

**PORTUGUESE INTEREST IN SETTLEMENT  
IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY NORTHEASTERN NORTH AMERICA:  
A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REASSESSMENT**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Portuguese Interest in Settlement in Northeastern North America in the Sixteenth Century: A Historiographical Reassessment**

By Emily Burton

Portuguese interest in settlement in northeastern North America in the sixteenth century is examined in the context of the existing historiographical literature which deals with settlement primarily in the seventeenth century and which assumes that Europeans were not interested in settlement in the region in the sixteenth century because the seasonal nature of the migratory fishery did not require it. The thesis questions this historiography by focusing on three separate instances of Portuguese interest in settlement between approximately 1520 and 1570.

The Portuguese interest in permanent residency in northeastern North America emerged in part out of the pattern of settlement that had taken place in the Azores in the fifteenth century – an indication that Portuguese Atlantic activity was governed by different timelines and priorities from those of the French or English. The thesis concludes that the existing historiography is misleading with respect to the Portuguese, thus identifying a cloudy area in the historiography and pointing to the need for a re-examination of its explanatory power.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

It is uncertain when the first sailors ventured courageously (or were blown off course) through the Pillars of Hercules and thence across the sea to the west; thus the beginnings of ... [the] conquest of the Atlantic are as shadows lost in the darkness of the "Ocean Sea." Yet these shadows were not without substance, for they were cast on the European worldview.<sup>1</sup>

Medieval fears of a "sea of darkness" beyond the known waters of the Mediterranean were overcome by either religious conviction (the Iberian desire to continue the reconquest beyond the peninsula) or commercial opportunities (the gold of Prester John, the spices and silk of Asia, and later the sugar of the Atlantic Islands and Brazil). Further north, "horror stories of what would happen to unwary voyagers into the unknown" also went hand-in-hand with "tales of marvels to the west."<sup>2</sup> Increased confidence in seafaring vessels and the accumulating knowledge of what lay beyond the Pillars of Hercules or the western edge of Ireland – including knowledge of fertile lands, fishing banks, gold mines and other potential sources of wealth – eventually brought people "away from the shores of Europe into the oceans."<sup>3</sup> Europeans did not refrain, however, from imagining. Be it islands, mainlands, or strange creatures, the westward European expansion of the late medieval and early modern period was characterized by a combination of fact and fancy.

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<sup>1</sup> John L. Allen, "The Indrawing Sea: Imagination and Experience in the Search for the Northwest Passage, 1497-1632," in Edwin A. Churchill, et. al., eds. *American Beginnings: Exploration, Culture, and Cartography in the Land of Norumbega* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> David Beers Quinn, *England and the Discovery of America, 1481-1620* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Quinn, *England and the Discovery*, p. 24.

Medieval literature, for instance, evoked an image of islands in the North that were separated by “indrawing seas” or channels that drained into the polar ocean.<sup>4</sup> In early modern maps, islands – such as the Isle of Brazil, the Antilian islands of the Seven Cities or Archipelagos of the Eleven Thousand Virgins – represented both real and imagined places. Islands could also be depicted according to their overall importance rather than their actual geographies. In the expansion across the Atlantic that began in the fifteenth century – prior to transatlantic radio communication and “mechanically propelled vessels” – islands were “essential partners in the whole business of long-distance navigation and seaborne commerce” and as such were sometimes portrayed as being significantly larger than they actually were.<sup>5</sup>

Among the islands that played a pivotal role in early modern Atlantic expansion are those that were charted and settled by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century, including the Azores archipelago, Madeira, the Cape Verdes and Saint Thomas. These islands maintained ties to Iberian Portugal while establishing connections to Asia, West Africa and South America through the Asian trade, the cultivation of sugar, and both coerced and voluntary migration. The mid-Atlantic Azores islands also established links with the North Atlantic at the beginning of the sixteenth century, if not before, through voyages of exploration supported by the Portuguese crown and through an interest in settlement in the region. Ports in northern Portugal also established connections to the region through both participation in the seasonal fishery in the coastal waters of northeastern North America and an interest in settlement.

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<sup>4</sup> Allen, “The Indrawing Sea,” p. 13.

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The present thesis examines the Portuguese interest in northeastern North America, and in particular the interest in the establishment of permanent settlements in the region in the sixteenth century. In 1521, for instance, King Manuel I of Portugal granted João Alvares Fagundes, from northern Portugal, rights to establish a settlement in northeastern North America. A 1570 Madeiran document notes that both people from Viana and married couples from the Azores set sail to settle in the New Found Land of Codfish, in lands they found to be fertile and whose inhabitants they found hospitable.

In the first few years of the sixteenth century, Gaspar and Miguel Corte Real – two Azorean brothers – perished in voyages of exploration to the northwestern Atlantic. The nephew of Gaspar and Miguel, Manuel Corte Real, received permission from the King of Portugal in 1567 to appoint a governor to a settlement in North America, where Manuel was already sending ships with people and provisions. The following year, another Azorean family also expressed interest in establishing a settlement in North America. In a 1568 petition by Manuel de Barcelos Machado against an embargo on his ship by Portuguese authorities in the Azores, Manuel stated that he had purchased a ship for the sole purpose of colonizing an island – Barcellona de Sam Bardão – where he had already been raising livestock.

Research into the topic does not attempt to prove conclusively the location or fate of Portuguese settlements in northeastern North America during the sixteenth century, although the question of the historical significance of the existence of at least one

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<sup>5</sup> T. Bentley Duncan, *Atlantic Islands: Madeira, the Azores and the Cape Verdes in the Seventeenth-Century Commerce and Navigation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 2.

Portuguese settlement in the region will be addressed. The focus, rather, is to examine the significance of the desire on the part of the Portuguese (the Corte Real, the Barcelos, Fagundes and others), and indeed the Portuguese crown, to establish settlements. This, in turn, will be examined within the context of the existing historiographical pattern of analysis with respect to the timing and nature of settlement in northeastern North America during the early modern period.

The thesis adopts an Atlantic perspective in the exploration of the connection between Portuguese activity elsewhere in the Atlantic and their interest in northeastern North America (the Northwest Atlantic). Atlantic history is an “emerging formulation which reveals more clearly than we have seen before a transnational, multicultural reality that came into existence over a certain passage of years and has persisted.”<sup>6</sup> The field of Atlantic history is one that is “fluid, in motion, and potentially boundless,” thus making it difficult to determine its genesis or precisely define it as a subfield of historical inquiry.<sup>7</sup> Strains of inquiry in the spirit, if not the nomenclature, of Atlantic history began to emerge in the twentieth century, as scholars moved beyond imperial and colonial frameworks of analysis. Historians of the “black Atlantic” such as Eric Williams and C.L.R. James, for instance, “had been pursuing subjects that were obviously and consciously Atlantic in scope” – such as the relationship between slavery, sugar and industrialization or the Haitian Revolution – long before the field of Atlantic history came into being.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Bernard Bailyn, “Preface,” in *The British Atlantic World 1500-1800*, eds. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), p. xix.

<sup>7</sup> David Armitage, “Three Concepts of Atlantic History,” in *The British Atlantic World 1500-1800*, eds. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Armitage, “Three Concepts,” p. 14. Eric Williams, for instance, in the preface to *Capitalism and Slavery*, a book written in 1943, states that the “world-wide and interrelated nature of the commerce” in the period prior to the Industrial Revolution, as well as the “direct effect” of this commerce on the Industrial

Atlantic history has also been associated with “anti-isolationist” post-World War Two journalists from the United States who drew links between North American and European societies in terms of the roots of “pluralist, democratic, liberal values.”<sup>9</sup> This incarnation, with its focus on the North Atlantic, did not make links with intellectual traditions further south. More recently, the field has been influenced by an “extraordinary growth in scholarship on Africa, the Caribbean, Brazil, and Spanish America” which has made possible an Atlantic perspective which encompasses “all four of its corners” – Europe, Africa and the two Americas.<sup>10</sup>

Although Atlantic history has been associated with the early modern period, scholarship in this area has also moved beyond the chronological limits of this period.<sup>11</sup> The field is defined geographically, as one would expect, by the Atlantic Ocean. David Armitage has developed a “threefold typology of Atlantic history” aimed at encompassing “all conceivable forms of Atlantic history,” without precluding their combination.<sup>12</sup> *Circum-Atlantic* history examines the movement of people, plants, animals and ideas across the Atlantic. It is “mobile and connective,” tracing “circulations about the Atlantic world.”<sup>13</sup> *Trans-Atlantic* History examines this movement in comparative perspective, for instance through an examination of the British and Spanish empires in the Americas. It is thus international (rather than transnational) in scope.

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revolution and the heritage this has left “even upon the civilization of today” had not been “placed in compact yet comprehensive perspective” – the latter being the aim of his text. Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1983), p. v.

<sup>9</sup> Armitage, “Three Concepts,” p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Jiménez and Marcus Rediker, “What is Atlantic History?” Online. CPAS Newsletter: The University of Tokyo Centre for Pacific and Asian Studies. October 2001. Available: [www.marcusrediker.com/Articles/what\\_is\\_atlantic\\_history.htm](http://www.marcusrediker.com/Articles/what_is_atlantic_history.htm), 30 August 2005. A “voluntary academic migration” – from Europe to North America and also from south to north – in recent decades has contributed to this growth in scholarship through a “mingling of scholars and themes from Europe and the Americas” on a scale that had not previously occurred. Bailyn, “Preface,” p. xix.

<sup>11</sup> Jiménez and Rediker, “What is,” n.p.

<sup>12</sup> Armitage, “Three Concepts,” p. 15.

Trans-Atlantic history focuses on the shores of the Atlantic, and assumes the existence of “nations and states, as well as societies and economic formations (like plantations or cities) around the Atlantic rim.”<sup>14</sup>

The final form of Atlantic history, defined by Armitage as *cis*-Atlantic history, “studies particular places as unique locations within an Atlantic world and seeks to define that uniqueness as the result of the interaction between a local particularity and a wider web of connections (and comparisons).”<sup>15</sup> The present study, while drawing upon all aspects of Atlantic history, fits most closely within the *cis*-Atlantic perspective in that it aims to examine the Portuguese experience not just with reference to their activities elsewhere in the Atlantic (Europe, Africa, Atlantic Islands, Brazil) but also within the context of northeastern North America as a “unique location” in which regional dynamics – from the impact of geography, climate and natural resources to the presence of aboriginal people – are key to an understanding of European activity in the region.

With respect to the resource base of the region – a topic in turn related to geography and climate – historians have argued that Europeans were not generally interested in permanent settlement or colonization in northeastern North America until the seventeenth century because the fishery did not require permanent occupation. Largely a seasonal offshoot of a well-established European industry, it required at most temporary stations for the drying of cod or processing of whale oil and other products. The same could be said for the early stages of the fur trade, in which most of the labour associated with the trade was carried out by aboriginal people. The Portuguese, however, do not appear to have followed the pattern of other Europeans in terms of their interest in

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<sup>13</sup> Armitage, “Three Concepts,” p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> Armitage, “Three Concepts,” pp. 18-9.

settlement in the region prior to the seventeenth century – generally regarded as the “Age of Settlement.” The thesis, thus, examines the extent to which this historiography is applicable in the case of the Portuguese.

The thesis also intersects with regional historiography in the relatively recent area of Aboriginal history in an attempt to place European activity within the overall context of the aboriginal presence in the region.<sup>16</sup> The delineation of northeastern North America as the area of study, for instance, is in part due to the possible location of Portuguese settlements in the area from Maine to Newfoundland, but also in part from an acknowledgement of existing aboriginal realities. Aboriginal history provides three inter-related insights that pertain to the present inquiry regarding the Portuguese interest in settlement. The first is that the regions to which the Portuguese and other Europeans traveled had already been inhabited by people – Beothuk, Mi’kmaq, Maliseet, Abenaki, Innu and Inuit – for some time and these societies were not static but were embedded in their own dynamic processes of interaction. In the Northeast for instance, people “maintained and extended their social, cultural, and spiritual horizons” through networks of exchange.<sup>17</sup> When Europeans began to arrive, the people they met might have been pre-disposed toward trading beaver furs for European goods because this exchange was “consistent with their own customs and beliefs.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Armitage, “Three Concepts,” p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> The field of Aboriginal history emerged in part from ethnohistorical research, with the 1937 publication of A.G. Bailey’s *The Conflict of European and Eastern Algonkian Cultures, 1504-1700* considered “the first major North American ethnohistorical study.” Bruce G. Trigger, “Ethnohistory: Problems and Prospects,” *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (1982), p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Neal Salisbury, “The Indians’ Old World: Native Americans and the Coming of Europeans,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, No. 53 (1996), p. 452.

<sup>18</sup> Salisbury notes, for instance, that special value may have been placed on “glass beads and other trinkets” because similar objects – obtained through long-distance exchanges in North America – were already regarded as “sources of physical and spiritual well-being.” Salisbury, “The Indians’ Old World,” pp. 452-3.

A second insight from Aboriginal history is that the existing inhabitants responded to the newcomers in various ways, with a strategic decision-making process underlying this diversity. “In varying circumstances,” notes John G. Reid, “aboriginal inhabitants might welcome colonial residents to the extent of seeking kinship ties with them, might withdraw as far as possible from any form of direct contact, or might simply decide unceremoniously to expel the intruders.”<sup>19</sup> A third point, which builds upon the first two, is that the European presence in the region should not be over-stated. During the sixteenth century, Europeans were primarily seasonal migrants to the region only, and a permanent European presence began to evolve only slowly. It was not until approximately 1720, for instance, that the non-aboriginal population surpassed the aboriginal one, and even then, “this was balanced by the broader territorial control and effective leadership structures of aboriginal nations.”<sup>20</sup> The sixteenth century in particular – the timeframe of the present study – should not be seen in terms of “colonial history” but rather as one primarily defined by the aboriginal presence in the region.

That having been said, the thesis takes into account imperial motivations in the region and their relationship to settlement through an interest in establishing territorial claims. Portugal was the pioneer nation of early modern European expansion, followed by Spain. Castile had claimed title to lands across the Atlantic following the first voyage of Columbus through a 1493 bull – *Inter caetera* – issued by Pope Alexander VI. Castile negotiated directly with Portugal, however, after the issuing of this (and previous) papal bulls because Portugal considered the decrees “too vague and too much of a threat to

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<sup>19</sup> John G. Reid, “Empires and Colonies in Early Modern Northeastern North America,” Paper Presented to the Annual Conference of the French Colonial Historical Society/Société d’histoire coloniale française, (Acadia University: 4 June 2005), p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> Reid, “Empires and Colonies,” p. 20.

Portuguese discoveries to be acceptable.”<sup>21</sup> The outcome of this negotiation was the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas, in which the Iberian rulers “agreed to set a line of demarcation 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands.”<sup>22</sup> All lands to the east of the line (encompassing a portion of present-day Brazil) were to be part of the Portuguese sphere.

From an aboriginal perspective, this division of territories among two powers with no history of habitation in the region would have been incomprehensible. Other European powers, more acutely aware of the European context within which the Iberian monarchs were operating, “disputed the right of the Pope to partition the world in this fashion.”<sup>23</sup> The French, for instance, claimed that permanent occupation of a region was required in order to exert sovereignty. In 1533, Francis I managed to persuade Pope Clement VII that the bull of Alexander VI “governed only the then known lands, not those subsequently discovered by the subjects of other crowns.”<sup>24</sup> Imperial concerns over territorial claims in the Americas were not resolved quickly, but were part of an ongoing process of conflict and negotiation and formed the backdrop – and sometimes the centre – of activity in the Americas. Imperial territorial claims must, therefore, be taken into account in a discussion of Portuguese settlement in the Americas.

Throughout the thesis, the term “settlement” rather than “colony” is used to describe the European interest in permanent residency in the sixteenth century. This is to emphasize the reality that early settlement was attempted within the context of an

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<sup>21</sup> Henry Kamen, *Empire: How Spain became a World Power 1492-1763* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), p. 42. Previously, Castile had contested Portuguese claims along the coast of West Africa. This dispute was resolved in the Treaty of Alcáçovas-Toledo (1479-1480), which acknowledged the Portuguese monopoly over “West African trade and expansion” granted to Prince Henry in 1443. Bailey W. Diffie, “Foreigners in Portugal and the ‘Policy of Silence,’” *Terrae Incognitae: The Annals of the Society for the History of Discoveries* (1969), pp., 30-1.

<sup>22</sup> Kamen, *Empire*, p. 42.

<sup>23</sup> W.J. Eccles, *France in America*, revised edition (Markham: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1990), p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Eccles, *France in America*, p. 3.

Aboriginal northeast rather than a well-established European colonial northeast.

Settlement refers to an overwintering presence rather than a seasonal one. It also assumes an intention – not necessarily in keeping with actual outcomes – to establish permanent residency. While this residency might be based on a staple commodity such fish or fur, this would not be the sole activity of a permanent settlement. Furthermore, both men and women were required for permanent residency, whereas the seasonal fishery involved men almost exclusively. Finally, permanent residency does not necessarily mean that all residents were themselves permanent. Early seventeenth-century settlements in Newfoundland, for instance, had transient populations.<sup>25</sup> Peter Pope notes that a “settlement is more than the sum of its parts and may be permanent even if few of its residents are...”<sup>26</sup>

Much of the historiography of early settlement focuses on the failure of early European colonial residency in comparison to later efforts. Pope challenges this assumption, noting the importance of focusing on the adaptation of “small-scale societies to their environment” rather than comparing these efforts to “economic or political milestones elsewhere.”<sup>27</sup> Early settlements in Newfoundland and Acadia for instance, have been seen as failures when contrasted with the New England “milestone,” but Pope argues that New England should be seen as the exception, not the rule.<sup>28</sup> Pope further

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<sup>25</sup> Peter Pope, *Fish into Wine: The Newfoundland Plantation in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), p. 225. Pope notes that some planters left Newfoundland, while their dependents might return to “the Old Country for a season or two” and servants often intended to overwinter for only a few years. He also notes that this pattern of mobility was not atypical, but “fell within the normal transatlantic range.” (p. 220).

<sup>26</sup> Pope, *Fish into Wine*, p. 207.

<sup>27</sup> Peter Pope, “Comparisons: Atlantic Canada,” in *A Companion to Colonial America*, ed., Daniel Vickers (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), p. 389.

<sup>28</sup> “The local administrative and economic customs which had evolved in Newfoundland over most of two centuries,” he notes, “constituted a cultural adaptation to a specific environment, economic and natural.” In other words, Newfoundland “was not simply a failed New England.” Pope, “Comparisons,” p. 499.

argues that the “failure” thesis has led some historians to ignore early modern settlement, seeing the “experiences of the earlier inhabitants of Newfoundland and Acadia” as “somehow irrelevant to later developments.”<sup>29</sup> The present research, building upon Pope’s insights, suggests that an examination of early Portuguese settlement – or interest in settlement – is a topic worthy of examination irrespective of later developments. Furthermore, an examination of early Portuguese settlement might, in turn, contribute to a re-evaluation of the significance of early settlement in the region.

Finally, the thesis also owes a debt to Discovery and Exploration historiography, despite its recent status as “unfashionable, if not altogether disreputable.”<sup>30</sup> While the Atlantic perspective is not considered to have emerged from this body of scholarship, it nonetheless rests upon its foundation – if nothing else in terms of the sheer volume of information that has accumulated as a result of the scholarship of people such as Charles Ralph Boxer, Edgar Prestage, Samuel Eliot Morison and David Quinn.<sup>31</sup> Whether or not one agrees with the interpretations put forth by these scholars, the documentation and descriptive writing they have collectively amassed helps facilitate the multiple interpretations of the Atlantic world currently emerging within Atlantic history.

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<sup>29</sup> “One must wonder,” he further observes, “how scholars could know this without analysis of the earlier period.” Pope, “Comparisons,” p. 503.

<sup>30</sup> Luca Codignola, “North American Discovery and Exploration Historiography, 1993-2001: From Old-Fashioned Anniversaries to the Tall Order of Global History?” *Acadiensis*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Spring 2002), p. 185.

<sup>31</sup> Bernard Bailyn, for instance, argues that Atlantic history does not emerge from “the generations of writings” on exploration and discovery. “They were detailing,” he notes, “how a world new to Europeans was gradually explored, not what the emerging world was like.” He further notes that, by World War II, the history of exploration and discovery – along with imperial history – “seemed to invite only incremental contributions to a well-sketches scene, not the exploration of a new kind of understanding.” Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concepts and Contours* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 5-6.

The thesis explores Portuguese settlement, or intended settlement, in the region by focusing on three inter-related questions: What was the Portuguese motivation for attempting to establish permanent settlements in northeastern North America in the sixteenth century? What is the historical significance of Portuguese settlement attempts – in particular the 1520s Fagundes settlement? Is the current historiography with respect to early European settlement in northeastern North America applicable or misleading with respect to the Portuguese?

Chapter 2 examines the relationship between early European settlement, resource exploitation and imperial concerns. Reasons put forth by historians regarding the general absence of settlement in the sixteenth century will be contrasted with early seventeenth-century settlement attempts – the French at Port Royal and the English at Cupids Cove. The chapter also examines the earlier Portuguese expansion into the Atlantic islands, as well as activities along the African and Brazilian coasts, and the extent to which these experiences might have provided models for Portuguese settlement in North America.

The following two chapters examine Portuguese activity in northeastern North America. Chapter 3 focuses on early voyages of exploration and Portuguese territorial claims in the region, as well as the Portuguese participation in the fishery. Royal patents and accounts from contemporary observers – Portuguese and other Europeans – are included in the analysis. Evidence regarding the Portuguese participation in the fishery is also reviewed, drawing upon, in particular, the research of Darlene Abreu-Ferreira on the topic. Chapter 4 focuses specifically on the three manifestations of interest in settlement outlined above, presenting the existing evidence of each interest in settlement – including

Governorships granted through royal letters, other official documents and contemporary references to settlement. The concluding chapter revisits the three main questions posed in the thesis in light of the descriptions, discussions and analysis presented in previous chapters.

## **Chapter 2: Settlement, Resource Exploitation and Empire: An Examination of Early European Settlement Activity with Respect to Existing Historiographical Patterns of Analysis**

*By the abundant treasure of that countrey ...  
The Spanish King vexeth all the Princes of Europe*  
Sir Walter Raleigh<sup>1</sup>

In the wake of John Cabot's 1497 voyage, English captains sailed across the Atlantic to fish for cod. French ports likewise embarked their own vessels to venture across the sea during the early modern period, and both French and Spanish Basque mariners bridged the ocean sea in the spring and winter to hunt whales and fish for cod. Finally, the Portuguese also participated in the *Terra Nova* fishery, although most likely not to the same degree as that of other European nations. Throughout the sixteenth century, the European presence in northeastern North America was mostly limited to this resource exploitation in coastal waters and – toward the end of the century – the beginnings of a fur trade with the aboriginal peoples of North America. A land presence was generally limited to temporary stations related to the inshore fishery or whaling activity.

In examining European activity in sixteenth century northeastern North America, historians have tended to conclude that Europeans were not initially interested in a more permanent land presence in the region because the seasonal nature of the fishery did not require it. Europeans – Jacques Cartier, Jean-François de Roberval, Sir Humphrey Gilbert and João Fagundes, among others – did nonetheless express interest in establishing a

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in K.G. Davies, *The North Atlantic World in the Seventeenth Century* (Minneapolis, 1974), p. 22

more permanent foothold in the region during the sixteenth century. Although none of these experiments was to result in permanent occupation, the motivation towards settlement as an exception – in terms of both historical experience and historical interpretation – is worth examining. The present study focuses on the Portuguese and examines the extent to which a resource-based historiography is applicable or misleading in the case of the Portuguese interest in settlement.

The first part of the chapter examines the reasons put forth by historians regarding the general lack of enthusiasm among Europeans for permanent and continuous habitation in the region. While the focus will be the sixteenth century, for analytical purposes the discussion will venture into the early part of the seventeenth century. The first French and English permanent settlements were established in Acadia and Newfoundland during this time period, and an examination of the motivations for establishing these settlements may shed light on the earlier absence of motivation. In addition, much of the historiography dealing with early settlement involves this era rather than the sixteenth century. The discussion will also draw upon examples from elsewhere in the Americas, although the primary focus is northeastern North America.

The second part of the chapter focuses specifically on the Portuguese. In examining Azorean and Peninsular Portuguese interest in settlement in northeastern North America in the sixteenth century, it will be necessary to again move beyond the geographical limits of the region and the temporal limits of the sixteenth century. Rather than venturing forward in time, the latter part of the chapter glances backwards, examining the Portuguese expansion westward and southward in the Atlantic that began in the fifteenth century. The patterns of development in the mid-Atlantic islands, in

particular the Azores, will be outlined in order to illustrate the possible continuity between these experiences and an interest in establishing a permanent land presence further north in the Americas. Some consideration will also be given to the African and Brazilian coasts and the Portuguese presence there in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The present chapter, thus, provides a framework for understanding the relationship between resources and settlement by examining the thematic structure of the existing historiography through a combination of substantive and historiographical analysis. An examination of the reasons put forth for the absence of settlement in the sixteenth century, of early non-Portuguese Europeans settlement and, finally, of Portuguese activity elsewhere in the Atlantic, will form part of the framework within which Portuguese interest in settlement in northeastern North America can be examined.

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No permanent European colonies or settlements were established in northeastern North America during the sixteenth century, despite manifestations of interest, some attempts at settlement, and occasional experiences – accidental or intentional – of overwintering. The explanation generally accepted among historians for this, as has been noted, is that Europeans simply had no need for permanent occupation. They were able to benefit from the exploitation of fisheries resources without the need of establishing either a colonial presence that demarcated territorial control or an ongoing land base from which to exploit the coastal and bank resources.

Richard D'Abate and Victor A. Konrad contrast the "rock-bound and forbidding coasts facing the North Atlantic" with the land of Norumbega to the south (present-day Maine and extending south into New England and west into the Bay of Fundy). They argue that – unlike the more abundant Norumbega – the land in present-day Labrador, Newfoundland and Cape Breton remained unsettled for over a century by Europeans because the "attractive resource was offshore."<sup>2</sup> Land-based resource exploitation might have required exclusive rights with the backing of the crown, but the fishery was "a resource shared in a nonterritorial sea."<sup>3</sup>

The "unclaimed" ocean resources could be exploited without permanent settlement, according to Margaret Conrad and James Hiller, because the fisheries that developed in the sixteenth centuries were "seasonal extensions of a European industry, reliant on a European workforce and European markets."<sup>4</sup> They argue that, until the development of the fur trade with aboriginal peoples, Europeans "were not persuaded that overseas colonies were desirable."<sup>5</sup> A.J.B. Johnston, in *Storied Shores*, a history of the southeastern part of Cape Breton Island in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, also notes that as long as Europeans – Basque, French and Portuguese – involved in private trading companies were able to obtain fish, fur or other commodities, "there was no compelling economic reason for them to create permanent colonies."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Richard D'Abate and Victor A. Konrad, "General Introduction," in Emerson W. Baker, et. al., eds. *American Beginnings: Exploration, Culture, and Cartography in the Land of Norumbega* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), pp. xxii-xxiii.

<sup>3</sup> D'Abate and Konrad, "General Introduction," p. xxii.

<sup>4</sup> James K. Hiller and Margaret R. Conrad, *Atlantic Canada: A Region in the Making* (Don Mills: Oxford UP, 2001), p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> Hiller and Conrad, *Atlantic Canada*, p. 45.

<sup>6</sup> A.J.B. Johnston, *Storied Shores: St. Peter's, Isle Madame, and Chapel Island in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Sydney: University College of Cape Breton Press, 2004), p. 31.

