 2004:65-66).

4.3 Crosses and Calvaries in Brittany

Breton crosses and calvaries are relatively well documented through historical and folklore documents; however, they have never been examined as an archaeological topic, either France or Canada. The cognitive processes that influenced the Breton fisherman to build crosses and calvaries in the Petit Nord landscape have roots in Breton Catholic traditions. This review of the existing literature on Breton religious monuments will focus on different point of views from crosses and calvaries, and Breton beliefs, according to different authors that have written about these particular topics.

In the Roman Catholic religion there are two kinds of crosses: the simple cross and the cross with the instruments of passion. The simple cross is composed in two parts: the traverse (the horizontal part) and the upright (the vertical part) (Figure 4.1). The simple crosses are usually built by local people, and they can be made of wood, stone or metal, but usually simple crosses are made of wood. Sometimes it is possible to observe inscriptions or ornaments at the junction of the two pieces of the cross or at its extremity (Simard 1995:39). The second kind is the cross with the instruments of passion (Figure 4.2). Passion's instruments are the weapons used to kill Jesus or to betray him before his sentence. People who built crosses with the instruments of passion usually chose among the ten passion's instruments that represent the death of Jesus; the spine crown, rooster, sponge, spear, ladder, hand, lantern, sun, nails and hammer (Simard 1995:43-44).

Figure 4.1 Simple cross, Finistère, Brittany.

Photo: Mélissa Burns.

Figure 4.2 Cross with the instruments of passion, St-Roch-des-Aunais, Québec.

Photo: Mélissa Burns.

A calvary can be seen as a crucifix outside the church (Simard 1989:243). Or can be defined as a cross with Jesus on it, and most of the time we can observe some or many of the characters who were with Jesus during his crucifixion (Figure 4.3). Three themes are usually illustrated: the childhood, the passion and the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Simard 1995:45). Calvaries are usually made by artisans and only some were made by local people. Some of them are the work of great artists. The principal difference in use between calvary and cross is that calvaries were usually situated in cemeteries or important villages, while crosses were situated along the road, facing the sea or in small villages (Simard 1995:45).

4.3.1 The Symbolic Meanings of Breton Crosses and Calvaries

Brittany is a maritime country, a land of seafarers (Cabantous 1987:183). The original name of Brittany (*Armor, Armorica*) means the "country of the sea" (Anson 1974:1). For a long time most of the economic activities in Brittany have been determined by the ocean. The Breton landscape has 2500 km of coastline, and the Atlantic Ocean has left its mark on the land almost everywhere (Figure 4.4) (Brékilien 1979:20). Around the coasts of Brittany the sea is known for its strong currents and high tides. Many Breton children are familiar from childhood with the sound of the waves and the winds. The sea means everything for the Bretons who were born and grew up on the Atlantic coast (Anson 1974:2). Thus, it is not surprising when later many of them became fishermen.
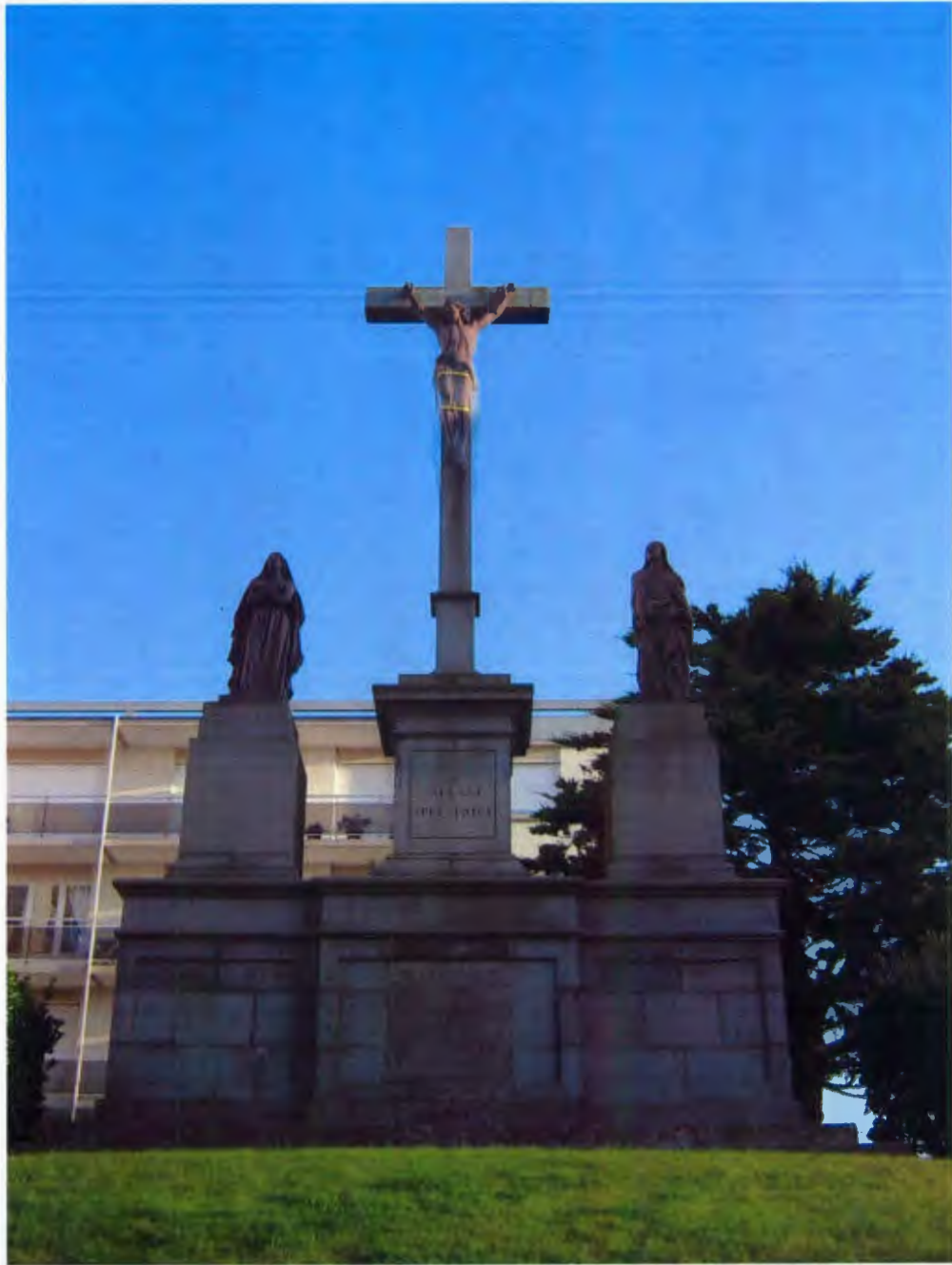
Figure 4.3 Calvary, St Malo, Brittany.

Photo: Mélissa Burns.

Figure 4.4 Coastal area of Brittany.

Photo: Mélissa Burns.

This maritime country is known throughout the world for its megaliths, ancient vestiges of the past, stone crosses and huge calvaries (Figure 4.5). One of the first books written about crosses and calvaries in Brittany was by Gwenc'hlan Le Scouëzec. In *Guide de la Bretagne Mystérieuse*, Le Scouëzec wrote that the first Christian symbols in Brittany were engraved on the megaliths, menhirs and dolmens. Le Scouëzec argues that the first signs of the Christian religion in the landscape were small cruciform incisions in the rock of these vestiges of prehistoric cultures. Later, the Bretons built crosses in the rock itself. Even if people in other regions of France and other European countries with Roman Catholic traditions built crosses and calvaries, it is in Brittany that this particular architecture was particularly well developed, between the late fourteenth and the early eighteenth century (Le Scouëzec 1968:27). Although the Christian cross as a monument appears around the fourth century in the European landscape, it is only in the fourteenth century that Christian crosses became an important tradition in Europe and in the sixteenth century in North America (Royer 1991:2). In Europe, the fourteenth century corresponded with the explosion of Catholic religion in popular art and, in France, crosses and calvaries are two good examples of this (Royer 1991:3). In the same way, Martin argues that in Protestant or other societies there is no equivalent of the calvaries and monumental crosses that feature as the center of each community as in Brittany (1985:313).

Le Scouëzec suggests that in Brittany many crosses have been erected to christianize a place of pagan religion or a place where some ancient superstitions were

Figure 4.5 Stone cross and monumental calvary. Finistère, Brittany.

Photos: Mélissa Burns.

still present such as dolmen and menhir (Le Scouëzec 1968:30). Similarly, Yann Brékilien argues that Bretons are very superstitious people. He notes that the Breton population in the nineteenth century had many popular religious beliefs and customs (Brékilien 1966:213). Among the Breton population, the cult of stone was one of the most important. Brékilien argues that the Bretons believed that stone was the symbol of immortality. This belief was from the idea that stone was coming from a solid and eternal ground (Brékilien 1966:243). Therefore, Brékilien argues that it is not surprising to find in Brittany many crosses and calvaries made of local stone. He argues that the prehistoric populations, who were established in Brittany many thousands of years ago, thought that stones were the symbol of the souls of dead people. Even though between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, most of these prehistoric monuments had been christianised, the symbolic meaning of these old vestiges survived and they represented the soul of death (Brékilien 1966:244). Brékilien and Le Scouëzec focus too much on the mystic side of Brittany. They gave their books a story slant, celebrating the cult of the stone among the Breton population. The authors do not look critically at this cult, rather they assume that every Breton believed in this cult. The authors associate the Celtic menhirs and dolmens with the origin of crosses and calvaries in Brittany. There are, however, other theories about the origin of these megaliths in the Breton landscape. Many archaeologists do not believe that dolmens, menhirs and the Celtic tradition are related in Brittany. But Brékilien and Le Scouëzec do not look at these different theories; they do not provide a critical overview to the reader. Rather they try to convince the reader that Breton crosses

and calvaries are a continuation in time of dolmen and menhir.

In *Guide de la Bretagne mystérieuse* Le Scouëzec examines only the religious side of Breton crosses and calvaries. The author does not examine other meanings, functions and symbolisism of these kinds of monuments. So it is impossible to obtain a complete overview in this work of this particular architecture in Brittany. The arguments provided are biased by the fact that only one facet of these monuments is examined. Le Scouëzec argues that Breton crosses and calvaries are different in their representation of religious art. He states that the evolution of calvaries in Brittany is remarkable and recalls the importance of the Roman Catholic religion in this part of France after the Middle Ages. Le Scouëzec also notes that Breton calvaries are essential monuments of the parish enclosure.[5] This feature was always situated close to the ossuary to remind people of the presence of death, and they were also the guarantee of future resurrection for the Roman Catholic believer (Le Scouëzec 1968:32; Moreau-Pellen 1950:8-20; Vincent-Pinchancourt 2007:10-11) (Figure 4.6). Unlike Le Scouëzec, Keith Spence (1979) argues that outside every chapel and parish church, at nearly all crossroads and at frequent intervals beside main roads, it is possible to observe stone calvaries and stone crosses. He states that it is not uncommon to see calvaries, road crosses or crosses in Brittany facing the sea, with a specific inscription or a special request to the passengers to pray in memory of those memorialised. Spence also argues that through naïve crucifixion scenes and realistic representations of the childhood, the passion, and the resurrection of Christ, calvaries are the distinguishing mark of religious art in the entire Breton landscape

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[5] In the Roman Catholic tradition the parish enclosure includes usually a church, ossuary, cemetery, and a cross or a calvary (Le Scouëzec 1982:15-16).

Figure 4.6 Parish enclosure of Pelyben, Finistère, Brittany.

Photo: Mélissa Burns.

(Spence 1979:182). Like Le Scouëzec, Spence looks only at one facet (religion) of crosses and calvaries in Brittany.

Early in the 1980's Gwenc'hlan Le Scouëzec wrote two new books about sacred stones in Brittany. The first (1982) concerned calvaries and parish enclosures in Brittany, while the second (1983) focused on monumental crosses and fountains in the Breton landscape. It is interesting to observe the evolution of the author through his three monographs. In *Pierres sacrées de Bretagne: Calvaires et enclos paroissiaux*, Le Scouëzec focuses on the symbolisim of Breton calvaries. He examines calvaries in each region of Brittany and also looks at the sculptors who made these masterpieces, symbols of the devotion to the catholicism in Brittany. Le Scouëzec argues that the orientation of calvaries in parish enclosures is important and follows some rigorous rules that are still observed today. In the Roman Catholic tradition, the church is always aligned east to west, and the great calvaries in Brittany follow the same orientation. Therefore, the scene of the resurrection of Jesus is usually situated on the west side of a calvary. In this way, when Christ came out of his tomb, he could see the sunrise from the east. In the Roman Catholic religion, east is associated with coming back to life. On the other hand, west is associated with sunset and death. Le Scouëzec argues that it is for this reason that usually the body of Christ faces west in the crucifixion scene of a Catholic calvary (Le Scouëzec 1982:16). Le Scouëzec uses a symbolic approach to analyze Breton calvaries and parish enclosures. This approach is a kind of cognitive theory, asking essentially what the cognitive processes and human behaviours were that led to the erection of these kinds of

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monuments in Brittany. The choice to include a theoretical framework to understand these structures allows a better understanding of Breton culture and of the symbolic meanings, functions and beliefs associated with Breton calvaries and parish enclosures. Le Scouëzec provides stronger arguments in this later work through a theoretical framework to interpret crosses and calvaries in Brittany.

Unlike Le Scouëzec (1982; 1983), who focuses on the symbolic meaning of Breton crosses and calvaries through a theoretical framework, Eugène Royer (1991) focuses on forms and functions associated with these kinds of monument. Royer argues that crosses and calvaries in Brittany were the symbol of Roman Catholic religion and expressed the faith of a family or a specific population. In the same way, Baud argues that in the past crosses and calvaries were mostly always associated with Catholic pilgrimages (Baud 1995:93). Royer states that the cross can be interpreted as a symbol of God who stands up with his arms in a horizontal position to protect the world around. Sometimes, crosses and calvaries were used as milestones and cornerstones because there were no other signs to guide people. Royer argues that crosses could mark the limit between two estates. He gives the example of St Malo in Brittany, where one well-known cross is called "*la croix de la mi-grève*". This cross had a boundary function, separating the territories of St Malo and Plessis-Bertrand. Finally, the author notes that the most important crosses for the Breton fishermen were the crosses on the seaside. He states that most of the time, this kind of cross faced the sea and was erected in a port or on a hill. Royer argues that two functions were primarily associated with crosses on the seaside.

First, a cross was a memorial built in memory of a strong storm or a wrecked boat; and

second, crosses facing the sea served as a permanent prayer for the sailors and fishermen

(Royer 1991:8-14). In his book *Calvaires Bretons*, Royer focuses on forms and functions

of crosses and calvaries in Brittany. He developed a typology for this particular kind of

architecture present in the Breton landscape.[6] Royer's major contribution to our

understanding of Breton crosses and calvaries is that he looks at all kinds of crosses and

calvaries in the Breton landscape and provides a complete overview of forms and

functions of these monuments. He does not focus only on a particular kind of cross or

calvary but provides a well-defined typology and a solid description of all the different

functions associated with crosses and calvaries in Brittany. The arguments provided by

Royer will be useful in the next chapters because crosses and calvaries present in the

Petit Nord region of Newfoundland during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were

probably erected for similar reasons.

Unlike Royer, who focuses on every kind of cross and calvary and their functions

in the Breton landscape, Vallance (1918) focuses only on churchyard crosses. Vallance

argues that crosses and calvaries are not always situated facing the sea or on the road side.

Most of them are situated in a cemetery or churchyard. Vallance argues that the

churchyard crosses are a separate class of monument (1918:79). However, the author

never explains why churchyard crosses are different than other kinds of crosses. The

author focuses in this paper on form and details of churchyard crosses. He argues that

Roman Catholic crosses may claim to be of special interest because they illustrate how

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[6] A typology is a classification system with an underlying purpose (Adams and Adams 1991).   65

the same motif was adapted to the changing fashions over time (Vallance 1918:82). To

illustrate his argument, Vallance presents seven examples of French crosses dated

between the fourteenth and late nineteenth centuries. He documents and compares each

cross. He claims that the most appropriate form for a collective commemoration is a cross

in the churchyard or other public place (Vallance, 1918:88). However, Vallance does not

give arguments to support this conclusion. Although Vallance provides much information

about the meaning of English and French churchyard crosses in his article, he does not

look critically at his sources. Vallance simply presents some facts but never explains why

these facts are pertinent to his topic.

In much of the literature, crosses and calvaries in Brittany are represented as

impressive monuments and as prestigious architecture (see Anson 1974; Debidour 1954;

Delumeau 1970; Le Scouëzec 1968, 1982, 1983; Martin 1985; Royer 1991; Simard 1995,

2004, Vallance 1918). Martin (1985) argues that it is inconceivable that in Protestant

societies we could find the equivalent of monumental architecture, crosses and calvaries

as in Brittany. Martin argues that the Roman Catholic union of the public realm and

Catholic faith is most continuous in the cult of Virgin or some protective saint, and in the

pilgrimage. Also, Martin argues that the Roman Catholic Church has consistently aimed

at a holistic environment over the centuries (Martin 1985:314-315). It could be for this

reason that Roman Catholic societies, such as in Brittany, have so many symbols of faith

in its landscape through churches, chapels, crosses, calvaries, sacred place, which are all

forms of monumental and prestigious architecture. Schultz (1968) suggests a new way of

studying Breton crosses and calvaries as monuments. Through different kinds of three-dimensional objects (Egyptians tombs, Florentine villa, Romanesque and Gothic churches, crosses and calvaries in Brittany) she examines the beliefs and symbolic meaning of monumental architecture over time. Schultz is the first author who argues that crosses and calvaries in Brittany are simple. She notes that Breton crosses and calvaries are relatively small in scale, in contrast to the magnificence of Romanesque and Gothic sculpture. Although Schultz argues that crosses and calvaries in Brittany represent a micro-architecture, she notes that these monuments reflect the vigorous life of the Bretons who worked hard on their farms and fishing boats (1968:20-21). The major critique that might be made of Schultz concerns the scale of comparison that she uses to compare monumental architecture. It is misleading to compare a Gothic church in Italy with crosses and calvaries in Brittany. It is like comparing an orange with an apple. These monuments do not have the same size, functions and symbolic meanings for the population. Of course, Breton crosses and calvaries are small and simple in comparison with Egyptians tombs. They are, on the other hand, large and complex, compared to most aspects of local material culture.

4.3.2 Crosses and Calvaries in the Breton Landscape

In ealier decades, the authors interested in Breton crosses and calvaries focussed mostly on the religious meanings and functions of these monuments. It is only in the last twenty years that authors such as Le Scouëzec (1983), Saunders (2003) and Simard (2004) included the notion of landscape in their reflections on Breton crosses and calvaries.

Recently, most of the books about crosses and calvaries as monumental architecture in Brittany make a distinction between *basse* and *haute Bretagne*. Jean Simard (2004) emphasizes the fact that Brittany was divided in the past into two linguistic zones. According to Simard, this distinction is essential to understand the difference in the meanings forms and functions of crosses and calvaries in Brittany. The *basse Bretagne,* or *Bretagne bretonnante,* is the west part of Brittany (Figure 4.7). The axis between St Brieuc, in the north, and Vannes in the south, is the limit between the two zones. In *basse Bretagne*, the road signs are bilingual (French and Celtic), and it is also in this section that most of the megaliths, stone crosses, monumental calvaries and parish enclosures are present in the Breton landscape. Simard argues that the eastern part of Brittany, called *haute Bretagne,* corresponds to the Gallo-Roman country. The Breton population speaks French in this zone, and megaliths, crosses and calvaries are rare in the landscape, except at St Malo, perhaps due to its geographic position not too far from St Brieuc. However, the entire Breton population of these two zones has the same sense of belonging to the nation. Simard states that Breton traditions and religious beliefs are the heart of Brittany over time (Simard 2004:64-65).