John Reid's examination of the first decade of the seventeenth century in *Six Crucial Decades* also draws a link between the fur trade and settlement in Acadia. The fur trade developed, at least in part, out of the fisheries, as fishers traded beaver pelts for personal items and then returned to Europe with small quantities of furs to sell. According to Reid, the demand for European furs "developed on a large scale" towards the end of the sixteenth century – after several decades of contact and encounters between Europeans and aboriginal peoples – and this extended contact led to "more incentive to make year-round settlements."<sup>7</sup>

Historian Gillian Cell has written extensively on the connection between resources and early settlement in Newfoundland, examining the relationship between the fisheries and settlement in comparative perspective by contrasting the European (primarily English) experience in Newfoundland with that of Virginia. In the introduction to a Hakluyt Society collection of primary printed materials dealing with early settlement in Newfoundland, Cell notes that the "trade to Newfoundland" was the first regular trade between Europe and the Americas and was "significantly different from those that developed later."<sup>8</sup> The trade was distinct in two principal ways: it "flourished without settlement," and "the mechanics of the industry" were already in place.<sup>9</sup>

The markets, techniques and financial organization of the fishing trade were already in place in Europe, and this allowed the Newfoundland fishery to be "absorbed

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<sup>7</sup> John G. Reid, *Six Crucial Decades: Times of Change in the History of the Maritimes* (Halifax: Nimbus, 1987), p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Gillian T. Cell, ed. *Newfoundland Discovered: English Attempts at Colonisation, 1610-1630* (London: the Hakluyt Society, 1982), p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Cell, ed. *Newfoundland Discovered*.

into the commercial life of Atlantic Europe.”<sup>10</sup> In England, for instance, a well-established North Atlantic fishery had existed for several centuries and England began to participate in an Icelandic fisheries trade in the first part of the fifteenth century.<sup>11</sup> In the late fifteenth century, German competition in the Iceland trade provided an incentive for the English fishers and merchants involved in the trade to “seek alternative fisheries.”<sup>12</sup> Basque whalers had likewise been active in a commercial European trade long before arriving on the shores of Labrador. Over-hunting, however, had drastically reduced the stocks closer to home, thus providing an incentive, indeed a need, to venture further afield in search of whales.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the French and Spanish were fishing off the shores of Ireland and the Portuguese fished off the coast of England and Africa.<sup>14</sup> Both tuna and sardine fisheries existed off the coasts of Portugal and included the involvement of Italians – who were either naturalized Portuguese or Florentine merchants.<sup>15</sup>

Cell’s conclusion that the Newfoundland cod fishery was a seasonal off-shoot of a well-established European fishery is the same conclusion, as noted above, drawn by Conrad and Hiller two decades later. As extensions of European industries, the fishing of cod or hunting of whales did not require men from Europe’s Atlantic ports to “uproot

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<sup>10</sup> Gillian T. Cell, “The Cupids Cove Settlement: A Case Study of the Problems of Early Colonisation” in *European Settlement and Exploitation in Atlantic Canada*, ed. G.M. Story (St. John’s: Memorial University, 1982), p. 99.

<sup>11</sup> A Bristol-Icelandic merchant trade, for instance had existed since at least 1411 and men from Bristol began fishing in Iceland around the year 1425. John L. Allen, “The Indrawing Sea: Imagination and Experience in the Search for the Northwest Passage, 1497-1632,” in Churchill *et. al*, *American Beginnings*, p. 14. In the last half of the fifteenth century, 100 vessels a year left English ports for Iceland to catch or purchase fish. See R. Cole Harris, ed., *Historical Atlas of Canada, Vol. 1: From the Beginning to 1800*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, c. 1987- c.1993), Plate 22.

<sup>12</sup> Kenneth R. Andrews *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprises and the Genesis of the British Empire 1480-1630* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 44.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Grenier, “Excavating a 400-year-old Basque Galleon,” *National Geographic*, July 1985, p. 67.

<sup>14</sup> Harris, ed. *Historical Atlas*, Plate 22.

<sup>15</sup> Darlene Abreu-Ferreira, “Portugal’s Cod Fishery in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century: Myths and Misconceptions,” in *How Deep is the Ocean? Historical Essays on Canada’s Atlantic Fishery*, eds., James E. Candow & Carol Corbin (Sydney: UCCB Press, 1997), pp. 35-6.

themselves or their families or to brave a Newfoundland winter.”<sup>16</sup> They could leave for the St. Lawrence or Strait of Belle Isle, Cape Breton or the Bay of Fundy, Newfoundland or the Grand Banks in the spring and return home to port towns such as Plymouth, Dartmouth, Rouen, La Rochelle or St. Jean de Luz before the onset of winter. The shore fishery did require the building of fishing stations to clean, salt and dry cod, but these stations were seasonal only.<sup>17</sup> Whaling likewise required stations where stone tryworks were built for the rendering of whale blubber.<sup>18</sup> Delays in the eastward journey home sometimes occurred, leaving the icebound whalers to overwinter at Red Bay and other point along the Labrador coast. Staying the winter, however, seemed to be the exception rather than the rule.<sup>19</sup> Because the cod fishers and whalers could return home on a yearly basis, the successful exploitation of the island of Newfoundland – and elsewhere in the region by extension – did not require settlement.”<sup>20</sup>

If larger numbers of people had been required to carry out these activities, a seasonal migratory pattern of labour might not have been a viable option. Moving large numbers of people back and forth across the ocean every year would have been a difficult task to sustain over an extended period of time. Added to this would have been the need for an increasing number of people not directly involved in the fishery to be present to support those that were directly involved – provisioning food, clothing, housing, religious services, and so on. Thus, a more permanent labour force – European or non-European, coerced or voluntary, or some combination thereof – would have been required. This was not the case in the exploitation of coastal resources in northeastern North America, but

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<sup>16</sup> Cell, “The Cupids Cove Settlement,” pp. 99-100.

<sup>17</sup> Conrad and Hiller, *Atlantic Canada*, p. 45.

<sup>18</sup> James A. Tuck, “Unearthing Red Bay’s Whaling History,” *National Geographic*, July 1985, p. 50.

<sup>19</sup> Conrad and Hiller, *Atlantic Canada*, p. 42.

did apply in other parts of the Americas where the particular activities engaged in required not only a more abundant human labour supply for successful exploitation but also more elaborate production facilities. Cell notes, thus, that:

Unlike the mining, ranching or plantation development in Spanish America, the Caribbean or the southern parts of North America, the Newfoundland fishery did not demand drastic economic or technical change, the large-scale permanent movement of people or the exploitation of a non-European labour force.<sup>21</sup>

The English settlement of Jamestown established in 1607 is one which Cell puts forth as an example of European economic activity in North America that required settlement for the successful generation of wealth. The Virginia Company, she argues, quickly realized that the absence of gold and silver mines – upon which the success of the Spanish empire largely rested – and the limited opportunities for trade available required them to seek other avenues in the generation of profit for the company. Likewise, the establishment of a mixed agricultural community based largely on self-reliance might prove beneficial for the settlers at Jamestown, but this model of colonization would not produce a profit for the company. From this realization emerged a tobacco-based economy which required “increased migration, larger holdings of land, and a system of indentured and eventually slave labour.”<sup>22</sup> These colonizing efforts, in generating a profit, would contribute to the European economy, or at least to the profit margins of the colonies’ investors. Virginia, however, unlike Newfoundland, required settlement in order to meet this objective.

Cell has conceptualized activities in Newfoundland and Virginia in terms of the difference between wealth that is extracted (the fishery) and wealth that is created

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<sup>20</sup> Cell, “The Cupids Cove Settlement,” p. 111.

<sup>21</sup> Cell, *Newfoundland Discovered*, p. 2.

(tobacco as a plantation crop). While this distinction has some validity, it becomes problematic for certain activities. Mining, for instance, is by its very nature “extractive,” and yet it requires a large labour force, thus not fitting easily into one category or the other. The fur trade, likewise, required non-European labour in the trapping of beaver and preparing of pelts. Cell argues that because of this, Europeans – New Englanders in particular – did “become involved in the organisation of Indian labour.”<sup>23</sup> The fur trade had far-reaching consequences for aboriginal people. For instance, it eventually led to the altering of annual subsistence cycles and also affected productive activity and patterns of social organization.<sup>24</sup> It seems a stretch, however, to draw the conclusion that Europeans were “organising” this labour. Aboriginal peoples involved in the fur trade had their own reasons for involvement in the trade, such as an interest in the acquisition of European material goods or the building of alliances.<sup>25</sup> It has been argued, as noted above, that the European-aboriginal fur trade was a factor in the development of European settlements. These settlements, in turn, may have required the fur trade in order to be viable. But it does not necessarily follow that they were settlements based on the creation of both new wealth and a new labour force. In other words, the trapping and preparing of furs is an

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<sup>23</sup> Cell, “The Cupids Cove Settlement,” p. 99.

<sup>24</sup> For instance, a Basque captain fishing near Canso in 1607 – who had been fishing in the region since 1565 – told Marc Lescarbot that the native people of the area sometimes “helped themselves” to the fish in French boats. Ralph Pastore speculates that this activity might be related to a shift in the “seasonal round” of the Mi’kmaq as they spent “more time in the interior securing fur-bearers than their prehistoric ancestors,” thus having to contend with periodic food shortages. Ralph Pastore, “The Sixteenth Century: Aboriginal Peoples and European Contact,” in *The Atlantic Region to Confederation: A History*, eds., Phillip A. Buckner and John G. Reid (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 34. Some Mi’kmaq chieftans also became middlemen in the fur trade, travelling to villages in New England to obtain furs from the Abenaki. European goods could also be traded for corn, squash, beans and shell-beads. Harald E.L. Prinns, *The Mi’kmaq: Resistance, Accommodation and Cultural Survival* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1996), p. 49. As Peter Pope points out, ethnohistorians are “only beginning to work out the sociocultural implications” of this development. Peter Pope, “Comparisons: Atlantic Canada,” in *A Companion to Colonial America*, ed., Daniel Vickers (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), p. 491.

activity that does not fit easily into Cell's conceptual categories of extracted versus created wealth.

This problem notwithstanding, Cell's examination of labour and technical inputs in the fishery vis-à-vis the cultivation of tobacco and other similar activities elsewhere in the Americas does provide a useful starting point in the examination of settlement patterns in sixteenth and seventeenth-century North America. Indeed, Cell's basic premise has been echoed by other scholars of early settlement in the region. It seems to offer a plausible explanation for the absence of settlement in areas of North America in which Europeans were involved in the cod fishery or whaling industry. A resource-based approach does not, however, adequately account for the shift that occurred in Newfoundland – and Acadia – at the beginning of the seventeenth century. This shift led to the establishing of Cupids Cove and Port Royal, respectively, as settlements that were to lay the foundations for permanent English and French settlement in the region. The discussion must, therefore, turn to an examination of early settlements and the reasons why Europeans became interested in establishing a permanent presence in the region.

In general terms, political factors were interwoven with economic considerations in the motivation toward early settlement. During the sixteenth century, Spain had been busy building an empire further south in the Americas, and France and England did not want to be left behind in the imperial race. Portugal, although in general more focused on Asia than America, had established possessions in the Atlantic and was making in-roads in Brazil. Newfoundland historian Keith Matthews notes that as early as 1500, the French and English “knew of and envied the riches which were flowing into Spain and Portugal”

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<sup>25</sup> For more information on the aboriginal demand for European goods, see Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), pp.15-19.

and that they too “dreamed of colonies.”<sup>26</sup> The Spanish and Portuguese had thus “aroused the admiration of other European nations” well before the beginning of the seventeenth century.<sup>27</sup> David B. Quinn also argues that “imitation of what was happening elsewhere in the Americas” was an incentive towards European settlement.<sup>28</sup> Initially, at least, the English and French were interested in the specific sources of wealth that were emerging further south – gold, silver and then sugar – and thought North America might offer similar profitable paths.

They were bound... to ask why, if gold and silver were to be found in quantity in Mexico and Peru, they should not also be found in North America? If sugar could be profitably transplanted from southern Europe and the Atlantic islands to the Caribbean and to Brazil, why not to North America also? If Spanish cattle, pigs, and sheep, not to mention horses, could multiply in Hispaniola and Mexico, why not on the mainland to the north? These were only the simplest questions which could and did arise.<sup>29</sup>

Cartier’s 1534 voyage to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, for instance, had as a primary objective the search for a North American sea route to Asia, but the mariners and their supporters in France were also interested in the discovery of “mineral wealth similar to that found in Mexico.”<sup>30</sup> The dreams of encountering the wealthy mineral kingdom of Saguenay – North America’s El Dorado – brought Cartier back to Canada several years later, but he, and those in his company, were to be disappointed. Although Europeans continued to hold hopes of discovering mineral wealth in North America, they did not find it, or at least none comparable to the existing Aztec and Incan reserves or the silver that was to flow into Castile following the discovery of mines in Potosí in the mid-

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<sup>26</sup> Keith Matthews, *Lectures on the History of Newfoundland 1500-1830* (St. John’s: Breakwater Books, 1988), p. 60.

<sup>27</sup> Reid, *Six Crucial Decades*, p. 11.

<sup>28</sup> David B. Quinn, *Explorers and Colonies: America, 1500-1625* (London: The Hamledon Press, 1990), p. 154.

<sup>29</sup> Quinn, *Explorers and Colonies*, p. 156.

<sup>30</sup> W.J. Eccles, *France in America*, revised edition (Markham: Fithenry & Whiteside, 1990), p. 4.

sixteenth century. They thus “had to learn gradually” what North America had to offer before “moving from the England or France they knew to pioneer a new life for themselves overseas.”<sup>31</sup> This “gradual” learning might help explain the experimental nature of settlement in the sixteenth century.

France and England might also have been interested in the ongoing occupation of lands in northeastern North America as a means to establish territorial claims. As was noted in Chapter 1, Iberian claims to newly discovered and undiscovered lands based on papal bulls were not accepted by other Europeans, who claimed that permanent occupation of territories actually discovered was required to exert imperial sovereignty. Given the relationship between imperial control and trade monopolies, this dynamic alone might have been sufficient to warrant an interest in permanent settlement in areas of North America not occupied by Iberians.

France and England, however, did not engage in efforts to match, let alone surpass, their Iberian neighbours in the building of empires prior to the seventeenth century.<sup>32</sup> In what was to become Acadia and Canada, the French were engaged in only two settlement attempts prior to the 1604 overwintering in St. Croix, although this record surpasses that of the English in Newfoundland during the same time period.

Jacques Cartier and Sieur de Roberval were sent to the Saint Lawrence in 1541 by the French king who had decided (in addition to the search for Saguenay) that he needed a colony “to bolster his own claims in North America.”<sup>33</sup> This venture initially aroused royal concern for both the Portuguese and Spanish monarchs, who corresponded

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<sup>31</sup> Quinn, *Explorers and Colonies*, p. 154.

<sup>32</sup> Davies, *The North Atlantic World*, pp. 6-9.

regarding “the measures to be taken against this threat to their territories.”<sup>34</sup> According to W. J. Eccles, part of the concern stemmed from the fact that the Iberian kings did not initially know the expedition’s destination, and feared it might be Brazil, Guinea or the West Indies.<sup>35</sup>

The Portuguese and Spanish crowns were indeed more concerned with French settlements elsewhere than they were with expeditions to North America. The French, for instance, had attempted to establish a colony in Brazil during the reign of Henry IV (1553-1610) on an island in Rio de Janeiro Bay, beginning in 1555. The colony was to be a haven in which Protestants and Catholics – in the midst of the Wars of Religion in France – would be able to live together in harmony rather than conflict. It also had the aim of weakening Portugal and Spain’s hold on the Americas and thus, not surprisingly, was not well received by the Portuguese who had begun to turn their attention more seriously to Brazil by the middle of the century. The island, with its approximately one thousand inhabitants, was attacked by the Portuguese in 1560 and the colony came to an end after a three week siege.<sup>36</sup> The French were likewise unsuccessful in the southern part of North America. Efforts in South Carolina and Florida in the 1560s to “lay claim to a region not yet occupied by Spain” were met with defeat when the French forts were destroyed by the Spanish – the latter being perhaps more concerned with French privateering than French imperial claims.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Philip T. Hoffman, “Rural, Urban, and Global Economies,” in Mack P. Holt, ed. *Renaissance and Reformation France 1500-1648* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002), p. 82. According to Hoffman, “the Spanish in fact tried to stop the French” from sending this expedition to North America. (p. 82).

<sup>34</sup> Eccles, *France in America*, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> Eccles, *France in America*, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> Hoffman, “Rural, Urban and Global Economies,” p. 83. Internal divisions between Catholics and Protestants, with many of the latter moving to the mainland, also weakened the colony. See Davies, *The North Atlantic World*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>37</sup> Hoffman, “Rural, Urban and Global Economies,” p. 83 and Davies, *The North Atlantic World*, p. 6.

It was not until the end of the sixteenth century that the French would again attempt to establish a territorial presence in northeastern North America. This time it was not the St. Lawrence but Sable Island, off the coast of present-day Nova Scotia, that was the chosen settlement site. On a significantly smaller scale than the Brazilian attempt, the sandy island was inhabited in 1598 and abandoned in 1603 with only 11 survivors.<sup>38</sup> A patent granting a Breton nobleman, Mesgouez de La Roche, rights as viceroy and governor of “the pagan lands in the New World” had been issued in the late 1570s, but was not acted upon until two decades later, when the patent was issued again, and de La Roche was given a trade monopoly.<sup>39</sup>

It seems evident that French monarchs from Francis I to Henry IV had a vested interest in establishing colonies, if not an empire, in the Americas, and yet their efforts along these lines were both infrequent and unsuccessful during the sixteenth century. France’s inability to act upon its intentions may have been largely influenced by preoccupations at home – foreign policy priorities and internal disputes. Up to 1559, for instance, France was embroiled in the Habsburg-Valois Wars, which placed an increasing financial burden on the crown.<sup>40</sup> Internal disputes revolved largely around religion, especially during the last forty years of the sixteenth century when violent conflicts

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<sup>38</sup> According to John Reid, forty convicts and “about ten armed guards” lived on Sable Island. See Reid, *Six Crucial Decades*, p. 10. According to K.G. Davies, “sixty settlers were planted on the Isle of Sables.” See Davies, *The North Atlantic World*, p. 7. W.J. Eccles, on the other hand, notes that La Roche obtained “two hundred men and fifty women” from French jails as would-be colonists. See Eccles, *France in America*, p. 12.

<sup>39</sup> Eccles, *France in America*, p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> The crown was forced to raise taxes, accept public loans and seek credit on the international market. By 1559, the royal debt was three times the annual budget. See Holt, *Renaissance and Reformation France*, p. 19.

between Catholics and Protestants resulted in a “deadly cycle of civil wars” – the Wars of Religion.<sup>41</sup>

The English, like the French, seemed to be more interested in new trade routes, and then cod, than settlement in the sixteenth century, although a few instances of interest in settlement bear mention. Perhaps the earliest involves John Rastell, a “lawyer, publisher and writer” with an interest in the New World. He received support from Henry VIII (1509-1547) for a 1517 westward voyage. Although Rastell and his expedition did not make it past Ireland, he had, according to historian Kenneth R. Andrews, declared as his purpose the English occupation of lands in North America.<sup>42</sup>

It was not until well into the second half of the sixteenth century that another English interest in settlement was to be expressed. Humphrey Gilbert was likely aware of the French attempts at settlement in Florida in the 1560s, and developed an interest in the Americas around that time.<sup>43</sup> During the 1560s and 1570s, however, Gilbert was involved in English colonial ventures in Ireland (for which he was knighted) and it was not until the late 1570s that he acted upon his interest in the Americas. In 1578, Sir Humphrey Gilbert was granted royal patents by Elizabeth I (1558-1603) “for the inhabiting and planting of our people in America.”<sup>44</sup> Gilbert and his heirs were granted “free libertie and

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<sup>41</sup> A 1562 edict granting Protestantism “legal toleration” was violently rejected by Catholics, leading to the Wars of Religion. The conflict was official brought to an end in 1598 with the Edict of Nantes. In the seventeenth century, co-existence, even a tenuous one, seemed preferable to violent attempts to “restore religious uniformity.” Philip Benedict, “The Wars of Religion 1562-1598,” in Holt, ed. *Renaissance and Reformation France*, p. 174.

<sup>42</sup> Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, p. 54. Two other voyages supported by Henry VIII, of John Rut in 1527 and Richard Hore in 1536, seemed to be primarily concerned with exploration. See also “The voyage of M. Hore, and divers other gentlemen to Newfoundland, and Cape Briton, in the yere 1536,” in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1927), pp. 338-341.

<sup>43</sup> An account of the French attempt at colonization in Florida had been published in London in 1563 and Gilbert was among “those in London who now began to take notice of America and its prospects.” See Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, pp. 184-5.

<sup>44</sup> In Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, p. 349.

licence” to “have, hold and occupie... with all commodities, jurisdictions and royalties both by sea and land” any territories discovered.<sup>45</sup> The extent to which establishing settlements in northeastern North America was a priority for Gilbert is unclear, but he did end up in St. John’s harbour in August of 1583 and – amidst Spanish, Portuguese, French and English fishing vessels – took possession of the harbour and the surrounding coasts in the name of his queen.<sup>46</sup>

It is of interest to note that Gilbert, like Cartier several decades before him, was interested in the potential mineral wealth of Newfoundland, “commanding the minerall man and refiner, especially to be diligent” although they found only “some sort of Ore, seeming rather to be yron then other metall.”<sup>47</sup> As Conrad and Hiller point out, nineteenth-century historians “tended to see Gilbert’s performance in St. John’s harbour as a significant event in the evolution of the British empire.” Because his “assertion of sovereignty” was not pursued by either the crown or other English interests, however, Conrad and Hiller conclude that Gilbert’s claims in 1583 “meant little in practical terms.”<sup>48</sup> Gilbert’s ship ran aground on Sable Island shortly thereafter, and he perished.

Although not in northeastern North America, another sixteenth-century English effort at settlement belongs to the same series of attempts. Sir Walter Raleigh, royal patent in hand, landed on Roanoke Island (off the coast of present-day North Carolina) with a group of settlers in 1585. After several years of struggle, the small colony disappeared, with the fate of the settlers a mystery. Unlike the French presence in South

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<sup>45</sup> In Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, p. 350.

<sup>46</sup> Initially, Gilbert seemed as interested in piracy and plunder in the Caribbean as he was in colonization further north. See Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, pp 187-8, 195. Gilbert may have also been more interested in Norumbega (Maine) than Newfoundland. See Pope, *Fish into Wine*, p. 48.

<sup>47</sup> From a letter written by Edward Hayes, captain of the *Golden Hind* in the 1583 expedition and published by Hakluyt in 1589. Quoted in Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, pp. 194-5.

<sup>48</sup> Conrad and Hiller, *Atlantic Canada*, p. 50.

Carolina and Florida, however, the Roanoke residents were not eliminated by Spanish forces that might have seen the English as interlopers in Spanish territory. K.G. Davies has analyzed the Spanish reaction in Florida and Roanoke (and also several decades later in Virginia and Bermuda) in terms of Spain's "power of resistance." He argues that Florida "showed the Spanish empire at the height of its powers," whereas Spain was diverted by its war with England from attempting to destroy the Roanoke colony and "establish a strong, continuous fortress on Chesapeake Bay."<sup>49</sup> This is an indication that Spain could not, in fact, have emerged as a major imperial power north of Florida.

The Spanish empire is generally considered to have been at its peak during the reign of Charles I (1517-1555) and Philip II (1555-1598), with the seventeenth century being seen as a period of decline, as the riches of the Indies quickly dwindled in the face of costly wars in Europe and insufficient investment in the domestic economy. It fits, thus, that while England might have been stalled in its American endeavours for most of the sixteenth century due to the threat posed by Spain, "the most wealthy and powerful military state in Western Europe," this was not to be the case in the decades (and century) following the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588.<sup>50</sup> In addition, although England did not have the equivalent of the Wars of Religion in France, the Protestant Reformation loomed large during the rule of the Tudors, consuming royal energy that might have otherwise been available for other efforts. Both France and Spain had priorities in their own countries – or in Europe more broadly – that limited their abilities to engage in colonizing efforts in the Americas. Preoccupation with the fishery was not the only

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<sup>49</sup> Spanish monarchs likewise did not respond with imperial force in either Virginia or Bermuda in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. Davies, *The North Atlantic World*, pp. 9-10.

reason, and indeed concentration in the fisheries was, in fact, a result of that limitation as much as a cause of it.

According to Keith Matthews, the “best” the English and French could do given their priorities at home “was to develop their fisheries in Newfoundland” and, especially during the second half of the sixteenth century, “send their ships to the West Indies to attack and plunder the wealth of the Spanish colonies.”<sup>51</sup> These activities were carried out by merchants, mariners, pirates and privateers. They sometimes operated, especially in the case of the latter, “at the boundaries of legitimacy,” while at other times they operated independently but with a “modicum of political backing.” They all, however, took risks that the monarchs and governments of their respective countries could not afford.<sup>52</sup>

The motivations of individuals – gentlemen explorers, merchant adventurers or members of private companies in England or France – did not necessarily coincide with the priorities, or means, of the crown. In the case of England, for instance, settlement – or other ventures for that matter – might not have been pursued in the sixteenth century simply because not enough people of means held an interest in its economic potential. Unlike their West Country counterparts, for instance, London merchants were largely uninterested in North American ventures during the first half of the sixteenth century because they were doing very well with the export of woollen cloth, primarily to Antwerp. “Only when the Londoners began seriously to seek direct contact with ulterior

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<sup>50</sup> Matthews, *Lectures*, p. 60. K.G. Davies argues that, given the choice between colonization in Ireland and the Americas, Ireland was “much the more important of the two” due to defensive military considerations while England was at war with Spain. See Davies, *The North Atlantic World*, p.5.

<sup>51</sup> Matthews, *Lectures*, p. 60.

<sup>52</sup> Elizabeth Manke, “Empire and State,” in David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World 1500-1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 181.

or new markets,” notes historian Kenneth Andrews, “would English oceanic expansion gain the momentum necessary for success.”<sup>53</sup>

French merchants were equally likely to be more motivated by profit margins than claims of imperial sovereignty. J.F. Bosher, for instance, has researched the connection between La Rochelle merchants and New France and notes that – especially prior to the formation of the Company of New France (1627-8) – the merchants “were mainly interested in their own private profit, and colonizing in North America was not profitable.” He further notes that, had the merchants been left to pursue their own plans, “French settlements in North America were unlikely to have developed much further than the tiny coastal slaving bases in West Africa.”<sup>54</sup>

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, optimism began to return to the domestic front in both France and England. France had emerged from the Wars of Religion and England was no longer at war with Spain. Monarchs from both countries thus looked more seriously to North America as a potentially lucrative locale for their enterprise of colonization and as a territory to be claimed in the imperial race against their Iberian neighbours. The monarchs were interested in the Americas for political and economic reasons. Merchants, traders and nobles, on the other hand, were motivated by the potential for new sources of wealth, although other matters, such as religion, also at times came into play.

The first French settlement in northeastern North America in the seventeenth century was established along the shores of the Bay of Fundy. Pierre du Gua de Monts, a Protestant nobleman, received a concession of land and a ten-year monopoly from Henry

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<sup>53</sup> Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, p. 63.

IV in return for agreeing to settle colonists and evangelize the region's aboriginal inhabitants.<sup>55</sup> The initial choice for the settlement was the island of St. Croix, at the present-day border between Maine and New Brunswick. De Monts – along with the Catholic nobleman Jean de Biencourt de Poutrincourt, Samuel de Champlain and seventy-eight additional male colonists – set sail from the French port of Le Havre in March of 1604, arriving at St. Croix by summer. By the fall they had built fortifications and other buildings and then “settled down to spend what turned out to be six terrible months of winter.”<sup>56</sup> Only slightly more than half of the habitation's residents survived the winter, and in the spring of 1605 the site was moved across the Bay of Fundy.

The first winter at Port Royal (1605-6) was mild compared to the previous winter at St. Croix and the settlers fared much better. The new settlers interacted with aboriginal people on both sides of the Bay of Fundy. Skills necessary for survival were passed onto the French, and the Mi'kmaq also provided the French with the furs upon which the colony depended for commercial success. Naomi Griffiths has argued that a “most important aspect” of the new French establishment was “the attitude shown toward the project” by the Mi'kmaq.<sup>57</sup> Reid has also noted the important role of the Mi'kmaq in terms of the French presence in the region. Rather than an “amiable helper of the French,” however, the Mi'kmaq are seen as allies who “had the power in the decade of the 1600s to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to French colonization.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> J.F. Boshier, “The Political and Religious Origins of La Rochelle's Primacy in Trade with New France, 1627-1685,” *French History*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (1993), p. 291.

<sup>55</sup> Naomi Griffiths, *The Acadians: Creation of a People* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1973), p. 3. Griffiths notes that Sieur de Monts was made viceroy and captain-general of “La Cadie.”

<sup>56</sup> Charles D. Mahaffie Jr., *A Land of Discord Always: Acadia from Its Beginnings to the Expulsion of Its People, 1604-1755* (Camden, Maine: Down East Books, 1995), p. 21.

<sup>57</sup> Griffiths, *The Acadians*, p. 4.

<sup>58</sup> Reid, *Six Crucial Decades*, p. 19.

As was noted above, the original charter for the establishment of a French settlement included a trade monopoly, which was primarily directed toward the fur trade. Initial observations of the settlers – such as those of Champlain with respect to St. Croix Island – also include references to trade with the aboriginal inhabitants of the surrounding areas. From the very beginning, the fur trade with aboriginal people appears to have been a key component of the establishment and development of the settlement. Although Port Royal was also envisioned as an agricultural community, the fur trade was essential in the generation of revenue that would finance the colony and provide a return to its investors.

Unfortunately for all concerned, the fur trade was not to provide the returns necessary to ensure the continuation of de Monts' monopoly. Rival merchants opposed to de Monts' exclusive rights continued to trade illegally for furs. "Whether fish or fur was the product," notes Griffiths, "those who were already involved in transatlantic enterprise did not welcome the organization of year-round communities of Europeans in the new lands."<sup>59</sup> Increased competition, exacerbated by a rise in the price of beaver furs during the same time period, created problems for the new settlement as it struggled to establish itself.<sup>60</sup> The merchants – many from northern French ports – opposed to the monopoly pressured the French government and in 1607 they "succeeded in having the fur trade reopened to all the King's subjects"<sup>61</sup>

The revoking of the monopoly ended the first period of French presence in Acadia. De Monts and Champlain redirected their energies towards the St. Lawrence, and

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<sup>59</sup> N.E.S. Griffiths, "1600-1650: Fish, Fur and Folk," in *The Atlantic Region to Confederation: A History*, eds., Phillip A. Buckner and John G. Reid (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 40, 42.

<sup>60</sup> Reid, *Six Crucial Decades*, p. 9.

<sup>61</sup> Eccles, *France in America*, p. 15. See also Reid, *Six Crucial Decades*, p. 9. Mahaffie notes that Paris hatmakers, "distressed by the price of beaver," had joined with the traders opposed to the monopoly in "putting pressure on the king and his ministers to cause cancellation of the monopoly," Mahaffie, *A Land of Discord Always*, p. 37.

no Europeans resided at Port Royal for the following three years. Poutrincourt, however, returned to the habitation in 1610 – with his eldest son, Charles de Biencourt, a secular priest and 20 male colonists – determined to attempt a second settlement at Port Royal. The primary goals of the colony continued to be fur trading and religious conversion of the aboriginal peoples. This time round, however, the religious conversion of the Mi'kmaq was to play a more prominent role in the motive and mission of the settlement. Within a few weeks of the French return to Port Royal, for instance, Chief Membertou and approximately 80 other Mi'kmaq were baptised “with a minimum of instruction” by Jessé Flesché, the secular priest included in the 1610 return voyage.<sup>62</sup>

Following the baptism, Madame de Guercheville, a wealthy Parisian with strong ties to the Jesuit Order, agreed to support the settlement at Port Royal on the condition that the Jesuits “would control missionary work in Acadia and become partners in the trade.”<sup>63</sup> Two Jesuit Priests arrived in Port Royal, along with Poutrincourt's wife, in 1611. Although the Wars of Religion had ended in France, tensions between Protestants and Catholics continued. These played themselves out in Poutrincourt's attempts to meet both economic and religious objectives in the struggling colony. For instance, one of the two Jesuit priests to arrive in Port Royal in 1611, Father Pierre Biard, noted in his 1616 *Relations* an incident in which Protestant merchants from Dieppe objected to the presence of Jesuits on board the ship they were repairing and loading. The merchants eventually withdrew their support for Poutrincourt. Merchants from La Rochelle, a strongly

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<sup>62</sup> Eccles, *France in America*, p.16.

<sup>63</sup> Hiller and Conrad, *Atlantic Canada*, p. 53.

Protestant port town, likewise objected to the “idea of a Jesuit Mission” and threatened to withdraw Poutrincourt’s credit.<sup>64</sup>

In the end, it was not merchants or missionaries who would end Poutrincourt’s dream of an Acadian colony along the Bay of Fundy. It was to be the English from Jamestown, who in 1613 attacked the habitation along with a settlement the French had tried to establish in Maine. This was, of course, not to be the end of Acadia, although Port Royal changed hands numerous times prior to 1710 as the French and English continued to struggle for control of the region.

In 1610, less than a decade after Henry IV’s grant to de Monts – and three years after the establishment of Jamestown, Virginia – the English attempted to establish a settlement in Conception Bay, Newfoundland.<sup>65</sup> The London and Bristol Company was formed in 1610 as a joint-stock company for the purpose of establishing a “plantation” and the company was granted a royal charter from King James I (1603-1625) to found and govern a colony extending from Cape St. Mary’s to Cape Bonavista.<sup>66</sup>

From the perspective of the crown, the establishing of colonial settlements provided a permanent base from which to control the fishery. Throughout the sixteenth century, Portuguese, Basque and French explorers, fishers, whalers and traders had been arriving on the shores of Newfoundland and therefore English dominance in the cod fishery could not be assumed. The possibility of colonial intrusions on the part of the

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<sup>64</sup> Griffiths, *The Acadians*, p. 8.

<sup>65</sup> Between 1603 and the 1640s a number of English colonies were “planned and attempted,” the colony at Cupids Cove being the second enterprise after Virginia and the first in northeastern North America. 1603-4 marked the beginning of the reign of James I and the end of the war with Spain, the latter releasing “English money, ships and men for colonial schemes.” By the 1640s England was again preoccupied with war, in this instance domestic rather than foreign. Matthews, *Lectures*, p. 62. K.G. Davies notes that England “excelled all others” in these endeavours in the seventeenth century “Age of Settlement.” Davies, *The North Atlantic World*, p. 37.

French, in particular, also proved to be a motivating force in favour of a permanent English presence in northeastern North America.<sup>67</sup> The merchants and other private investors involved in the scheme also hoped to secure a foothold in the fishery, although they were perhaps as concerned with competition from West Country mariners well-entrenched in the Newfoundland cod fishery as they were with foreign or imperial competition.<sup>68</sup> The company also hoped to “produce naval stores, trade with the natives for furs, discover iron and copper, and provide a halfway base for ships voyaging to Virginia.”<sup>69</sup>

Included among the company’s 48 initial members were 36 London and Bristol merchants.<sup>70</sup> In May of 1610, John Guy – a Bristol merchant and soon-to-be governor of the new colony – set sail with his brother, brother-in-law and 39 other men to establish a settlement, and arrived in Newfoundland after 23 days of “remarkably fine passage.”<sup>71</sup> In a letter from the Company’s associates, John Guy was instructed to choose a location for the settlement “within the limits of the country assigned unto us in order to plant our said colonie.” Although Guy was given freedom to choose the most suitable location, the company’s backers note their preference for “The Baye of Conception” as a location for

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<sup>66</sup> See D.W. Prowse, *A History of Newfoundland* (Portugal Cove-St. Philips: Boulder Publications, 2002), p. 94.

<sup>67</sup> Matthews, *Lectures*, p. 61.

<sup>68</sup> Peter Pope notes, for instance, that Richard Whitbourne, writing in the 1620s, presented in great detail in his *Discourse and Discovery of Newfoundland* “the case that settlement would permit a more efficient fishery.” Peter Pope, *Fish into Wine: The Newfoundland Plantation in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), pp. 49-50.

<sup>69</sup> The investors expressed their objectives for the colony in a February, 1610 petition to the Privy Council for a grant of incorporation. Gillian T. Cell notes that in the petition they also “chose in political fashion” to emphasize England’s national interest in establishing a Newfoundland colony before any other foreign state. Gillian T. Cell, *English Enterprise in Newfoundland 1577-1660* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 56.

<sup>70</sup> Cell, *English Enterprise*, p. 53.

<sup>71</sup> Prowse, *A History*, p. 97.

the settlement.<sup>72</sup> Migratory fishermen were already fishing in the waters of Conception Bay, north of present-day St. John's on the Avalon Peninsula, and the site must have been chosen at least in part because of the vantage point it would have offered in the exploitation of marine resources.

The settlement seems to have been a well-planned venture on the part of the company's associates. In addition to the settlers arriving in the colony well-equipped, the company had already purchased a cargo of fish, which would make the return voyage to England on the ship that had carried John Guy and the settlers to Cupids Cove.<sup>73</sup> The settlers were also asked to keep a journal of activities and events in the settlement – including commentary on the weather – which would “help the company victual its colony” and also help “assess the possibility of a successful and permanent settlement.”<sup>74</sup>

The original instructions of the London and Bristol Company also stipulated that the charter to establish the colony be read to the migratory fishermen active in the area. The charter did not grant monopoly rights in the fishery to the London and Bristol Company. In fact, it clearly stipulated that the fishery was to remain open not only to individual English fishermen, “in as large and ample a manner as they [had theretofore] used and enjoyed the same,” but also to “all manner of persons of what nation soever.”<sup>75</sup>

Many historians have concluded that, despite the above stipulations, the relationship between migratory English fishers and Newfoundland's early settlers involved a great deal of conflict. The nineteenth-century historian D.W. Prowse, for instance, contended that the charter was “a dishonest attempt to give away to Court

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<sup>72</sup> “Instructions to John Guy from the Associates of his Company, 1601.” Quoted in Prowse, *A History*, pp. 95-6.

<sup>73</sup> Cell, *English Enterprise*, p. 61.

<sup>74</sup> Cell, *English Enterprise*, p. 62.

favourites land occupied and possessed by Englishmen long anterior to the grant.”<sup>76</sup>

Harold Innis analyzed the “bitter and unrelenting struggle” between the settlers and the fishermen in terms of the struggle of the migratory fishers against a monopoly in the fishery.<sup>77</sup> Cell also explores this question, arguing that, although the charter did not specifically grant monopoly rights, the presence of settlements would nonetheless give the company advantages, such as a longer fishing season and “prior occupation of the best fishing sites.”<sup>78</sup> One small settlement could not make much of a difference, but settlement scattered along the coast would amount to a “*de facto* monopoly.”<sup>79</sup>

More recent scholarship has drawn different conclusions regarding the issue of conflict. Matthews, for instance, argues that there is simply insufficient evidence that this conflict existed – in Cupids Cove and subsequent English settlements.<sup>80</sup> Pope, in his recent study on the significance of early settlement in Newfoundland, notes that:

An eighteenth-century perception that migratory fishers and settlers were inevitably in conflict over the issue of local government evolved into the nineteenth-century idea that they were actually in conflict over settlement itself.<sup>81</sup>

Pope comes to the conclusion that, although conflicts did exist, the economic and social relationships between the two groups in the seventeenth century were marked by

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<sup>75</sup> Cell, *English Enterprise*, p. 56.

<sup>76</sup> Prowse, *A History*, p. 94.

<sup>77</sup> The position of the fishermen was further complicated by the emergence of the “carrying trade,” in which surplus fish caught by settlers was sold to “sack ships” that sold directly to Spain, Italy and other countries rather than being sold in England on return to the West Country. See Harold A. Innis, *The Cod Fisheries: The History of an International Economy*. Revised edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), p. 54.

<sup>78</sup> Cell, *English Enterprise*, p.56.

<sup>79</sup> Cell, *English Enterprise*, p.56.

<sup>80</sup> Keith Matthews, “Historical Fence Building: A Critique of the Historiography of Newfoundland,” *Newfoundland Studies*, Vol, 17, No. 2 (Fall 2001), pp. 156-9.

<sup>81</sup> Pope, *Fish into Wine*, p. vi.

interdependence.<sup>82</sup> He sites contemporary references to settlers coming to the aid of migratory fishermen as an indication of cooperation rather than conflict. Sir John Berry, a naval commander who had been sent to Newfoundland to “instruct the settlers to leave” by the Committee for Trade and Plantations found, for instance, that the “inhabitants yearly cure many hundred fishermen of the scurvy.”<sup>83</sup> According to Nehemiah Troute, a purser in the HMS *Swann* who provided testimony to the Committee for Trade and Plantation in 1678, the settlers also provided accommodation for crew members who arrived on shore in boats while their ships were caught in ice or delayed by westerly winds. Troute also argued that the inhabitants provided migratory fishers with access to timber and other wood products and stored their boats over the winter as a protection against theft from other Europeans involved in the fishery. Year-round settlement in Newfoundland thus helped protect the infrastructure of the British fishery.<sup>84</sup> Settlement, as has been noted, helped protect British sovereignty against the French. Troute argued that the planters were “possessors of the country for his Majestie” and that they helped protect trade with the West Indies.<sup>85</sup>

Establishing a settlement would have been an expensive enterprise relative to the seasonal fishery.<sup>86</sup> The settlers would have to be self-sufficient as quickly as possible or they would consume the potential profits to be made in the fishery with the costs of

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<sup>82</sup> Conflicts existed over shore space, for instance, but this competition existed for “all crews in the dry fishery.” Peter Pope, “Comparisons: Atlantic Canada,” in *A Companion to Colonial America*, ed., Daniel Vickers (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), p. 498.

<sup>83</sup> Pope, *Fish into Wine*, pp. 66, 69.

<sup>84</sup> Pope, *Fish into Wine*, pp. 68-70.

<sup>85</sup> In Pope, *Fish into Wine*, p. 67.

<sup>86</sup> Although James Houblon, a “prosettlement West Country merchant,” argued that the settlers could produce dried fish more cheaply and of better quality than the migratory fishermen, most “proponents of settlement admitted that the costs of overwintering at least matched the transit costs of the ships fishing,” with year-round fishing the only way to make settlement the more viable option for the fishery. Pope, *Fish into Wine*, p. 70.

settlement. Establishing an agricultural base was a means towards achieving this self-reliance. The fishery, however, was not intended to be the sole commercial focus of the new colony. As was noted above, the company also intended to establish a trade in furs with the native people of the region. Despite some tentative initial contacts, the fur trade with the Beothuk did not materialize.<sup>87</sup> Around the same time the English began to settle Newfoundland, the Beothuk began to avoid direct contact with Europeans, retreating first to other coastal areas and then from coastal areas into the interior.<sup>88</sup>

The lack of interaction with aboriginal peoples precluded the possibility of missionary activity on the part of the English, although it seems unlikely that such activity would have occurred even if a beneficial trading relationship had developed between the English and the Beothuk. Although friendly “but not over intimate relations with the native population” were hoped for by the company, religious conversion does not appear to have been a factor in the original vision of the settlement.<sup>89</sup> The French experience at Port Royal thus differs significantly from that of Cupids Cove with respect to European-First Nations contact – in terms of both commerce and conversion.

The first years at Cupids Cove saw optimism, despite setbacks. An agricultural community was being established, boats were built for further exploration and for the

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<sup>87</sup> In the fall of 1612, John Guy set out from Cupids Cove on an exploratory mission. He met with a group of Beothuks in November at Bull Arm. The two groups shared a meal and exchanged gifts. Upon leaving, the Beothuk hung beaver and sable skins on poles, and the English exchanged some of the pelts for “a hatchet, a knife and some needles.” It seems the Beothuk had come to the meeting better prepared than the English for trade. Ralph Pastore, “The Sixteenth Century,” p. 31, and Cell, *English Enterprise*, p. 68.

<sup>88</sup> Ralph Pastore notes that most “prehistoric Beothuk sites are found along stretches of coastline” that allowed the Beothuk to exploit marine resources such as seals, walrus, cod, salmon, capelin and smelt. Pastore concludes that sometime “after about the second decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century,” the Beothuk began to follow a pattern of withdrawal from European contact, although there is evidence up to the 1760s that “they were still visiting the coast to hunt and fish.” See Ralph Pastore, “The Collapse of the Beothuk World,” *The Acadiensis Reader: Atlantic Canada Before Confederation*, Vol. 1, third edition, ed. P.A. Buckner, Gail G. Campbell & David Frank (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1998), pp. 11-12, 14.

exploitation of the fishery, and Guy had “worked out a number of commercial projects” during the first year of settlement. Among these were the export of timber and fish and the smelting of iron imported from England.<sup>90</sup> Sixteen women arrived in the colony in 1612, and the following year the first English child was born in the settlement.<sup>91</sup>

In addition to the inability to establish a fur trade and tensions with the migratory fishermen, the settlers encountered other problems. Neither the climate nor the soil proved as good as expected and the settlers found the long winters difficult. Crops failed, visiting ships did not buy timber and the settlement came to rely increasingly on the fishery.<sup>92</sup> The struggling settlers even had to contend with attacks by pirates. By 1620, although a few settlers remained, the colony at Cupids Cove was disbanded and the company began to sell off tracts of land it had been granted under the charter in an effort to “recoup some of its investment.”<sup>93</sup>

In Acadia, the establishment of Port Royal seemed to be a logical development in the context of trading relationships with aboriginal people. The historiography which sees the fur trade developing after (and out of) the fishery, and settlement developing at least in part due to the development of the fur trade, thus has relevance with respect to Port Royal. In Newfoundland, on the other hand, no English-Beothuk fur trade developed and the Cupids Cove experience can be seen rather as an attempt to move beyond a temporary presence in the seasonal fishery. Although both projects attempted to create economically

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<sup>89</sup> Cell, *English Enterprise*, p. 62. The 1610 instructions to John Guy do mention the capturing of “one of the savages of the country” in order to teach him English, but obtaining a “safe and free commerce with them” is given as the reason. See Prowse, *A History*, p. 96.

<sup>90</sup> Cell, *English Enterprise*, p. 63.

<sup>91</sup> Hiller and Conrad, *Atlantic Canada*, p. 56. In the spring of 1612, Guy also returned from England with the Reverend Erasmus Stourton, Church of England, “artizans and farmers,” horses, cattle, pigs, poultry and farming implements. Prowse, *A History*, p. 101.

<sup>92</sup> Matthews, *Lectures*, p. 63.

<sup>93</sup> Hiller and Conrad, *Atlantic Canada*, p. 56.

diverse communities, in the end both settlements were to rely heavily on a staple commodity. Finally, each endeavour represented European settlements in northeastern North America based on a combination of royal charters – including stated or implied monopoly rights – and private investment and each settlement came about in part due to a changing European context. Although the specifics of the changes differed between France and England, the result was that both countries were motivated to engage in overseas ventures in the seventeenth century in ways they had not been able to in the sixteenth century. In this regard, the timing of the settlements is significant in relation to the earlier activities of England and France – as well as Spain and Portugal – in the Americas (and the Atlantic). The above discussion of European settlement attempts has attempted to shed light on the motivation towards settlement held by both monarchs and merchants as well as the extent to which settlement – its existence or absence – might have been influenced by geography, resources, European priorities or imperial concerns. The discussion now turns to the Portuguese experience in the Atlantic and the Americas.

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In the mid-fifteenth century, Portugal was a country of one million people engaged mainly in farming and fishing, ruled by the Aviz monarchy and socially divided into the three estates of nobility, clergy and common people.<sup>94</sup> Seeking new sources of revenue, the crown and nobility looked to overseas trade and by the beginning of the following century, Portugal had emerged as a significant sea-faring and trading nation.

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<sup>94</sup> According to the 1527-32 census, the population of Portugal was between one million and 1.5 million. During the sixteenth century, between 2,400 and 4,000 people, mostly men, left Portugal for the Americas

Given Portugal's position on the Iberian Peninsula, it made sense that the sea would provide a key means of expansion. Portuguese historian A. Teixeira da Mota notes, however, that the emerging nation faced two obstacles in this regard. One was the "Islamic power in north Africa" which constituted, from the expansionist perspective of the Portuguese, a barrier not only to Africa but also to the riches of Asia, given that the Portuguese, along with other Europeans, were dependent upon "intermediaries" in Venice and other Italian cities for access to these routes.<sup>95</sup> The other barrier was the "Sea of Darkness" beyond the Pillars of Hercules – the vast Atlantic of mythic medieval monsters and mysterious islands. Until a sea route to the east was discovered, allowing the Portuguese to circumvent routes to Asia originating in the Mediterranean, the Atlantic would have held out considerable promise.

Although the last Muslim territories in southern Portugal had been "reconquered" by the middle of the thirteenth century, a southern Iberian Muslim presence remained until 1492 in Granada when King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella reclaimed this territory for Christian Castile (and Aragon). A certain "crusading spirit" emerged out of the Iberian Reconquest which, according to Alan Taylor, created an *hidalgo* (*fidalgo* in Portuguese) "warrior caste" that – along with militant clergy – spearheaded conquest in the Americas.<sup>96</sup> Crusading motivations aside, throughout the centuries of Islamic domination in Iberia, "young Portugals" had become accustomed to traveling west to

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and Africa and Asia – mostly Portuguese India. A.J.R. Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire, 1415-1808* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 60.

<sup>95</sup> A. Teixeira da Mota, "Portuguese Navigations in the North Atlantic in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," A Paper delivered before the University on the Occasion of the Unveiling of the Statue of Gaspar Corte Real in St. John's on the 8<sup>th</sup> September, 1965. ( St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1965), p. 3.

<sup>96</sup> Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 2001), p. 26-8.

“seek their fortunes as administrators and merchants in the great Muslim cities.”<sup>97</sup> By the fifteenth century, many Portuguese had a sense of the world beyond its frontiers, both through the Islamic presence in Iberia and through direct experiences of travel. The voyaging of the fifteenth century – down the coast of Africa and eventually into Asia as well as to Atlantic island archipelagos, the shores of Brazil and the cold waters of the North Atlantic – emerged thus from previous experiences of migration and diverse cultural contact.<sup>98</sup>

Portuguese advances in navigation techniques and ship designs allowed them to venture southward along the African coast and westward into the Atlantic in the fifteenth century.<sup>99</sup> The Azores and Madeira (and Canary) island archipelagos were likely discovered by the Portuguese while “probing along the northwest coast of Africa.”<sup>100</sup> It is possible that at least some of the nine mid-Atlantic Azorean islands were known to Europeans in the fourteenth century, although they were not charted and settled until the fifteenth century.<sup>101</sup> A 1439 Catalan map, for instance, shows “eight islands presumed to be the Azores,” and in July of the same year, Prince Henry was authorized through a

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<sup>97</sup> David Birmingham, *A Concise History of Portugal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 15.

<sup>98</sup> This was also a time of internal migration. Southern Iberia (the Algarve and the Atlantic coast of Andalusia) became the recipient not only of Italian merchants and sailors but also of “Biscayan, Galician, and northern Portuguese seamen,” as an international maritime community came into being. Lyle N. McAlister, *Spain and Portugal in the New World 1492-1700* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 9.

<sup>99</sup> These improvements were not made for the express purpose of venturing far into the Atlantic, but rather evolved through a series of innovations that came about as trade and commerce shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic and into northern Europe. These innovations – such as stronger ships with square sails to brave Atlantic storms – in turn facilitated further westward and southward expansion. See Taylor, *American Colonies*, p. 28. Portuguese mariners also learned a great deal about ocean navigation from Arab scholars, in some cases the knowledge having been “rediscovered” from classical Greece “through the medium of Arabic translations.” Birmingham, *A Concise History*, p. 16.

<sup>100</sup> Taylor, *American Colonies*, p. 29.

<sup>101</sup> Edgar Prestage, *The Portuguese Pioneers* (London: A. & C. Black, 1933), pp. 48-9.

royal letter to begin the settlement of the islands.<sup>102</sup> Terceira was the third island to be sighted by some “unknown mariners” and the captaincy of the island was given to Jacques de Bruges, a Flemish servant of Prince Henry, in 1450.<sup>103</sup> Madeira was likewise known to exist in the fourteenth century, but was not explored and settled until after the French/Spanish occupation of the Canary Islands in 1402.<sup>104</sup> The Cape Verde Islands became part of the Portuguese sphere of influence in the 1460s.<sup>105</sup>

It is interesting that many of the Portuguese who received royal patents for discovery and settlement in North America originated in the Azores. It is possible that their experiences in the Azores were a motivating factor in the decision to attempt settlements in northeastern North America. What, then, were the dynamics of settlement in the Azores and other Atlantic islands? Also, what factors related to the Portuguese experiences along the African coast and in Brazil might have been present also in experiments in settlement in northeastern North America in the sixteenth century?

According to H.B. Johnson, three phases or stages of development occurred in the Atlantic islands during the fifteenth century: exploration, wheat farming, and capitalist

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<sup>102</sup> The map was made by the Catalan Gabriel Vallesca at Majorca and includes an inscription stating that the islands were found by a “pilot of the king of Portugal” in 1427. Thomas Bentley Duncan, *Atlantic Islands: Madeira, the Azores, and the Cape Verdes in Seventeenth-century Commerce and Navigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 12. Edgar Prestage notes that the Catalan Map was made by Gabriel Valsecca (not Vallesca) and that the date may have been 1427 or 1432. Prestage, *The Portuguese*, p. 49.

<sup>103</sup> According to Edgar Prestage, de Bruges was granted the captaincy because he had the financial means to undertake the cost of the colonizing venture. Other Flemish settlers of means were also granted captaincies in São Jorge (St. George), Fayal and Pico, thus accounting for the Azores sometimes being referred to as the “Flemish Islands.” Edgar Prestage, *Portuguese Pioneers*, p. 52. Bentley Duncan, writing several decades after Prestage, notes that the “earliest colonizing ventures in Terceira” probably began in the late 1450s, but “are wrapped in obscurity,” thus making no mention of de Bruges. Bentley Duncan, *Atlantic Islands*, p. 16.

<sup>104</sup> H.B. Johnson, “Portuguese Settlement, 1500-1580,” in Leslie Bethell, ed., *Colonial Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) p. 2.