Simard notes that crosses appeared in *haute Bretagne* only in the fourteenth century and later they were influenced by the French presence following the marriage of the last duchess of Brittany and the king of France, in 1532. 1532 therefore corresponds to the end of Brittany as an independent region of France (Delumeau 1970:210-211; Simard 2004:71). Simard argues that at St Malo, Dol and Rennes, all in *haute Bretagne,*

the crosses were made of wood, with some ornaments, or geometric motifs at the junction or at the extremities of the cross. He notes that most of the time there was a place for a niche with a shrine. Simard states that at Nantes, also in *haute Bretagne*, the road crosses and crosses facing the sea were usually made of iron and some had ornaments or instruments of passion. He mentions that at Rennes and Nantes, the crosses are recent and are never older that the nineteenth century (Simard 2004:71-72). Crosses existed in the haute Bretagne landscape before the nineteenth century but because they were made of wood, most did not survive over time. Simard provides much information about specific kind of crosses and calvaries in both linguistic regions of Brittany. Simard focuses however only on their location in the Breton landscape. The author does not think critically about why it is possible to observe so many different kinds of crosses and calvaries in Brittany. To provide a better understanding of these monuments, Simard might have looked at crosses and calvaries through the Breton landscape, and also at the symbolic meaning of crosses and calvaries and their role in cognitive processes. Landscape theory cannot answer the questions about beliefs and symbolic meanings. However, landscape and cognitive theories working together could provide a good way of understanding of crosses and calvaries in Brittany. Although Simard does not provide a complete understanding of crosses and calvaries in Brittany, the information provided by Simard is very important for the interpretion of crosses and calvaries built by Breton fishermen in the Petit Nord, particularly those still standing at the fishing rooms in Crouse Harbour.

Le Scouëzec (1983) focuses on the notion of time and landscape, which he suggests are theoretical frameworks to understand monuments like crosses. The main idea in his book concerns religious monumental architecture in Brittany, such as crosses and calvaries. Le Scouëzec argues that the location of crosses and calvaries in the Breton landscape is very important to understanding these vestiges of the past and their symbolic meanings. Le Scouëzec documents Breton stone crosses as religious monuments in a thorough examination of their different forms, diverse origins and the typical position of each specific kind of cross and calvary in the landscape (Le Scouëzec 1983:38-39). In a similar way, Saunders (2003) looks at the archaeological presence of crosses and calvaries in the Breton landscape. The author examines Christian crosses and calvaries from past to present, monumental to miniature, and from battlefield memorial to the symbolic re-ordering of personhood through the notions of landscape and archaeology. Like Le Scouëzec (1983), Saunders does not focus only on the religious meaning of crosses and calvaries. He notes that they are an important symbol of the Roman Catholic tradition, but he also suggests that Breton crosses and calvaries are memorial and commemorative monuments symbolizing different events not necessarily associated with religion (Saunders 2003:8-10).

4.3.3 Material Culture Associated with Crosses and Calvaries

Saunders is the first author to suggest some of the concrete material objects that an archaeologist digging near crosses and calvaries might find. Saunders argues that crosses and calvaries in the Breton landscape could be associated with miniature

portable objects, such as a crucifix, rosary beads or a wooden cross inserted into a little glass bottle. Saunders argues that a talismanic connection of form and belief does exist between the landscape and human body through large and small cruciform objects. Thus, the protection afforded the monumental crosses and calvaries could be transferred to those who carried or wore small amuletic crosses and material objects (Saunders 2003:14). In the same way, Anson argues that deep in his heart, the Breton sailor has always been profoundly religious (1974:9-10). He notes that Breton fishermen often carry an image of Our Lady and/or a rosary bead in their pockets or worn around their neck (Anson 1974:9). In this case, the rosary bead could be associated with the protection afforded by a monumental cross. Folklorist Paul-Yves Sébillot (1968) examines fetishism of a specific object. Sébillot examines traditions and customs associated with European fishermen in *Folklore des pêcheurs*. He notes a Breton custom for funeral practices, which included a cross as memorial. When a fisherman was lost in the sea, his family and the local population replaced his body with a wooden cross for the funeral. The day after, the priest would come to his home to bring the memorial cross, (the symbol of the dead fisherman), to the church. A funeral ceremony was carried out and later the cross was buried in the cemetery or near a cross facing the sea (Sébillot 1968:65-66). Anson, Saunders and Sébillot suggest an interesting point about the material culture of crosses and calvaries in Brittany, when they suggest a relationship between crosses and calvaries as monumental architecture and small crosses and material culture as amuletic objects. This allows deeper reflection about beliefs and rituals surrounding these monuments.

4.3.4 Crosses and Calvaries in Breton Cultural Beliefs and Practices

The most prolific author on Breton folklore is probably Paul-Yves Sébillot. This French author wrote many books about the daily life, beliefs, and practices of the Breton population. Sébillot (1970) notes that while fishermen were far from Brittany during the summer, the women practiced certain rituals to ensure that their husband, son or brother had a safe trip. Because these women had no way of receiving any news from their sweethearts, who were fishermen and sailors, they had a custom of visiting a dolmen that had been Christianized. With a hammer they struck a rock in the direction where they wanted a good wind, so that the fishermen would have a safe trip back home. Sébillot also mentions that in the sixteenth century women visited a huge stone facing the sea and asked birds to protect their husband or sweetheart. This tradition was accompanied by a dance around the stone, while the women dressed in beautiful clothes and flowers (Sébillot 1970:228-229). These rituals reveal important aspects of the symbolic meaning of monuments facing the sea. Similar practices and rituals in front of crosses facing the sea have been noted by other folklorists in Brittany. Therefore, some analogies about symbolic meaning of these rituals could be established for these different kinds of monuments.

In *Mariners of Brittany*, Anson argues that women believed in customs associated with crosses and calvaries facing the sea. He states that during the long summer months in Brittany, the fishermen, even if they were absent thousands of miles across the Atlantic Ocean, were not forgotten. Sweethearts and wives, mothers and

grandmothers, made pilgrimages to a favourite shrine, church, sacred place, or cross

facing the sea, to call upon God and Our Lady, Star of the Sea, to give a safe return home

to the crews of the fishing boats in Newfoundland (Anson 1974:10-11). Anson and

Sébillot are both folklorists and most of their information about customs, rituals and

traditions are from oral history. As archaeologists and historians, we need to evaluate

such information critically before using it for interpretation because sometimes rituals

and tales from oral history can have been modified or re-interpreted over time by

different generations. Folklore and oral history are, however, a good way to begin.

As mentioned previously, Brittany is a land of seafarers. Fishermen and sailors

believe strongly in God and their devotion to him can be observed through their religious

practices (Cabantous 1987:228-236; 1990:10). Anson examines the religious beliefs of

Breton seafarers and he notes that much of these aspects of the daily life of fishermen

came from the fact that the Roman Catholic faith played an important role in every

village in Brittany (Anson 1974:8). Anson argues that during the nineteenth century in

the parishes situated on the Breton coast, two-thirds of the seafaring populations were

practicing Roman Catholics. This represents a very high proportion of the population

compared with the rest of France. Anson also notes that in many villages of Brittany, it

was the custom before the departure of the fishermen for Newfoundland to organize a

retreat or a mission for them. At the end of this program, participants held a ceremony or

a procession to some favourite shrine. Anson notes that in most of the Breton villages a

special mass for the sailors was celebrated before the departure of the *Terre-Neuvas* to

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Newfoundland (1974:10-11). As a folklorist specialising on fisherman, Anson interviewed fishermen, fishermen's wives and children to document Breton traditions. He provides important information about rituals and customs practiced in Brittany before the departure of sailors to Newfoundland. However, he does not document the rituals and customs of Breton fishermen overseas. It is impossible to know from Anson's work alone, whether there was a continuity of fishermen's practices, on fishing boats and onshore, in Newfoundland.

In *Mariners of Brittany*, Anson introduces a specific religious custom of Breton fishermen: the devotion to Saint Anne. This practice is usually expressed in the form of a vow made to her during a storm at sea or on other occasions of danger. Many examples of these vows have been recorded for the past four or five hundred years. Anson notes that one of these examples is from the year 1628, when Jean le Net related how his ship was driven by a wind of terrific force from the coast of Newfoundland to the river of Vannes (France), in less than thirteen days. Usually, it took almost a month to cross the Atlantic. For Jean le Net, the survival of his ship and crew was due to the miraculous intervention of Saint Anne. In the vow made to Saint Anne, the Breton fishermen promised to make a pilgrimage to *Sainte-Anne d'Auray* in Brittany or to a sacred place, such as a chapel or a cross. Anson reports that Breton sailors were supposed to make this pilgrimage barefoot and bareheaded, dressed only in shirt and trousers, and eating only bread and water (Anson 1974:14-15). This custom reflects the importance of Roman Catholic religion for Breton fishermen.

The major contribution of Anson is to provide solid folkloric information about importance of religious beliefs and practices in Brittany. He suggests two different points of view to provide a better understanding of religious practices in Brittany. First, Anson looks at fishermen and their devotion to God. Secondly, Anson looks at the women who stayed in Brittany during the summer. Anson shows that the Roman Catholic religion was an essential element of Breton daily life in the past. Like Anson, Cabantous describes European mariners through their beliefs and customs of the Christian religion. He argues that Breton sailors and fishermen believe in God in a different way than the land-based population (Cabantous 1990:12-14).

Spence (1979) looks at the representation of Breton crosses and calvaries through artistic images. He argues that one of the unique facets of crosses in Brittany is the use of a painted wooden figure of Jesus Christ on the cross, with his arms stretched, and his head downcast. According to Spence, it is this representation in the typical Breton calvary that inspired Gauguin to paint one of his greatest pictures. Gauguin's *Yellow Christ*, represents the austere and mystical aspect of Breton religious art (Spence 1979:173). The major contribution of Spence is to argue that crosses and calvaries in Brittany are rooted in the everyday world. Their presence not only in tales, legends, customs, beliefs, and traditions, but also in music and painting suggests that these monuments hold powerful meanings for the Breton population.

Spence suggests another symbolic meaning of crosses and calvaries in Brittany. He argues that monumental crosses and calvaries were built from the profits of Breton

agriculture and fishery, by the rich merchants and lords of Brittany (Spence 1979:184).

For Spence, Breton calvaries are the granite embodiments of the religious fervour of the

Bretons between the fourteenth and late eighteenth centuries. According to Royer in

some cases in Brittany, road crosses, or crosses in front of the sea, were memorials of a

special event, usually associated with death. Royer notes that in every Breton cemetery, it

is possible to observe a cross and the function of this cross was to protect dead people

and also to invite the population to pray and repent their sins. Royer also notes that at St.

Malo some of the crosses were associated with ancient traditions of funeral processions

(Royer 1991:8-14). In the same way, Spence argues that most of these monuments are the

symbol of a particular kind of processions known as pardons. In the Roman Catholic

tradition *pardons* are not unique to Brittany; but almost every Breton village had its own

pardon (Spence 1979:190). Of course, as Spence admits, other Celtic and Roman

Catholic countries have road crosses, shrines, crucifixes and calvaries, but nowhere else

do they pervade the landscape as they do in Brittany. Unlike Spence, who looks at the

notion of pardon as a symbol, Brékilien argues that the Breton population sees the pardon

as an essential function before their death rather that a simple symbol. Brékilien argues

that in the past, the Bretons thought that it was impossible to enter paradise without

having visited the seven saints of Brittany who had created the country. Brékilien notes

that for many centuries, millions of men and women in Brittany walked across the Breton

landscape to prove their faith and love in these Breton saints. This tradition was called

Tro Breiz in the Breton language. On the road, Bretons encountered many cathedrals,

churches, chapels, road crosses, crosses facing the sea and calvaries. This religious

practice of pilgrimage was abolished in the seventeenth century, because the Roman

Catholic Church wanted to eliminate all ancient pagan beliefs. However, this custom was

still practiced secretly until the nineteenth century (Brékilien 1966:259-260). Brékilien

mentions that during the pardon Bretons met in religious and sacred places. Therefore, as

Saunders (2003) and Sébillot (1968) argue, we can suppose that during these pardons

some specific customs were practiced near the crosses, calvaries or other sacred place. It

is therefore possible that particular objects, such as rosary bead or image of shrine, used

for these pilgrimages were left or given as offerings to these symbolic monuments. The

major contribution of Brékilien, Royer and Spence to this study is their suggestion of new

ways to examine crosses and calvaries; through the notion of death and memory.

Between the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, Bretons had a tradition of

publishing an *Almanach de la mémoire et des coutumes de la Bretagne*. The entire month

of November was dedicated to this notion of death. Many passages in the *Almanach* were

dedicated to some practices to link death, a cross or calvary, and memory (Tiévant 1981).

A passage in John Lanchester's novel *The Debt to Pleasure* summarizes well this notion

of death, so present in the Breton culture:

> Death, then, gives Brittany its cultural distinctiveness [...] only the
>
> image of death in Mexico (figure of color, of a comparable pre-
>
> Christian harshness, and of carnival – *carne levare*, farewell to flesh)
>
> is a vivid and grotesquely alive as the half-comic, terrifying, grimacing

skeleton figure of the Breton *Ankou*. And in both cultures, the energy

with which death is celebrated and embodied is a tribute, a very pagan

tribute, to the pressing presentness and thisness of life. (Lanchester,

2002:97-98).

Hallam and Hockey (2001) examine the relations between memory, space and

material cultures of death. They argue that memory processes have been imagined and

communicated through a variety of spatial and visual metaphors that construct an

architectural of memory places. The authors also argue that, by approaching memory as a

social and cultural practice, located in social space and mobilizing material forms, it is

possible to analyze and interpret space/bodies/objects in acts of remembrance (Hallam

and Hockey 2001:77). This theoretical approach to the examination and documention of

spaces of death and memory might be applicable to understanding crosses and calvaries

in Brittany, in the way presented by Spence and Brékilien.

Monumental crosses and calvaries in Brittany have been well documented in the

last few decades by historians and folklorists. The authors have documented the form,

functions and meanings of these monuments. However, these vestiges of the past have

never been studied by archaeologists. Many of the crosses and calvaries still stand in

Brittany, so it could be interesting to look at these particular features from a new point of

view as archaeology. Archaeological excavations surrounding these monuments could

validate some of the information provided by the historical documents and oral tradition.

On the other hand, historical archaeology has the opportunity to refer to such literature, to

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contextualize its finds. This review of the literature on Breton crosses and calvaries

helped me to understand these vestiges of the past. In this thesis, I started with the

assumption that crosses and *calvaries* are two important symbols for a specific population,

in a specific moment of history, in a specific historical, political and social context. In the

French tradition, crosses are multi-valent symbols, and the road crosses and crosses

facing the sea are an excellent expression of these. Calvaries and crosses thus express

part of a popular spirit. The fishermen who were established at Petit Nord were from

Brittany, so the cognitive processes that influenced the Breton fisherman in

Newfoundland to build crosses and calvaries in the Petit Nord landscape certainly have

roots in Breton traditions. In the following chapters, by comparing archaeological and

historical data, I intend to examine why Breton fisherman in the seventeenth to the early

twentieth centuries built crosses and calvaries on the Petit Nord, where they did and when

they did.

Chapter 5: Dos-de-Cheval, EfAx-09

Summer 2007 marked the third season for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord* project on the maritime cultural landscape. The aim of this broad archaeological project is to document the French seasonal, shore-based, salt-cod fishery in northern Newfoundland, from 1504-1904 (Pope 2007:3). The field season of 2007 was also the second year of full-scale excavations at the key site of Dos de Cheval (EfAx-09) in Crouse, Newfoundland (Pope *et al*. 2008:54) (Figure 5.1).

My research objectives were to document a specific kind of feature present in the Petit Nord landscape from the late seventeenth century to today: crosses and calvaries. Crosses and calvaries are not, however unique to the Petit Nord; a few thousand have been recorded in the territory known in the past as New France and those monuments were considered as one of the strongest symbol of French presence in a specific territory (Porter 1984:278-279; Porter et Désy 1973:50; Simard 1989:243). In Newfoundland, a cross known as "The Micmac Cross" is located in Baie de Nord and would date from the late 1800s.

> The cross is located on a terrace approximately 150 meters above sea level. It lies flat on a granite rock surface with the placement of small rocks forming the outline…The Micmac contend that they did not construct the cross but rather accidentally discovered it.. The earliest coin [French] at the cross, 1865, does not necessarily date its

Figure 5.1 EfAx-09 (Dos de Cheval), key site of *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*. Photo: Peter Pope for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

construction although it does roughly date the opening of the telegraph

station at Baie de Nord (Penny 1983:2-3).

Monumental crosses were also a distinguishing feature of the English-speaking

Redemptorist missionaries from Canada, who erected crosses in Newfoundland's

English-speaking Roman Catholic communities, notably on the island's west

coast from the beginning of the twentieth century. In addition, one may also

suspect that the Breton Recollets, who replaced the Saint-Denis (Paris) Recollets

and staffed the parish of Plaisance from 1700-1714, may have erected together

with their many Breton parishioners crosses and calvaries. Archaeology at

Plaisance might confirm such practice in the early eighteenth century, especially

since it is the same Roman Catholic population and even a Breton ecclesiastical

clerical presence (Taylor-Hood 1999).

As seen in Chapter 4, in Brittany crosses and calvaries were an artistic and

religious tradition that formed part of the wide and complex history of the creation of a

Breton identity (Déceneux 2001:7). In the Petit Nord region of Newfoundland crosses

and calvaries were frequently mentioned as landmarks in seventeenth– and eighteenth–

century surveys (Pope 2003a:16). Those that still stand today in the Petit Nord landscape

are generally sited on ancient beaches, looking down from inland on the work areas

below (Pope 2008). My goals with the archaeological excavations and surveys during the

summer of 2007 were to determine the functions of those features, to date them and to

understand their relationship to the landscape as well as their symbolic meaning in the

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Petit Nord region. Université Laval MA candidate Rébecca Janson helped me with my field work at Dos-de-Cheval site, known today by local population as Long Point (EfAx-09). Together we also dug and surveyed at Northeast Crouse (EfAx-11), a village uninhabited since the 1970s, due to the resettlement program in Newfoundland. Both sites are situated in Cape Rouge Harbour, locally known today as Crouse harbour (Figure 5.2).

5.1 Methodology

A key challenge for my project was the location of Breton crosses and calvaries in successive periods, as the migratory fishery in the Petit Nord area evolved. Historic maps, paintings and photographs were useful in outlining this process, but precise definition required integration of archaeological data from areas surrounding those features in the Petit Nord region to offer a better understanding. Excavation areas at EfAx-09 and EfAx-11 and archaeological surveys in the Petit Nord region were selected from previous surveys conducted in 2004 by Peter Pope. Pope recorded a calvary and two monumental wooden crosses *in situ*; a calvary still stands at Dos-de-Cheval (EfAx-09) (Figure 5.3) and two monumental crosses still stand at Northeast Crouse (EfAx-11) (Figure 5.4). Other survey areas were selected from seventeenth– and eighteenth–century fishing censuses, in which calvaries were frequently mentioned in the name of fishing room. However, due to limited time as well as the difficult access of those harbours (most of

Figure 5.2 Map of Cape Rouge Harbour, known today as Crouse Harbour.