<sup>105</sup> Prestage, *The Portuguese*, pp. 144, 184-5.

agriculture.<sup>106</sup> All of the Portuguese Atlantic islands were uninhabited when discovered by the Portuguese, and there were few or no settlers during the initial stage of exploration and charting. Animals were “put ashore to proliferate” and some were occasionally rounded up, slaughtered and sold in Portugal.<sup>107</sup> In the Azores, for instance, sheep and goats were introduced in 1431 while the first settlers did not arrive until after Prince Henry’s royal authorization to organize the settlement of the islands at the end of the decade.<sup>108</sup> The settlers – Flemish and other European migrants in addition to the Portuguese – tended the livestock for several years before introducing agriculture to the island, with the cultivation of wheat beginning in 1442.<sup>109</sup> Similar patterns emerged in Madeira and the Cape Verde Islands, although rice, cotton, fruit and sugar were cultivated in Cape Verde rather than wheat.<sup>110</sup>

Madeira and the Cape Verde Islands were the only islands to develop the third stage of “capitalist agriculture” based primarily on sugar. The Atlantic islands began to replace the eastern Mediterranean and southern Iberian Peninsula as major sugar producers. The sugar complex developed in the Mediterranean, based on “specialized milling technology,” private, commercial investment and coerced or enslaved labour, was transferred to the Atlantic islands during this time.<sup>111</sup> By the end of the fifteenth century, Madeira was the largest single producer of sugar in the western world.<sup>112</sup> During the

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<sup>106</sup> Johnson, “Portuguese Settlement,” pp. 2-3.

<sup>107</sup> Johnson, “Portuguese Settlement,” p.3.

<sup>108</sup> Johnson, “Portuguese Settlement,” p.3

<sup>109</sup> Johnson, “Portuguese Settlement,” p. 3.

<sup>110</sup> It is perhaps of interest to note that, in southern Portugal, rural properties left vacant in the thirteenth century after the expulsion of propertied Muslims were handed over to knights of the military orders that had participated in the reconquest and *fidalgos*, who in turn “repopulated the land left vacant with livestock.” McAlister, *Spain and Portugal*, p. 9.

<sup>111</sup> Johnson, “Portuguese Settlement,” pp. 26-7.

<sup>112</sup> James Lockhart and Stuart B. Schwartz, *Early Latin America: A History of Colonial Spanish America and Brazil* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 27.

sixteenth century, the Portuguese island of Saint Thomas (São Tomé), off the west coast of Africa, also experienced an economic boom due to sugar. The Portuguese South Atlantic experience with the cultivation of sugar was transferred to Brazil in the mid-sixteenth century. C.R. Boxer has noted that the “transplantation of sugar cultivation and... slavery to Brazil” was a natural outcome of the experience in the Atlantic, and of Saint Thomas in particular.<sup>113</sup> Johnson also notes that it was the Portuguese experience in the South Atlantic islands, “more than in Africa,” that later led to the pattern of colonization undertaken in Brazil.”<sup>114</sup>

The temperate climate of the Azores could not sustain the cultivation of sugar. By the mid-sixteenth century Terceira – one of the main islands and home to the Corte Reais, the Barcelos and João Fernandes – had become a trading and stopover post, providing services to travellers and ships involved in the transatlantic trade.<sup>115</sup> The Azores, thus, established an economy based initially on livestock, then agriculture and then trade.

It is significant that, as shall be explored further in Chapter 4, the Portuguese who intended to settle in North America also transported livestock prior to, or concomitant with, the attempt at settlement. It seems possible, if not likely, that their objective was to move from an initial stage of exploration to one of a settled agricultural community. During the fifteenth century the Azores – temperate islands with no previous inhabitants or economic base – underwent this shift with some success. By 1500, for instance,

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<sup>113</sup> C.R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire 1415-1825* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1969), p. 89.

<sup>114</sup> Johnson, “Portuguese,” p. 2.

<sup>115</sup> Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, pp. 40-1, 126.

Terceira was “an intensively cultivated island” and Angra, its main town, had churches “in the Manueline Gothic style” and paved streets “lined with stone mansions.”<sup>116</sup>

The initial settlement of the Azores and other Portuguese Atlantic islands was not financed by the crown but by private individuals, often nobles. There existed, nonetheless, a close relationship with the crown in these ventures. The medieval precedent of “lordly domain” provided the model for the relationship between the monarchy and individuals of private means. In this system of hereditary grants or gifts, “a large portion of royal jurisdiction over a specified territory and its inhabitants” was granted to “a lord who thereafter acted as the king’s *locum tenens* to the extent spelled out in the gift.”<sup>117</sup> Boxer sees the system of donatary captaincies – based on the Portuguese word *doações* or “gift” – as one that combined feudal aspects of medieval Portugal and “capitalistic elements.”<sup>118</sup> James Lockhart and Stuart B. Schwartz provide a slightly different interpretation, in which the medieval lordships (*senhorios*) were transformed into captaincies used for “imperial ends” and “capitalist agricultural development.”<sup>119</sup> Johnson, however, cautions that attempts to impose “ideological categories” such as these “simply confuse its understanding.”<sup>120</sup> It is clear, nonetheless, that in the Atlantic islands the donatary captaincies constituted a means of territorial expansion (rather than simply a means to generate trade networks, for instance) that benefited both the Portuguese crown and the individuals involved.

In this system, land under crown control was converted to a captaincy. An individual would be given certain powers and privileges, such as legal jurisdiction and a

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<sup>116</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison, *The European Discovery of North America: The Northern Voyages, A.D. 500-1600* (New York: Oxford UP, 1971), p. 211.

<sup>117</sup> Johnson, “Portuguese,” p. 13.

<sup>118</sup> Boxer, *The Portuguese*, p. 87.

percentage of profits from trade or cultivation, and in return would agree to “accept the cost of transporting settlers and initiating economic activities” and govern the newly established settlement or colony.<sup>121</sup> The individual received the hereditary title of “captain and lord proprietor.”<sup>122</sup> For instance, in 1460 King Afonso granted his brother, Dom Fernão, jurisdiction in the Azores and Madeira. According to Christopher Bell, the grants “were in standard form,” with “the recipient, his heirs and successors [receiving] the islands with all rivers, anchorages, forests, fisheries and coral, together with their mines, vineyards and cattle [as well as the] rights of all kinds which had previously belonged to the Crown and all jurisdiction civil and criminal, reserving only cases in which the penalty was death or dismemberment.”<sup>123</sup>

From both an economic and a legal perspective, Portugal’s possessions in the Atlantic (the Azores, Madeira, the Cape Verde Islands and São Tomé) were regarded as territorial extensions of the mainland kingdom. Portuguese expansion elsewhere did not universally emulate this model, however. The factory system implemented in Brazil during the first decades of the sixteenth century, for instance, was motivated by trade, not settlement.

Setting sail for India in 1500, Pedro Álvares Cabral – a *fidalgo* and member of the king’s household – and his crew were blown off course (or intentionally detoured) and found themselves on the shores of present-day Brazil.<sup>124</sup> They remained there for two

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<sup>119</sup> Lockhart and Schwartz, *Early Latin America*, p. 26.

<sup>120</sup> Johnson, “Portuguese Settlement,” p. 14.

<sup>121</sup> Lockhart and Schwartz, *Early Latin America*, p. 26.

<sup>122</sup> Lockhart and Schwartz, *Early Latin America*, p. 26.

<sup>123</sup> Christopher Bell, *Portugal and the Quest for the Indies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 122.

<sup>124</sup> Some historians accept the official account of the Portuguese arrival in Brazil in 1500, which explained it as an accidental landfall. Lockhart and Schwartz, for instance, conclude that “it seems clear from the tone of surprise and wonderment in the letter of 1500” that, if previous contacts had been made with Brazil, they had no impact “on Portuguese mariners.” Lockhart and Schwartz, pp. 181-2. Others assume that knowledge

weeks prior to continuing their journey east. Pedro Vaz de Caminha, writing to the king from Brazil to tell the “news of the finding of this new territory,” described in detail their brief stay along the coast, including their first encounters with native people. “My opinion and every one’s opinion,” he noted, was that “these people lack nothing to become completely Christian except understanding us; for they accepted as we do all they saw us do.”<sup>125</sup> De Caminha also noted the “very extensive” land and woods and an “infinitude of waters,” and concluded that “the country is so well-favoured that if it were rightly cultivated it would yield everything.”<sup>126</sup>

Despite the optimistic report of the expedition’s scribe, the Portuguese crown did not initially express a strong interest in either the religious conversion of the Tupian peoples or the cultivation of the land. In fact, for most of the sixteenth century, Brazil was “peripheral to metropolitan interests,” in part because of the interest in opening up the Asian trade.<sup>127</sup> For the first three decades after Cabral’s landfall, the Portuguese (and the French) traded with the Tupian along the coast, exchanging monkeys and parrots for trinkets and tools. The main economic activity engaged in by the Portuguese at this time, however, was the extraction of dyewood, a forest resource that provided dye for the European textile industry. These activities were carried out through trading posts set up along, or off, the coast.

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of Brazil was kept quiet because the Portuguese crown wanted to conceal “the true situation and extent” of a “southern continent to the west of Africa” from Spain and that when the Treaty of Tordesillas was signed in 1494, the Portuguese king “wanted to include it in his limits.” This is the explanation given, for instance, by the English merchant Robert Thorne in a 1527 letter to the king of England. See Jaime Cortesão, “Pre-Columbian Discovery of America,” *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 9, Iss. 9 (1937), p. 40. See also David B Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. I: America from Concept to Discovery. Early Exploration of North America* (New York: Arno Press, 1979), pp. 185-8 for the relevant part of Robert Thorne’s letter.

<sup>125</sup> Charles David Ley, ed., *Portuguese Voyages 1498-1663* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1953), p. 58.

<sup>126</sup> Ley, ed., *Portuguese Voyages*, pp.58-9.

<sup>127</sup> See, for instance, A.J.R. Russell-Wood, “Centres and Peripheries in the Luso-Brazilian World, 1500-1808,” in *Negotiated Empires: Centres and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820*, eds., Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 105-6.

The Portuguese had used this system of trading, or factory posts (*feitorias*) along the west coast of Africa in the fifteenth century. Modelled after the system used by Venetians, Genoese and Catalans in the Mediterranean, small garrisoned trading posts were established on islands just off the African coast.<sup>128</sup> The first *feitoria* was built in 1445 with the objective of trapping the trans-Saharan trade of the western Sudan and they quickly spread down the coast and then into Asia, reaching as far as the Moluccas.<sup>129</sup> Unlike the Atlantic islands, Africa and Brazil (and other areas encountered by the Portuguese in Asia) were already inhabited, thus posing potential difficulties for permanent occupation. As Johnson has pointed out, the Portuguese could not simply put livestock “ashore to multiply” until the first colonists arrived because of the already present human habitation.<sup>130</sup>

Lockhart and Stewart conclude that the factory system was an excellent way of establishing a permanent commercial base for trade with the existing inhabitants, “without the cost of conquest and occupation.”<sup>131</sup> Merchants, ship owners and nobles were given licenses from the crown to undertake trading voyages.<sup>132</sup> In Brazil, the first *feitoria* was established in 1503 by a consortium of Lisbon merchants in exchange for a three-year trade monopoly.<sup>133</sup> From 1506 to 1534, the factory system was controlled directly by the crown, with approximately half-a-dozen “royal factories” established. Private vessels were licensed to trade with the Tupian. For instance, in 1511 the *Bretoa*, a ship financed by Italian and Portuguese merchants, arrived in Brazil. It loaded

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<sup>128</sup> Lockhart and Schwartz, *Early Latin America*, p. 25.

<sup>129</sup> Boxer, *The Portuguese*, p. 25.

<sup>130</sup> Johnson, “Portuguese Settlement,” p. 7.

<sup>131</sup> Lockhart and Schwartz, *Early Latin America*, p. 25.

<sup>132</sup> Boxer, *The Portuguese*, p. 25.

<sup>133</sup> Johnson, “Portuguese Settlement,” pp. 7-8. They were also required to send six ships a year to Brazil to explore the coastline.

approximately 5,000 dyewood logs that had been cut and transported to the factory by native people, who received “trinkets and small tools” in exchange for their labour.<sup>134</sup>

The French had been active in the area during the same time period, trading directly from ships rather than establishing trading posts, and sending agents to live among the Tupian.<sup>135</sup> Boxer argues that the French – mariners from Normandy and Rouen – were involved in trade along the coast on “as large, or possibly even greater” scale than the Portuguese.<sup>136</sup> The French, as has been mentioned previously, also attempted to establish a permanent presence in Brazil. The Portuguese also came to feel they had to establish a permanent base in Brazil in order to protect what they perceived as their territorial rights according to the Treaty of Tordesillas. In the early 1530s, King João III (1521-1557) dispatched a fleet of five ships and four hundred settlers to Brazil to establish a royal colony in São Vicente. In 1534, the coastline was divided into a dozen captaincies, ten of which were settled in the sixteenth century. It is interesting to note that, unlike the Azores and other Atlantic islands, the *donatários*, or captains, in Brazil were not “great nobles or wealthy merchants.” They were “soldiers of fortune,” bureaucrats, lesser nobility and gentry who had in common a connection with the royal court.<sup>137</sup> Boxer notes that “extensive juridical and fiscal privileges” were granted by the Crown to the captains.<sup>138</sup> These included, for instance, the right to establish townships, collect local taxes, licence buildings such as sugar mills, receive tithes on products such as sugar and fish, and the right of capital punishment. The crown continued to hold a

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<sup>134</sup> Johnson, “Portuguese Settlement,” p. 9. The return cargo also included Tupi natives taken as slaves and various animals.

<sup>135</sup> Johnson, “Portuguese Settlement,” p. 10.

<sup>136</sup> Boxer, *The Portuguese*, p. 86.

<sup>137</sup> Boxer, *The Portuguese*, p.87 and Johnson, “Portuguese Settlement,” p. 13.

<sup>138</sup> Boxer, *The Portuguese*, p. 87.

monopoly with respect to dyewood, and some trade was opened to foreigners.<sup>139</sup> Despite these provisions, only two of the twelve captaincies – in São Vicente and Pernambuco – were initially successful.<sup>140</sup>

During the course of the sixteenth century, thus, Brazil relied first on the factory system used by the Portuguese in Africa and then on the donatary captaincy system used in the Azores and other islands in order to promote trade and then settlement and colonization. The existence of indigenous peoples was key in the decision not to settle Brazil initially, although Portugal's preoccupation with its Asian trade was also a factor. By mid-century (1549), the crown had established a royal government in Brazil in order to further strengthen its territorial claim and the second half of the century saw the development of the sugar industry.

By the end of the fifteenth century, Portuguese activity in North America had declined significantly, while the opposite was true for South America, with the increase in sugarcane cultivation based on enslaved African labour and eventual exploitation of gold and diamond resources. Peripheral to Europe for most of the sixteenth century, Brazil had become critical to Portugal's economic well-being by the seventeenth century.<sup>141</sup> Comparisons beyond the mid-sixteenth century between Brazil and northeastern North America are thus marked by differences rather than similarities. In fact, it is possible that the Portuguese interest in Brazil – both in terms of the profits to be

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<sup>139</sup> Johnson, "Portuguese Settlement," p. 16.

<sup>140</sup> Johnson, "Portuguese Settlement," p. 16. Many of the captains lacked the necessary capital or could not attract settlers. In addition, settlement was hampered in some cases by hostile relations with the native people of the region.

<sup>141</sup> Russell-Wood, "Centres and Peripheries," p. 106.

made and the need to deal with threats to territorial claims there – may have been one of the factors that turned them away from northeastern North America.<sup>142</sup>

The experience of the Portuguese in Brazil does not generally serve as a model for the pattern of Portuguese involvement in northeastern North America, as was the case with the Azores. There are, however, some similarities between sixteenth-century Brazil and the early Portuguese presence in North America. The Portuguese arrived in both areas at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and initial exploration involved the *extraction* of existing wealth (cod, walrus, dyewood) rather than the *creation* of other forms of wealth. In both areas, the crown had an interest in establishing a territorial claim (following the 1494 treaty with Spain), although neither area constituted a priority for the Portuguese crown during most of the 1500s.

In terms of an analysis of Portuguese settlement patterns, perhaps the most important commonality was the presence of indigenous peoples in both northeastern North American and Brazil. Historians have argued that the factory system was used in areas that were inhabited upon contact. This was the case in Brazil, but does not appear to be the case in North America, where the royal grants indicate a desire to establish settlements patterned on the uninhabited Atlantic islands. Given the limited documentation available, it is difficult to determine the nature of Portuguese-Native relations in North America. An examination of general European-Native interactions during the sixteenth century, however (see Chapter 3) may provide insights that allow for informed speculation, at least, regarding potential patterns of interaction between Portuguese would-be settlers and the Mi'kmaq, Beothuk or other aboriginal inhabitants.

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<sup>142</sup> Rosana Barbosa, Saint Mary's University, Halifax. Personal communication, September 9, 2005.

The latter part of this chapter has attempted to examine the role of the Portuguese in the Atlantic and South America to gauge the extent to which these experiences help explain the desire among some Portuguese to establish settlements in northeastern North America in the sixteenth century. While there are some aspects of the Portuguese endeavour in Brazil that point to a need for further analysis, the experience in the Azores is more instructive. The stages of exploration and development of the Azores, and the establishment of settlements based on donatary captaincies, appear to have elements in common with early Portuguese attempts to inhabit North America. In addition, the temperate climate set the Azores apart from other Atlantic Islands such as Madeira and the Cape Verdes as well as tropical Brazil. It seems plausible that the Portuguese experience in the Azores in the 1400s allowed members of the Azorean Corte Real and Barcelos families, as well as the Azorean men and women who participated in the Fagundes settlement, to envision a more permanent presence in northeastern North America several decades – or possibly even a century – earlier than other Europeans. Ignorance of northern winters aside, the venture could have been seen as a logical step in a process of Atlantic expansion.

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The Portuguese presence in northeastern North America suggests that Europeans were indeed interested in settlement in the region in the sixteenth century. The interest may have stemmed from an imperial interest in establishing territorial claims without the need for significant direct investment – given the crown's priorities elsewhere – or a

desire to establish a permanent shore base for the fishery. The comparison with the Portuguese Atlantic seems to highlight a desire to establish a permanent settlement, containing both men and women as well as livestock, that also had sources, possibly the fishery, for the generation of revenue. The latter profile has some elements in common with the first French and English attempts at permanent settlement at Cupids Cove and Port Royal. The settlements of John Guy and de Monts had in common their reliance on a staple commodity – fish or furs – but they also had in common the attempt to create diversified communities based on agriculture and possible sources of wealth (or trade) in addition to saltcod or beaver pelts.

The examination of Port Royal and Cupids Cove, the first French and English permanent settlements in the region in the seventeenth century, helps provide a framework for the discussion of Portuguese settlement in the previous century. It is possible that the Portuguese experience had – in intent if not outcome – more in common with the Cupids Cove and Port Royal experiences than it did with the European seasonal residency of the sixteenth century. If this were to be the case, it would suggest that the current pattern of historiography does not apply on the face of it when the Portuguese experience is factored in. The examination of the Portuguese interest in settlement is thus important because it has the potential to challenge conclusions arrived at by historians regarding early European settlement in the region. As such – and also because the first Portuguese settlement attempt pre-dates similar initiatives of the French and English – it is worthy of both greater consideration and re-consideration. These questions will be revisited following a more detailed look at Portuguese activity in the region – related to exploratory voyages, territorial claims and the migratory fishery – in the next chapter as

well as an examination of the Fagundes, Corte Real and Barcelos interest in settlement in  
Chapter 4.

### **Chapter 3: Islands and Mainlands, Sea Routes and Cod: The Portuguese, Other Europeans and Aboriginal Peoples in Northeastern North America**

Father, before your arrival in these parts where God decreed we should be born and where we have grown like the grasses and the trees you see around you, our most constant occupation was to hunt all sorts of animals so as to eat their flesh and to cover ourselves with their skins.

This was the response given by Mi'kmaq Shaman-Chief Arguimaut to Abbé Maillard in the mid-eighteenth century, when the latter asked him how people occupied themselves and spent their time prior to the “arrival of the Europeans in this region.”<sup>1</sup> Arguimaut goes on to note that they “would also catch all sorts of fish to eat” from lakes, rivers or the sea-shore, that the meat would be consumed “cooked or raw,” and that they would kill only the animals and birds that were required for consumption that day. Finally, the Shaman-Chief also noted the techniques used to light fires – rubbing sun-dried pine wood or striking white beach pebbles against each other “over powdered rotten dried pine wood”.<sup>2</sup>

After the arrival of European explorers, fishers and adventurers in the late fifteenth century, the Mi'kmaq began to hunt not only for food and clothing, but also to trade animal furs for knives, copper kettles, beads and other European goods. Other Algonkian-speaking peoples of the region – the Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, Innu or Montagnais, and Beothuk – would also interact with the new arrivals in various ways,

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Ruth Holmes Whitehead, *The Old Man Told Us: Excerpts from Mi'kmaw History 1500-195*, (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1991), pp. 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> Ruth Holmes Whitehead, *The Old Man*, p. 10.

both friendly and hostile.<sup>3</sup> Although open to debate, the latter – English, French, Portuguese and Basque – were estimated to number 12,000 a year (seasonally) in the 1570s by English merchant Anthony Parkhurst, a number that may have been roughly equivalent to the pre-contact Mi'kmaq population alone.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter explores the European presence in northeastern North America in the late-fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Early Portuguese voyages in search of new lands, and possibly new sea routes, and the Portuguese participation in the fishery will be explored in detail, and placed within the context of similar activities carried out by other Europeans. The chapter ends with some observations on European-aboriginal interaction during the first century of contact, in particular the first decades of the sixteenth century. The limited and sometimes contradictory evidence available from this time period – through maps, documents and oral histories collected at a later date – all combine as “bits of broken mirror glass” (to use Ruth Holmes Whitehead’s term) to give us an impression of the people who traveled to or inhabited this land – seasonally or permanently – and how they occupied their time. Through the description of the above activities, the chapter aims to assess the nature and significance of the Portuguese presence in the region and to provide a backdrop for the discussion in the subsequent chapter of Portuguese settlement activity. Beyond this, the chapter aims to argue that,

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<sup>3</sup> Two major language groups existed in the region – Algonkian and Iroquoian. Native cultures can also be understood according to a combination of geographic territory and “cultural and linguistic affiliations.” In this regard, the Beothuk, Mi'kmaq and Maliseet would be part of the Atlantic region, whereas the Innu would be part of the Northern Woodlands region. It is important to bear in mind, however, that neither “clear-cut boundaries” nor “internal cultural homogeneity” are suggested by these classifications. See the map, “Native Peoples of Canada,” in *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart and the Glenbow Museum, 1988), no pagination.

<sup>4</sup> Ralph Pastore, “The Sixteenth Century: Aboriginal Peoples and European Contact,” in *The Atlantic Region to Confederation: A History*, eds., Phillip A. Buckner and John G. Reid (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 22, 35. Pastore notes that pre-contact estimates of Mi'kmaq population vary from 4,500 to 50,000, but that “a figure of about 12,000 is more on keeping with conventional assumptions about the carrying capacity of their territory.” (p. 35)

although the Portuguese were involved in the seasonal European fishery, much of their interest in the region revolved around land and territorial claims.

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In the fifteenth century, according to David Quinn, the search for “islands which could be exploited in their own right” and attempts to reach Asia by sailing westward were “two lines of thought and action” that were not “mutually exclusive,” with newly found islands, for instance, serving as “jumping off points” in the passage to Asia.<sup>5</sup> Although a southward and eastward sea route to Asia had become known to Europeans by the sixteenth century, Europeans continued to search for sea routes in the northwest (and in northeastern Europe), with European crowns undertaking numerous exploratory voyages in the hemisphere in the century following Columbus’ arrival in the Caribbean, each hoping to be the first to discover the elusive trading route. Did the initial interest of the Portuguese in North America revolve around both the search for new lands to be “discovered” (i.e. possessed in the name of the king of Portugal) and voyages of exploration in search of a westward route to the East?

Perhaps the most persuasive of the early documents describing a Portuguese interest in a northward passage to Asia pre-dates both the Cabot and Columbus landfalls in America and the Portuguese navigation of the southern tip of Africa. It is a 1474 letter from the Florentine Paolo Pozzi Toscanelli to Fernão Martins, a Portuguese cleric and councillor to the king. Martins had been charged with consulting Toscanelli regarding

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<sup>5</sup> David B. Quinn, ed. *North American Discovery Circa 1000-1612* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. xv-xvi.

“the best route to the Indies.”<sup>6</sup> In the letter, Toscanelli makes reference to a previous discussion with Martins regarding “a shorter way of going by sea to the lands of the spices, than that which you are making by Guinea.”<sup>7</sup> The route involves sailing continually westward from Lisbon and is explained in a chart made by Toscanelli (which has not survived). Although controversy regarding the authenticity of the letter has existed among historians, recent opinion “holds that the letter is authentic,” although difficulties exist “about its language that have not been wholly resolved.”<sup>8</sup>

Other examples of a Portuguese interest in a westward route are from the sixteenth century. In a 1567 French report to Catherine of Médicis (Queen mother and regent for Charles IX), for instance, it is noted that the “Portuguese had hopes of finding a much shorter route to the South Sea and the Molucas from... Canada by crossing the country by land, and not by the ordinary route they use.”<sup>9</sup> The French, in other words, believed there to be a Portuguese interest – real or imagined – in a shorter route to the Asian spice capitals. They believed the Portuguese interest in the route was related to Spain’s recent establishment of settlements in the Philippines.<sup>10</sup> The Spaniard Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, in a 1568 statement to the inquisitor Juan de Ovando, also noted the Portuguese interest in settling *Terra Nova* because of the “design which the Portuguese have of reaching China and the Moluccas.”<sup>11</sup> Richard Hakluyt was another voice to report

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<sup>6</sup> Edgar Prestage, *Portuguese Pioneers* (London: A & C Black, 1933), pp. 188-9.

<sup>7</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, A Documentary History of North America to 1612, Vol. 1: America from Concept to Discovery. Early Exploration of North America* (New York, Arno Press, 1979), p. 82-3.

<sup>8</sup> Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol 1.*, p. 82.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in David Quinn, *New American World: A Documentary History of North America to 1612, Volume IV: Newfoundland from Fishery to Colony. Northwest Passage Searches* (New York, Arno Press, 1979), pp. 184-5.

<sup>10</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. IV*, pp. 184-5.

<sup>11</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. IV*, p. 186.

an Azorean voyage to “discover the Northwest passage of America.”<sup>12</sup> All of the above examples have in common references to a Portuguese interest in a northwest passage that were expressed by early modern Europeans who were not themselves Portuguese.

Writing at the end of the nineteenth century for the Royal Society of Canada, George Patterson argued that King Manuel I (1495-1421) was interested in a northwest route to Asia because he was jealous of Spain’s “triumph” in the west and feared that “a shorter way might be found by which they might invade his dominions to the east.”<sup>13</sup> Edgar Prestage, writing almost a half century after Patterson, noted the possibility that the Portuguese were seeking a “shorter route to the spice countries than that discovered by da Gama,” but also believed that the Portuguese crown might have been motivated to travel to the northwest by the “idea that the lands visited by Cabot were in the Portuguese sphere.”<sup>14</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison, among the last of nineteenth-and twentieth-century scholars to emphasize imperial concerns in historical interpretation, asserted that all European voyages up to about 1580, “except for those of farmer Fernandes and fisherman Fagundes,” revolved primarily around searches for a passage to “fabulous Cathay,” thus including other Portuguese voyages among those concerned with a passage to Asia.<sup>15</sup> In his recent text on the Portuguese Empire, on the other hand, A.J.R. Russell-Wood makes

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<sup>12</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. IV*, pp. 186-7.

<sup>13</sup> George Patterson, “The Portuguese on the North-East Coast of America, and the first European attempt at Colonization there. A lost chapter in American History,” *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, Vol. VIII, Section II (1890), p. 130.

<sup>14</sup> Prestage, *The Portuguese Pioneers*, p. 271.

<sup>15</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison, *The European Discovery of America: The Northern Voyages, A.D. 500-1600* (New York: Oxford UP, 1971), p. 211.

no mention of the Portuguese crown being interested in such a passage.<sup>16</sup> Were the Portuguese, in fact, interested in an alternate sea route to East in the sixteenth century?

Contrary to the traditional assertions, Portuguese historian A. Teixeira da Mota, writing in the 1960s, claimed that the Portuguese were not interested in a northwest passage to Asia. The “opinion among English-speaking historians” that the Portuguese king was interested in a “new route to the East through the northwest Atlantic” is not, he asserts, supported by either documentary evidence or logic.<sup>17</sup> Teixeira da Mota noted, for instance, that the royal charters issued at the time focus on islands and lands to be discovered and do not make mention of the search for a new passage to the East. In terms of the logic of a northwest passage search, he concludes that it would have been “absurd” for the Portuguese to spend time and energy searching for another trade route to Asia, “after taking almost three quarters of a century to discover the Cape route.” He also notes that the Portuguese would not have invested considerable energy into this project because the route would have been in Spanish territory in the New World.<sup>18</sup>

Although – as the above French reference signifies – the possibility of a shorter, less costly route might have been enticing to the Portuguese, the logic of investing energy into the search for a new trade route is one that could be questioned, given that the Portuguese had only recently determined that Asia could be reached by sailing southward around Africa. The documentary evidence is less ambiguous. The discovery of new lands is clearly emphasized, whereas the same cannot be said with regard to new trade routes.

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<sup>16</sup> The only mention of the northwest passage in the book concerns Estêvão Gomez, a Portuguese pilot sailing for Spain. The voyage of Gomez is discussed below. A.J.R. Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire, 1415-1808: A World on the Move* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> A. Teixeira da Mota, “Portuguese Navigations in the North Atlantic in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” A Paper Delivered before the University on the Occasion of the Unveiling of the Statue of Gaspa Corte Real in St. John’s on the 8<sup>th</sup> September, 1965 (St. John’s, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1965) pp. 19-20.

Merchants and nobles may have been motivated by opportunities to acquire new lands – a symbol of status and rank – as well as the possibility of new commercial opportunities, while Portuguese monarchs, on the other hand, were likely motivated in their North American ventures (as noted by Edgar Prestage above) by a desire to claim territories in the “New World” that fell within their sphere of influence. Brian Cuthbertson also notes that Portugal would have reacted with concern to the 1497 landfall in the region of John Cabot because the land was thought to be on the Portuguese side of the demarcation line established between Spain and Portugal.<sup>19</sup>

John Cabot, or Zuan Caboto, an Italian sailing for the English during the reign of Henry VII, was not the first European to reach the shores of northeastern North America. The earliest known arrival of Europeans involved Scandinavian seafarers who established a base camp in northwestern Newfoundland – an area known to the Norse as Vinland – towards the beginning of the eleventh century.<sup>20</sup> Historians do not generally see any link between the westward North Atlantic expansion of the Norse and European activity in the hemisphere several centuries later.<sup>21</sup> John Allen, however, contends that English fishermen may have learned about Norse explorations while participating in the Icelandic fisheries and that these “sailors of Bristol, in turn, might have imparted their information

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<sup>18</sup> Teixeira da Mota, “Portuguese Navigations,” p. 22.

<sup>19</sup> Brian Cuthbertson, “Early Portuguese Voyages to North America with Particular Reference to Nova Scotia,” (Halifax Regional Municipality: Heritage and Tourism, February 2000), p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Spreading first across western Europe and then into the Atlantic in search of lands to settle, the Vikings found three lands west of Greenland: Helluland, Markland and Vinland. The archaeological discovery in 1961 of a Norse habitation in L’Anse-aux-Meadows, present-day Newfoundland, has helped confirm the evidence in the Norse sagas regarding this westward movement. According to Margaret Conrad and James Hiller, “current scholarly consensus” sees L’Anse-aux-Meadows as a base camp at the entrance to Vinland, “a region that encompassed the Gulf of St. Lawrence.” Margaret R. Conrad and James K. Hiller, *Atlantic Canada: A Region in the Making* (Don Mills: Oxford UP, 2001), pp. 36-7.

<sup>21</sup> Conrad and Hiller conclude that the Norse “encounter with America... neither changed the European view of the world nor stimulated further voyages westward.” Conrad and Hiller, *Atlantic Canada*, p. 38. Samuel Morison notes that even “Greenland was so forgotten by southern Europe” that when an Azorean

to contacts in the Mediterranean,” thus “bridging the gap of knowledge” between the early medieval and early modern explorers.<sup>22</sup>

Apart from the Norse, no other accounts of a non-aboriginal presence in North America have been conclusively proven. The sixth-century voyage of St. Brendan in a small boat with a group of monks remains a legend of medieval origin.<sup>23</sup> A recent claim that a Chinese village of thousands of people existed in Cape Breton in the fifteenth century is highly speculative, lacking both archaeological confirmation and clear documentary evidence.<sup>24</sup> Other claims however, are based on documentary evidence that has been interpreted by historians as possible or probable proof of European experiences in the region prior to 1497. Among these would-be early explorers are included a Portuguese with an Azorean connection who also had genealogical links to subsequent generations of Azorean-Portuguese travellers.

João Vaz Corte Real had been chamberlain (*porteiro mór* or head porter) to the Infante Dom Fernando in the royal household of King Afonso V (1438-1481) in the

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arrived there in 1500, “it was mapped as a new discovery and given a new name.” Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 61.

<sup>22</sup> John L. Allen, “The Indrawing Sea: Imagination and Experience in the Search for the Northwest Passage, 1497-1632,” in *American Beginnings: Exploration, Culture, and Cartography in the Land of Norumbega*, eds. Emerson W. Baker et. al. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), p. 15. Alan Taylor also notes that Christopher Columbus was known to have sailed to Ireland and England, and may have ventured as far north as Iceland. “If Columbus did indeed make it to Iceland,” Taylor contends, “he probably heard something about the transatlantic voyages and discoveries of the Norse people of western Scandinavia.” Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), p. 33.

<sup>23</sup> St. Brendan was known to have travelled in the waters around Scotland and Ireland. Expeditions further west are speculative and in part based on the appearance of “St. Brendan’s Island” in late medieval marine charts. See Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. 1*, p. 54.

<sup>24</sup> Architect Paul Chiasson claims to have found a low stone wall and several stone platforms that he contends are not European in origin while hiking in Cape Breton in 2003. See Michael Posner, “Did China Discover the Americas?” *The Globe and Mail*, July 16, 2005, p. F8. In addition, Gavin Menzies claims that a Chinese fleet sailed the eastern coast of North America in the fifteenth century. He contends, for instance, that over-crowding on the junks would have lead to a need to establish settlements in the southern part of North America and that two squadrons “crossed the icy waters of the North Atlantic,” with one venturing north past Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and around Greenland before heading east. See Menzies, *1421: The Year China Discovered America* (New York: Perennial, 2004), pp. 323, 343-6.

Algarve in southern Portugal.<sup>25</sup> It is possible that the Corte-Real were a branch – legitimate or illegitimate – of the Da Costa family, which in turn has been connected to both “a modest branch of the House of Burgundy” and the Lisbon Parliament that proclaimed the beginning of the Aviz monarchy in 1385.<sup>26</sup> They were considered to be “gentlemen of the court” or *fidalgos*, and as such the family was one of financial means and also some status.<sup>27</sup> In 1474, João Vaz Corte Real was granted a donatory captaincy for Angra, on the island of Terceira, in the Azores.<sup>28</sup> Morison, in *The European Discovery of America: Northern Voyages*, contends that the king granted Corte Real the captaincy because of his “energy in obtaining colonists for Terceira.”<sup>29</sup> Between 1460 and 1470, foreigners were recruited to settle and develop the central and western islands, many of them “Flemish merchants and adventurers,” and these immigrants “planted the first settlement in Terceira.”<sup>30</sup> It is possible that João Vaz aided Prince Fernando, nephew of Prince Henry and lord proprietor of the central and western islands during the decade in question, in the recruitment of settlers. João Vaz had also been *porteiro mór* to the

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<sup>25</sup> Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 213.

<sup>26</sup> João Vaz Corte Real’s father was believed to be Vasco Annes Corte Real. His father, in turn, was possibly Vasco Annes da Costa. The latter had three male children: the first born Vasco Annes, Gil Vaz da Costa and Afonso Vaz da Costa. It is possible that Vasco Annes had a surname different from that of his brothers because of his illegitimate status, although it has also been suggested that the surname Corte Real was given to him by the king because he was a highly esteemed servant of the monarch. See Eduardo Brazão, *The Corte Real Family and the New World* (Lisbon: Agência-Geral do Ultramar, 1965), pp. 37-40.

<sup>27</sup> Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 213. Darlene Abreu-Ferreira also refers to the Corte Real as “noblemen” from the Azores. Darlene Abreu-Ferreira, *The Cod Trade in Early Modern Portugal: Deregulation, English Domination, and the Decline of Female Cod Merchants*, PhD. Dissertation (St. John’s: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1995), p. 35.

<sup>28</sup> João Vaz Corte Real has been characterized as a “court gentleman” who “devoted himself to trade and agriculture and also built fortifications, a hospital and various improvements” in the Azores as well as a sea adventurer and corsair who kidnapped his Galician wife. Brazão, *The Corte Real Family*, p. 41.

<sup>29</sup> Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 213. João Vaz was also granted a captaincy in São Jorge 10 years later. T. Bentley Duncan notes that the colonization of Terceira and other islands in the Azores proceeded slowly, especially in comparison with Madeira. T. Bentley Duncan, *Atlantic Islands: Madeira, the Azores and the Cape Verdes in Seventeenth-Century Commerce and Navigation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 14.

<sup>30</sup> Bentley Duncan, *Atlantic Islands*, p. 14. As was noted in the last chapter, the first captaincy of Terceira, according to Edgar Prestage, was granted in 1450 to a Flemish servant of Prince Henry.

Duke, and it is likely that the captaincy was granted for all the services provided to the family, not only the recruitment of settlers. The letter patent of donation from Dona Brites, Fernando's widow, states that the donation was "in consideration of the services" he had performed, first for the Infante (Henry) and then for the Duke.<sup>31</sup>

It has also been suggested that the granting of a captaincy in the Azores to the elder Corte Real had to do with northern voyages of exploration. According to Gaspar Frutuoso, sixteenth-century Azorean author of *Saudades da Terra* (a "manuscript compilation of fact and legend" relating family histories and events of local importance), the captaincy was granted to João Vaz because he had discovered, in name of the king, the *Terra Nova dos Bacalhaus* – the Newfoundland of Codfish.<sup>32</sup>

This idea was explored further by Danish historian Sofus Larsen – writing in the second decade of the twentieth century – who contended that Corte Real was part of an expedition which reached Greenland in the early 1470s, and then possibly explored the northeast coast of North America. The expedition was launched as a result of a request made by the king of Portugal to the king of Denmark to send forth ships to search for new lands in the North.<sup>33</sup> An expedition of this kind would not have been unheard of in the fifteenth century. For many Europeans, as historian James Williamson notes, the "sea air

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<sup>31</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison, *Portuguese Voyages to America in the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940), p. 35. The island of Terceira was divided into two captaincies in 1474, "centered upon the two chief settlements of Angra and Praia." Bentley Duncan, *Atlantic Islands*, p. 16.

<sup>32</sup> Morison, *The European Discovery*, pp. 3-4. Morison notes that "Frutuoso is not to be taken seriously as an authority on history," citing as an example Frutuoso's claim that João Vaz may have discovered not only Terceira, but also parts of Brazil and the Cape Verde Islands. Henry Harrisse also contends that João Vaz "was not favoured by the widow... because he had gone off to look for new lands," but states rather that she was expressing a "conventional formula of the time" by granting the captaincy in exchange for services to the family. English translation in Brazão, *The Corte Real Family*, p. 37. See also Prestage, *The Portuguese Pioneers*, p. 187.

<sup>33</sup> The request was written on a mid-sixteenth-century map of Iceland. See Cuthbertson, "Early Portuguese Voyages," p. 4. David Higgs and Grace Anderson note that the expedition was "referred to at various times in the sixteenth century," including a reference on the 1537 Frisius and Mercator globe. See David Higgs

of the late fifteenth century was laden with stories of lost or unknown lands across the ocean.”<sup>34</sup> As was mentioned in the last chapter, the Portuguese had explored, chartered and settled many islands in the mid-and south-Atlantic in the fifteenth century, and the Portuguese crown continued to issue charters of discovery for Atlantic islands in the second half of the fifteenth century.<sup>35</sup> The existence of some islands in the Ocean Sea was known at the time, and the search for more would not have been an enterprise stoked by imagination alone. In addition, the Portuguese excelled other Europeans in ocean travel during the fifteenth century – using lateen sails to sail into the wind against the Atlantic westerlies, for instance, and this expertise would have given the Portuguese a distinct advantage, thus setting the stage for supremacy in Atlantic travel.<sup>36</sup>

Twentieth-century Portuguese historian Jaime Cortesão has been the leading modern proponent of a Portuguese claim to “New World discovery” prior to Columbus or Cabot, although this claim is based on an even earlier voyage than that of João Vaz Corte Real, which interestingly Cortesão has viewed with skepticism.<sup>37</sup> Cortesão’s interpretation of a pre-1497 Portuguese landfall in North America is based in part on stories collected by Christopher Columbus about Portuguese activity in the Atlantic and

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and Grace M. Anderson, *A Future to Inherit: The Portuguese Communities of Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> James A. Williamson, *The Cabot Voyages and Bristol Discovery under Henry VII* (Cambridge: The Hakluyt Society, 1962), p. 22.

<sup>35</sup> In 1473, for instance, Ruy Gonçallves de Camara was issued a royal charter of donation to “appropriate barren lands, corporal, real and actual... without being encumbered or disturbed by anybody,” with the condition that the land “must not be situated beyond Cape Verde.” The following year, Fernão Telles was also granted, as a reward for services to the “Kingdom” in Africa – and elsewhere – islands to be discovered with his own ships, as long as “such islands are not in the seas of Guinea.” For the full text of these and similar charters, see Quinn, *New American World*, Vol. 1, pp. 78-82.

<sup>36</sup> Although the Portuguese also excelled in ship-building (as noted in the previous chapter) and latitude sailing, these were later inventions. Latitude sailing, for instance, dates to 1485 and the three-masted caravel to the last decades of the fifteenth century. See Cuthbertson, “Early Portuguese Voyages,” p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> He notes that it “seems to me proved” that the expedition reached Greenland, but it is “rather doubtful” that it reached North America. Jaime Cortesão, “The Pre-Columbian Discovery of America,” *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. IX, Iss. IX? (1937) pp. 35-6.

compiled by Bartolomé de las Casas in the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>38</sup> The specific text cited by Cortesão notes that inhabitants of the Azores had made it known to Columbus that they had seen pine-trunks “when the winds blew strong from the west and north-west” as well as “the bodies of two dead men who seemed very broad in the face and of an appearance different from that of Christians,” and, finally, “certain islands” to the west.<sup>39</sup> One of the inhabited islands to the west was thought to be the *Ilha das Sete Cidades* (Island of the Seven cities), also identified as Antilla, and, in 1452, Diego de Tieve (or Detiene) and Pedro de Velasco, his Spanish pilot, set out in search it.<sup>40</sup> The Bartolomé de Las Casas document states that, after having discovered the island of Flores in the western Azores, they “went so far to the north-east that they reached Cape Clear [Cabe de Clara], which is in Ireland towards the east.”<sup>41</sup>

Cortesão cites the above reference as an example of a Portuguese having landed in North America, but bases his conclusion on his own correction of “an error of the text.” The reference to sailing in a northeasterly direction from Flores, Cortesão contends, could not have been accurate due to previous knowledge of the Island of the Seven Cities existing to the west. As such, the voyage of de Tieve and Velasco must have been in a

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<sup>38</sup> For a translated version of the Spanish text from Bartolomé de las Casas’ *Historia*, see David Quinn, *New American World, Vol. I*, pp.76-8.

<sup>39</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. I*, pp. 76-7.

<sup>40</sup> The existence of the Island of the Seven Cities is based on a legend, documented in sixteenth-century Portuguese histories and in the writings of Ferdinand Columbus, that a group of Medieval Portuguese, fleeing the Moors and led by a bishop, arrived in the island. See Quinn, *England and the Discovery of America*, p. 60. Gavin Menzies sights this “local story of non-European bodies washed onto the beach” as possible evidence that “the Chinese may have inhabited the Azores.” Menzies, *1421*, p. 345.

<sup>41</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. I*, pp. 77-8. Seven of the nine Azorean islands had been discovered by 1439, with Flores and Corvo, the “most isolated” and “stormiest” of the islands being discovered at this latter date. See Bentley Duncan, *Atlantic Islands*, p. 12.

northwesterly direction, with the two and their crew eventually reaching the Grand Banks.<sup>42</sup>

Although the above evidence suggests a possible Portuguese presence in northeastern North America a quarter, or perhaps a half, century before Cabot, it is not conclusive, and the question remains open to interpretation and confirmation. Quinn, for instance, notes the possibility that João Vaz Corte Real may have discovered part of North America but acknowledges that “positive evidence” of this is lacking.<sup>43</sup> Although some historians claim that the evidence is lacking due to a “Policy of Silence” (or “Secrecy”) on the part of the Portuguese crown regarding their explorations – a policy designed to “hide from Portugal’s rivals the new techniques she had mastered and the new discoveries made” – other historians tend to be sceptical, if not dismissive, of the secrecy theories.<sup>44</sup> Morison, for instance, has reviewed the evidence for a *política de sigilo*, including the disappearance of maps and sketches, the petitioning of the king to exclude foreigners in newly acquired Portuguese lands and the link between secrecy and the Portuguese interest in establishing a demarcation line in the Atlantic between the two Iberian powers.<sup>45</sup> He arrives at the conclusion, however, that it is “fantastic to infer from absence of evidence that important discoveries must have been made.”<sup>46</sup> He further argues that the logic of basing Portuguese titles to land in North America on early

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<sup>42</sup> Cortesão, “Pre-Columbian Discovery,” p. 32. Cortesão notes the “correction of this error” in both the Las Casas text and the text of Ferdinand Columbus, who also compiled the works of his father.

<sup>43</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol I*, p. 74.

<sup>44</sup> Bailey W. Diffie, “Foreigners in Portugal and the ‘Policy of Silence,’” *Terrae Incognitae, The Annals of the Society for the History of Discoveries*, Vol. 1 (1969), p. 24. Darlene Abreu-Ferreira notes that the policy of secrecy “has been expounded especially by Portuguese historians, notably Eduardo Brazão, Jaime Cortesão and Vitorino de Magalhães,” with Brazão contending that errors on early maps were sometimes committed intentionally to confuse rivals. Darlene Abreu-Ferreira, “Portugal’s Cod Fishery in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century: Myths and Misconceptions,” in *How Deep is the Ocean? Historical Essays on Canada’s Atlantic Fishery*, eds., James E. Candow & C. Corbin (Sydney: UCCB Press, 1997), pp. 31-2.

<sup>45</sup> Morison, *Portuguese Voyages*, pp. 76-8, 83.

<sup>46</sup> Morison, *Portuguese Voyages*, p. 86.

sixteenth-century voyages, and not earlier ones, “would be as reasonable as for the English to have suppressed all knowledge of John Cabot, and to have based the English title to North America on the voyages of Frobisher and Gilbert.”<sup>47</sup>

It follows, thus, that if the English had arrived in North America prior to Cabot, that knowledge would not have been suppressed. Speculation with respect to a pre-1497 (and post-Norse) European arrival in North America is not, however, confined to Portuguese would-be travellers. The English, likewise had a similar claim for a pre-1497 arrival in North America. In 1480 and again in 1481, seamen and merchants from Bristol – aware of the Portuguese presence in the Azores and Madeira – set sail “to serch and fynd a certaine Ile called the Isle of Brasile” and may have travelled as far westward as North America, although conclusive evidence of a North American landfall has yet to emerge.<sup>48</sup>

As historian John Allen points out, whether “or not the English discovery of the New World predated the initial Columbian voyage probably does not matter a great deal.”<sup>49</sup> What is of significance is the European movement across the Atlantic, with both England and Portugal turning their “prows to the west and north well before 1492.” Turning the prow westward from the Azores is more a metaphor for an exploratory

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<sup>47</sup> Morison, *Portuguese Voyages*, p. 86.

<sup>48</sup> Quinn, ed. *North American Discovery*, pp. 34-5. The quotation is from an inquiry into the trading activities of Thomas Croft, a customs official in Bristol. A letter (from December, 1497 or January, 1498) written by the English merchant John Day suggesting that land explored by John Cabot “was found and discovered in the past by the men from Bristol who found ‘Brasil’” also raises the possibility that English mariners had arrived on the eastern shores of North America prior to 1497. See Quinn, *North American Discovery*, pp. 43-5. It is interesting to note that a map produced around 1490 and likely of Portuguese origin, the “Paris Map,” clearly outlines both the Isle of Brasil and the Island of the Seven Cities. This was, according to David Quinn, the “type of chart that would have led Bristol men into the Atlantic.” David Beers Quinn, *England and the Discovery of America, 1481-1620* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), p. 60. Abreu-Ferreira also notes the possibility that “Bristol fishers” maintained a policy of secrecy in order to keep the location of rich fishing grounds a secret. Abreu-Ferreira, “Portugal’s Cod Fishery,” pp. 31-2.

mindset than a nautical reality, given the difficulties mariners would have had attempting to sail in a direct western course from the Azores because of the prevailing westerlies.<sup>50</sup> Mariners would have likely sailed in a northerly direction towards Greenland (as was probably the case with João Vaz Corte Real) and then westward across the Labrador Sea.

Another Azorean to venture north in the fifteenth century was João Fernandes. Also known as the *Lavrador*, Fernandes was a small landed proprietor from Terceira. Fernandes was a “friend and neighbour” of Pedro Maria de Barcelos, an Azorean landowner, and Fernandes also farmed the Barcelos land.<sup>51</sup> There is speculation that Fernandes and Barcelos undertook a northern voyage of exploration in 1492, although this seems improbable, given that – according to Pedro Barcelos – the voyage lasted three years and Fernandes was thought to be in Bristol in 1493.<sup>52</sup> The Barcelos family connection is worth noting because, as will be discussed in the next chapter, members of the Barcelos family may have attempted to settle in North America in the 1560s.

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<sup>49</sup> D’Abate and Konrad, “General Introduction,” in *American Beginnings: Exploration, Culture, and Cartography in the Land of Norumbega*, ed. Emerson W. Baker, et. al., (Lincon: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), p. xxi.

<sup>50</sup> Cuthbertson, “Early Portuguese Voyages,” p. 6 and Bentley Duncan, *Atlantic Islands*, p. 17.

<sup>51</sup> Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 211. A. Davis describes Fernandes as “a landholder or labrador under the captaincy of the Corte-Real family.” Given that both the Barcelos and Corte Real families were Terceira nobility, they would have been known to each other, and it is certainly possible that Fernandes would have had some connection to both these families. A. Davis, “Fernandes, João,” 2000, Online. *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. University of Toronto/Université Laval.

<sup>52</sup> Eduardo do Canto, the nineteenth-century Azorean historian, believed the voyage had taken place in the first months of 1492, thus placing it chronologically earlier than the Columbus’ October landfall. See Cuthbertson, “Early Portuguese Voyages,” p. 6. Edgar Prestage states that Fernandes and “Barcellos” left in early 1492, were away for three years and, because of the long absence, probably “made more than on expedition.” Prestage, *The Portuguese Pioneers*, p. 270. Documents from the Public Records Office, however, show that a “John Furnandus” shipped sugar to Bristol from Lisbon in 1492 and cloth from Bristol to Lisbon the following year. See Quinn, *England and the Discovery*, p. 57. The Barcelos claim that the voyage lasted three years comes from a 1506 lawsuit, in which Barcelos states that upon his return from the voyage with João Fernandes “lavrador,” he found “his people” had been driven from his land. In Quinn, *New American World, Vol. 1*, pp. 154-5. It is possible, then, that Fernandes was away from the Azores for three years, but traveled to both Bristol and Lisbon and used the ports as departure points for further northern voyages.

Fernandes was given a patent from the king in 1499, granting him the governorship of any lands “either inhabited or uninhabited,” that Fernandes “may discover and find anew.”<sup>53</sup> It is interesting to note that the award was made to a *lavrador* rather than a *fidalgo* in this case. Fernandes was granted a governorship with the “same revenues, honours, profits and advantages” granted to the governors of the “islands of Madeira and the others.”<sup>54</sup> Although Labrador bears his name, Fernandes is thought to have encountered Greenland.<sup>55</sup> According to Morison, Fernandes returned to Terceira empty-handed, disappointed and indeed offended to learn that Gaspar Corte Real had also been given a patent of discovery. He left the Azores for Bristol where he became part of an “Anglo-Azorean syndicate” in 1501-2.<sup>56</sup> Nothing is known of him after this.

Gaspar Corte Real was one of the six children – three sons and three daughters – of João Vaz Corte Real and his Galician wife, Maria de Abarca.<sup>57</sup> The eldest, Vasco Annes, inherited his father’s governorship in the Azores, but it was probably his other two sons, Gaspar and Miguel, who spent more time on Terceira. Gaspar, the youngest sibling, at times served as acting Governor of the Corte Real captaincy in Terceira – and also of the island of São Jorge after 1484 – during the absence of his father or elder

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<sup>53</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, p. 145.

<sup>54</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, p. 145.

<sup>55</sup> Writing in 1541, Alonso de Santa Cruz (“Islario general de todas las islas del mundo”) noted that Greenland “was called Labrador because a *lavrador* from the Azores gave information and intelligence of it to the King of England...” Quoted in Bernard G. Hoffman, *Cabot to Cartier: Sources for a Historical Ethnography of Northeastern North America 1497-1550* (University of Toronto Press, 1961), p. 14. The name was transferred to present-day Labrador at a later date. Cuthbertson, “Early Portuguese Voyages,” p. 6.

<sup>56</sup> Morison, *The European Discovery*, pp. 212-213. A Davies notes that João Fernandes had probably “traded with Bristol from 1486 on and so became linked with the English voyages to America as well as with Portuguese voyages.” Davies, “Fernandes, João,” online.

<sup>57</sup> Vasco Anes was the eldest, followed by Miguel, Joana, Eyria, Isabel – whose husband became captain of the island of Faial – and Gaspar. Brazão, *The Corte-Real Family*, pp. 105-6.

brother.<sup>58</sup> After his father's death in 1496, Gaspar became deputy captain of the town of Angra in Terceira in service to his brother.<sup>59</sup>

As has been noted, the Corte Real family had close connections to the royal family, and the favour of the royal court in the granting of captaincies held by the elder Corte Real (João Vaz) was to continue among subsequent generations. In May, 1500, King Manuel I (1495-1521) granted João Vaz' youngest son a patent of discovery which noted that Gaspar had "made efforts in the past, on his own account and at his own expense, with ships and men, to search out... some islands and a mainland" and was "desirous of continuing this search."<sup>60</sup> The patent stated that the voyage would be carried out at the risk and expenditure of Gaspar Corte Real, who would be granted "by right and heredity for ever," the governorship of any "island or islands, or mainland" discovered.<sup>61</sup> The document further stated that he was to be granted civil and criminal jurisdiction over any such lands and that it was the wish of the king that he and his heirs "govern and rule the mainland or islands so found" in the name of the crown and its successors.<sup>62</sup> Another stipulation was that Gaspar and his successors would receive one-fourth of any revenues

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<sup>58</sup> L.A. Vigneras, "Corte-Real, Gaspar," October, 2003. Online. *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2000.