Source: Marco Chiaremonte for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord.*
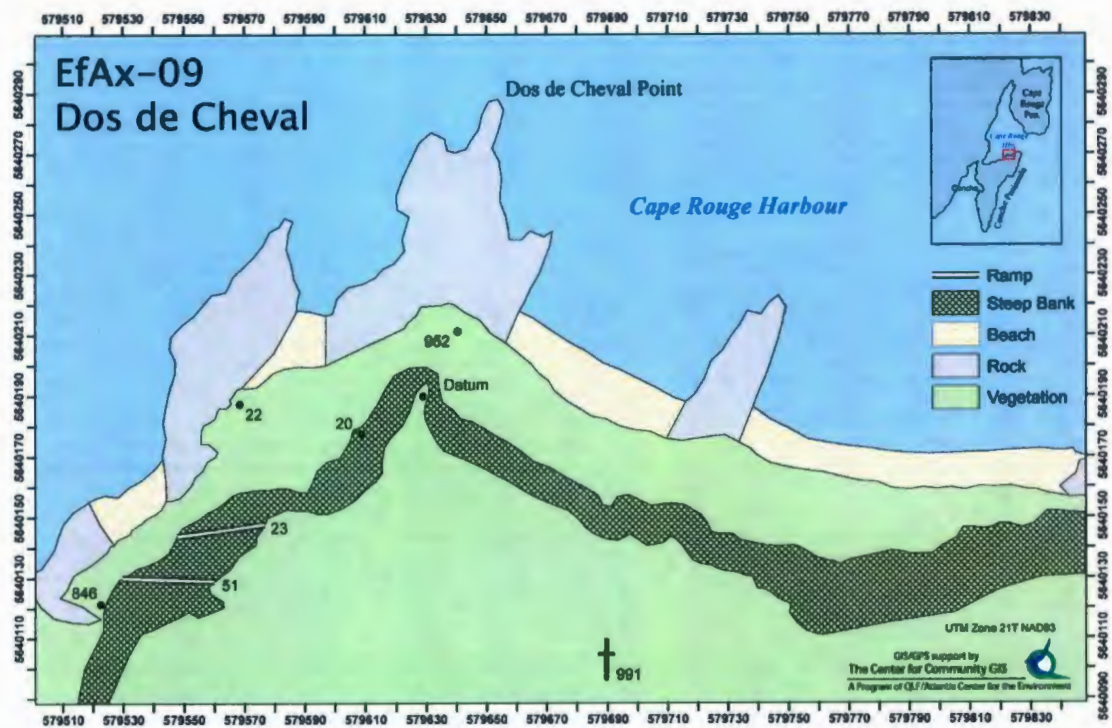
Figure 5.3 Dos de Cheval (EfAx-09), Area D, Feature 991 calvary.

Source: Centre for Community GIS, Québec-Labrador Foundation and Marco

Chiaremonte for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

them are uninhabited today), I was able to visit only two sites in 2007: La Crémaillère (EiAv-03) and Croque Waterfront (EgAw-07). However, I had the chance to return to the Petit Nord during the summer 2008, which allowed me to survey two more sites with the project crew: Fischot Islands (EhAw-01) and Canada Harbour (EeBa-04), known by the Breton fishermen as *le havre de Canaries*. Both sites had great potential concerning the presence of cross or calvary.

During the archaeological excavations, stratigraphic control followed the event system, which has proved most appropriate for historical archaeology (Harris 1989:22-29). Each feature dug in 2007-08, as well as those we uncovered or revised during surveys, was mapped and photographed on site. Artifacts collected were cleaned and conserved at our field lab in Conche by our lab supervisor, Memorial masters' candidate Sarah Newstead and her assistant, Memorial archaeology student Allison Small. I carried out cataloguing and analysis in the North Atlantic Archaeology lab at Memorial University, with special attention paid to some specific artifacts as sensitive indicators of chronology and relevant functions and symbolism. Only 14 artifacts and about 40 rough iron nails were recovered over the summers, in my research. Diagnostic artifacts were photographed and/or illustrated.

5.2 Area D: Feature 991 – Calvary (monumental cross on a rock platform)

In 2006 Pope recorded, by drawing, the Feature 991, calvary – an impressive standing oak cross on a rock plinth, on the higher terrace in Area D (Figures 5.5 and 5.6). Local informants reported that the calvary had been repaired by the French Navy in the

Figure 5.5 EfAx-09, Area D, Feature 991 calvary.

Photo: Mélissa Burns for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord.*
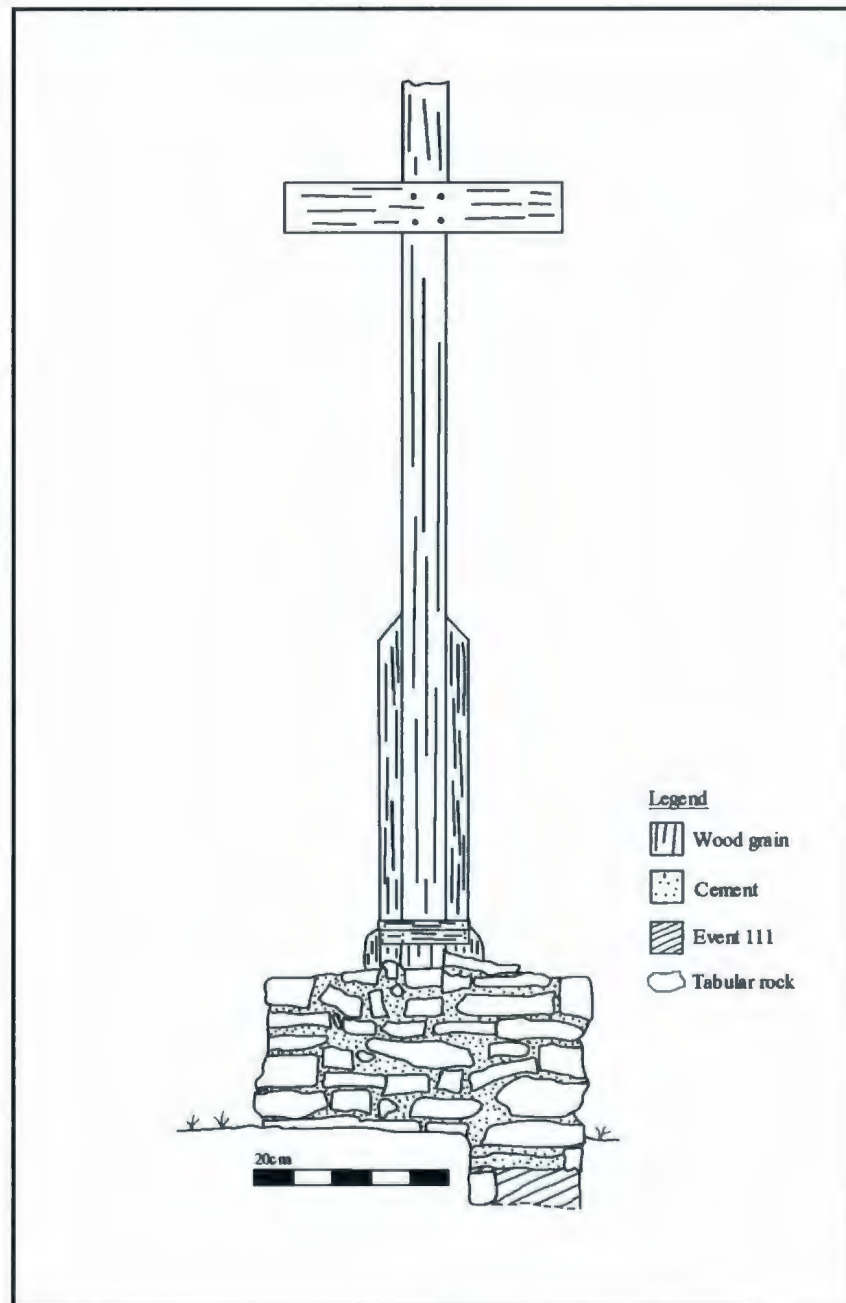
Figure 5.6 Feature 991 calvary.

Source: Jennifer Jones for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

1930s and Pope suggested that the present calvary marked a traditional ritual place due to the existence of an older enclosure around the existing structure (Pope 2007:25). Rébecca and I started our season at Dos-de-Cheval (EfAx-09) by digging in Area D, to evaluate the hypothesis suggested by Pope in 2004, as well as attempt to answer my research questions about Breton crosses and calvaries in the Petit Nord region over time. We began by cutting the vegetation surrounding Feature 991 to expose the older enclosure recorded by Pope in 2004 as Feature 992. This gave us the chance to observe Feature 992 and to identify this dry-masonry structure as a rock enclosure: a large square composed of one layer of tabular rocks lying on the ground without mortar or cement, surrounding the calvary Feature 991 (Figures 5.7 and 5.8). It is quite common in the Roman Catholic tradition to observe such a feature surrounding a calvary or a monumental cross – the enclosure assures it protection (Porter 1984:281). The enclosure is sometimes made of wood, rock or metal, and creates a sacred space in which only a specific person, such as a priest, can have access, and sometimes in Brittany cross and calvary were part of the parish enclosure (Le Scouëzec 1968:32; Simard 1995:41-45). Going into the sacred space created by the enclosure required specific rituals, such as stepping over the enclosure, which reminded the person that the Bible states that it is impossible to approach the divine world without some difficulty (Déceneux 2001:20). An example of a cross enclosure present in the Petit Nord region was recorded in 1886 by Louis Koenig. He painted a landscape of Jacques Cartier Island, in Quirpon Bay, in which he showed a white wooden cross, as well as a white wooden fence, an enclosure surrounding the cross

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Figure 5.7 EfAx-09, Area D, Feature 992 rock enclosure.

Photo: Mélissa Burns for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord.*

EfAx-09 (Dos de Cheval), Area D
Level Plan of Features 991 and 992

Keys:

⬭ : Rocks (Feature 992)

〰 : Feature 991 -Cross
      on top of a rocks platform

≈ : Wood

∴∴ : Cement

Scale 1:10
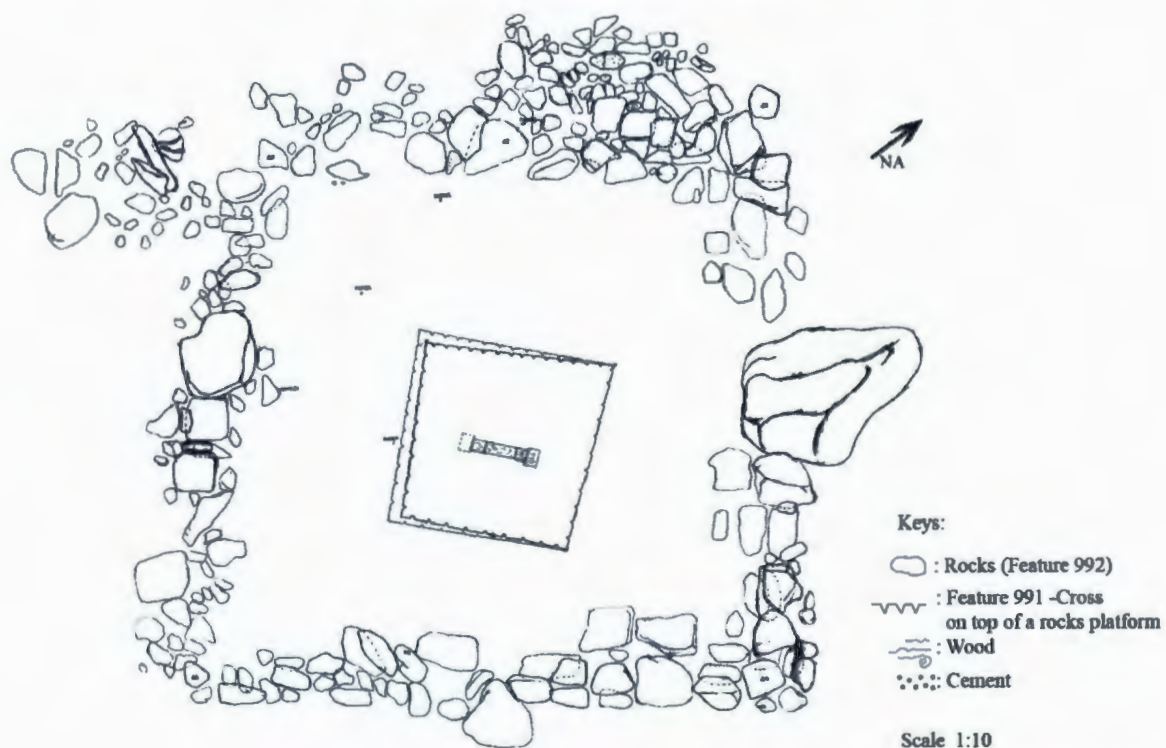
Archaeology of the Petit Nord

Melissa Burns & Rebecca Janson
13 July, 2007

Figure 5.8 Level plan of Feature 992 rock enclosure.

Source: Mélissa Burns and Rébecca Janson for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

NA= Grid North (rough north east true).

Figure 5.9 Louis Koenig. Le Kirpon, 1886. Note the white wooden cross surrounded by a white wooden enclosure.

Source: National Archives of Canada, C-149776.

(Tompkins 2004:27) (Figure 5.9).

In an attempt to uncover diagnostic artifacts to date and to interpret the function of Features 991 and 992 we opened two square units E105S22 and E102S27, near both features but aligned diagonally to them. In both units the first event was very similar: Events 1101 and 1102 are both a brown soil with few pebbles and no artifacts. Below Event 1101 in E105S22, we uncovered Event 1103, a brown soil with few pebbles and some medium stones. A few pieces of what appeared first as French white faïence were recovered from that event. However, after the ceramic sherds had cleaned and dried by the lab crew, those pieces were identified as refined white earthenware. Below Event 1103, we uncovered Event 1105, a brown yellowish soil with few pebbles. And below Event 1106 we found a dark brown soil with a lot of large rocks, which I identified as the sterile soil. In E102S27, below Event 1102, we uncovered Event 1104, a brown soil with some angular stones, from which two medium sized rough iron nails were recovered. Below Event 1104, we uncovered Event 1106, a brown yellowish soil, with pebbles and some large rocks. Below Event 1106 we uncovered Event 1107, a brown yellowish soil with pebbles, at which point I decided to stop digging, due to the close similarity of each event at the same depth in E102S27 and E105S22, as well as the absence of diagnostic artifacts in E102S27. Once we were done with the excavation of E105S22 and E102S27, I decided to dig two units close to the rock platform on which the impressive oak cross is standing. The goal was to determine if the platform had a mode of construction hidden underground, different from the construction visible from the ground surface. There is

cement on top as well as between each course of rocks of Feature 991. Pope suggested that the cement could have been added by Newfoundlanders sometime in the 1940s to repair the rock platform. He mentioned that it was a common practice at that period in Newfoundland to solidify older structures or monuments by adding some cement (pers. comm. 2007). Excavation of E107S27 and E107S26 permitted me to uncover a 10 cm thick cement base, below the rocks of the plinth (Feature 991) about 15 cm deep from the ground surface (Figure 5.10). Local oral history suggests that the French Navy repaired the existing calvary in 1936, but the cement footing uncovered this summer suggests that the calvary was, in fact, totally rebuilt at that time. The archaeological excavations recovered only a few pieces of refined white earthenware, so in the end we have no evidence that Area D was used for a calvary much before the early 1900s: both Features 991 and 992 seem to date from the 1930s.

As mentioned previously, local oral history suggests that the French Navy repaired the existing calvary in 1936. Over the summer I did some interviews with older residents of Crouse and Conche, and they all told me that a previous cross or calvary stood roughly where Feature 991 stands today. One of my questions was: Do you remember when the French Navy came in the 1930s to build the calvary standing at Dos-de-Cheval site? All informants stated first: "the French Navy did not build the calvary in [the] 1930s, they replaced the old one". They all focused on the word rebuilt when speaking about the present calvary standing in Area D. They also all noted that Area D was used as a cemetery by Breton fishermen in the past; the earlier monumental cross or

EfAx-09 (Dos de Cheval) , Area D

North Profile of Feature 991 -rock platform

Keys:

⬡ : Tabular rock (Feature 991)

:⦂:⦂: : Cement

— — — — : Limit of excavation

↓↓↓ : Present surface

E

Not excavated

Event 1111
Brown yellowish soil with pebbles and some angular stones

Sterile soil

Melissa Burns & Rebecca Janson
13 July, 2007

Scale 1:10
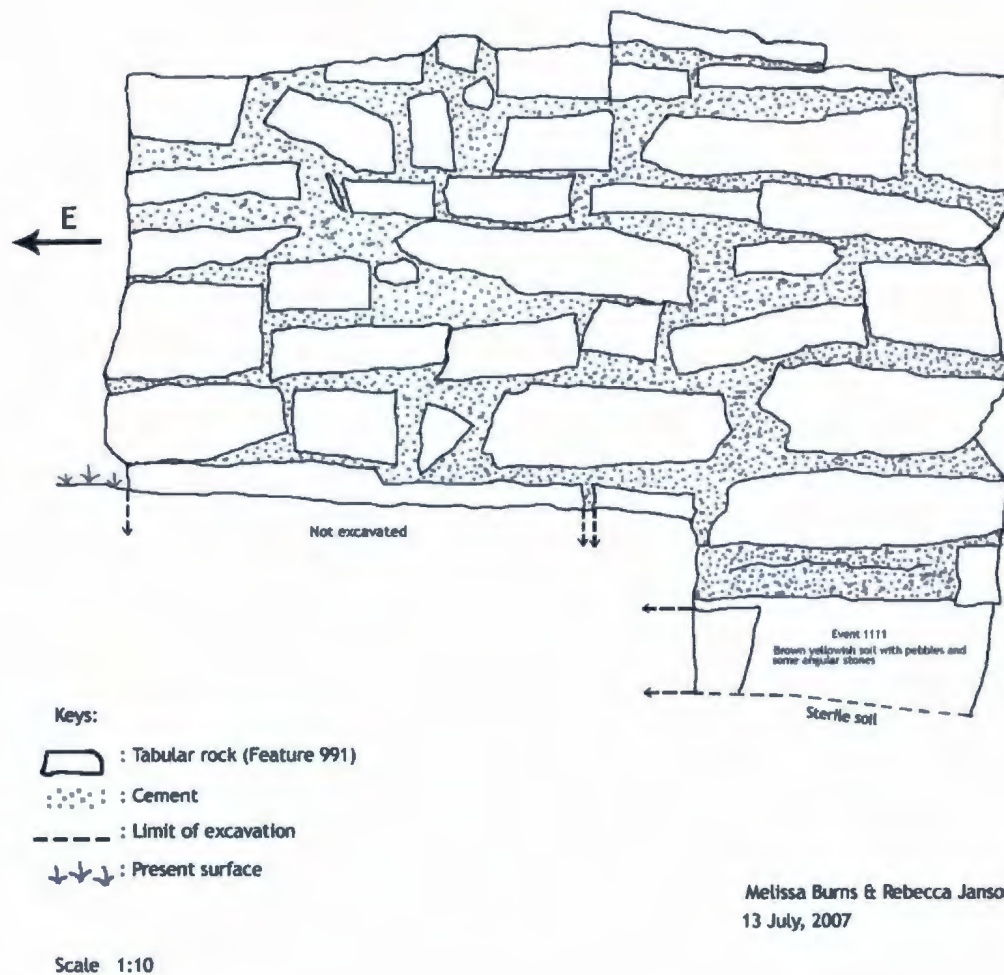
Figure 5.10 EfAx-09, Area D, north profile of Feature 991 rock platform.

Source: Mélissa Burns and Rébecca Janson for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

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calvary was surrounded by smaller wooden grave markers. My oldest informant told me that when she was young she used to go every Sunday afternoon with her family to picnic at the religious monument. She mentions that it was a common tradition for many families from Conche and Crouse. George Casey's MA folklore thesis (1971) supports this idea. In the 1960s, Casey interviewed older residents from Conche and Crouse about their daily life. He notes: "they know of the French cannons and also of the French Crosses which mark the graves of the French fishermen at three separate locations in the community" (Casey 1971:37). Therefore, even if no archaeological proof of an older calvary was recovered in Area D, and even if no evidence was found to prove that the Feature 992 enclosure is older than the Feature 991 calvary, that does not mean that there was no calvary and/ or cross (monumental and/or grave markers) standing in the landscape of this area of the French fishing room before the 1930s. We dug only four 1x1m squares at the Feature 991 calvary, which limited our chances of recovering human remains or diagnostic artifacts linked to an older calvary or grave markers.

In a *Voyage to Newfoundland*, Julien Thoulet notes that in 1886 the largest harbours of the Petit Nord region had all their own cemeteries (Thoulet 2005:83).[7] Georges Cloué's maps from 1850s and 1860s show cemeteries at Croque and St. Julian (Figures 5.11 and 5.12). Both cemeteries are places set back from working areas in each fishing room. Censuses from 1680, 1764, 1784 and 1832 suggest that Croque and St. Julian were among the biggest fishing rooms in the Petit Nord region. So far, no map has

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[7] *A Voyage to Newfoundland* (translated and edited by Scott Jamieson) is the daily log of Julien Thoulet. In 1888, Thoulet visited Newfoundland and the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon aboard a French ship, *La Clorinde*.

Figure 5.11 G. Cloué, Épine Cadoret, 1846 showing a cemetery in Croque Harbour.

Source: France, Dépôt des cartes et plans de la marine, Paris, 1864, in Memorial

University, CNS micro fiche 147.

Figure 5.12 G. Cloué, 1854 showing a cemetery in St Julien Harbour.

Source: France, Dépôt des cartes et plans de la marine, Paris, 1864 in Memorial

University, CNS micro fiche 155.

shown a cemetery at Dos de Cheval fishing room; however the censuses from 1680, 1764, 1784 and 1832 suggest that, for centuries, the bay of Crouse, known by the Breton as *Baie de Carouge* was a privileged harbour, and all censuses suggest that Dos de Cheval was one of the biggest fishing rooms (Anon., 1764, 1784, 1832; Bernard 1680). The hypothesis of an earlier cemetery in Area D of EfAx-09 is therefore reinforced by Thoulet' statements.

During the seventeenth century, cemeteries were perhaps as much as a kilometer away from community centre with their own ceremonial/sacred space; however, by the end of the seventeenth century burial practices changed (Brooke 1998; Mytum 2004:18). Mytum notes that "burial grounds became more centrally located, and funerals included a religious element including prayers and sermon at the sacred space located within the meeting house" (2004:18). He also states that "religion was a major structuring principle for beliefs and practices regarding death during this period" (Mytum 2004:13). Feature 991 is a calvary located at the far limit of Dos de Cheval fishing room. As mentioned in previous chapters, cross or calvary are strong symbol of Roman Catholic religion and are often present in Catholic cemeteries (Royer 1991:8-14). Feature 991 is easily accessible and close enough to be seen from any particular area of the site; but on the other hand, the calvary is also far enough off the working areas to create what could be interpreted as a quiet ceremonial space where dead people could repose in peace, as suggested by the Christian religion.

5.3 Area A –Feature 1131, the Plinth of a Cross

Before the field season began in 2007, I had noticed that Georges Cloué's 1858 chart of Cap Rouge Harbour shows a cross at Dos de Cheval/Champs Paya, but not where the Feature 991 calvary stands today (Figure 5.13). Cloué shows a cross on a natural promontory between Area B, to the east, and Areas A and C, to the west (Figure 5.14). This small platform, at the edge of the second beach terrace, has such a commanding view of the site that in 2006 we chose it for our datum. In 2007, we first opened up Units R and M, essentially two test pits, since neither unit was oriented to the grid of the site. This was an attempt to determine the potential for finding some evidence of an older cross at that place – or, any other feature that we could related to the French occupation of the fishing room. Once the sod has been removed from Units R and M, we uncovered in both units Event 1121, a black organic soil with a lens of very dark black soil next to a large tabular rock located in the northeast corner of Unit R. Event 1121 yielded 78 rough iron nails (an average of 6 cm long), as well as a little piece of lead and copper, later identified as an air gun shot. Most artifacts were recovered in Unit R, next to the large angular rock –which is part of the plinth Feature 1131. Below Event 1121, we uncovered in both units, Event 1122, a dark brown soil with a lot of pebble and cobble. A large number of small iron nails were found in Event 1122, again with a higher concentration in Unit R, next to the plinth Feature 1131. Below Event 1122, we uncovered in Units R and M, Event 1123, a brown soil with a lot of pebble. Only a few nails were recovered in that event. Below Event 1123, we uncovered Event 1124, a light brown yellowish soil
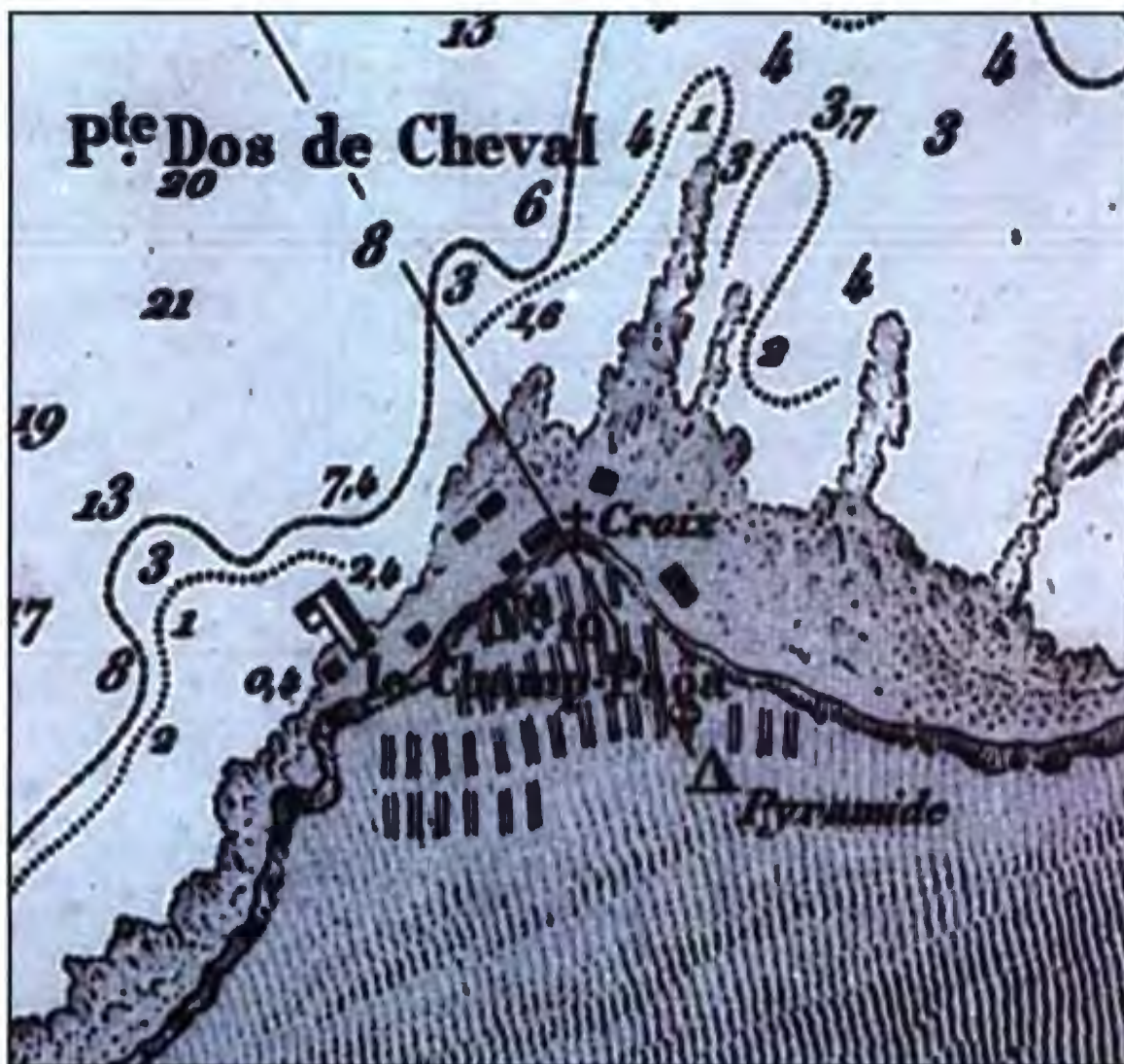
Figure 5.13 G. Cloué, Cape Rouge, 1858 showing Dos de Cheval fishing station.

Source: France, Dépôt des cartes et plans de la marine, Paris, 1864, in Memorial
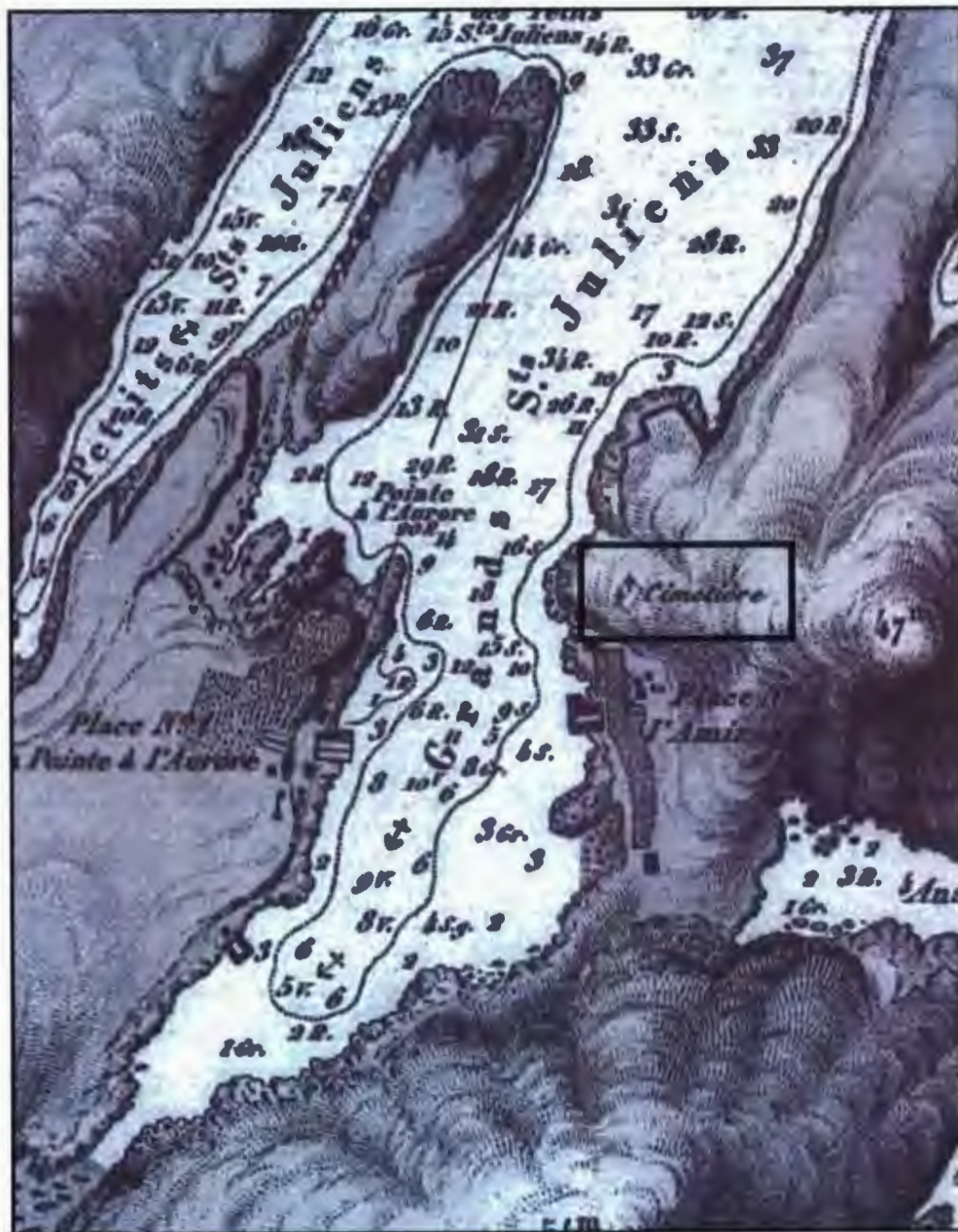
University, CNS micro fiche 193.

Figure 5.14 EfAx-09, Natural promontory between Area B, to the east, and Areas A and C, to the west, on which stands Feature 1131 plinth of cross. Photo taken facing south.

Photo: Mélissa Burns for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

with medium pebble and a lot of small stones. Some nails were recovered in both units but only on top of Event 1124. Below Event 1124, we uncovered Event 1125, a brown soil with a lot of pebble and only few small stones; no artifact was recovered in either units. Below Event 1125 we uncovered Event 1126, a black soil with a lot of small pebble. I interpreted Event 1126 as the sterile soil. Pope suggests that it would make sense to have a layer of fine beach pebble at this depth as a natural soil, since the open terrace of present Area D, corresponds to an ancient beach from, perhaps, 6 000-8 000 years ago (Pope: pers. comm. 2007). Events 1121 to 1125 are interpreted as fill layers: a rudder pintle was recovered during the excavation. The presence of such piece of boat in fill layers suggests movement of pebbles and cobles from the beach. The goal of those who built Feature 1131 was to level and create a solid and flat area over the natural bedrock; the way in which the natural bedrock slopes means that it would have been impossible to build Feature 1131 plinth on top of it without first leveling this natural promontory.

Even if we had to avoid excavating the datum itself we kept digging on this natural promontory. So far we were able to dig fourteenth surrounding 1x1 units, which allowed us to uncover about 50 large tabular rocks that appear to be the collapsed plinth of an earlier cross, recorded as plinth Feature 1131 (Figures 5.15 and 5.16). A high concentration of tabular rocks was present close to our datum, which was located at the centre of the anthropogenic platform, on top of the natural promontory. The level surface is quite small (about 4x4 m), so it would make sense to build the cross in the centre of the

Figure 5.15 EfAx-09, Area A, Feature 1131 plinth of cross, facing grid north west.

Photo: Mélissa Burns for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

Keys:

⬭ : tabular rock (Feature 1131)

/// : baulk

Ⓡ : visible part of a larger underlying rock

⊛ : datum (WONO)

- - - - : underlying rock

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Figure 5.16 EfAx-09, Area A, plan of Feature 1131 plinth of cross.

Source: Mélissa Burns and Rébecca Janson for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

NA= grid north

platform, to reduce the risk of a collapse. A collapse would have happened easily, if the structure would have been built too closely near the edge of the anthropogenic platform.

Stratigraphic levels in those twelve additional units were the same as those described previously in Units R and M. The cross itself was probably made of wood. During the excavation we recovered many wooden knots, as well as what appears to be decomposed wood. A wide quantity of larger and smaller nails with wood traces on them was recovered too. All nails recovered were well preserved, most of them are complete and the level of corrosion is very low. The oldest local informants interviewed over the summer, who were about 5 years old in 1936, had no memory of a cross in this prominent location. So it is probably safe to say that the Feature 1131 cross disappeared from the fishing room landscape sometime between 1858, the date at which the cross is shown on Cloué's map, and the first or second decade of the twentieth century. However, since only a few artifacts were found and none was diagnostic, it is impossible to determine when this cross appeared first at the Dos-de-Cheval fishing station.

5.4 A Portable Crucifix from Area C

During the summer of 2007, a portable crucifix was recovered in Area C at Dos de Cheval near the Feature 1021, boat ramp made of tabular rocks and logs. Area C is the main work area of the early Breton fishing room. It is in this area that major cod processing work was done. Evidence in the form of a ring to attach the crucifix to a rosary bead, suggests that this crucifix recovered in Area C was a portable crucifix. Staffordshire ceramic, Normandy stone wear and brown faience associated with Feature

1021 allow us to date the ramp between 1730s to1780s (Brassard and Leclerc 2001:55-56; 69-70). The portable crucifix recovered in Area C is made of copper alloy. The tendency was to use brass for making most crosses before 1760, then crucifixes gradually changed and were made of silver during the 1760s and years following (Quimby 1939:356-357; Rinehart 1990:94). The crucifix found at Dos de Cheval has one arm longer than the other three, and this is the bottom arm. This kind of cross was classified by Edward Hulme: "when the lower portion of the upright piece is longer than the rest [of the sections]…it is termed the Latin cross" (1976:78). On one side of the crucifix recovered in Area C, Christ is depicted (Figure 5.17). As the messiah, Jesus Christ is probably the most recognized symbol in Christianity. On the other side, the crucifix found at Dos de Cheval depicts some of the instruments of passion (Figure 5.18).

Rinehart suggests that "in order to understand how and why Christian iconography was depicted in the eighteenth century, one must look at activities over the previous centuries that affected artists who created religious scenes" (1990:50). During the sixteenth century, Protestant reformers began attacking Roman Catholic theology and iconography. In 1545, the Roman Catholic clergy held a general council in Trent at the request of German emperor Charles V to reaffirm Roman Catholic dogmas and to clarify church symbolisms (Kirchner 1958:49-50). The ending of the Council had a profound impact on Roman Catholic art; the purification of Catholic iconography then became the main issue for the clergy. From the Council of Trent until the late eighteenth century,

Figure 5.17 A portable crucifix recovered in Area C, EfAx-09, showing Jesus Christ.

Photo: Patty Wells.

Figure 5.18 A portable crucifix recovered in Area C, EfAx-09, showing the instruments of passion.

Photo: Patty Wells.

Roman Catholic artists were required to follow approved instructions in the way that they depicted religious scenes (Rinehart 1990:50).

> The Baroque style became a dominant force during the first half of the seventeenth century and continued through the 1750s. Baroque art is characterized by dynamism, by orderliness despite exuberance, by an assertion of life and faith, and by a mastery of form. Pictures in the baroque style offer a realistic representation of people and events, which is a continuation from the Renaissance (Rinehart 1990:51).

Like the crucifixes found at Fort Michilimackinac in United States, the one recovered at Dos de Cheval (EfAx-09) is a crucifix in the baroque style. Hodder states that the designs of an object and the symbols present on it provide useful information concerning its functions and show the meaning given by people to the artefact (1982:9-10). The discovery of such a significant object at the traditional Breton fishing room coincide with Anson's (1974) religious statement. He argues that Breton fishermen always carry a rosary bead in his pocket or worn around his neck to remind him of his Roman Catholic faith (Anson 1974:10).

5.5 Dos de Cheval, Summary

The key resulting from research done in 2007 is that Feature 1131, the plinth of a cross located near the water in Area A, could have had various functions for the Breton fishermen: navigation, religious and cultural identity markers. The much more recent,

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Feature 991 calvary, located in Area D quite far from the water, had on the other hand a

unique function, acting as a cemetery landmark.