<sup>59</sup> Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 214.

<sup>60</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. 1*, p. 146. Gaspar was probably born around 1450, making him about 50 years old at the time of his first northern voyage. Eduardo Brazão notes that earlier references to João Vaz Corte Real in *Saudades da Terra* as discoverer of the Newfoundland of Codfish might have been a mistake and the text should have noted Gaspar (who would have been in his 20s then) as the discoverer. This discovery, then, would be the one referred to in the 1500 royal patent, which would indicate that the islands and mainland being granted to Gaspar had already been visited. Brazão states his belief that "the islands and mainland were already known." Although possible, this seems a speculative interpretation rather than a definitive conclusion. See Eduardo Brazão, *The Corte-Real Family*, pp. 106, 110-111. Brian Cuthbertson notes, on the other hand, an agreement among historians that the wording of the 1500 grant "means that Gaspar had before 1500" undertaken "voyages of discovery, but had been unsuccessful in discovering new islands and mainlands." Cuthbertson, "Early Portuguese Voyages," p. 9.

<sup>61</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. 1*, p. 146.

<sup>62</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. 1*, p. 146.

generated from trade or other means.<sup>63</sup> They would also have “the privilege of mills, salt, ovens, machines and mill-races and all that the governors of our other islands now have and enjoy by grants from us.”<sup>64</sup> Finally, the “office and power of governor of a fort and the rights thereto pertaining, and with all the other honours, privileges and powers that are granted to him” were also included in the patent from Manuel I.<sup>65</sup> This patent, with reference to hereditary rights, trade revenues, forts and mills, was similar to other captaincies granted to Portuguese individuals in the Atlantic islands, as seen in the previous chapter. This suggests that the Portuguese crown viewed northern voyages in much the same way that it viewed middle and southern Atlantic ones. Merchants or nobles who were able to finance exploratory voyages within the Portuguese sphere of influence would discover and possess lands in the name of the king of Portugal and, in return, would be granted substantial rights including the governorship of the newly acquired land(s).

This broad Atlantic perspective is reflected in the sixteenth-century writing of Damião de Góis, author of *Crónica do Felicíssimo Rei Dom Manuel*, with respect to Gaspar’s 1500 voyage north.<sup>66</sup> According to de Góis, Gaspar – “an adventurous and courageous man, wishing to gain honour” – sailed north rather than south in his search for new lands because “others had already made many discoveries” to the south.<sup>67</sup> If Gaspar’s father had engaged in a northern voyage of exploration of some sort, this could possibly have given Gaspar an added incentive to venture north rather than south. De

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<sup>63</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, p. 146

<sup>64</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, p. 146.

<sup>65</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, pp. 146-7.

<sup>66</sup> The first part of the *Crónica* was published in Lisbon in 1566. In Quinn, ed. *New American World*, Vol. 1, p. 152. Eduardo Brazão describes de Góis as “the illustrious humanist and friend of Erasmus.” Brazão, *The Corte-Real Family*, p. 113.

<sup>67</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, p. 152.

Góis wrote that Gaspar set sail from Lisbon in September, 1500, but an account of the voyage written in 1563 by António Galvão stated that Gaspar “went from the Iland Tercera with two ships well appointed at his own cost” and returned “unto the Citie of Lisbon.”<sup>68</sup> Galvão also noted that Gaspar sailed north to a latitude of 50 degrees to a land “now called after his name.”<sup>69</sup> Although it is possible that Gaspar reached present-day Newfoundland on this voyage – a “cool land” with “big trees” – he may have arrived only as far as Greenland before returning to Lisbon.<sup>70</sup>

Gaspar set out again the following year, with the “sole purpose,” according to Albert Cantino, an Italian living in Lisbon at the time, “of finding out if it were possible to discover in that region [the northern parts] any lands or islands.”<sup>71</sup> Cantino’s account of the voyage is based on “all that in my presence was told the king by the captain” of one of the returning ships.<sup>72</sup> Cantino wrote to the Duke of Ferrara that, five months after setting sail from Lisbon, Gaspar and his crews “met huge masses of solid snow floating upon the seas and moving under the influence of the waves.” The ships collected fresh water from the icebergs before continuing on. After a few days, they encountered frozen seas, and so “began to turn towards the north-west and the west,” and after three more

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<sup>68</sup> António Galvão, *Tratado que compos o nobre & notavel capitão António Galvão, dos diversos & desvaryrados caminhos por onde nos tempos passados a pimenta e especiaria veio da India...* in Quinn, *New American World*, Vol. 1, p. 152. See also Brazão, *The Corte-Real Family*, pp. 112-3 for a more complete title.

<sup>69</sup> The English translation compiled by David Quinn states that it was 56 degrees, with 50 degrees given in parenthesis as being “in the Portuguese.” Quinn, ed. *New American World*, Vol. 1, p. 152.

<sup>70</sup> Morison concludes that it was “undoubtedly” Newfoundland. Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 215. Cuthbertson notes that Damião de Góis, from whom the description comes of a land that is “very cool and green with many trees, as are all the lands in that area,” may have confused Gaspar’s second voyage with his first and, as such, Gaspar would have arrived at Cape Farewell, Greenland. Cuthbertson, “Early Portuguese Voyages,” p. 8.

<sup>71</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, p. 148. In a letter written to Hercules d’Este, Duke of Ferrara, regarding the voyage. Henry Harrisse notes that Cantino’s identity and reasons for being in Portugal are not known definitively, but that he may have been one of many Italian merchants living in Lisbon at the time. “... Nous ne savons en quelle qualité il habitait le Portugal... Ce n’était peut-être qu’un

months of sailing they “caught sight between these two courses of a very large country which they approached with very great delight.”<sup>73</sup> Cantino’s letter continues with the following description:

And since through this region numerous large rivers flow into the sea, by one of these they made their way about a league inland, where on landing they found abundance of most luscious and varied fruits, and trees and pines of such measureless height and girth, that they would be too big as a mast for the largest ship that sails the sea. No corn of any sort grows there, but the men of that country say they live altogether by fishing and hunting animals, in which the land abounds, such as very large deer, covered with extremely long hair, the skins of which they use for garments and also make houses and boats thereof, and again wolves, foxes, tigers and sables.<sup>74</sup>

Another account of this voyage, written by the Venetian ambassador in Lisbon, Pietro Pasqualigo, shortly after the arrival in Lisbon of the first of the caravels to have made the round-trip, notes that the crew of the ship believed they had encountered a mainland which was connected to “another land” discovered the previous year by the king’s ships.<sup>75</sup> After sailing “600 miles or more” along the coast, they also felt the land was connected to the Antilles and to “the land of the Parrots recently found by the king’s vessels on their way to Calicut” – a reference to Brazil.<sup>76</sup> The Venetian ambassador notes the king’s pleasure in the news of these lands, which could “secure without difficulty and in a short time a very large quantity of timber for making masts and ships’ yards,’ as well

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de ces négociants italiens, établis dans les ports de la péninsule...” Quoted in Brazão, *The Corte-Real Family*, p. 116.

<sup>72</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, p. 148.

<sup>73</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, p. 152. Samuel Morison states that the second voyage included three ships, with Cantino being present in Lisbon when two of the three ships returned. He also points out that Cantino’s account of the timelines of the voyage cannot be accurate, given that they left in May and returned in October, being away for a total of five months. Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 215.

<sup>74</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, pp. 148-9.

<sup>75</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1 p. 150.

<sup>76</sup> Pasqualigo wrote two letters, possibly to his brothers, one on October 18, 1502 and one dated the following day. In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, pp. 149-151.

as slaves, “fit for every kind of labour.”<sup>77</sup> The passage also makes reference to increasing the king’s “fleet for India,” thus drawing a connection between North America and Portuguese endeavours in Asia. The link, however, is the use of timber from the lands to the north in the building of masts for ships travelling to India, and not in the possibility of a northern route to India.

The description of a mainland connected to land discovered the previous year, as well as the reference to timber made by Pasqualigo and Cantino both indicate an arrival in North America rather than Greenland, the latter having vegetation such as shrubs and grasses on the southwestern shores, but not trees tall enough to provide ship’s masts. In addition, Greenland was inhabited by Inuit people at the time, and the descriptions of the aboriginal peoples encountered are more likely to be Innu, Beothuk or Mi’kmaq.<sup>78</sup>

Early Portuguese maps also indicate that Gaspar landed in North America – in his second voyage if not the first. One such map is a planisphere that Alberto Cantino sent to the Duke of Ferrara in 1502 (the map-maker’s name is unknown and it is often referred to as the Cantino Planisphere).<sup>79</sup> An island, placed just to the east of the demarcation line established by the Tordesillas Treaty (i.e. in the Portuguese sphere), and illustrated with tall trees, lies in the North Atlantic west of Greenland. It is labelled as *Terra del Rey de Portugall*. (Land of the King of Portugal). An inscription on the map above Newfoundland indicates that the “discovery was made by Gaspar de Corte Real,” who “sent thence a ship with certain men and women which lived in this land.” The

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<sup>77</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, p. 150.

<sup>78</sup> Cantino, for instance, notes that “except for the terribly harsh look of the men, they appear ... to be in all else of the same form and image as ourselves,” and that they “go quite naked except for their privy parts, which they cover with ... deer.” In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1., p. 149.

<sup>79</sup> The map remained in the “archives of the House of Este, in Ferrara, until 1592.” It was discovered in the nineteenth century in a butcher shop, where it was being used as a screen. It was then restored and “presented to the Este Library.” See Hoffman, *Cabot to Cartier*, p. 41.

inscription also notes that Gaspar “remained with his other ship and has not since returned.”<sup>80</sup> A map by Pedro Reinel, made in 1504 or later, also provides evidence of Portuguese voyages to the northeast through the presence of Portuguese flags.<sup>81</sup>

Gaspar and all those aboard the third ship were never to return, perishing at some point during the voyage. Gaspar’s brother, Miguel, inherited the patent of discovery in January, 1502.<sup>82</sup> In the letter acknowledging the older brother’s hereditary rights, it is noted that Miguel – described as a “nobleman of the court” and “major-domo” – had also spent money in “fitting out” ships for Gaspar’s expedition and had accompanied his brother on the second of the two expeditions, for which his brother promised to “share with him ... the said land he should thus discover.”<sup>83</sup>

According to Damião Góis, Miguel left Lisbon on May 10, 1502 in search of his brother. He set sail with two ships “equipped at his own cost,” but, like his brother before him, he was not heard of again.”<sup>84</sup> Miguel, also, was presumed to have perished at some point during the voyage, although there has been speculation that he survived, and lived in – or at least passed through – present-day New England. The evidence for this is based on inscriptions found on a rock near Narragansett Bay across from Dighton,

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<sup>80</sup> English translation in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, p. 149. “Esta terra he descoberta per mandado do muy alto exçelentissimo P principe Rey dom manuel Rey de portugual a qual descobrio gaspar de corte Real caualleiri na cassa do ditto Rey, a quall quãdo a descobrio mandou hu naujo com ceros omes & molheres que achou na dita terra ...” The original Portuguese is reproduced in George F.W. Young, *Miguel Corte-Real and the Dighton Writing-Rock* (Taunton: Old Colonial Historical Society, 1970), p. 212. The Cantino Planisphere also has an inscription beside Greenland related to the 1500 voyage which states that the land is “believed to be the point of Asia.” (“... se cree ser esta a ponta dasia E...”) See Quinn, p. 149 and Young, p. 112.

<sup>81</sup> The map is also referred to as the Kuntsmann I because of the plate number assigned to it in F. Kunstmann, *Atlas zur Entdeckungsgeschichte Amerikas* (Munich, 1859). Quinn notes that the map also shows “that Portuguese explorers were penetrating north of Newfoundland” and that they “were making systematic records of both latitude and variation.” Quinn, ed., *New American World: A Documentary History of North America to 1612, Volume I: America from Concept to Discovery. Early Exploration of North America* (New York: Arno Press, 1979), p. 481. The map is reproduced in the same volume (see number 24). The exact date of the map is not known, a point that will be returned to in Chapter 4.

<sup>82</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, pp. 151-2.

Massachusetts, which were thought to be Portuguese in origin. In the 1920s, Edmund Delabarre claimed to have deciphered the inscription “Miguel Cortereal” along with the date 1511 and an emblem which could have been the Portuguese coat of arms in the rock.<sup>85</sup> The 1511 date assumes that Miguel survived for at least nine years and that he either was ship-wrecked near by and lived in the area – suggesting a friendly relationship with the inhabitants of the area – or that he was ship-wrecked further north and made his way south by land.<sup>86</sup> Although the act of leaving inscriptions in rocks was practiced elsewhere by the Portuguese, historians have raised doubts about the Dighton Rock being conclusively of Portuguese origin.<sup>87</sup> As with the early Portuguese voyages to North America, the survival of Miguel in North America for almost a decade (if not longer) is a point open to debate.

In 1503, King Manuel I – for whom “the loss of these two brothers was felt very deeply,” according to Góis – sent two armed vessels in search of Gaspar and Miguel, but did not find them. The third, and eldest, Corte Real brother – Vasco Annes (or Vasqueannes) also wanted to undertake a voyage in 1503 to search for his brothers, but the king “refused to let him go.”<sup>88</sup> There were thus four Portuguese expeditions between 1500 and 1503. Information regarding the “actual events” of these undertakings is

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<sup>83</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, p. 151.

<sup>84</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, p. 153.

<sup>85</sup> Edmund Delabarre, a psychology professor at Brown University, published a book and an article – *Recent History of Dighton Rock* (Cambridge, 1919) and “Dighton Rock: The Earliest and Most Puzzling of New England Antiquities,” *Old-Time New England* (Boston, October 1923), pp. 51-72 – in which he explored the “interesting possibility” that the engravings were of Portuguese origin. A popular myth that Miguel Corte Real was responsible for the Dighton Rock inscription persisted well into the twentieth century. See George F.W. Young, *Miguel Corte-Real*, pp. 11-12, 47-49, 101-2.

<sup>86</sup> Young, *Miguel Corte-Real*, p. 88.

<sup>87</sup> Portuguese historian José Maria Cordeiro de Sousa, for instance, has noted that the forms of the letters were atypical for the time, as was the use of Arabic numerals instead of Roman ones. See Young, *Miguel Corte-Real*, pp. 77, 89. Samuel Morison concludes that the rock, which contains many other engravings, “is essentially an Algonkin petroglyph displaying crude human and animal figures, on which later visitors have overlaid their names.” Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 247.

available for only the 1501 voyage of Gaspar and derives from the captain and crew members of the returning vessels.<sup>89</sup> The Pasqualigo documents as well as the Cantino letter and map and the Pedro Reinel map, taken together, provide conclusive evidence that the Corte Real brothers did indeed arrive in North America at the beginning of the sixteenth century. They – as well as the original letters patent – lend support to (or at least do not contradict) the claim by historian Teixeira da Mota, outlined above, that the Portuguese crown was interested in territorial claims in the region rather than a northwest sea route to Asia. The labelling of lands to the north as being of the Corte Reals and of the king of Portugal clearly contradicts English claims established by the 1497 Cabot journey, although Manuel I, and subsequent Portuguese monarchs, chose not to act upon the claim to any significant degree.<sup>90</sup> As was noted in the last chapter, to the extent that the Portuguese crown was involved in the Americas at the beginning of the sixteenth century, it was interested in defending claims in Brazil rather than further north.

The sixteenth-century documents pertaining to early Portuguese voyages to northeastern North America, the Cantino Planisphere and Reinel map in particular, are nonetheless significant. They demonstrate an interest not only in exploration, but also in the claiming of territories in the name of the Portuguese crown by individuals who were granted governorships in the new islands and lands in return for having financed the voyages of exploration. The interest in the landward potential of the region was thus

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<sup>88</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. 1*, p. 153.

<sup>89</sup> Young, *Miguel Corte-Real*, p. 31.

<sup>90</sup> The Portolan World Chart (c. 1500), also known as the Juan de la Cosa Mappemonde, staked a British claim on the region following John Cabot's 1497 voyage. Morantz, Alan, *Where is Here? Canada's Maps and the Stories They Tell*, (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2002), p. 82. Juan de la Cosa, the mapmaker, was a cartographer on Columbus' second voyage (1493-4) and it is unclear how he arrived at the information that lead him to place English flags in the northern part of the New World half of the map. Although 1500 is generally given as the date the map was made, it may have been compiled as late as 1509, making the

expressed both by the monarchy and by people – farmers, merchants or nobles – operating out of their own initiative.

The early Portuguese voyages represent efforts to document and chart the peoples and geography of North America, including the contours of the eastern North American coastline. Subsequent voyages by Europeans in the next two or three decades would significantly augment this understanding, providing cartographical information – with varied degrees of accuracy – on the coasts from Florida to Labrador. Of the many voyages – such as those of John and Sebastian Cabot, Giovanni da Verrazzanno, Estêvão Gomez and Jacques Cartier – one in particular bears brief mention.

The Spanish expedition of 1524 or 1525 led by Estêvão Gomez – one among many Portuguese to “sail in the service of Castile” – explored the eastern coast of North America at least as far north as Cape Breton.<sup>91</sup> Knowledge of the voyage comes largely from several charts prepared by Diogo Ribeiro and from the sixteenth-century chronicles and maps of Alonso de Santa Cruz, neither of which outline the specific route taken. The 1529 Ribeiro Map identifies land south of the “TIERA NOVA DE CORTEREAL” as the “TIERA DE ESTEVA GOMEZ,” while another Ribeiro chart prepared three years later puts the Gomez lands south of the “TIERA NVEVA DELOS BACALLAOS.”<sup>92</sup> It is interesting to note that at least two decades after the first known Portuguese voyages to

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Cantino Planisphere the first to portray early sixteenth-century voyages to the New World. De la Cosa's map was found in an antique shop in Paris in 1833. Morison, *The European Voyages*, pp. 217, 238-9.

<sup>91</sup> Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, p. 5. Gomez had participated in the global circumnavigation of 1519-22 and used this experience to convince Charles V (Carlos I) that he could find a better route. Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 326.

<sup>92</sup> This portion of the map is reproduced in Eduardo Brazão, *A Descoberta da Terra Nova* (Lisboa: Agência-Geral Do Ultramar, 1964), no pagination. See also Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. 1*, Plates No. 47, No. 49 and No. 50 for reproductions of the 1529 Ribeiro and 1545 Santa Cruz maps.

the region, the land to the west of Greenland continued to be identified as that of the Corte Real family.<sup>93</sup>

Unlike the early Portuguese journeys to the region, the voyages of Gomez and others were more explicitly concerned with the possibility of a passage to Asia through the Americas.<sup>94</sup> Returning to the point raised at the beginning of this chapter, it seems that the Fernandes and Corte Real voyages, on the other hand, were primarily concerned with territorial claims in the region. In the following chapter, primary documents relating to Portuguese interest in settlement in the region will be examined to assess the extent to which continuity exists between these early voyages and subsequent expressions of interest in settlement.

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In addition to the search for a northwest passage, Europeans also travelled to northeastern North America in search of commercial opportunities to be found in the fishery. According to John Day in his correspondence with Christopher Columbus, John Cabot found “many fish like those which in Iceland are dried in the open and sold in

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<sup>93</sup> The 1529 Ribeiro map also identifies a “tiera de los bretones” just beyond the *Rio de la buelta* – presumably a turn-around point. See Morison, *The European Discovery*, pp. 334-6. Alonso de Santa Cruz notes that Gomez explored a deep river in a cold region between the land of the “Bacallaos” (Newfoundland) and “Labrador” (Greenland). One of the Santa Cruz maps also identifies the “Isla de San Juan” (Nova Scotia) and a bay of the “Bretons.” See Quinn, ed. *North American Discovery*, p. 72, and Sauer, *Sixteenth-Century North America*, p. 68.

<sup>94</sup> John Cabot, for instance, petitioned Henry VII for the right to sail to the northwest to arrive at “India by a shorter route.” Cabot’s son, Sebastian, following in his father’s footsteps, regarded the American landmass with “displeasure,” as it represented a barrier for European commercial endeavours in Asia. See Allen, “The Indrawing Sea,” pp. 10, 15. In 1524, Giovanni da Verrazzano, sailing under the French flag and backed by merchants and bankers (mostly Italian) in Lyon, Paris and Rouen, explored the eastern coast of North America in the search for the “happy shores of Cathay.” See Sauer, *Sixteenth-Century North America*, p. 54. Peter Martyr, in his *De Orbe Novo*, asserted that the Gomez voyage had “no other thing in charge than to search out whether any passage to the great Chan, from out the diuers windings and vast compassings of this our Ocean were to de founde.” Quoted in Allen, “The Indrawing Sea,” p. 19.

England and other countries” along the coasts.<sup>95</sup> A letter from Raimondo di Soncino to the Duke of Milan a few months following Cabot’s return to Europe also describes a sea “swarming with fish, which can be taken not only with the net but in baskets let down with a stone.”<sup>96</sup> And, as has been noted, Bristol fishermen were likely exploiting the region’s coastal resources even before this. The European seasonal and migratory fishery in the northwest Atlantic developed, thus, at the end of the fifteenth century or beginning of the sixteenth century.

Although documents in European archives – such as port records, charter party agreements and insurance policies – constitute important sources of evidence, knowledge regarding European involvement in the migratory fishery remains incomplete. This is particularly true for the Portuguese involvement in the fishery, a point that will be examined in more detail below. It has been difficult, for instance, for historians to assess the number of ships from European ports that participated in the fishery off the coasts of northeastern North America throughout the sixteenth century. Incomplete knowledge exists also regarding the exact locations of specific fisheries, and details of the type of labour involved. Of note in the documentary evidence is the absence of first-hand accounts of the Atlantic voyages and North American fishing sojourns by the people who actually were involved.<sup>97</sup> That having been said, sufficient evidence exists to provide a

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<sup>95</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, p. 98.

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in Harold A. Innis, *The Cod Fisheries: The History of an International Economy*, Revised Edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), p. 11.

<sup>97</sup> In England, “objective prose accounts by participants in maritime events” were uncommon before the middle of the sixteenth century. Unlike the Spanish experience further south, for instance, no narrative accounts (except “some rather imprecise remarks by Sebastain Cabot”) exist for all the voyages that took place in the North Atlantic up to 1509. Quinn, *England and the Discovery of America*, pp. 215-6. A comprehensive first hand account of the cod fishery in the seventeenth century comes from Nicolas Denys’s *The Description and Natural History of the Coasts of North America (Acadia)*, *Second Volume*, ed., William F. Ganong (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1908), pp. 247-348. As Peter Pope points out, “practices in the dry fishery” had not likely changed significantly prior to Denys’s observations, but “the possibility of variations in custom and practice which have not come to light” must be taken into

broad outline of the fisheries, including information regarding the organization of the industry as well as the types of fisheries engaged in at different locations and the extent to which the English, French, Basque and Portuguese were involved over the course of the century.

Despite the general absence of first hand accounts from the fishers themselves, information regarding the sixteenth-century European fishery – such as the number of vessels involved – does exist through the observations of Europeans who travelled in the region during the same time period. John Rut, writing from St. John's Newfoundland in 1527, noted eleven Norman vessels, one from Brittany and two "Portugall Barkes" fishing.<sup>98</sup> During the same year, English sailors captured by the Spanish in the West Indies reported having seen about 50 French, Spanish and Portuguese vessels in Newfoundland.<sup>99</sup> In June, 1543, Jean François Roberval and his crew sailed into "the Harbour of Saint John," where they "found seventeene Shippes of fishers."<sup>100</sup> They remained in the area until the end of the month, collecting fresh water and, on one occasion, intervening in a dispute between some of their "Countrymen and certaine Portugals."<sup>101</sup>

In 1578, Anthony Parkhurst, an English merchant, estimated that about 350 vessels a year – 150 Norman or Breton, 100 Basque, 50 English and 50 Portuguese – were involved in the transatlantic seasonal fishery.<sup>102</sup> As Ralph Pastore points out, this

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consideration. Pope, "The 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Fishing Voyage," in *How Deep is the Ocean? Historical Essays on Canada's Atlantic Fishery*, eds., James E. Candow & C. Corbin (Sydney: UCCB Press, 1997) p. 19.

<sup>98</sup> Quoted in Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, pp. 12-3.

<sup>99</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, "Portugal's Cod Fishery," p. 38.

<sup>100</sup> Jacques Cartier, *The Voyages of Jacques Cartier*, with an introduction by Ramsay Cook (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 108.

<sup>101</sup> Cartier, *The Voyages*, p. 109.

<sup>102</sup> Peter E. Pope, *Fish into Wine: The Newfoundland Plantation in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), p. 19.

figure should be considered an estimate only, but it does “give some idea of the magnitude of the European presence in the Atlantic region.”<sup>103</sup> Abreu-Ferreira suggests that “Parkhurst’s report should be viewed with some discretion,” noting that he may have embellished the number of non-English vessels because he was attempting to “convince English authorities that outsiders presented a real threat” to English interests in Newfoundland.<sup>104</sup> Peter Pope, on the other hand, sees Parkhurst “as a participant and not as a lobbyist” and is more willing to “trust Parkhurst’s rough figures.”<sup>105</sup> Pope estimates that 350 vessels would translate into a live catch of approximately 75,000 tonnes, and suggests the possibility of an “underestimation” of the size of the industry given that the ports of Bordeaux, La Rochelle and Rouen were, all together, provisioning 150 vessels a year by the middle of the sixteenth century.<sup>106</sup> From Cabot’s account at the end of the fifteenth century of sea swarming with cod, the European seasonal fisheries off the coasts of northeastern North America had expanded – by the end of the following century – to several hundred vessels a year.

By contrast with the situation during the seventeenth century, when European governments were more directly involved in commercial endeavours in North America through the issuing of trade monopolies and through the development of mercantilist

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<sup>103</sup> Pastore, “The Sixteenth Century,” p. 22.

<sup>104</sup> Abreu-Ferreira notes, for instance, that archival research on the Basque participation in the fishery by Selma Barkham suggests Parkhurst’s figure to be an over-estimation, if not a “flagrant exaggeration.” Abreu-Ferreira, “Terra Nova through the Iberian Looking Glass: The Portuguese-Newfoundland Cod Fishery,” *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 79, Issue 1 (March 1998), EBSCO version, p. 3

<sup>105</sup> Pope, *Fish into Wine*, p. 19.