Chapter 6: Northeast Crouse, EfAx-11

Northeast Crouse (EfAx-11) is a large site, extended along the northern shore of Crouse Harbour, from Truite Point near the mouth of the harbour to Goguelin Point at the opening into Biche Arm (Figure 5.4). Various historic maps and fisheries surveys suggest that over time there were four to six French fishing rooms at Northeast Crouse (Anon. 1832; Bernard 1680; Cloué 1858). Older documents suggest that those fishing rooms were among the first used by French fishermen on the Petit Nord (Pope 2007:29). Later in the field season of 2007, Rébecca Janson, myself and project director Peter Pope revisited the multicomponent site at Northeast Crouse, reported in 2004 and 2006. Two monumental oak crosses still dominate the landscape: Feature 9 in Area O and Feature 12 in Area Q. Measured drawings permitted us to compare their dimensions and construction with the standing calvary at EfAx-09. The close similarity of all three monuments leaves little doubt that they were all built or rebuilt in 1936, by the French Navy. The goals with archaeological excavations at EfAx-11 were to document the area surrounding Feature 12, and to verify if Feature 614 was an older plinth of a cross.

6.1 Area O –Feature 9, Monumental Wooden Cross and Grave Marker

Feature 9 is an impressive oak cross standing in Area O at Northeast Crouse and is similar at Feature 12 in Area Q at the same site and to Feature 991 in Area D at Dos de Cheval. Its dimensions and construction are identical to Feature 12 and similar enough to Feature 991 to conclude that this cross had also been built or rebuilt in the 1930s by the

French Navy (Figure 6.1). Feature 9 is sunk into the ground with cement reinforcement at its base. The close similarity of that cement base with Feature 991, at Dos de Cheval, reinforces the idea that the Features were built or rebuilt at the same time. The uniqueness of this monumental cross resides in the little wooden cross close to it. Unlike Feature 9, which is facing south and looking down to the beach work areas as well as the ocean, the little wooden cross next to Feature 9 is facing east (Figure 6.2). In the Christian religion east is associated with the resurrection, on the other hand, west is associated with sunset and death. Therefore, grave markers facing east allow the dead person, when he comes out of his tomb, to see the sunrise from the east –which is the best symbol of the resurrection of Christ (Le Scouëzec 1982:16). For all these reasons, the little cross next to Feature 9 is interpreted as a grave marker. Rituals cultural and religious as well as sacred practices concerning human sepultures are not the focus of my MA thesis. Excavated human skeletons take time and require specific archaeological methods; therefore, given the limited time to spend at Northeast Crouse, I decided to not dig close to the grave marker and the Feature 9 monumental cross and instead decided to investigate Feature 12, high on the slope above the western end of EfAx-11.

6.2 Area Q –Feature 12, Monumental Wooden Cross and Feature 615, Raised Platform

As mentioned previously, Feature 12 is an impressive wooden cross oriented to
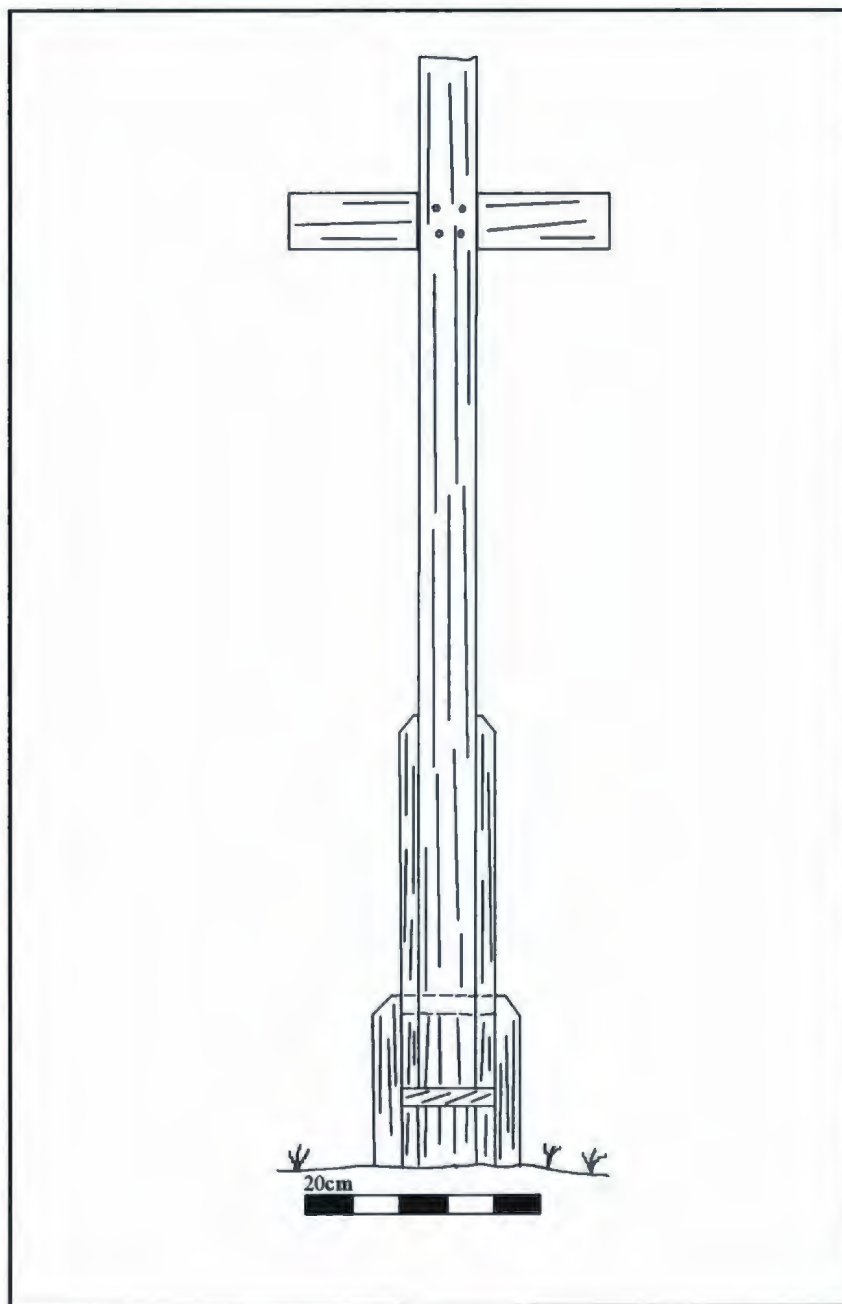
Figure 6.1 EfAx-11, Area O, Feature 9, monumental cross.

Source: Jennifer Jones for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

Figure 6.2 EfAx-11, Area O, Feature 9, monumental cross and grave marker.

Photos: Peter Pope for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

just about the magnetic south and located in Area Q, high on the slope above the western end of Northeast Crouse (Figure 6.3). Like Feature 9 at Northeast Crouse (EfAx-11) and Feature 991 at Dos de Cheval (EfAx-09) Feature 12 was built or rebuilt in 1930s by the French Navy (Figure 6.4). Unlike the cross at Dos-de-Cheval, which stands on top of a rock platform and can be interpreted as a calvary, Feature 12 at Northeast Crouse stands in the ground with cement at its base. Like Feature 991 at EfAx-09, Feature 12 seems to be surrounded by a dry-masonry structure, which we identified as Feature 615. The goals of the excavation were to determine if an older cross was standing there before the 1930s, to recover diagnostic artifacts that could help us to date and determine the function of this actual cross, as well as an older cross if evidence were recovered, and to document the Feature 615, raised platform. Due to time limitations we picked two best spots to reach my objectives. We decided to open two 1x1m units (E8S2 and E8S4) on the east edge of the Feature 615. Because the west, south and north sides of the Feature 615 raised platform seemed to have been disturbed in the past by two holes that have been dug in front of Feature 12 cross, I decided not to test those parts of Feature 615 (Figure 6.5). In both units E8S2 and E8S4, we uncovered the same soils at the same depth. Once Rébecca and I removed the sod from our units, we both uncovered a very muddy black organic soil with a lot of pebbles (Event 621 in E8S2 and Event 630 in E8S4). Below those events a dry dark brown soil with a lot of pebbles was uncovered in the western two thirds of both units (Events 622 and 631). In the eastern third of both units we uncovered Events 623 and 632 which are both a black muddy soil with a lot of pebbles. Those

Figure 6.3 EfAx-11, Area Q, Feature 12 monumental wooden cross.

Photo: Peter Pope for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.
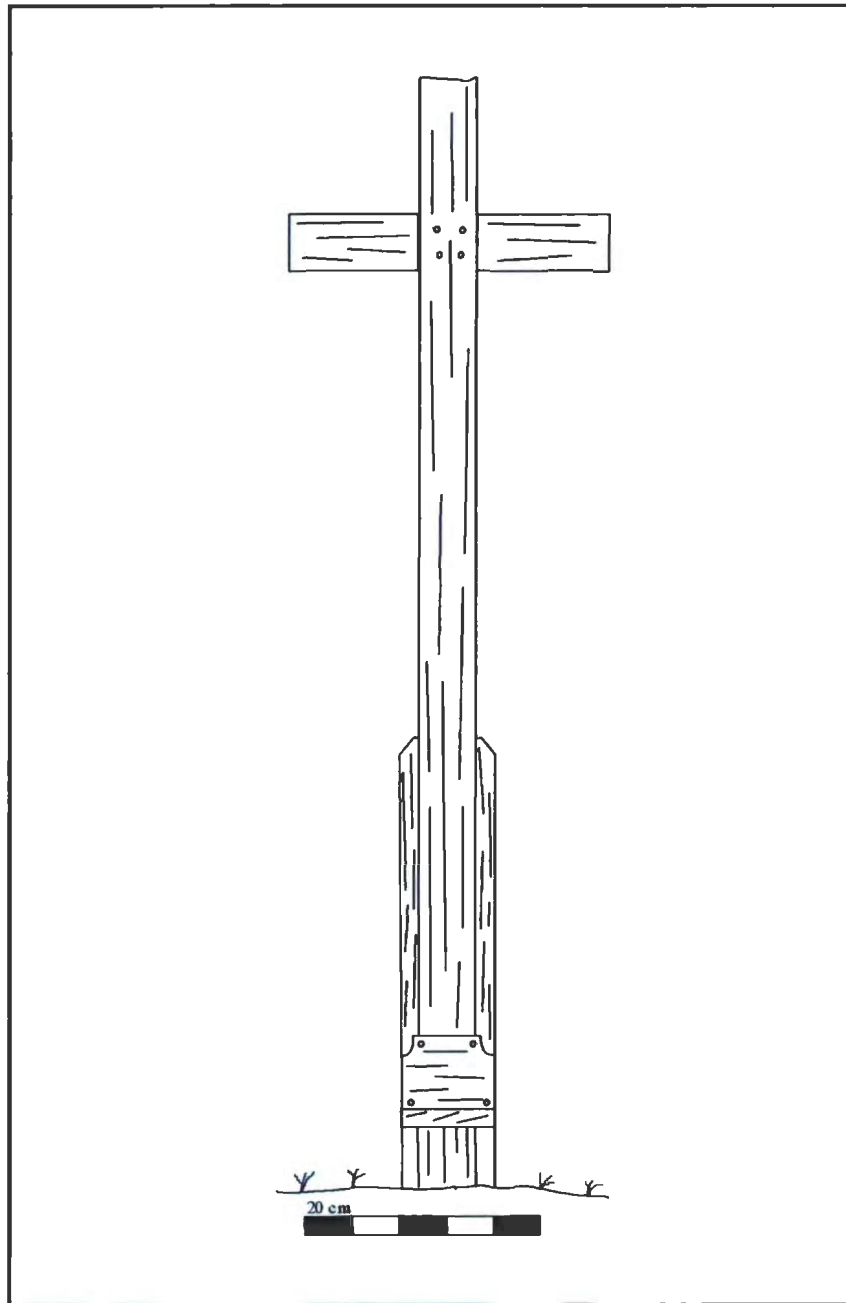
Figure 6.4 EfAx-11, Area H, Feature 12, monumental cross.

Source: Jennifer Jones for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

EfAx-11, Area Q
Level Plan of Features 615 and 12

Feature 12
Cross

True North

Keys:

⬡ : tabular rock (Feature 615)
|'|'|'| : depression
∴ : cement

Scale   1:20
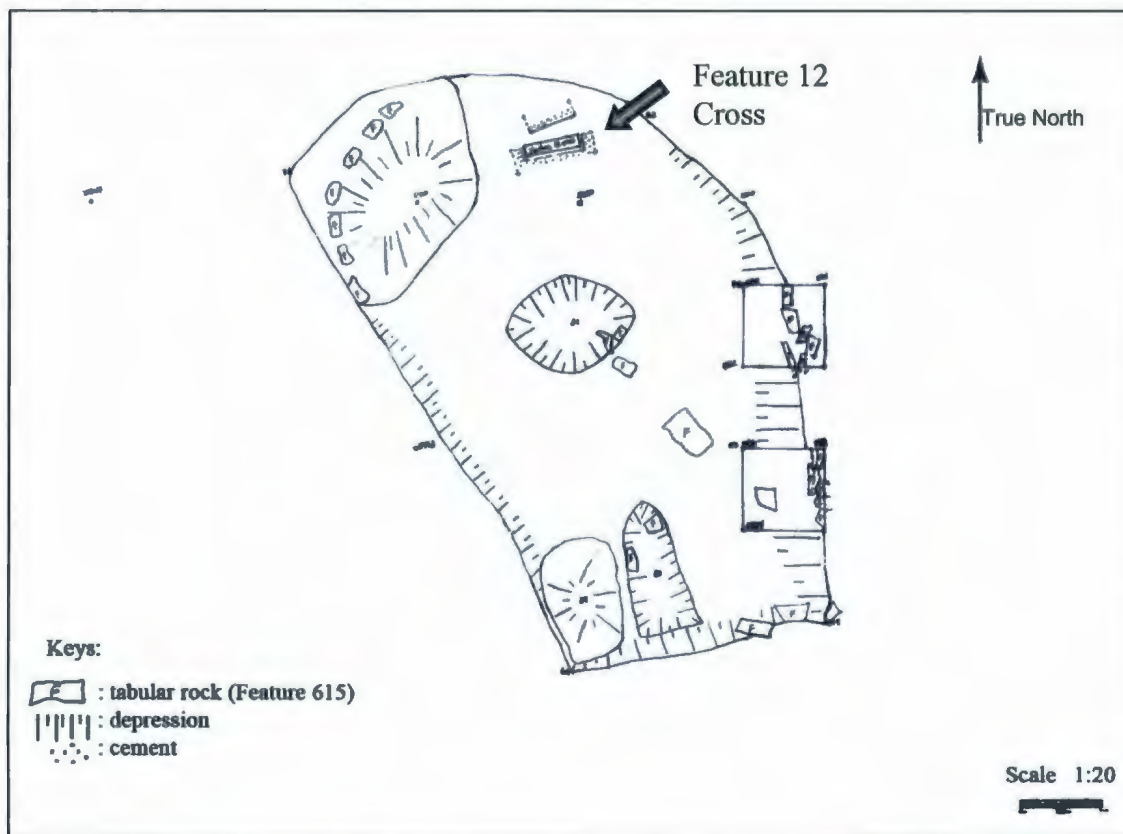
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Figure 6.5 EfAx-11, Area Q, plan of Features 615 (raise platform) and 12 (cross).

Source: Mélissa Burns and Rébecca Janson for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord.*

events are quite similar to the first we uncovered in E8S2 and E8S4. We also uncovered

some tabular rocks in both units which we associated with Feature 615. Feature 615

platform seems to divide the two events present at the same depth in both units. It looks

as if the dry dark brown soil with a lot of pebbles is an anthropogenic layer created to

level the area in front of Feature 12 wooden cross. And it seems the black muddy soil

situated just outside the boundary of Feature 615 has been used to solidify the feature

identified as a plinth of cross, so the rocks that make up Feature 615 would be well

anchored in the soil. Below Event 622 in E8S2 and Event 631 in E8S4 we uncovered a

dark black soil with a lot of pebbles (Event 625 in E8S2 and Event 634 in E8S4) very

similar to the first event uncovered below the present surface, except that Events 625 and

634 were not muddy at all. That could be explained by the fact that both Events 625 and

634 are situated about 55 cm below the present surface, which means that the soil over it

protected those events from rain and snow, which contributed to humidity in the ground.

We stopped digging at those events, which we interpreted as the sterile soil (Figure 6.6).

No artifact was recovered during the excavation of those two units; so no proof was

found to establish whether an older cross stood there in the past. Archaeological

excavations did allow us to document the mode of construction of Feature 615. I suggest

that Feature 615 was created in the past to delimit the area close to the cross and also to

level the area due to the fact that the soil surrounding the cross is very wet and muddy.

The test pits done in 2007 next to Features 12 and 615 confirm that the natural soil in

Area Q is wet and muddy even after many sunny days. So, the platform created by

EfAx-11, Area Q

Profile of the North Side of Unit E8S2

E8S1

Event 621
Event 620
Event 622
Event 624
Event 625
Event 623

E9S2

E ➡
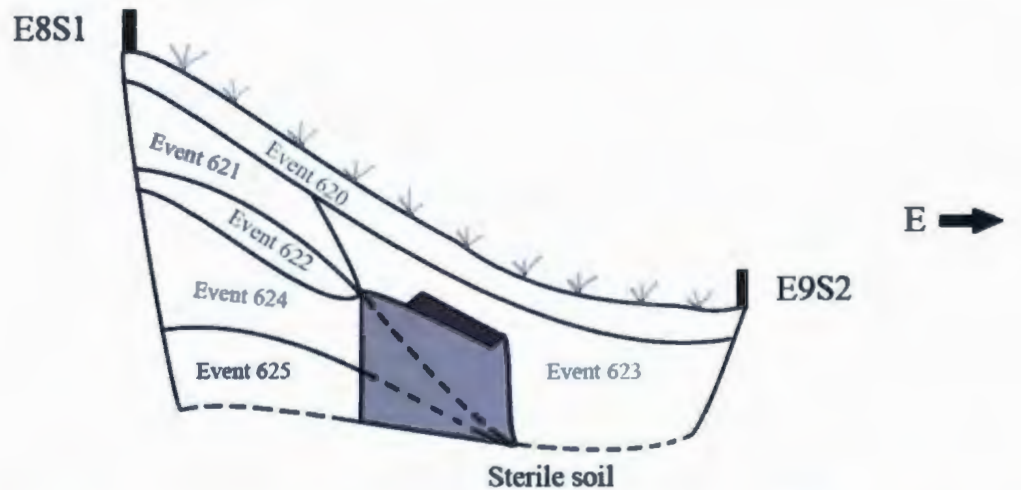
Sterile soil

Description:

Event 620: **Black organic soil with roots**
Event 621: **Very black muddy oraginc soil**
with a lot of pebbles
Event 622: **Dark brown soil with a lot of pebbles**
some small angular stones
Event 623 = Sterile soil: **Black muddy organic soil**
with a lot of pebbles
Event 624: **Brown soil with a lot of pebbles**
Event 625 = Sterile soil: **Brown soil with a lot of fine**
and medium pebbles

Keys:

▬▬▬ : Feature 615
▬▬▬ : Baulk
⇟ ⇟ : Present surface

Scale 1:10

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18 July, 2007

Figure 6.6 EfAx-11, Area Q, profile of the north side of unit E8S2.