<sup>106</sup> Pope, *Fish into Wine*, pp. 19-20. Pope also acknowledges that the findings of Selma Barkham suggest an overestimation of the “number of Spanish Basque vessels.” (p. 20). See also Selma Barkham, “The Documentary Evidence for Basque Whaling Ships in the Strait of Belle Isle,” in *Early European Settlement and Exploration in Atlantic Canada*, ed., G.M. Story (St. John’s, 1982), pp. 53-96. In 1595, 17 years following Parkhurst’s observations of 50 English vessels (a time of growth for the English fishery), 50 ships set sail from Plymouth alone. The significance of the fleet was noted by Sir Walter Raleigh, who wrote to Sir Robert Cecil, “If these should be lost, it would be the greatest blow ever given to England.” In Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, p. 32.

policies, European crowns were not directly involved in the North American fisheries in the sixteenth century. That having been said, they did play a role – to the detriment or gain of the industry. Royal courts collected taxes or tithes on imported fish, imposed trade restrictions and embargoed fishing vessels for royal service during times of war.<sup>107</sup> Exceptions to these policies were also made. In England, for instance, a 1563 law designed to promote the fishery – which served as “a training ground for mariners” – established Wednesdays and Saturdays as “fish days” and also exempted Newfoundland fish from import tax.<sup>108</sup> It was commercial interests, not the imperial concerns of European monarchs, that fuelled the growth of the transatlantic fisheries.<sup>109</sup> Typically, both the costs and the profits associated with a fishing voyage would be shared among the various parties involved, including the ship owner or owners, the captain and crew and the merchants who supplied provisions for the voyage.<sup>110</sup>

The first recorded European cargo of North American cod arrived in the western port of Bristol in 1502, with 36 tons of saltfish on the *Gabriel*.<sup>111</sup> Even though the

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<sup>107</sup> Until the end of the sixteenth century, for instance, English vessels were often not permitted to sell Newfoundland cod directly to foreign ports. Ships returning to West Country ports sold their catches to French, Dutch and other European merchants who then re-sold the cod in European markets, in particular Mediterranean ones. In 1598, an act was passed that allowed English fishers to “carry foreign fish.” A 1604 insurance policy for the *Hopewell* of London, for instance, stated that insurance would be provided from the day the fish landed on the ship until the day the “same fishe shal be arrived at Toulone and Marcelleze.” In Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, pp. 32, 34. Other examples of official involvement to the detriment of the industry are included subsequently in the body of the text.

<sup>108</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “Portugal’s Cod Fishery,” p. 34. The stipulation that ships were exempt from paying customs dues was originally for four years and was subsequently renewed. In 1579, the Newfoundland fishery was also “declared exempt from an embargo on ships and mariners.” See Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, p. 31.

<sup>109</sup> David Quinn notes, for instance, that the Europeans who travelled to North America during the sixteenth century did so “in the main” to “profit themselves or their employers” and the largest profit was gained from the banks and shore fishery. David B. Quinn, *North America from Earliest Discovery to First Settlements: The Norse Voyages to 1612* (New York: 1977), p. 511.

<sup>110</sup> Pope, “The 16<sup>th</sup>-Century,” p. 16. Innis notes that, after 1550, the “custom of giving one third to the men, one third to the boat owner and one third to the supply merchant” continued in the inshore fishery, but a smaller share (“only a quarter”) was given to the crew in the offshore or “green” fishery because “more attention” was required in the “dry” fishery. Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, p. 21.

<sup>111</sup> Pope, *Fish into Wine*, p.15.

English were the first to record a presence in the *Terra Nova* fishery, Bretons, Normans and Basques likely had a higher level of participation in the fishery until the 1560s and 1570s.<sup>112</sup> French vessels from Channel ports in Brittany and Normandy were the first to fish regularly in the area, and Atlantic Ports such as Bordeaux and La Rochelle also become involved in the migratory fishery in the first part of the century, acting as provisioning ports for Norman and Basque vessels as well as those from Brittany.<sup>113</sup> By the 1520s, it is estimated that 60 to 90 French vessels were crossing the ocean on a yearly basis and by the end of the century as many as 500 ships a year may have participated in the trans-Atlantic fishery.<sup>114</sup>

Bretons and Normans established inshore fishing stations along Newfoundland's Avalon Peninsula, at Gaspé and around Cape Breton and, latter in the century, along the coast of Nova Scotia and into the Bay of Fundy.<sup>115</sup> The offshore fishery began later in the century and included the Grand Banks as well as banks off southern Newfoundland and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.<sup>116</sup> The Basque – both French and Spanish – had begun to arrive in the region around 1512, departing from ports such as St. Jean de Luz and San

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<sup>112</sup> Pope, *Fish into Wine*, pp. 15-17 and Pope, "The 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Fishing Voyage," p. 15.

<sup>113</sup> The Bretons made voyages from as early as 1508, and possibly 1504, with Norman voyages beginning in 1506. Pope, "The 16<sup>th</sup>-Century," p. 15. See also Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, pp. 16-23 As was noted in the last chapter, French vessels also sailed to Brazil. W.J. Eccles has observed that the "ports of northwest France were as much concerned with the Brazil trade as with the fishery of the Grand Banks." W.J. Eccles, *France in America*, revised edition (Markham: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1990), p. 2. See also Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, pp. 16-23

<sup>114</sup> Conrad and Hiller, *Atlantic Canada*, p. 42. Robert Hitchcock, writing in 1580, noted that 500 ships left France every March and returned in August. Hitchcock was, according to David Quinn, a "propagandist for the development of the English fishing industry" whose main concern was the local English fishery. Quinn, *New American World, Vol. IV*, p. 105. Pope notes that Hitchcock's figure "may be somewhat exaggerated," but concludes that there "were certainly several hundred French vessels in the transatlantic cod fishery by this time." Pope, "The 16<sup>th</sup>-Century," p. 15.

<sup>115</sup> Conrad and Hiller, *Atlantic Canada*, p. 42.

<sup>116</sup> Conrad and Hiller, *Atlantic Canada*, p. 42.

Sebastián in the Bay of Biscay.<sup>117</sup> Early in the century, the Basque – like the French – were involved in the inshore fishery, and French and Spanish Basques “often fished together” in the Strait of Belle Isle, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Gaspé and along the southeastern shores of Newfoundland.<sup>118</sup> Starting in the 1530s, the Basque began to hunt for whales in the Gulf and the Strait of Belle Isle, a practice which continued until the beginning of the seventeenth century.<sup>119</sup>

The Spanish fishery (and possibly Portuguese as well) began to decline around the same time the English fishery began to expand. A number of reasons have been put forward for the decline. Inflation and the imposition of “new taxes and restrictions on trade and shipping” were a factor.<sup>120</sup> England’s defeat of the Spanish Armada was also thought to have dealt a considerable blow to the industry in both Spain and Portugal, given the latter’s annexation to Spain eight years prior. Many vessels were embargoed for service in the Armada and tensions between England and Spain leading up to the sea battle of 1588 have also been linked to an increase in attacks on Portuguese and Spanish vessels abroad. Bernard Drake’s seizing of sixteen or seventeen Portuguese ships in Newfoundland in 1585 “in reprisal for the embargoing of English ships in Spanish ports,” constitutes an example of the latter.<sup>121</sup> Two years later, in March, 1587, the Spanish (and Portuguese) king Philip II issued a warning to Basque ships crossing the Atlantic to beware of English and French corsairs who were “fitting out in haste a number of ships

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<sup>117</sup> Ralph Pastore, “The Sixteenth Century,” p. 22. Conrad and Hiller state that the Basque began arriving after 1520, not 1512. Conrad and Hiller, *Atlantic Canada*, p. 42.

<sup>118</sup> Conrad and Hiller, *Atlantic Canada*, p. 42.

<sup>119</sup> Pastore, “The Sixteenth Century,” p. 23. Basque whaling ships numbered about 30 a year by mid-century. Conrad and Hiller, *Atlantic Canada*, p. 42.

<sup>120</sup> Conrad and Hiller, *Atlantic Canada*, p. 43.

<sup>121</sup> Quinn contends that the seizure “constituted a major blow to the Portuguese inshore fishery from which, apparently, it did not fully recover.” Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. IV*, p. 47. A political motivation

with the sole object of going to Terranova and doing in those posts any damage they can to those who go there from this land, and other parts of the seacoast of these my realms, to the cod and whale fisheries....”<sup>122</sup>

The Portuguese also likely began their involvement in the fishery early in the century, with northern Portuguese ports participating in voyages to the Avalon Peninsula as well as Cape Breton. The ports of Viana do Castelo and Aveiro, in particular, seem to have been involved in the cod fishery in the second half of the century.<sup>123</sup> Carl Sauer contends that Portuguese fishermen “making yearly voyages” for cod were natives of both the northern ports of Portugal and the islands of the Azores.<sup>124</sup> He also asserts that some of these fishermen had acquired information regarding harbours and “places to get water and wood” – along with some knowledge of coastal native peoples – because they had travelled with “the Corte Real brothers.”<sup>125</sup>

Some historians have contended that the Portuguese involvement in the fishery was already significant by the year 1506, when Manuel I issued a royal letter concerning the regulation of fish tithes from “Terra Nova” in northern Portuguese ports between the Douro and Minho Rivers.<sup>126</sup> Harold Innis notes, for instance, that the “fishery was sufficiently important by 1506 to warrant an attempt to secure a decision as to the disposition of the tithes that would be favourable to the King.”<sup>127</sup> Contrary to Innis’

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behind the attacks has been called into question by Abreu-Ferreira who contends that English, French and Dutch vessels also attacked one another. Abreu-Ferreira, “Portugal’s Cod Fishery,” p. 32.

<sup>122</sup> Quoted in Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. IV*, pp. 114-5.

<sup>123</sup> Pope, *Fish into Wine*, p. 16.

<sup>124</sup> A source is not cited for this information. Sauer, *Sixteenth-Century North America*, p.47.

<sup>125</sup> Sauer, *Sixteenth-Century North America*, p. 47.

<sup>126</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “Portugal’s Cod Fishery,” pp. 37-8.

<sup>127</sup> Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, p. 14. Samuel Morison also concludes that there were enough Portuguese fishing in northwestern Atlantic waters by 1506 “to justify the king’s clapping a 10 per cent import duty on their catch,” and action which he categorizes as “the first European attempt to protect home industries from American competition.” Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 225.

conclusions regarding the 1506 document, Darlene Abreu-Ferreira argues that caution is required in the interpretation of the royal letter. She notes, for instance, that the letter exists only as a copy of the original and that, while the title – which was added to the copy – refers to “Codfish,” the body of the letter does not, raising the possibility that the original document may not have been referring to cod.<sup>128</sup> She also notes that the reference to “terra nova” in the document cannot be assumed to be Newfoundland, as the term was in common use.

Abreu-Ferreira’s cautionary note provides a needed counter-balance to the weight that has been placed on the 1506 document. It is possible, however, that the reference to cod in the title was added to the copy of the letter precisely because it was known that the “terra nova” in the body of the letter referred to Newfoundland. A 1515 charter for the town of Aveiro, in northern Portugal, “also makes reference to a tax applied to cod,” thus supporting the possibility that the 1506 document did, in fact, represent official involvement in the Newfoundland cod trade at an early date.<sup>129</sup> On the other hand, like the 1506 document, only a copy of the original Aveiro charter has survived and no other early sixteenth-century town charters from northern Portugal mention cod, “though the documents make several references to fish in general and to sardines in particular.”<sup>130</sup> The significance of the 1506 ordonnance thus remains open to debate.

As was noted above, among the various European fishing fleets engaged in the migratory fishery, the Portuguese participation has been among the hardest to assess. Contemporary references to Portuguese vessels in the region – such as those of John Rut,

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<sup>128</sup> The title, “*Trelado de hua Carta del Rey, nosso Senhor, acerca da Dizima dos bacalhaos*,” is translated in Abreu-Ferreira’s article as “Copy of a Letter from our Lord the King in regard to the Tithe of Codfish.” Abreu-Ferreira, “Portugal’s Cod Fishery,” p. 38.

<sup>129</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “Terra Nova,” p. 4.

Anthony Parkhurst, English sailors in the Caribbean and the English seizure of Portuguese vessels – indicate that the Portuguese were indeed present in the region. Another reference to the Portuguese in Newfoundland is associated with Sir Humphrey Gilbert’s 1583 possession of Newfoundland (discussed in Chapter 2). In August of the same year, Gilbert issued a passport to Tomas Andre, ship’s master from “Avero,” the port town, “that he may have free access to and liberty in the fishing and trade of the Newfoundland.”<sup>131</sup>

Early maps also point to Portuguese activity in the region. Place names on the maps could have derived, at least in part, from the frequent visits of fishing vessels along the coast. The Pedro Reinel map, mentioned previously in association with the early Corte Real voyages, also includes several Portuguese place names (with the present-day equivalents in parenthesis) such as *R de san Francisquo*, *I dos bacalhos* (Baccalieu I.), and *C da espera* (Cape “Hope,” now Cape Spear).<sup>132</sup> A 1525 map by Jorge Reinel (The Miller I Map) – which refers to Newfoundland as *Terra Corte Regalis* – includes the following Portuguese names for rivers, islands and capes along the eastern shores of Newfoundland *C: Raso* (Cape Race), *r: fermoso* (Fermeuse), *r: de sant Joham* (St. John’s), *c: de espera* (Cape Spear), *y: dos bacallaos* *c: de boa ventura* (Bonavista) and,

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<sup>130</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “Terra Nova,” p. 4.

<sup>131</sup> Quoted in Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. IV*, p. 109.

<sup>132</sup> Brian Cuthbertson notes that the Portuguese place names on the Pedro Reinel map “could only have come” from the early Corte Real voyages. Cuthbertson, “Early Portuguese Voyages,” p. 12. George Patterson, on the other hand, concludes that the continued use of many Portuguese place names “shows that they were not derived from the fancy of an explorer, but must have come into common use among the fishermen or others who frequented the localities.” Among the “others,” he infers are included people who would have occupied the land, “for some time.” Patterson, “The Portuguese,” p. 143. As noted previously, the date of the Pedro Reinel map is uncertain. If it was made as early as 1504, it is more likely that the place names derived from early explorers, not fishermen. It also seems likely, given the use of some of the same names in the Pedro Reinel and Jorge Reinel maps, that names came into usage as a result of repeated seasonal voyages to fish for cod, whatever the origins of the names.

furthest north, *y: de fortuna* (Belle Isle).<sup>133</sup> Samuel Morison concludes that the early Portuguese maps constitute “an impressive record... of the Portuguese impact on Newfoundland, and of the growing importance of the Grand Banks fisheries.”<sup>134</sup> The above documentary and map references, however, represent only one piece of the puzzle and corroboration of this evidence with archival documentary records in Portugal – such as King Manuel I’s 1506 document – has been problematic.

Many non-Portuguese historians have written about the Portuguese participation in the migratory fishery, as glimpsed at through the above examples. Abreu-Ferreira, in her recent doctoral research on the cod trade in early modern Portugal, provides a critical overview of this literature, including an analysis of the extent to which scholarly conclusions regarding the Portuguese cod fishery are evidence-based. Abreu-Ferreira contends that historians have made “colourful” and “fantastical” claims about Portugal’s involvement in the sixteenth-century cod fishery.<sup>135</sup> Many of the claims, however, cannot be substantiated because they “omit any reference to sources, cite one another as sources, or rely on the policy of secrecy allegedly practiced by Portuguese monarchs.”<sup>136</sup> The following provides an example of the problematic paper trail to which she refers:

Ketih Matthews concluded that already in 1501 the Portuguese had fishing companies established in Viana, Aveiro, and in Terceira, Azores, to deal with the Newfoundland cod fishery. His source for this information was D.W. Prowse, who borrowed it from George Patterson, who in turn had

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<sup>133</sup> Morison, *The European Discovery*, pp. 224-227. Page 224 includes a comparison of three early maps (the Miller map, the 1502 Cantino map referred to above and the Reinel chart from 1505 which included two Portuguese flags) with a modern map of the same coast.

<sup>134</sup> Morison, *The European Discovery*, pp. 227-8.

<sup>135</sup> Included in the claims described by Abreu-Ferreira are Samuel Eliot Morison’s assertion (in Abreu-Ferreira’s words) that “Newfoundland was practically a transatlantic province of Portugal in the first quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century,” David Quinn’s suggestion that Newfoundland was unofficially almost considered a part of Iberia, Harold Innis’ claim that Portuguese evidence exists but has not been divulged, and George Patterson’s contention that contemporary accounts underestimated Portugal’s involvement. The policy of secrecy was explored in a previous section of this chapter.

<sup>136</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “Portugal’s Cod Fishery,” p. 31.

quoted an obscure Portuguese historian. None of them based his arguments on actual archival documents.<sup>137</sup>

She contends that claims regarding Portuguese “pre-eminence in the early cod fishery” are unfounded because the evidence for such claims does not exist.<sup>138</sup> Most of the custom books from both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for “all the major ports along Portugal’s Atlantic coast,” for instance, have “disappeared,” and an analysis of the evidence that has survived did not point to a systematic or large-scale Portuguese participation in the cod fishery.<sup>139</sup>

Abreu-Ferreira’s research was conducted mostly in northern Portugal – with some research in the Azores as well – with the objective of finding evidence of “cod availability and distribution in the early modern era.”<sup>140</sup> Existing municipal council records, town charters, customs books and other documents were examined for references to cod.<sup>141</sup> Records from Porto, one of the few places where custom books have survived, indicate that three ships left to participate in the Terra Nova cod fishery in 1558, with another three ships leaving the following year.<sup>142</sup> Porto custom records also reveal that five cargoes of cod linked to Portuguese agents arrived in the port between 1574 and 1585, while four cargoes of cod arriving in 1591, and another four in 1597, were mostly connected to foreign vessels.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “The Cod Trade,” p. 36.

<sup>138</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “Portugal’s Cod Fishery,” p. 31.

<sup>139</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “Portugal’s Cod Fishery,” p. 38, and “Terra Nova,” p. 3.

<sup>140</sup> Research was carried out in municipal archives in the northern port towns of Aveiro, Porto, Vilo do Conde and Viana do Castelo as well as the inland river towns of Ponte de Lima, Braga, Guimaraes, Viseu and Abrantes. Archival material in Ponta Delgada, São Miguel (Azores) was also consulted. Abreu-Ferreira, “Terra Nova,” p.2. See also Abreu-Ferreira, “The Cod Trade,” pp. 401-2.

<sup>141</sup> Other documents analyzed included “ships’ health inspection registries, shipping and fisheries regulations and contemporary accounts such as travel reports and history texts.” Abreu-Ferreira, “Terra Nova,” p. 2.

<sup>142</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “Terra Nova,” p. 3.

<sup>143</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “Terra Nova,” p. 3. One of the eight cargoes was “unclear,” while the other seven were connected to foreign shipmasters, including French, Flemish and Biscayan ones.

Church records from Porto provided “the best documentation on the Portuguese cod trade.” Because the church was entitled to a “tithe on incoming merchandise” in the sum of ten percent of the crown’s intake – which was also ten percent – it kept records on ships and their cargoes and the merchants involved.<sup>144</sup> The Porto records reveal that three categories of cod were registered – *vento* (possibly wind-dried), *pasta* (possibly wet or green cod) and *refugo*.<sup>145</sup> The *vento* cod was brought to port primarily by the English and was more expensive than the *pasta* cod, which was purchased from the French.<sup>146</sup> The church records begin in the year 1573, although the best records are from the seventeenth century (1639-1679).<sup>147</sup> Due to the lack of custom records prior to 1573 and the inconsistency of the documents from 1573 to 1600, the records are not generally helpful in assessing the sixteenth-century Portuguese participation in the fisheries. Given that they represent the “best” documentation of the early modern Portuguese cod fishery in northern ports, the difficulties in determining Portuguese involvement come into sharper focus.

The church records, in conjunction with the port records, do suggest that in the latter part of the sixteenth century Portugal was involved in the cod trade, but as a purchaser of foreign cod as much as, or perhaps more than, as a supplier. This information is consistent with the assumption that the Iberian participation in the cod fishery began to decline in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Another piece of evidence uncovered by Abreu-Ferreira for the second half of the sixteenth century involves a 1566 contract from Vila do Conde, north of Porto, in which a group of local

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<sup>144</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “The Cod Trade,” pp. 39-40.

<sup>145</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “The Cod Trade,” p. 41.

<sup>146</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “The Cod Trade,” pp. 41-2.

<sup>147</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “The Cod Trade,” p. 40.

merchants “organizing a cod fishing expedition” had to “go to Lisbon for financial support” – the inability to find local financing pointing to an irregular cod fishery, according to Amelia Polonia of the University of Porto.<sup>148</sup>

In 1552, a law passed by King D. João III prohibited Portuguese vessels from going to northern Europe due to an increase in corsair attacks in the North Atlantic. The ban included “a stipulation for a list of all vessels in Portugal’s northern coast,” and the ship’s list from Aveiro noted that all the ships were “engaged in the Terra Nova cod fishery as well as in trade with Ireland, England, Flanders, and the islands.”<sup>149</sup> The 1552 shipping regulation was reinstated in 1571, with specific references to ships leaving from Aveiro and Viana, suggesting that “those two maritime ports were especially associated with the Portuguese cod fishery.”<sup>150</sup>

A collection of Portuguese laws on the fishery which included documents covering the last half of the sixteenth century, on the other hand, significantly made no mention “of cod or Terra Nova,” although this collection does not tell us anything about the cod fishery in the first half of the century.<sup>151</sup> The literature on early modern Portuguese consumption patterns with respect to fish was also analyzed by Abreu-Ferreira, who came to the conclusion that, although evidence on consumption patterns is incomplete, “the available data suggest” that cod was more expensive than both beef and other varieties of local fish and that cod consumption was not high during the sixteenth

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<sup>148</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “Terra Nova,” p. 6.

<sup>149</sup> Another reference to cod involved a vessel in Matosinhos which was “heading for the Levant with cod.” No other references to cod appear in any of the ship’s lists associated with the 1552 law.

<sup>150</sup> Abreu-Ferreira notes that this view is supported by Anthony Parkhurst’s 1578 letter which indicates that most of the ships in Newfoundland were from these two ports. Abreu-Ferreira, “Terra Nova,” pp. 2-3. Abreu-Ferreira, “Terra Nova,” p. 2.

<sup>151</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “Terra Nova,” p. 2.

century.<sup>152</sup> Another factor in the cod trade might have been that the Portuguese crown (as was fairly typical for early modern economies) did not foster economic development at the national level.<sup>153</sup> Fishing vessels were often pressed to participate in other aspects of overseas trade, an indication that promoting the cod fishery was not a priority of the crown.<sup>154</sup>

Abreu-Ferreira concludes that, rather than an “established and regulated” cod fishery, Portugal’s participation should be seen as “sporadic.”<sup>155</sup> She further asserts that “the Portuguese cod fishery was barely discernible” during the first half of the sixteenth century, while “it hardly got off the ground in the second half.”<sup>156</sup> Abreu-Ferreira’s conclusion regarding the lack of Portuguese pre-eminence in the cod fishery is clearly substantiated through her research. Her conclusion regarding a “barely discernible” fishery, however, seems at odds with the absence of archival evidence. The extent of Portugal’s involvement in the fishery, it would seem, may never be fully known due to the significant gap in the archival sources, in particular for the first half of the sixteenth century.

It is of interest to note that royal patents and other documents related to sixteenth-century Portuguese exploratory voyages – such as those reviewed above – did not register

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<sup>152</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “Portugal’s Cod Fishery,” p. 36. Local fish markets, for instance, “only occasionally included cod.” Abreu-Ferreira, “The Cod Trade,” p. 37.

<sup>153</sup> Economies functioned at the local level more than at the national level. In the town of Porto, for instance, “city officials were directly involved in price and wage fixing, determining and overseeing standards in weights and measures, granting retail licenses, imposing and collecting sales taxes, and maintaining public health and safety.” Abreu-Ferreira, “The Cod Trade,” p. 43.

<sup>154</sup> The tendency to enlist vessels used in the fishery for other types of service “became more pronounced” towards the end of the sixteenth century. Abreu-Ferreira, “Portugal’s Cod Fishery,” p. 35.

<sup>155</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “Portugal’s Cod Fishery,” p. 38.

<sup>156</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “Terra Nova,” p. 3.

an interest in cod.<sup>157</sup> While Cabot's initial impressions included references to cod, it was not *bacalhao* but land resources such as timber that caught the eye of early Portuguese explorers. Margaret Conrad and James Hiller also note that the Portuguese participation in "a fishery of any significance" is open to debate and that they seemed "to have been more interested in the region's landward potential than codfish."<sup>158</sup> Peter Pope is also of the opinion that the Portuguese "did not become major participants in the migratory fishery."<sup>159</sup> He contends that this was due to "claims in Brazil, Africa and the Indian Ocean" as well as to involvement in fisheries in the Atlantic Islands.<sup>160</sup>

Thus, European mariners endured foggy, sometimes icebound, coasts and rudimentary living conditions on shore to make a living in the transatlantic migratory cod and whale fisheries. Merchants from Plymouth to Porto and Burgos to Bordeaux stood to make financial gains through their investments and early modern monarchs, although involved to some extent, did not promote the fisheries in a systematic, ongoing way throughout the sixteenth century. Keeping in mind the inconclusive nature of evidence regarding the Portuguese participation in the fishery, in general terms the shifting timelines of the Atlantic fishery in the sixteenth century can be summarized as follows:

Both the large French fleets and the smaller Spanish and Portuguese fleets could trace their origins to limited beginnings in the first half of the century, followed by rapid expansion from about 1545 to 1565, a plateau between 1565 and 1585, and a marked decline after 1585, just when English participation accelerated from its first steady commitment in the 1560s.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> This absence could be seen throughout the century, in fact. Six separate royal letters, in 1500, 1506, 1522, 1538, 1574 and 1579 regarding Corte Real family patents do not mention cod. Abreu-Ferreira, "Portugal's Cod Fishery," p. 37.

<sup>158</sup> Conrad and Hiller, *Atlantic Canada*, p. 42.

<sup>159</sup> Pope, *Fish into Wine*, p. 16.

<sup>160</sup> Pope, *Fish into Wine*, p. 16.

<sup>161</sup> Pope, "The 16<sup>th</sup>-Century," p. 16.

Taken as a whole, the European fisheries in northeastern North America constituted significant European commercial activity in the region. After mid-century, for instance, the cod fishery was “amongst the largest European business enterprises.”<sup>162</sup> By the end of the century, it “exceeded, in volume and value, European trade with the Gulf of Mexico, which is usually treated as the American center of gravity of early transatlantic commerce.”<sup>163</sup> It remained, in the decades and even centuries to come, according to Pope, “much more important than the trade in furs.”<sup>164</sup>

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The exchange of European goods for the furs and pelts of animals developed gradually over the first several decades of the sixteenth century, becoming a well-established practice by mid-century, with “further stimulation after 1580” as a result of the European demand for hats made from beaver pelts.<sup>165</sup> Many of the initial voyages of Europeans into the area in the first decades of the sixteenth century did not, however, involve trading. Some early expeditions had very little contact with aboriginal people. Peter Martyr, for instance, reported only that Sebastian Cabot “had a little intercourse with ... [the] inhabitants, whom he found to be fairly intelligent and who covered their

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<sup>162</sup> David Quinn has also observed that the inshore fishery “was the most pervasive and significant European investment in North America” during the early period of European contact. Quinn, *North America from Earliest Discovery*, pp. 513-4, 525.

<sup>163</sup> Pope, *Fish into Wine*, p. 13.

<sup>164</sup> Pope, *Fish into Wine*, p. 14.

<sup>165</sup> Conrad and Hiller, *Atlantic Canada*, p. 44.

whole body with skins of different animals.”<sup>166</sup> Other contemporary accounts – first or second hand – also recorded what might be considered “ethnographic” information, viewing the aboriginal peoples of the region through a European lens.