Source: Mélissa Burns and Rébecca Janson for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

levelling the soil in front of the cross would allow people to stay dry when they visited the cross. Archaeological excavations did not provide evidence of an older cross. Due to the limited time only two 1x1m units were dug in 2007 – so the possibility of finding a diagnostic artifact was reduced. [8] On our first day at Northeast Crouse in 2007 we met Gilbert Chaytor, who was born and raised at Northeast Crouse, before moving to Conche due to the resettlement program of the 1970s. Now living in St John's, Newfoundland, where he is a crab fisherman, he comes back every summer to Conche to visit family and friends and to work at Northeast Crouse on his parents' house. Gilbert helped us by carrying our survey and camping equipment over to the Area Q Feature 12 cross, on his four-wheel ATV and also showed us significant features in different areas of the site. He had also some information about Features 12 and 615 in Area Q. As mentioned previously, Feature 615 seemed to have been disturbed over time (Figure 6.5). When the oak cross was recorded by Pope in 2004 and revisited in 2006 by the crew of our *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord* project, we wondered about disturbances to Feature 615, which appeared to be roughly round test pits. We asked Gilbert if he had heard of archaeologists working in the Petit Nord area years ago, but he had no idea. However, to our great surprise Gilbert mentioned to us that he knew who made those holes. He told us that as a little boy, he and some friends had dug this area looking for treasure such as gold or money, left there in the past by the French, until they were caught and chastised by their parents. In his MA thesis on the folklore of the area, George J. Casey notes that in 1968 stories of buried treasure were still a matter of serious interest and involvement in

[8] The excavation of 14m² of the Feature 1131 plinth of cross at Dos de Cheval (EfAx-09) did not provide diagnostic artifact either, to document similar features.

the past. Several older residents of Conche expressed an open belief in the buried treasure

stories which they had heard from their parents (Casey 1971:251). Casey also notes from

that buried treasure in the Conche legends took usually the forms of "money", "bars" and

"gold" (Casey 1971:253). Such stories help to explain the dreams of Gilbert and his

friends of finding a treasure left by the French, especially since the Feature 12

monumental wooden cross was the only standing architecture left by the French in the

landscape of Northeast Crouse. All informants interviewed over the summer reported that

everyone in Conche considered the three crosses in Crouse harbour as a symbol of the

French fishermen who occupied the Petit Nord area a long time ago. A few informants

told me that even though the majority of the population in Conche and Crouse are Roman

Catholic, the crosses built by the French were not considered to be part of the local

culture. Residents of Crouse and Conche associated those crosses with another culture,

even another world. Over almost a century, the residents of Conche and Crouse have

never integrated or reused these monuments in their own cultural system. They were, at

best, a nice place for a picnic.

6.3 Area H –Feature 614, Tabular Rocks on a Natural Promontory

Feature 614 is located on a natural promontory above the first main beach terrace

of Area H, at the lower edge of the second terrace, with an excellent view of Area H and

J (Figure 6.7). Those two archaeological areas, defined by Pope in 2004, are major parts

of the French fishing room known in the past as *Les Goguelins*, which is shown on

Figure 6.7 EfAx-11, Natural promontory above the first main beach terrace of Area H, at the lower edge of the second terrace, with an excellent view of Area H and J.

Photo: Mélissa Burns for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

Figure 6.8 Cape Rouge harbour, 1765 showing the French fishing room *Les Goguelins*.

Source: Anon. Baie de Carouge (1765), France, Archives des Colonies, Paris, C12, V.1 (1765), in Memorial University, CNS.

Figure 6.9 G. Cloué, Northeast Crouse, 1858 showing *Les Goguelins*.

Source: France, Dépôt des cartes et plans de la marine, Paris, 1864, in Memorial University, CNS micro fiche 193.

French maps from the late mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries and reported in French surveys from 1680 (Figures 6.8 and 6.9). The spot where Feature 614 is located is reminiscent of the Feature 1131 rock plinth at our datum in EfAx-09. It is on a promontory, yet it is actually close to the main galet area of the old French fishing room, at the intersection of paths. The ground juniper vegetation on the present surface is even similar. Even if there was no evidence clearly indicating the existence of a cross here, I decided to open two units to determine if what appear as tabular rocks on the present surface could be identified as an older plinth of cross like Feature 1131 found at our key site Dos de Cheval (EfAx-09). Excavation of this promising area at EfAx-11 told another story. The events uncovered during the excavation of E15S75 and E16S75, as well as pipe stems, pipe bowls, wooden knots and rough broken iron nails recovered do not suggest that Feature 614 is the rock plinth of a cross. However, the tabular stones exposed do seem to be part of a feature. An intersection of two ramps could well explain the soil, stones and the artifacts found in E15S75 and E16S75.

6.4 Area R –Feature 503, Crosses as Grave Markers

During the 2004 survey along the Petit Nord coast to identify archaeological sites associated with French fishermen, people from Conche told Peter Pope of several smaller wooden crosses at Northeast Crouse. The local oral history suggests that those grave markers were erected in memory of nine fishermen who died in a failed fishing expedition. Informants from Conche and Crouse mentioned to Pope that those crosses were located somewhere between the two monumental crosses (Features 9 and 12) at

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the boundary of the open high terrace and the forest. It was not until 2006 that Pope and

his crew found Feature 503, nine wooden cross grave markers (Figure 6.10). We revisited

Area F Feature 503 during our few days digging at Northeast Crouse. Feature 503 grave

markers are similar enough to the calvary and the two monumental crosses still standing

in Crouse harbour (Feature 991 at EfAx-09 and Features 9 and 12 at EfAx-11) as well as

the grave marker close to Feature 9 in Area O at Northeast Crouse to conclude that those

grave markers were built or rebuilt in 1930s by the French Navy (Figure 6.11). The

similarity of the cement in the ground used to solidify Feature 503 reinforces the idea that

Feature 503, as well as Features 9 and 12, at Northeast Crouse and Feature 991 at Dos de

Cheval all date from the 1930s. It was not easy to determine the orientation of the grave

markers; most of the crosses have fallen or been removed and the cement put in the

ground to solidify them has been damaged over time. However, it seems that the crosses

of Feature 503 were originally facing east, which reinforces the interpretation of them as

a French Roman Catholic memorial burial. No archaeological excavation was done to

document Feature 503, and the local oral history is unclear about those crosses. Therefore,

it is impossible to state if Feature 503 was simply built in the 1930s as a commemorative

place, or if there really are bodies buried there.

6.5 Northeast Crouse, Summary

The multi-components site EfAx-11 is more complex than the unique fishing

room Dos-de-Cheval. Surveys and archaeological excavation at Northeast Crouse

allowed me to document Features 9, 12 and 503. As at EfAx-09, the survival of

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cemeteries at EfAx-11 was recorded. The four features built by the French Navy at Northeast Crouse in the 1930s follow also the same patterns in the landscape of the fishing rooms that Feature 991 at Dos-de-Cheval: those distinctive features are located far from the present beach, looking down on the work area below, near a crevasse and hardly visible from the sea. Future research would be needed to access the possibility of older crosses or calvaries at EfAx-11.

Figure 6.10 EfAx-11, Area R, Feature 503 grave markers, oak with bronze screws.

Photo: Peter Pope for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord.*
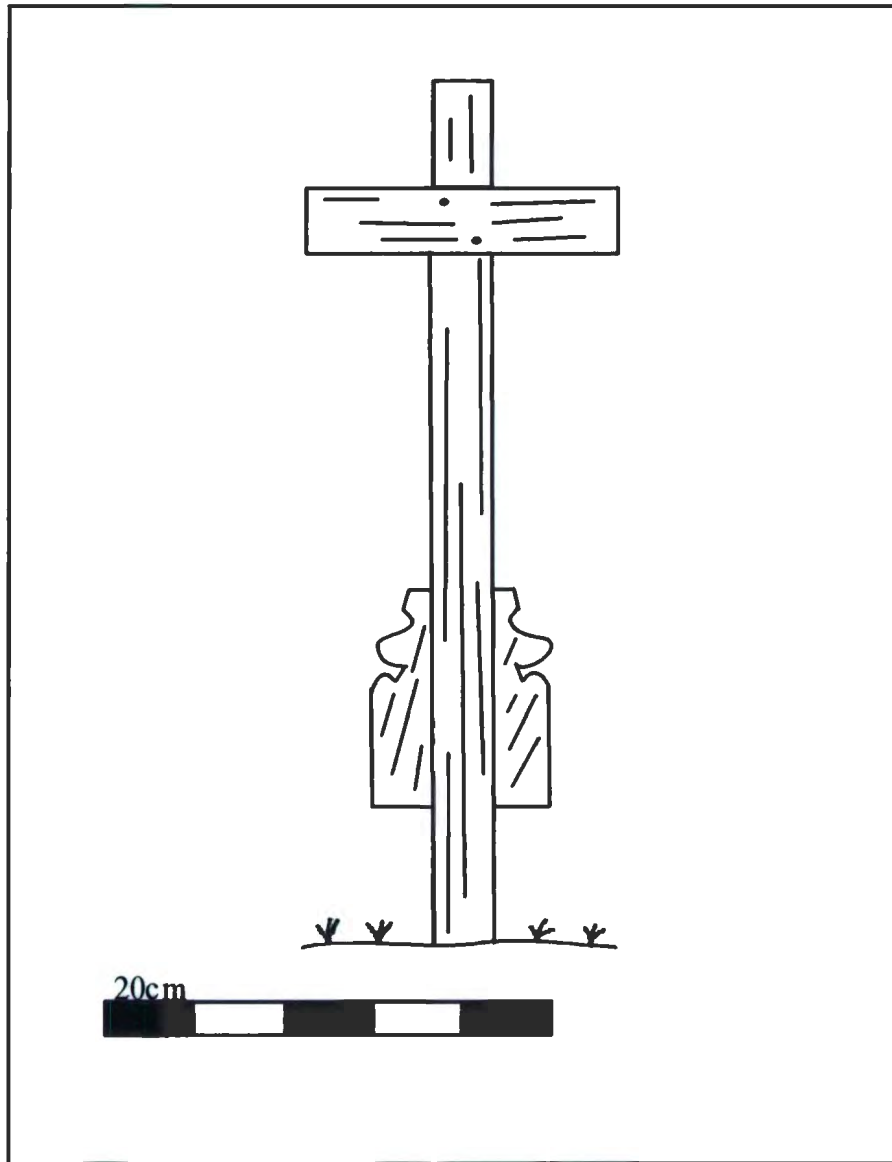
Figure 6.11 Feature 503 a grave marker.

Source: Jennifer Jones for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

Chapter 7: Surveys in the Petit Nord Region:

Other Crosses and Calvaries Visited

7.1 Croque Waterfront – Cemetery

Over the summer of 2007, project director Peter Pope and I revisited Croque

Waterfront (EgAw-04), which has a fenced cemetery with both French and English

burials and a recent monumental wooden cross (Figures 7.1 and 7.2). Unlike the two

impressive crosses and the calvary in Crouse harbour, which are all made of oak, a

valuable hardwood not native to Newfoundland, the cemetery cross at Croque Waterfront

is made of construction grade softwood, probably from Newfoundland (Pope 2007:

personal comm.). Local oral history states that this cross was rebuilt in the 1970s by a

resident of Croque. The monumental wooden cross in the Croque cemetery is 4m high by

1.60 m wide, which is much smaller than the three monuments rebuilt by the French

Navy in Crouse harbour in the 1930s. Three commemorative inscriptions from the mid-

twentieth century as well as the mid-nineteenth century have been transcribed on new

metal plates and added to the monumental cross. One plate is inscribed: "Sacred place to

the memory of young English boys", another one reads: "Souvenir Français -1957 aux

marins de la division navale de Terre-Neuve", and the third inscription half French half

English, reads: "Sacred to the memory of Mr Philip Brook Midshipman His Britannic

Majesty's Sloop ECHO 1792. Mr Walter Hughes Midshipman. Mr John Crallan

Midshipman. His Britannic Majesty's ship Narcissus 1811. Ici repose le lieutenant de

vaisseau De Villaret Joyeuse de la Marine Française 1854."

Figure 7.1 EgAw-04, Croque cemetery.

Photo: Mélissa Burns for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

Figure 7.2 EgAw-04, Monumental cross in Croque cemetery.

Photo: Mélissa Burns for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

In addition to the monumental cross, various grave markers are also present in the Croque cemetery. Twelve grave marker crosses, all made of cement and painted in white are standing; none have inscriptions. There is also a larger grave marker cross about 1.14 m tall by 1.02 m wide painted in white and made of oak which stands on a cement platform. The inscription on that grave marker reads: "Ici repose Edourad Villaret de Joyeuse -Officier de la marine française mort en mer à bord de l'Iphigenie 1854". Finally, there are two Celtic wooden crosses painted in white, both commemorating English mariners who died in 1792 and 1811 respectively. Those two crosses each stand on a cement base and have been recently rebuilt; the original Celtic crosses made of what seems to be oak are now conserved in the Croque Interpretation Centre.

The nineteenth century visitor Julien Thoulet mentions that there were no monuments marking the graves of women or children in the French cemeteries of the colony, only men, all aged between twenty and thirty years old (Rompkey 2004:202). In a *Voyage to Newfoundland*, Thoulet made some observations of the fishermen and their relationships to death, funerary and cemetery practices:

> Croque has its own cemetery with a large white cross at the entrance to Epine Cadoret in front of Pointe de l'Observatoire, where the officers customarily carry out their observation. Sailors belonging to the French station and to the English station who die in this area are buried here…Sailors and officers alike, French and English, Catholics and Protestants, a certain Villeret de Joyeuse between a French

quartermaster and an English novice, sleep side by side in absolue

equality. Why is death more terrifying in the city than in the country?

In this solitude, beneath these wild mountains where few fir trees grow,

it seems serious, melancholy, but devoid of horror (Thoulet 2005:83).

Mytum notes that through the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries in Europe there was no noteworthy difference between Roman Catholic and Protestant cemeteries (2004:17). In a similar way, Luria argues that Catholics and Protestants shared their daily interactions, which could on one hand provoke conflicts, but on the other hand create opportunities for cooperation (2005:103). "The form and nature of the burial ground, and its relationship to settlement, depended upon its date of establishment and the complex ecclesiastical as well as secular history of the area" (Mytum 2004:17).

Both the ethnographic observations made by Thoulet in 1886 and the historical and archaeological context evoked by Mytum and Luria about the organization of cemeteries help us to understand a mixed, French and English cemetery in Croque as a normal, if perhaps somewhat dated, phenomenon. Every period in history and every land mass on the globe provide evidence that cemeteries are collective representations of deeply shared attitudes and assumptions (Jackson and Vergara 1991). Despite the fact that the French were Roman Catholic and most English fishermen and naval personnel were Protestant, both denominations are rooted in the Christian world.

7.2 La Crémaillère

In the summer of 2007, I also spent a day on survey at La Crémaillère (EiAv-03) with Dr. Peter Pope, Memorial MA student Stéphane Noël, and Marc Moingeon, a well-informed amateur historian from France. La Crémaillère is a large bay, just south of St. Anthony (Figure 2.2). Historic documents and maps indicate that there were four to six fishing rooms there over the centuries (Anon 1680, 1832).

I had noted that the Breton survey of 1680 mentions calvaries at La Crémaillère: one of the fishing rooms was named "Le calvaire de dessus la pointe des ancres". Maps of 1765 and the 1850s give the location of the "Pointe des ancres" fishing room (Figures 7.3 and 7.4). Therefore, once I had identified the potential emplacement of this fishing room, Marc and I explored the second terrace above the associated Area A beach. We soon observed tabular rocks, still visible through the present vegetation. Pulling the ground juniper away, we exposed Feature 9 – a roughly square arrangement of tabular rocks (Figure 7.5). The feature is situated on the second beach terrace, close to a crevasse, in the midst of a green flat area looking down on what is likely the "Pointe des ancres" fishing room. This seems to be an isolated structure and a disturbed rough plinth for a cross is as good an explanation of this structure as any. The landscape of Feature 9 at La Crémaillère and the one of Feature 1131 at Dos-de-Cheval are quite
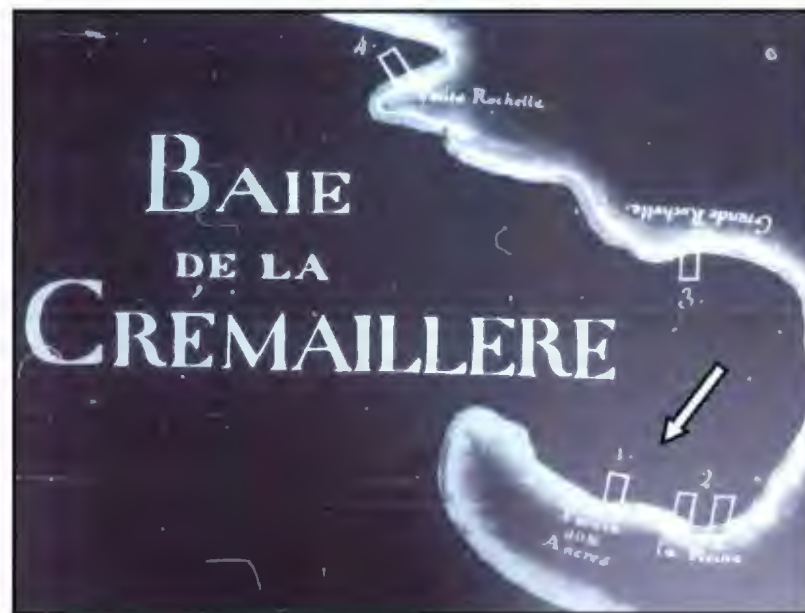
Figure 7.3 La Crémaillère, 1765 showing *La Pointe de Ancres*.

Source: Anon. Baie de la Crémaillère (1765), Archives des Colonies, Paris, C12,

V.1 (1765), in Memorial University, CNS.

Figure 7.4 G. Cloué, La Crémaillière, 1857 showing *La Pointe de Ancres*.

Source: France Dépôt des cartes et plans de la marine, Paris, 1860, in Memorial

University, CNS micro fiche 171.

Figure 7.5 EiAv-03, Area A, Feature 9 rough square arrangement.

Photos: Peter Pope for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

similar, which reinforces this explanation. It is on a promontory, yet it is actually close to the main work area of the old French fishing room, and juniper vegetation from the present surface is quite similar (Pope et al. unpublished field notes 2008:122-123).

7.3 Canaries Harbour

During the summer of 2008, Peter Pope, Janine Williams, Geneviève Duguay, Rita Barrett and myself visited Canada Harbour, known by the Breton as *Havre des Canaries*. This harbour was very promising for the search for a calvary. Richard's map from 1827 showed one on top of the hill located at the entrance of Canada Harbour (Figure 7.6). We then followed the trail shown on the historic map and got easily to the summit.

> We then recorded Feature 17 a deposit of large angular gravel, within a shallow dished area that has the feel of an open sanctuary. Feature 17 is located near the highest point on this hill (Figure 7.7). Mélissa and Peter explored one of the relatively larger spruce trees for signs of the plinth of a cross. Janine then trowelled the gravel area, because it is so unusual, in this rocky location and seemed to overlie a dark peatry soil. Mélissa joined her to expose several angular rocks about 20-30 cm diameter, surrounding a void roughly 20 cm square and, in turn, surrounded by the angular gravel (together these were Event 181). They thought the angular rocks might have surrounded the base of a

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Figure 7.6 Canada Harbour, known as *Havre des Canaries* by the Breton fishermen, showing a calvary on top of the hill.

Source: Plan du Havre et des établissements de pêche des Canaries, Terre-Neuve, drawn in 1827 by L. Richard, Toulon, January 1830. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cartes et Plans, S.H. (19ème): pf. 129, div. 6.

Figure 7.7 Emplacement of the calvary shown on Richard's map of 1827.

Photos: Peter Pope for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

Figure 7.8 Rosary found near the archaeological remain of a calvary in Canada Harbour.

Photos: Janine Williams for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

cross, the support reinforced by a cone of gravel heaped around.

While discussing this, Janine dug a little more and recovered a rosary,

with crude ground glass beads and an ornate medallion (Figure 7.8)

(Pope unpublished field notes 2008).

Like Feature 991 calvary and Features 9 and 12 monumental crosses located in Crouse Harbour and all dated from the early twentieth century, the Feature 17 calvary in Canada Harbour is located on a high point in the landscape of the harbour, away from the ocean, but still with a great view of the harbour, as well as the coast surrounding. From the sea it would have been just about impossible to miss. The rosary found near Feature 17 reinforces the idea of calvary being erected for religious purpose. Geneviève Duguay, a material culture specialist with Parks Canada Québec region, suggests that the rosary could date from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, which corresponds roughly to the period of Richard's map, which show the calvary right where we found Feature 17 (Duguay: 2008 pers. comm).

7.4 Fischot Island

During the summer of 2008, I also had the chance to survey Fischot Islands with Peter Pope, Janine Williams and Ryan Anderson. Again this site was very promising for finding a cross: Cloue's 1857 map of Fischot showed *le sommet de la croix* which is the highest summit of this little archipelago (Figure 7.9). Then we uncovered a circle of rocks which we interpreted as the remains of the oldest cross standing on top of *l'ile du Nord-Est*.
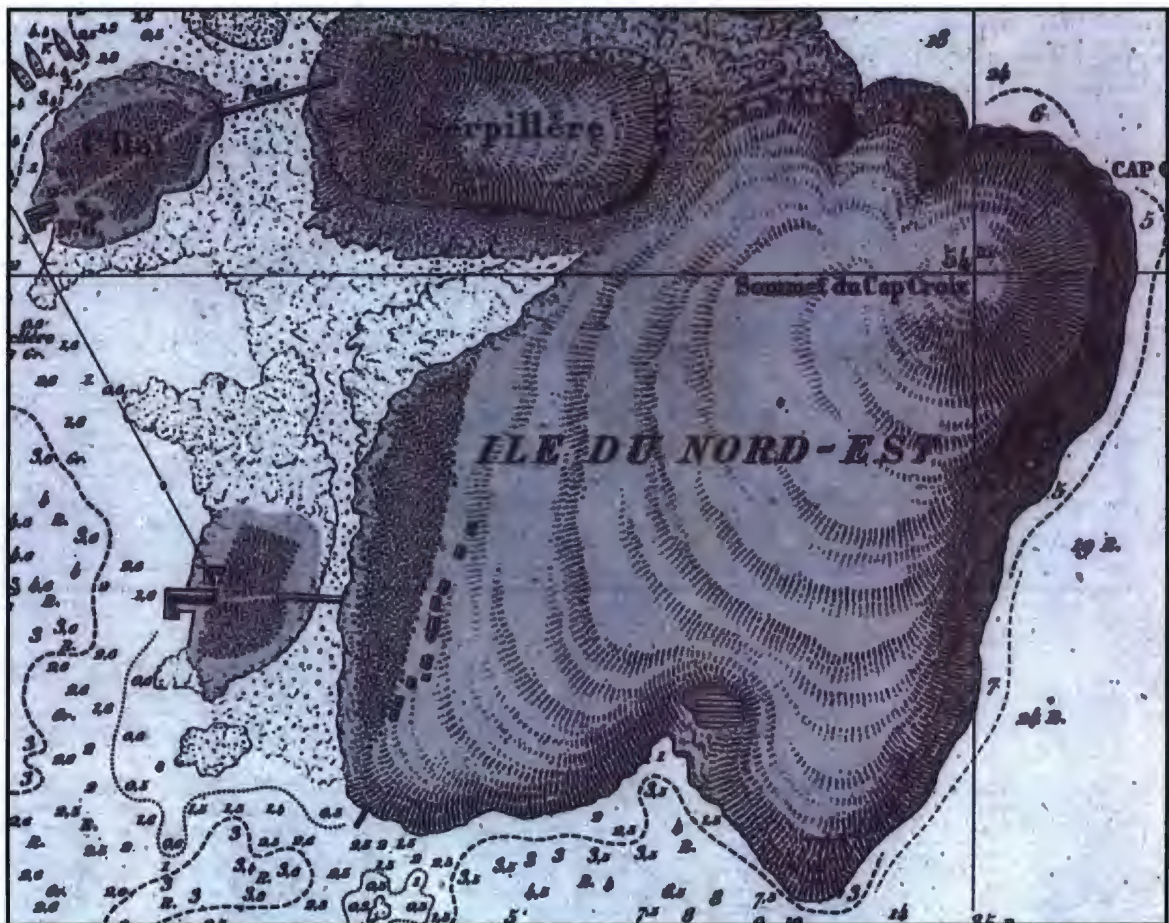
Figure 7.9 G. Cloué, Fischot Islands, 1857 showing the *Sommet du Cap Croix*.

Source: Dépôt des cartes et plans de la marine, Paris, 1857, in Memorial University, CNS

micro fiche 163.

We climbed *le Sommet de la Croix*, the prominent hill on Northwest
Island, to its summit at 54 m asl. Feature 21 was a ring of rocks about
20-30 cm maximum dimension. Since there were no such rocks
elsewhere at this elevation and since we are at the highest point of the
hill, we interpreted these as the remains of the plinth of a cross.
Mélissa did a little trowelling, revealing that in the centre of the
presumed plinth area the soil differed from the stoney soil around and
was reddish and organic, and resembling decomposed wood. She
uncovered a 1974 Canadian Bluenose silver dime. Since this was
about the time people were moved from Fischot, we interpreted this as
a memento left by one of the departing residents and left it where they
found it. The summit commands excellent views of the surrounding
seascape north to St Anthony, deep into Hare Bay and south to the
Conche Peninsula (Pope unpublished field notes 2008).

Again, Like Feature 991 calvary and Features 9 and 12 monumental crosses
located in Crouse Harbour and Feature 17 calvary in Canada Harbour, Feature 21 is
located on a high point in the landscape of the harbour, away from the ocean. Every cross
or calvary dating from the nineteenth century or later identified to date, seems to follow
those rules –Crouse Harbour, Canada Harbour, Fischot. On the other hand, all crosses or
calvaries dating from the late seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries seem to have
been located nearer the water and standing on a natural or anthropogenic promontory.

Chapter 8

8. Discussion

The aim of this thesis was to understand why Bretons built crosses and calvaries on the Petit Nord between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries. I wanted to clarify the cultural and religious beliefs of the Breton fishermen who established themselves seasonally along the Petit Nord coast to fish cod, and I wanted to document the kinds of crosses they erected. What were the origins of these crosses? What were the symbolic meanings surrounding these crosses? Were the crosses functional (landmark, milestones, scenes of cult, etc.) or symbolic (religion, identity, discovery, etc.)? Archaeological excavations during the summer of 2007 at two sites, Dos de Cheval (EfA-09) and Northeast Crouse (EfAx-11), as well as archaeological surveys done in 2007 and 2008, and research at the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland, and in several *Archives Départementales de Bretagne* have provided me enough data to document and interpret the Breton crosses and calvaries built over centuries in the landscape of the Petit Nord.

As mentioned in previous chapters, Breton fishermen participated in a seasonal onshore fishery along the coast of Petit Nord. At their fishing stations, some installations, such as fishing stages, were needed to process cod (Pope 2008). With the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, Breton fishermen were forbidden to stay during the winter or to build any kind of buildings, besides *chaufauds*, *galets*, flakes, cabins, cookrooms and bread ovens, which were necessary to process cod and live there (Hiller 1996:3). Among the various features that created the landscape that we can observe archaeologically in the

Petit Nord today, only one type is not associated with essential needs, to live and to dry cod: the monumental crosses and calvaries. Those monuments were present over several centuries in Newfoundland along the Petit Nord coast and were distinctive features of Breton fishing rooms; to date only few monumental crosses have been recorded elsewhere in this province (Figure 8.1).

Like every society, the Bretons interpreted their own world throughout social, economic and political aspects over time. The choices made by the Bretons to build crosses and calvaries in Brittany as well as into the lands they colonized overseas, were strong symbols of cultural identity. I have identified three specific motives that influenced the erection of crosses and calvaries in the Petit Nord by the Bretons: religion, cultural identity and commemoration. The late seventeenth century is associated with some recommendations made by clergy members who wanted to remind Bretons fishing in Newfoundland of their religious identity as Roman Catholics. In Europe, as well as in North America, the period from the early eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century, is strongly marked by wars between France and England. Breton fishermen might have built crosses and calvaries in the Petit Nord to mark their territory in Newfoundland –to mark the French Shore as French. Finally, the two monumental crosses and the calvary erected by the French Navy in 1930s to replace similar older features in Crouse Harbour are interpreted as a commemorative act in memory of the Breton fishermen who died at the Petit Nord, as well as to remind the present-day local population, as well as visitors, of four centuries of Breton presence on the Petit Nord.
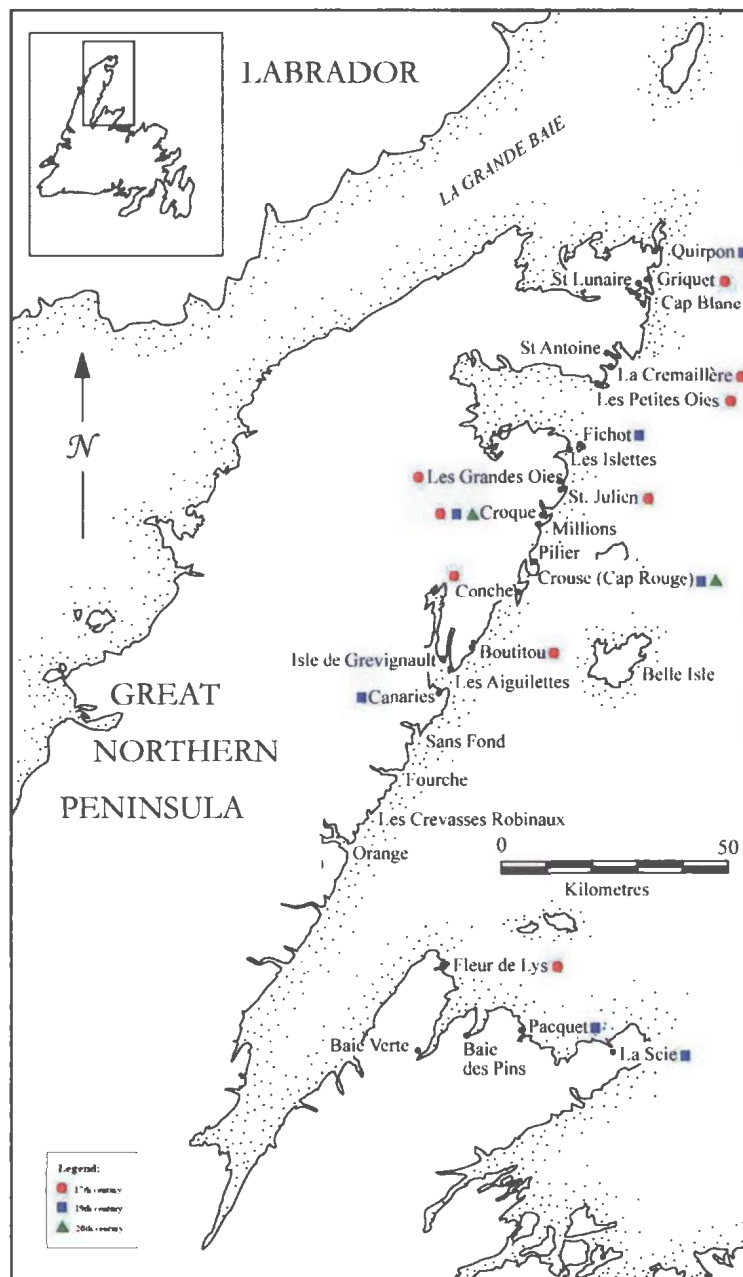
Fishing stations of the Petit Nord, c 1640-1832
Ed Eastaugh for Archaeology of the Petit Nord Modified by Melissa Burns, April 2008

Figure 8.1 Spatial distribution of crosses and calvaries along the Petit Nord

Source: Ed Eastaugh for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*, modified by Mélissa Burns.

8.1 Landmarks of Roman Catholic Faith

Crosses and calvaries appear in the Petit Nord landscape sometime before the end of the seventeenth century. Several calvaries are mentioned in the Breton fishing survey of 1680, which gave me the opportunity to recreate the spatial distribution of calvaries along the Petit Nord region for this specific year (Bernard 1680) (Figure 8.2). Even though calvaries were not present in each harbour of the Petit Nord in 1680, harbours that had no calvary were usually located close to another harbour where there was at least one calvary. A correlation between the number of men and the presence of at least one calvary in a specific harbour suggests that the larger harbours had at least one of these distinctive religious and cultural features (Table 8.1).

Several crosses and calvaries, symbols of the Breton religious faith, were erected from the late 1600s to the mid 1900s in the Petit Nord. As mentioned in my review of the literature in Chapter 4, even though a calvary has various functions and symbolic meanings, depending on the time period and the society associated with it, a calvary must be first interpreted as religious symbol. This is particularly true on the Petit Nord at the end of the seventeenth century. In 1681, an ordinance was pronounced in Paris to mandate the presence of a chaplain aboard ships participating in the onshore cod fishery in Newfoundland. However the Breton ships owners did not always respect that ordinance (Brière 1990:36; de la Morandière 1962:105; Taylor-Hood 1999:26-27). On 30 March 1688, M. de Pontchartrain wrote a letter to the Secretary of the French Navy to

Fishing stations of the Petit Nord, c 1640-1832

Ed Eastaugh for Archaeology of the Petit Nord Modified by Melissa Burns, April 2008

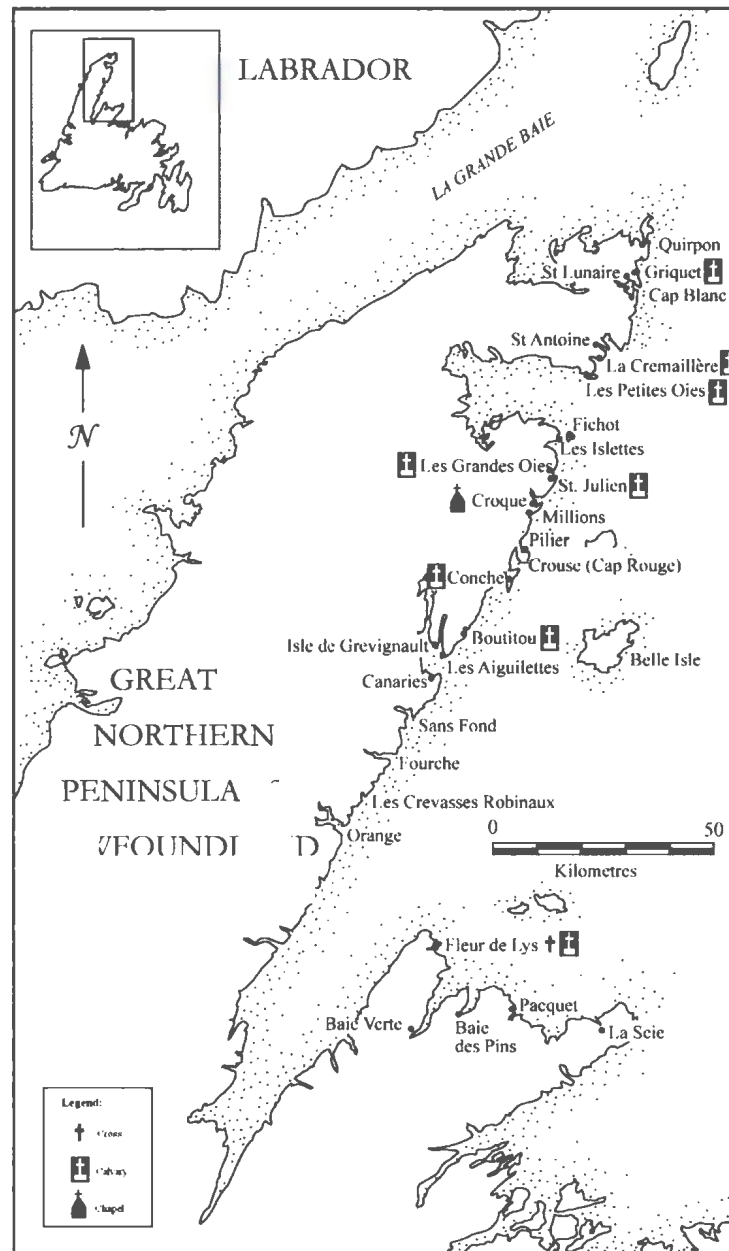**Figure 8.2** Spatial distribution of crosses and calvaries during the 17th century along the

Petit Nord

Source: Ed Eastaugh for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*, modified by Mélissa Burns.

Table 8.1 Comparison between the Number of Religious Features and the Number of Fishermen in Each Fishing Harbour in 1680

Harbours	Religious Features	Men
Quirpon	0	106
Griquet et le Cap Blanc	2	260
St-Lunaire	0	120
St-Antoine	0	80
La Crémaillère	3	208
Petites Oies	1	105
Fischot	0	445
Les Ilettes	0	290
Grandois	3	151
St-Julien	2	215
Croque	1	215
Millions	0	30
Pilier	0	40
Cap Rouge (Crouse Hr.)	0	262
Conche	2	347
Belle-Île	0	120
Boutitou	2	61
Les Aiguillettes	0	120
Île de Grevignault	0	353
Les Canaries	0	130

Sans Fond	0	60
Les Crevasses Robinaux	0	30
Orange	0	50
Fleur de Lys	2	130
Baie Verte	0	120
Baie des Pins	0	50
Baie des Grous	0	40
L' Île à Bois	0	30
Pacquet	0	160
Coup de Hache	0	45
La Scie	0	230

complain about the disrespect for this ordinance. A few years later, in 1694, a new

ordinance was pronounced saying that at least one chaplain should be onboard each ship

that had a crew of more than 25 (de la Morandière 1962:105). The ship owners of St.

Malo did not agree with that ordinance:

> Il est inutile, disaient-ils dans un mémoire en date du 7 avril 1700, de
>
> charger tous les navires qui vont à la pêche de la molue d'un aumônier.
>
> La pêche de la molue est une manne qu'il faut recueillir dans son
>
> temps, pour peu qu'on néglige de le faire cela cause la ruine totale
>
> d'un voyage. Pendant plus de trois mois quand on est à la côte, il faut
>
> de toute nécessité que les pêcheurs aillent à la pêche d'abord que le
>
> jour paroit et s'en reviennent que le soir à la nuit qui d'ordinaire n'est
>
> pas longue: 2 ou 3 heures de repos…Cela ne veut pas dire qu'on
>
> néglige le service car il y a toujours quatre à cinq aumôniers à la côte
>
> du Petit Nord qui passent sur les vaisseaux qui y vont et qui vont de
>
> havre en havre pour assister ceux qui peuvent être blessés et avoir
>
> besoin de leurs services. Les havres où il y a d'ordinaire quatre ou cinq
>
> navires ne manquent pas d'avoir la messe tous les dimanches et celui à
>
> bord de qui se trouve l'aumônier invite toujours ses voisins à venir
>
> l'entendre…(de la Morandière 1962:108).

Religious faith could explain the presence of crosses and calvaries on the Petit

Nord at the end of the seventeenth century, like Feature 9 found at La Crémaillère in

2007, but also in the following centuries. Feature 991 calvary at Dos-de-Cheval as well as the Feature 9 monumental cross at Northeast Crouse are both linked to human remains. They reminded the living of the religious affiliations of the Breton fishermen. Those two monuments, like the cross still standing in the Croque cemetery, acted as symbol of the Roman Catholic religion among the Breton fishermen alive or dead.

8.2 Landmarks of Breton Identity

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are synonymous with war between France and England, in Europe as well as in North America (Brière 1990; de la Morandière 1962; Hiller 1991; Turgeon 1985). The Napoleonic wars (1790-1814) changed for ever the landscape of the Petit Nord region. After their absence during that period, the Bretons came back to Newfoundland around 1820 to fish cod and found Newfoundlanders, English and Irish, who had settled along the Petit Nord. The area where the Bretons were fishing for hundreds of years had changed in a way that they would never have imagined (Hiller 1996:15-18; Matthews 1973:209-217). Political reasons could have therefore prompted the erection of crosses and calvaries in the Petit Nord by the Breton fishermen in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Crosses and calvaries are often associated with French presence in the New World. As noted in my review of the literature in chapter 4, Breton identity and religion are inseparable. Due to their position in the landscape, crosses and calvaries might have been used as navigation markers as well as symbol of the Breton identity. Along the Petit Nord no matter how old those monuments are, they are always located on top of a hill, or on a natural

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promontory, visible from the work area below, as well as from the ocean. Like Feature 9, the possible plinth of a calvary dated from 1680 found at La Crémaillère, and Feature 1131, the plinth of a cross uncovered in 2007 at Dos-de-Cheval, crosses and calvaries built by the Breton fishermen in the harbours of the Petit Nord region between the late seventeenth and mid-nineteenth centuries may have been used as a distinctive landmark of cultural identity to reaffirm their rights on the French Shore over the English, the Irish and later Newfoundlanders.

8.3 Commemoration of the past: Crosses and Calvary in Crouse Harbour

As mentioned in Chapter 5 on Dos-de-Cheval –EfAx-09, the two crosses and the calvary located in Crouse Harbour were rebuilt by the French Navy in the 1930s. Those three features are the only architectural remains, beside several *galets*, left by the French that are still well preserved and standing in the landscape of the harbour today. The local history, recorded in the 1960s by Georges Casey, suggested that those monuments were replaced to commemorate the Breton presence on the Petit Nord (Casey 1971). Those three features are associated with a burial ground. Burial grounds help to connect people and the location of their life and death. The connection between a burial ground and the historical period in which the buried lived can also help to explain why some cemeteries survive and others do not (Nielsen 1997:103). It is possible that those three monuments which have been rebuilt a few decades after the end of the French fishery in Newfoundland represent a commemoration of the Breton fishermen who spent part of their life in Newfoundland to fish and process cod. For many years, Crouse Harbour

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was the biggest fishing harbour (Anon. 1764, 1784, 1832; Bernard 1680). That could

explain why Crouse Harbour was picked among all the fishing harbours of the Petit Nord

for this kind of late commemoration. Commemorating Breton fishermen through

monumental architecture was common in the past in Brittany; several chapels, crosses

and calvaries have been built over the years along Brittany's coast. (Figures 8.3, 8.4, 8.5,

8.6)

8.4 Case Study: Dos-de-Cheval

Crosses and calvaries are shown on several maps of the Petit Nord region between

the mid-eighteenth century and the mid-nineteenth century. Some are associated with a

cemetery, while others stand on a natural promontory at the entrance of the harbour. The

archaeological excavations at Dos de Cheval during the summer of 2007 allowed me to

consider a nineteenth-century cross as well as a twentieth-century calvary as symbolic

landmarks, either religious, political/cultural or for navigation. The fishing room Dos de

Cheval (EfAx-09) is used here as a case study to interpret crosses and calvaries in the

Petit Nord landscape from the late seventeenth century to today.

Archaeological excavation of the Feature 991 cemetery calvary and the Feature

1131 plinth of a cross on top of a natural platform at Dos de Cheval raise two questions.

First was the Feature 1131 plinth of a cross in Area A replaced by the Feature 991

calvary on the Area D higher terrace, sometime in the 1930s? Or was there at some point

two crosses standing in the fishing room landscape of Dos-de-Cheval?

Either way, the identification of an earlier cross location (Feature 1131) much

Figure 8.3 *La Chapelle aux Vergers*, Cancale, Brittany. Chapel erected in memory of

fishermen who died fishing in Newfoundland. Photo: Mélissa Burns.

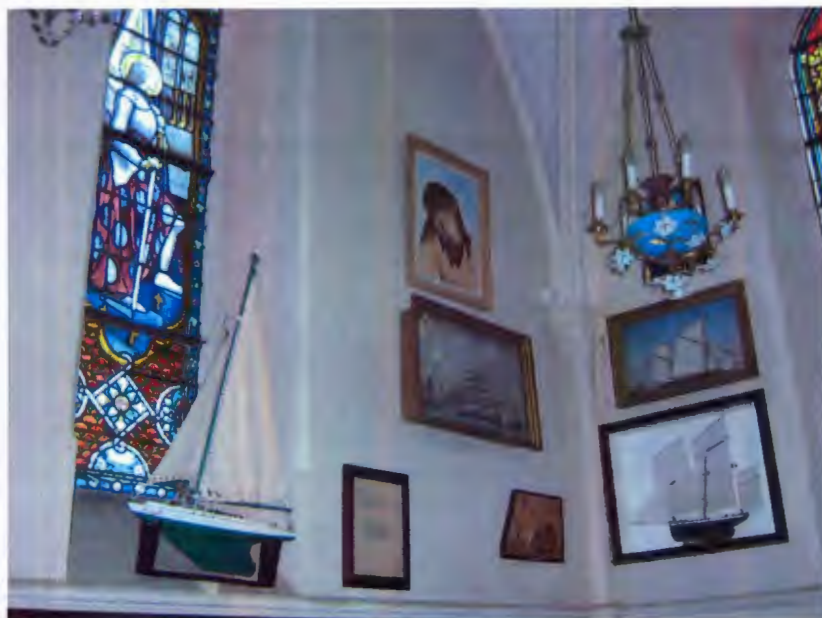

Figure 8.4 Ex-voto inside the chapel.

Photo: Mélissa Burns.

Figure 8.5 Chapel Sanson along the Finistère coast, Brittany.

Photo: Mélissa Burns.

Figure 8.6 *La croix des veuves*, Pays de Paimpol, Brittany.

Photo: Mélissa Burns.

nearer the water than the present one (Feature 991) raises interesting questions about the ceremonial landscape of the fishery, in earlier times, as well as functions and symbolic meanings of those two crosses over time, at Dos-de-Cheval.

The presence of Features 991 and 1131 at the Dos de Cheval site raises a problem of timing. I suggest some hypotheses to resolve this problematic. If Feature 1131 stood as single cross for years in the Dos-de-Cheval landscape, this allows for various hypotheses. Feature 1131 stands on a small platform, on top of a natural promontory, at the edge of the second beach terrace, and offers a commanding view over the whole fishing room. On a foggy day, the promontory on which Feature 1131 stands is the only land mark visible from the sea, as well as from the work areas below (Figures 8.7 and 8.8). Anson notes that it was common in the past in Brittany to use crosses and calvaries on the seaside, as a landmark to guide fishermen and mariners (1974:8-15). Feature 1131 could have been used, at least in part, as a navigation marker. Saunders suggests that crosses and calvaries in Brittany were an important symbol of the Roman Catholic tradition (2003:8-10). Due to its position, I would suggest that Feature 1131 could have been used as a sacred/ceremonial space in the past by Breton fishermen. Again, the emplacement has such a commanding view that the cross was certainly visible from every work area, as well as from the ocean. The Feature 1131 cross was located on a natural promontory between Area B, to the east, and Areas A and C, to the west, and is also at the crossroads of two important anthropogenic paths (Figure 5.2). Workers in the cod fishery worked seven days a week, from sunrise to sunset (de la Morandière 1962:108; 168-184). It is
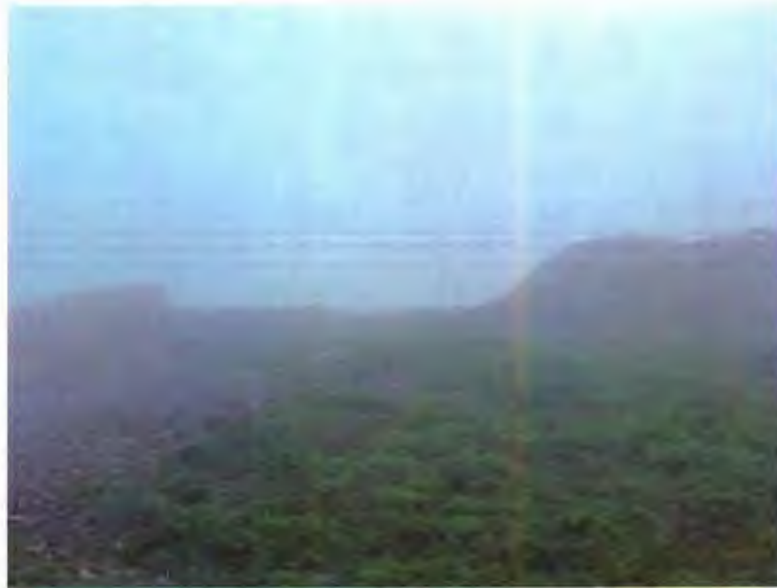
Figure 8.7 EfAx-09, Area A, Feature 1131 plinth of cross (at right) on a foggy day.

Photo: Mélissa Burns for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

Figure 8.8 EfAx-09, Area A, Feature 1131 plinth of cross (at right) on a sunny day.

Photo: Mélissa Burns for *An Archaeology of the Petit Nord*.

well documented that Breton fishermen were superstitious and had strong beliefs about the Catholic religion (see Chapter 4). Documents of the sixteenth to late nineteenth centuries mention a period of time reserved to pray or meditate. Brière (1990:36-38) and de la Morandière (1962:105-108) state that, even though the rules established by the king of France in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, which required a priest aboard the bigger ships who were fishing on the Petit Nord, were not well respected, there were always at least four or five priests every year along the Petit Nord coast to provide spiritual help and masses to the Breton fishermen. Located on a natural promontory visible from everywhere, fishermen and beach workers could look at the cross every time they needed, even when they were working hard. The location of Feature 1131 would also have been an excellent place to say the mass; the priest standing at the cross, and his flock at the feet of the promontory.

Dos-de-Cheval was one of the larger fishing rooms in the Petit Nord region for centuries (Anon. 1832; Bernard 1680). From the mid-eighteenth century to the end of the French fishery in 1904, all over the Petit Nord region, Breton fishermen had to deal with English fishermen; many conflicts have been recorded over time (Anon 1765a, 1784; Brière 1990; de la Morandière 1962; Hiller 1996). Cross and calvary are strong symbols in France and Brittany, especially concerning cultural identity and religious beliefs, the functions and symbolism of those features over the centuries in Catholic territory are well documented (Anson 1974; Baud 1995; Brékilien 1966; Cabantous 1990; Le Scouëzec 1982; Royer 1991; Sébillot 1968; Simard 2004; Spence 1979; Schultz 1968; Vincent-

Pichancourt 2007). Therefore, it is possible that between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries Feature 1131 functioned as a landmark, for the Breton fishermen to define their territory. Feature 1131 would have acted, in part, as a cultural/national identity marker to reaffirm French rights on the Petit Nord over the English and later Newfoundlanders.

On the other hand, if a cross and a calvary were standing at Dos de Cheval at the same time, each probably had different functions and meanings. If we accept the explanations suggested previously for Feature 1131 in Area A, what were the functions and symbolic meanings of Feature 991 calvary in Area D? As explained previously, no archaeological evidence of an earlier calvary was found in Area D in 2007. However, local oral history suggests that Feature 991 was a replacement by the French Navy in 1930s for a similar earlier feature. Local history also suggests that in 1936 the French Navy came to Crouse to commemorate the past presence of French fishermen in the Petit Nord region. All informants interviewed in the summer of 2007 reported that the area surrounding the Feature 991 calvary was used by Breton fishermen as a cemetery. The oral history also suggests that French Navy came every four years until the end of 1940s to paint and repair the area surrounding the cemetery (Casey 1971:37).

During the field season of 2006, a Christian burial was found on the beach of Area C (working area). The burial was a European male who was facing east, with his arms crossed on his pelvis. Diagnostic artifacts allowed dating the burial from the early 1700s (Pope 2008: pers. comm.). A human burial following the rules of the Christian religion, near the working area would suggest that there was no cemetery at Dos de

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Cheval in the early eighteenth century. Therefore, the cemetery function of Feature 991 calvary in Area D would be relatively late (later 1700s or early 1800s).

Cultural symbols of death are strong reminders of past presence and for millennia every culture has created its own system to remember its ancestors (Hallan and Hockey 2001; Pearson 2000). Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in western countries, Mytum argues that "communal burial was the normal practice during this period, with formal enclosed areas being set aside for this purpose" (2004:15). Following these statements, the meaning of Feature 991 is a much stronger symbol of Breton presence than those suggested for Feature 1131 a landmark. That would explain why the French Navy rebuilt, or at least repaired, the cemetery's calvary as well as grave markers to commemorate French fishermen established seasonally for about four hundred years in Crouse Harbour.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

As mentioned previously, crosses and calvaries are not unique to Newfoundland. Over time, several crosses and calvaries in New France (known today as Canada) were erected in different landscapes and for different reasons. These have been well documented, especially those from the Province of Québec, by folklorists and historians such as Jean Simard, John Porter and Léopold Désy; although in places like Brittany only a few archaeologists have documented them. In the last fifty years, historians and folklorists recorded thousands of road shrines in Québec, Nova Scotia, Acadia and Manitoba. However, only few have paid attention to the possible presence of such features in Newfoundland. All over New France those features were built in similar landscapes that those documented in this thesis: cemeteries, along the roadside, at a crossroad, in forests or on the seaside and on farmland, and they all had similar functions such as marking a boundary, landmarks, or ceremonial and sacred places (Porter 1984). Numerous examples of devotion to the calvary were recorded in New France in the mid-eighteenth century (Porter 1984; Simard 1989). In 1749, a Swedish voyager Pehr Kalm traveling along the St. Lawrence valley notes:

> There are several crosses put up by the roadside, which is parallel to
> the shores of the river. These crosses are very common in Canada, and
> are put up to excite devotion in the travelers. They are made of wood,
> five to six yards high, and proportionally broad. In that side which
> faces the road is a square hole, in which they place an image of our Savior,

the Cross, or of the Holy Virgin with the Child in her arms, and before

that they put a piece of glass, to prevent its being spoiled by the

weather. Everyone who passes by crosses himself, raises his hat or

does some other bit of reverence (Kalm 1967:416).

However, if the forms and functions of crosses and calvaries are well known in

Canada and in Brittany, the cognitive process, inseparable from the socio-political

historical contexts which justify the erection of such monument, is not documented at all

for those regions. My aim with this thesis was to understand the cognitive processes and

the historical context which lead the Breton fishermen to build such features in Northern

Newfoundland. Archaeological excavations and surveys on the Petit Nord allowed me to

provide a better knowledge and understanding of crosses and calvaries as symbolic

architecture in which a nation identifies and promotes its unique cultural identity in a

specific region, often consciously to another group of people.

Both archaeological surveys and excavations conducted during the summer of

2007 and 2008 along the east coast of the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland

have contributed to our knowledge of the forms and functions, associated practices and

symbolic meaning of crosses and calvaries in the Petit Nord region. My research has

shown that Breton fishermen were profoundly religious. Although on the Petit Nord for

only a few months every year, while busy fishing and processing cod, Breton fishermen

still took the time to build crosses and calvaries in the landscape of their own fishing

station or harbour. They even continued to build crosses and calvaries on the coast of the

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Petit Nord after the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht, which forbade the French to build permanent structures in Newfoundland. Crosses and calvaries are the only features identified, to date, from archaeological excavations in the Petit Nord that were not essential for habitation, fishing and processing cod. This reinforces the idea that crosses and calvaries in the Petit Nord, as in Brittany, were a strong symbolic marker of a Breton identity, inseparable from the Roman Catholic religion.

As suggested by Hodder and Hutson, the interpretation of meaning is constrained by the interpretation of context, which means that material culture and structure can be seen as the product of adaptation with the environment surrounding (2003:4-5). The wars between France and England between the late seventeenth and the early nineteenth century are an important factor that helped to justify the presence of crosses and calvaries in the Petit Nord. As discussed in Chapter 8, those features are a strong cultural marker, associated mainly with the French presence in a specific region (Simard 1995). The stressful context of this period for the Breton fishermen concerning their rights on the French Shore and the constant conflicts with the English may well have pushed them to erect features that would mark their territory.

Today, the two crosses standing at Northeast Crouse and the calvary standing at Dos-de-Cheval are still considered by the local communities of the region as strong symbolic markers of the long gone presence of Breton fishermen. Only few features from the days of the Breton fishery are still prominent in the maritime cultural landscape of the Petit Nord -the two monumental crosses and the calvary in Crouse harbour are the most

well known. The reconstruction of these three monuments in the 1930s has to be credited

to the French Navy; without them some of the architecture belonging to the Breton

fishermen would be now just underground remains. While doing my interviews in 2007,

the oldest residents of Crouse and Conche told me that the oral knowledge concerning the

Breton fishermen would be soon forgotten if nothing is done soon. *An Archaeology of the*

Petit Nord directed by Dr. Pope, contributes strongly to the recording, preserving and

diffusing of the knowledge concerning the Breton fishermen who once seasonally

occupied the landscape of the Petit Nord.

While this thesis provided several answers of a yet neglected aspect of the

material culture and linked practices and meanings; further researches on this topic would

be worthwhile in order to provide an even better understanding of crosses and calvaries

and their implications on the Petit Nord from a different perspective. By adopting a

contextual approach, this thesis provides a long-term history with a focal point on the

functions and meanings of these monuments at a macro-scale in Northern Newfoundland.

However, this thesis does not discuss the social relationships that arise as a result of the

exchanges between fishermen of different fishing stations and/or harbours with respect to

crosses and calvaries.

Dos-de-Cheval was used in this thesis as a case study to provide knowledge

concerning functions, meanings and practices associated with these monuments as well as

the relationships of crosses and calvaries to the *landscape* within a specific fishing room.

Even though several other examples of crosses and calvaries on the Petit Nord are

mentioned in this thesis, only little emphasis was made to provide a small-scale, as well as a large-scale understanding of local movements, social relationships between fishermen of different fishing stations, both in a same or different harbours, and the Breton's seasonality on the Petit Nord through time, in link with the spatial distribution of Breton crosses and calvaries in that region. Further researches might help archaeologists to answer these issues and created a behavioral cartography among the different fishing stations, as well as the different fishing harbours on the Petit Nord. Also, additional researches on the portable crucifix found at Dos-de-Cheval and the rosary beads found at Canaries Harbour may lead to a discussion concerning more detailed ritual practiced at those sacred/ceremonial places.

Still, this thesis –*Symbols of the French Presence in Newfoundland: Breton Crosses and Calvaries -1680 to Today*, contributes to the knowledge concerning the religious history of Newfoundland, as well as the French presence on the Petit Nord. The primary research in Brittany provides the background cultural and material evidence from which to interpret the data from the Petit Nord. This thesis makes an important contribution not only to archaeology but also to the cultural and religious history of Newfoundland. Finally, the attempt to situate my research within a contemporary theoretical framework reinforces the interpretations suggested in order to explain how people engaged with their world and created and sustained a sense of their social identity.

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