The letter of Alberto Cantino to the Duke of Ferrara regarding Gaspar Corte Real’s second voyage referred to above, for instance, contains information regarding the land’s existing inhabitants, such as the use of deer skins for both clothing and houses. This engagement, however, was not merely descriptive. Cantino reported that one of the caravels returned with “about fifty men and women” who had been “forcibly kidnapped.”<sup>167</sup> Cantino also reported having “touched and examined” the abducted members of the return voyage, whom he described as having gentle “manners and gestures.” Cantino also noted the following:

In fine, except for the terribly harsh look of the men, they appear to me to be in all else of the same form and image as ourselves. They go quite naked except for their privy parts, which they cover with a skin of the above-mentioned deer. They have no arms nor iron, but whatever they work or fashion, they cut with very hard sharp stones, with which they split in two the very hardest substances.<sup>168</sup>

Pietro Pasqualigo, the Venetian ambassador in Lisbon, also reported one of Gaspar’s caravels returning with “seven natives, men, women and children.”<sup>169</sup> It is likely that a total of 57 people were kidnapped, and arrived in Lisbon on two separate ships.<sup>170</sup> Pasqualigo also noted that the men had “brought from there a piece of broken gilt sword, which certainly seems to have been made in Italy” and

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<sup>166</sup> His account was published in 1534 in a collection of travel accounts. Quoted in Hoffman, *Cabot to Cartier*, p. 19.

<sup>167</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. 1*, p. 149.

<sup>168</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. 1*, p. 149.

<sup>169</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. 1*, p. 150.

<sup>170</sup> Pasqualigo, for instance, notes: “They have brought back here seven natives... and in the other caravel, which is expected from hour to hour, are coming fifty others.” In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. 1*, p. 150.

that one “of the boys was wearing in his ears two silver rings which without doubt seem to have been made in Venice.”<sup>171</sup> If the ambassador’s observations are accurate, they point to “a very early, and possibly amicable, contact” between aboriginal people and Europeans in the region.<sup>172</sup>

Gaspar was not the only European to kidnap native people. Thomas Aubert of Dieppe, was thought to have kidnapped seven native people somewhere between Bonavista and the Strait of Belle Isle in 1508 and taken them to Rouen.<sup>173</sup> Estêvão Gomez – although it was contrary to Castilian law – kidnapped 58 people, both men and women, possibly near the Penobscot River, where people were engaged in summer fishing, or possibly further north along the shores of Nova Scotia of Cape Breton.<sup>174</sup> It is difficult to imagine how such a hostile encounter might have taken place. James Axtell argues, in the case of Gomez, that the people he encountered “were already familiar with sea-going Europeans” and might have assumed that Gomez had invited them on board to engage in trading activity. The same might be true for the Beothuk or Mi’kmaq encountered by Gaspar Corte Real, especially given the reference to European goods mentioned above.

Cartier’s first voyage to the region in 1534 included various encounters with aboriginal peoples. One such encounter occurred on July 6 while Cartier and some of his crew members were exploring the Bay of Chaleur in a longboat.

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<sup>171</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. 1, pp. 150-1.

<sup>172</sup> Pastore, “The Sixteenth Century,” p. 33.

<sup>173</sup> Eccles, *France in America*, p. 2.

<sup>174</sup> James Axtell suggests the possibility of the Penobscot location, while the anthropologist Harald Prins asks, “Were Gomez’s victims Mi’kmaqs?” See James Axtell, *Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford UP, 1992), p. 82 and Harald E. L. Prins, *The Mi’kmaq: Resistance, Accommodation, and Cultural Survival* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1996), p. 45.

Upon one of the fleets reaching this point, they sprang out and landed a large number of people, who set up a great clamour and made frequent signs to us to come on shore, holding up to us some skin on sticks. But as we were only one boat we did not care to go, so we rowed towards the other fleet which was on the water. And they [on shore] seeing we were rowing away, made ready two of their largest canoes in order to follow us. These were joined by five more of those that were coming in from the sea, and all came after our longboat, dancing and showing many signs of joy, and of their desire to be friends, saying to us in their language: *Napou tou daman asurtat*, and other words we did not understand.<sup>175</sup>

The French, concerned about their small numbers and sole boat in comparison with the would-be traders, shot at the latter and drove them away. The following day, a successful exchange finally occurred, with “knives and other iron goods, and a red cap” for the chief being given in exchange for skins which were, according to Cartier, “of small value.”<sup>176</sup>

The above encounters give an indication that relationships of exchange involving European and aboriginal goods began with false starts and misunderstandings that were overcome by the mutual desire to trade. One of the initial communication difficulties involved language. When the Mi’kmaq in the Bay of Chaleur spoke to Cartier, for instance, he did not understand them. And yet, it has been hypothesized that the Mi’kmaq were speaking a pidgin language that had been developed through previous trading relationships. Harald Prins and Ruth Holmes Whitehead, for instance, have examined the phrase *Napou tou daman asurtat* and concluded that it was likely a form of Mi’kmaq-

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<sup>175</sup> Cartier, *The Voyages*, p. 20.

<sup>176</sup> Cartier, *The Voyages*, p. 21. Other trading encounters are described in the account of Cartier’s first voyage, including one along the lower north shore of Quebec, at Natashkwan or Natashquan, in which “some twelve men set off in two canoes and came as freely on board our vessels as if they had been Frenchmen,” thus indicating previous experience trading with Europeans. (p. 30). Cartier, *The Voyages*, pp. 22-31. Ralph Pastore notes that the twelve men who boarded the French vessel may have been either Montagnais or St. Lawrence Iroquoians. Pastore, “The Sixteenth Century,” p. 27.

Portuguese pidgin.<sup>177</sup> The first word, Napou (Nape'u) is a Mi'kmaq word which used to refer to birds such as cock pheasants but also had the connotation "man." Holmes Whitehead has suggested that the remaining words could be "tú dameu a cierto," indicating a Portuguese influence. The entire phrase thus becomes: "Hey, man, give me something!"<sup>178</sup>

In keeping with the perspective of Aboriginal History outlined in Chapter 1, it is important to remember that the sixteenth century was one defined by a limited European presence in Aboriginal territory. An inclusion of the aboriginal dimension of the sixteenth century is thus, a priori, inescapable. Specific evidence dealing with Portuguese-Aboriginal interaction, however, is fragmentary. The above examples demonstrate that both violent encounters such as kidnappings and friendly exchanges, based on gift giving and trading, took place between Aboriginal peoples and Europeans. This generates a spectrum of possibility for contacts that may have taken place between Portuguese settlers and aboriginal peoples.

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This chapter has provided an overview of the Portuguese presence in northeastern North America in the sixteenth century, with reference also to the activities of other Europeans and of the aboriginal inhabitants of the region. While many Europeans were

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<sup>177</sup> Prins, *The Mi'kmaq*, p. 46 and Ruth Holmes Whitehead, "Nova Scotia: The Protohistoric Period 1500-1630," Curatorial report Number 75 (Halifax: Nova Scotia Museum, 1993), p. 15.

<sup>178</sup> Discussion regarding the origins of the phrase have been explored in more detail in correspondence between Harald Prins and Ruth Holmes Whitehead in October, 1985 and April 1986. Ruth Holmes Whitehead's interpretation of the phrase as *Nape'u, tú dameu a cierto* and the translation into English of "Hey, man, give me something," are contained in a letter to Charles Martijn, dated April 6, 1987. I am grateful to Ruth Holmes Whitehead for providing me with copies of all of the above correspondence.

engaged in exploratory voyages associated with the search for an alternate sea route to the East, the Portuguese may have been primarily interested in territorial claims in the region. In addition, the Portuguese may have been as interested in the land as the sea, given recent scholarship which has shown that previous claims have exaggerated the Portuguese participation in the fisheries. The search for a northwest passage to Asia and the exploitation of coastal resources were two activities that are considered by historians to be normative for Europeans in the region during the sixteenth century. Examined through that lens, the Portuguese do not quite fit with the traditional historiography. The following chapter examines Portuguese activities that represent a clear departure from the conventional norm.

## **Chapter 4:**

### **Portuguese Interest in Settlement: The Fagundes, Barcelos and Corte Real Experiences**

*I have always been surprised that the first apparent post-Viking European settlement in Canada... is still so largely unknown.*

D. B. Webster, former Curator, Royal Ontario Museum<sup>1</sup>

The previous chapter ended with examples of interactions between Europeans and aboriginal peoples in the sixteenth century from a variety of locations, including the St. Lawrence, Newfoundland, the Bay of Chaleur, Maine and Cape Breton. The exact location of any possible Portuguese settlement is unknown. Any assessment of Portuguese interactions with the people they might have encountered are, thus, highly speculative and the few instances of interaction described in the last chapter were presented as a means of demonstrating that both harmonious and acrimonious exchanges took place throughout the region. This helps establish the possibility that either form of exchange might have existed between Azorean-Portuguese settlers and the Mi'kmaq, Beothuk or other peoples they might have encountered. In addition, the examples in Chapter 3 were chosen primarily from the first decades of the sixteenth century. No expressions of interest in settlement appear in the documentation after 1570. Thus early encounters are of greater significance than later ones in that they may have influenced the fate of fledgling settlements.

The first part of this chapter explores three expressions of Portuguese interest in settlement between 1520 and 1570. Of the three, the 1520s settlement of João Fagundes will be explored in more detail than the Barcelos or Corte Real intentions, since the

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<sup>1</sup> D.B. Webster, "On the Trail of a Lost Settlement," in *Archaeological Newsletter*, New Series, No. 159 (August 1978), no pagination.

former appears to be the most likely of the three expressed interests in settlement to have actually resulted in an attempt at permanent residency. Documentation regarding an actual settlement exists, for instance, while in the case of the latter two the documentation describes the intention to settle only. A discussion – sometimes speculative – of the location, nature and fate of the Fagundes settlement occupies a central place in the chapter and involves a review of both the evidence and the interpretations put forth by historians regarding the evidence.

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The earliest documented case of a Portuguese interest in settlement in northeastern North America in the sixteenth century involves João Alvares de Fagundes, (*Joam Alvarez ffagundez*) who has been described as a “gentleman of the royal household,” a “nobleman (*cavaleiro*) of the... Lord’s court” and a shipowner with commercial interests who lived in Viana do Castelo, in northern Portugal.<sup>2</sup> On March 12, 1521, King Manuel I issued Fagundes a grant for a hereditary governorship in North America, with a notarized copy of the patent being made on May 22 of the same year in Viana – the latter being the only of the two documents to have survived. The patent stipulates that, since Fagundes “had no son but only one daughter,” the daughter (Dona

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<sup>2</sup> The first quotation is from Carl Ortwin Sauer, *Sixteenth-Century North America: The Land and the People as Seen by the Europeans* (Berkeley, University of Los Angeles Press, 1971), p. 47. The second quotation is from the 1521 charter to Fagundes. Reprinted in H.P. Biggar, ed., *The Precursors of Jacques Cartier 1497-1534* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1911), p.129. Samuel Eliot Morison refers to him as a shipowner. Samuel Eliot Morison, *The European Discovery of America: The Northern Voyages, A.D. 500-1600* (New York: Oxford Up, 1971), p. 228, while Peter Pope described Fagundes as “a merchant from the fishing town of Viana.” Peter Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century Azorean Portuguese Colony in Cape Breton: A Speculative Analysis,” Final Report for the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism and Culture (Torbay: Newfoundland: Past Present: Historic Sites and Material Culture Consulting, Nov. 1992), p. 1.

Violante) – and her successors both male and female – would inherit the governorship.<sup>3</sup> Fagundes had financed an exploratory voyage to the region the year prior, and the patent also makes reference to the previous venture. It is noted that Fagundes, “at his own expense and cost,” had discovered lands and islands in the north, including a “land said to be a mainland which stretches from the line of demarcation with Castille... which is contiguous in the south with our boundary, as far as the land that the Corte Reals discovered.”<sup>4</sup> The patent goes on to provide fairly detailed information regarding Fagundes’ first voyage, including the mention of various place names.

... the three islands in Watering-place bay on the coast running north-east and south-west: and the islands named by him Fagundes are these, namely: St. John, St. Peter, St. Anna and St. Antonio: the islands of St. Panteliom’s archipelago, with Pitiguoem island: the islands of the Archipelago of the 11,000 Virgins: the island of Santa Cruz, which lies at the foot of the bank, and another island also named St. Anna, which was sighted but not put upon record...<sup>5</sup>

Historians have used the information in the 1521 patent as a basis for reconstructing the lands visited by the Fagundes expedition in 1520, including speculation regarding the course of the voyage. This enterprise, in turn, may help shed light on the location of the Fagundes settlement (a point that will be returned to below). George Patterson, in his article on the Portuguese presence in Cape Breton for the Royal Society of Canada, contends that the three islands in Watering-place bay (*aas tres ilhas na baya d’auguoadá*), “must be St. Pierre, Great and Little Miquelon, which up till near

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<sup>3</sup> In Biggar, ed., *Precursors*, p. 130. The Portuguese version of confirmation of the letters patent to Fagundes is also reproduced in Biggar, *Precursors*, pp. 127-129.

<sup>4</sup> In Biggar, ed., *Precursors*, p. 130. The “land said to be mainland” is a translation of the Portuguese *a terra que sse diz ser firme*. Biggar, p. 128. Many Portuguese patents made a point of differentiating between islands and mainlands, although the wording in the Fagundes patent suggests that the land was not known with absolute certainty to be a mainland rather than an island. The term *tierra firme* was also used in early Spanish America. It originally referred to the Isthmus of Panama, but was generally used to differentiate the Caribbean from other parts of Spanish America. James Lockhart and Enrique Otte, eds., *Letters and People of the Spanish Indies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. xii.

the close of the last century were separate islands.”<sup>6</sup> Patterson also concludes that the Archipelago of the Eleven Thousand Virgins (*as ilhas do arçepelleguo das honze mill virgeens*) was off the southern coast of Newfoundland, “to the west of Fortune Bay,” noting that they appeared as such in sixteenth-century maps.<sup>7</sup> Finally, Patterson notes that the only other island that can be positively identified is that of *Santa Cruz*, which “plainly represents Sable Island.”<sup>8</sup> Patterson’s interpretation of the place names thus suggests that Fagundes travelled from north to south.

A north-south course for the voyage is corroborated by Samuel Eliot Morison, who contends that Pitiguoem island (*Ilha de Pitiguoem*), means Penguin Island, with the penguin “of that era” being the great auk.<sup>9</sup> He notes that the English were using the term Penguin Island as early as 1536. Present-day St. Pierre, Miquelon, “and the numerous islets between them and the coast of Newfoundland” were not the islands of Watering-

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<sup>5</sup> In Biggar, ed., *Precursors*, p. 130.

<sup>6</sup> George Patterson, “The Portuguese on the North-East Coast of America, and the first European attempt at Colonization there. A Lost chapter in American History,” *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, Vol VIII, Section II (1890), p. 148. This and other original Portuguese place names given in parenthesis in this section are quoted from Bernard Hoffman, *Cabot to Cartier: Sources for an Historical Ethnography of Northeastern North America 1497-1550* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), p. 34.

<sup>7</sup> The Maiollo Map (1527) and the Viegas Map (1584). Patterson, “The Portuguese on the North-East,” p. 148. Clusters of islands or islets with the name Eleven Thousand Virgins occurred in other parts of the Americas as well, and originated in the Popular Medieval legend of St. Ursula, princes of Cornwall, and “her eleven thousand sea-going virgins, who toured the waters of Europe for years but were murdered by the Huns at Cologne.” Morison, *The European Discovery*, pp. 228-9.

<sup>8</sup> It is not clear if the Fagundes patent identified Santa Cruz because it had already been known prior to 1521 or if Fagundes gave the name to the island. The Portuguese map of Pedro Reinél (Chapter 3) identifies Santa Cruz as an isolated island to the south of Newfoundland, thus connecting the island to Sable Island. Although the Reinél map is thought to have been made in the year or two following the Cantino Planisphere, Morison contends that the Reinél map could not have been made prior to 1521 precisely because it incorporates some of the discoveries of Fagundes. Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 226. Brian Cuthbertson also assumes that Fagundes named the island Santa Cruz and also notes that the same island was referred to as “Fagunda” on maps subsequent to his voyage. Brian Cuthbertson, “Early Portuguese Voyages to North America with Particular Reference to Nova Scotia” (Halifax Regional Municipality: Heritage and Tourism, February 2000), pp. 11-12. Carl Sauer, following George Patterson’s analysis of the Reinél map, assumes a prior naming of the island, an assumption which would be in keeping with an earlier date for the Reinél map. See Sauer, *Sixteenth-Century North America*, p. 49 and Patterson, “The Portuguese on the North-East,” p. 107.

<sup>9</sup> Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 228.

place Bay, but were part of the Archipelago of the Eleven Thousand Virgins – placing them nonetheless off the shores off Newfoundland. Morison also notes that Santa Cruz “may have been Sable Island,” and that both the islands of Santa Cruz and *Santa Ana* appear on several early maps.<sup>10</sup>

Contrary to both Patterson and Morison, the geographer Carl Sauer interprets the references in the 1521 patent as an indication that the 1520 voyage happened in a south-north direction. The term Pitiguoem, one of the islands in the St. Panteliom Archipelago is, according to Sauer, native in origin and refers to “the Penobscot region of coastal Maine.”<sup>11</sup> He notes, for instance, that Nicolas Denys referred to a “River of Pentagouet” next to New England and also to a 1613 French fort in the region known as Fort Pentagouet, while Samuel Champlain also used the terms “Pemetegoiy” and “Peimtegouet.”<sup>12</sup> The Island of the Eleven Thousand Virgins, then, would have corresponded to “the island-strewn coast east to Mount Desert.”<sup>13</sup> Sauer concurs with the previous authors on the identification of Santa Cruz with Sable Island.

Sauer’s identification, following Denys and Champlain, of Pitiguoem’s native origin – and hence association with the Penobscot region of Maine – seems a more convincing interpretation of this place name than the assumption that it means penguin – possibly an English reference or possibly from *pingüim* in Portuguese or *pingouin* in

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<sup>10</sup> Santa Ana, according to Morison, “became an overseas rival to Hy-Brasil.” Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 229. Bernard Hoffman also concludes that the locations of names referred to in the patent “on a number of contemporary maps” places the Fagundes venture along the eastern and southern coast of Newfoundland. Hoffman, *Cabot to Cartier*, pp. 34-5.

<sup>11</sup> Sauer, *Sixteenth-Century North America*, p. 48.

<sup>12</sup> Sauer, *Sixteenth-Century North America*, p. 48. See Nicholas Denys, *The Description and Natural History of the Coasts of North America (Acadia)*, *Second Volume*, ed., William F. Ganong (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1908), p. 97-8. Denys notes that the “Fort of Pentagoët had been built by the late Monsieur de la Tour...” and footnote 1 on page 97, written by William F. Ganong, notes that the “French form of the name of this river was first used by Champlain as *Pemetgoit* and *Peimtegoüet*, while the English form appears in the *Popham Narrative* of 1607 as *Penobscot*.”

<sup>13</sup> Sauer, *Sixteenth-Century North America*, p. 48.

French. On the other hand, a Newfoundland location seems more likely for the Archipelago of the Eleven Thousand Virgins. The 1525 Jorge Reinel map clearly places the archipelago along the southern coast of Newfoundland – *Terra Corte Regalis* – roughly between present-day Fortune Bay and Placentia Bay. Given that this map is thought to be an early “cartographical record of Fagundes’s voyage,” it is likely that this was, in fact, the location of the archipelago.<sup>14</sup> The Miller I map also names *c. do Bretoes*, *R. de sam Pablo*, *terra de mynta gente* and *R. de saluago* in the area associated with Cape Breton, while Nova Scotia is denominated *Terra Frigida*.<sup>15</sup> The above would suggest that the 1520 voyage began in an area that was already familiar – through the Corte Real voyages and also possibly through reports from crews involved in the cod fishery off the coasts of the Avalon Peninsula – and that it then proceeded southward to “discover” lands not claimed by the Corte Real brothers. In the early modern Portuguese worldview, this would mean that any new lands associated with the Fagundes voyage could then be incorporated into a request for a governorship of the lands.

Two other sixteenth-century maps bear brief mention, as they provide evidence of the Fagundes voyages. The first, the Lázaro Luis map (made between 1520 and 1523 and published in 1556) includes the inscription – on land corresponding to present-day Nova Scotia – “Land of the Labrador discovered by João Alvarez” (*A terra Doo lauvrador q’descobrio Joaom Alvarez*).<sup>16</sup> A later map, produced by the Portuguese cartographer Diego Homem in 1568, refers to Cape Breton as *Cap Fagundo*.<sup>17</sup> Homem also produced a chart in 1558 which identified Cape Breton as *Cap de Bertoen*, but included several

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<sup>14</sup> Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 231.

<sup>15</sup> Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 231.

<sup>16</sup> See Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. 1*, p. 482 and Map Number 39.

Portuguese names of rivers along the coast of Nova Scotia.<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, both the 1558 and 1568 Homem charts provide delineations of the Bay of Fundy, (*Baya Funda* or Deep Bay) making him one of the first mapmaker to identify the bay and, by extension, to separate Nova Scotia from Maine.<sup>19</sup>

The exploration of the coasts between Newfoundland and Maine undertaken by Fagundes led to the 1521 royal patent in which he was to receive title for lands south of those already granted to the Corte Real brothers. The king granted Fagundes “the governorship of all those islands and lands he may discover, in the same form and manner that the governors of ... Madeira and the Azores” received their offices.<sup>20</sup> This included all the “clauses and conditions, favours and salaries, privileges and liberties” contained in previous grants, “relating both to jurisdiction and to the revenues, and with all else therein contained.”<sup>21</sup> Finally, the patent also makes specific mention of the fact that Fagundes was to be granted, “with legal right and inheritance, the white and black soap-houses of the said lands and islands” – suggesting an interest in soap manufacturing.<sup>22</sup> The royal letter, thus, is similar in tone, style and content to previous letters issued by Portuguese monarchs in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, including those that were mentioned in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 for both the Atlantic Islands and northeastern North America.

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<sup>17</sup> Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 231. According to Patterson, Homem was Portuguese but lived in Venice. Patterson, “The Portuguese on the North-East,” p. 149.

<sup>18</sup> See Patterson, “The Portuguese on the North-East,” p. 151.

<sup>19</sup> Patterson contends that the Portuguese called the body of water Deep Bay “expressing not the depth of its waters but the depth to which it penetrated the continent.” Patterson, “The Portuguese in the North-East,” p. 149. The first map to represent the Bay of Fundy was the 1554 Lopo Homem map. The Ortelius world map of 1564 also features a “great bay reaching into Canada.” Hoffman, *Cabot to Cartier*, p. 190.

<sup>20</sup> In Biggar, ed., *Precursors*, p. 130.

<sup>21</sup> In Biggar, ed., *Precursors*, pp. 130-1.

<sup>22</sup> In Biggar, ed., *Precursors*, p. 131.

Unlike other patents issued to Portuguese explorers undertaking northern voyages, the Fagundes grant seems to have resulted in the establishment of a settlement in northeastern North America. As was noted above, Fagundes had requested his own notarized copy of the patent and, according to Carl Sauer, Fagundes read the patent at Viana to “drum up participants.”<sup>23</sup> Fagundes appears to have been successful, not only in Viana but also in the Azores, in recruiting settlers for his project. A description of the settlement, given in a 1570 Madeiran account by Francisco de Souza, notes that married couples (*alguns casais*) from the Azores were included in the group and that this fact was well known.<sup>24</sup>

*Tratado das Ilhas Novas* was written in 1570, and was based on information in de Souza’s possession that had been collected by other people, although their identities are not given. The document was not published until 1877, when 100 copies – for distribution to libraries in Europe and America – were printed by Azorean historian Ernesto do Canto in Ponta Delgada, on the island of São Miguel in the Azores.<sup>25</sup> The preface to the nineteenth century publication (*Duas palavras de prefacção*), notes that the original document was thought to have been lost in the Lisbon earthquake (1755), but

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<sup>23</sup> Sauer, *Sixteenth-Century North America*, p. 49.

<sup>24</sup> See Sauer, *Sixteenth-Century North America*, pp. 49-51, Morison, *The European Discovery*, pp. 228-9, David Higgs and Grace M. Anderson, *A Future to Inherit: The Portuguese Communities of Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), pp. 8-9 and Hoffman, *Cabot to Cartier*, pp. 33-35, for English translations of sections of the document. The full text has been published in Biggar, *Precursors of Jacques Cartier*, pp. 196-7. Biggar’s version, which is based in part on George Patterson’s translation, is also in Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” Appendix B, pp. 51-2.

<sup>25</sup> A Portuguese version of the document currently exists at the Library of the University of Coimbra as *Papeis politicos e historicos*, MS. No. 620 (175 do antigo deposito). A Portuguese copy also exists at the Cultural Institute in Ponta Delgada. Copy No. 99 of the Portuguese version, from the National Library and Archives of Canada, is the source of the Portuguese text used in this chapter. The complete title of the 1570 document is: *Tratado das Ilhas Novas e descobrimento dellas e outras couzas, feito por Francisco de Souza, feitor d’ElRei Nosso Senhor na capitania da cidade do Funchal da Ilha da Madeira e natural da dita Ilha e’ assym sobre a gente de nação Portugueza, que está en huma grande Ilha, que n’ella forão ter no tempo da perdição das Espahnas, que ha trezentos e tantos annos, em que reinava ElRei Dom Rodrigo.*

copies were found to exist in provincial libraries. A copy of the document was requested, sometime between 1865 and 1877, from Manuel Ignacio da Silveira Borges, who was then a student at the University of Coimbra, and was used as the basis for the 1877 publication.<sup>26</sup>

The preface also makes reference to a Portuguese presence in North America prior to Columbus and considers the Corte Real voyages at the beginning of the sixteenth century to be further confirmation of the earlier voyages. The document further suggests that the “epic grandeur of Columbus’ enterprise” had obliterated from memory the Portuguese explorations in the region, leaving to the “great Genoese navigator the exclusive glory of the discovery of the New World.” The publishing of the document in the late nineteenth century thus appears to be aimed at reclaiming the past glories of Portugal. On the other hand, the preface also notes that the “pompous title” of de Souza’s text gives the impression that the work is of much more importance than it, in fact, is. The only specific reference in the preface to the content of the text is to a “very important” piece of news – “the establishment of a Portuguese colony on Cape Breton Island at the end of the first quarter of the sixteenth century.”<sup>27</sup>

According to de Sousa, “certain noblemen of Vianna associated themselves together” and, “in view of the information in their possession regarding the Codfish-land of Newfoundland determined to settle some part thereof, as in truth they did in a ship and

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*Dos Portuguezes que forão de Viana e das Ilhas dos Açores a povoar a Terra Nova do Bacalháo, vay em sessenta annos, do que succedeo o que adiante se trata.*

<sup>26</sup> “... nos dirigimos ao nosso conterraneo, então estudante em Coimbra, o sr. doutor Manuel Ignacio da Silveira Borges, pedindo-lhe uma copia d'elle; em breve nol-a remetteu tirada pela sua propia mão., p. xi.

<sup>27</sup> English translations in this paragraph are my own. “Uma noticia contem elle importantissima, qual é a do estabelecimento de uma colonia portugueza na ilha do Cabo-Bretão, nos fins do primeiro quartel do seculo decimo sexto.” *Tratado das Ilhas Novas*, pp. ix-x.

a caravel.”<sup>28</sup> It has been assumed that Fagundes was probably among the “gentlemen of Vianna” who were involved in the venture in northeastern North America. Fagundes was from Viana and was known to have an interest in *Terra Nova*, both in terms of the cod fishery and in terms of receiving a captaincy.<sup>29</sup> The coincidence in timing of the patent and the settlement also points to an association between the two. Finally, the members of the Viana syndicate would not have been able to settle in lands granted to Fagundes without his cooperation.<sup>30</sup> Only this circumstantial evidence, however, has emerged, and details of his connection to the endeavour remain to be confirmed.<sup>31</sup> Fagundes may have partially financed the venture, remaining in Viana and wishing all those on board the vessels a safe journey and prosperous new life as they set out from Portugal. He may, conversely, have had the intention of establishing himself as governor of the lands to which he had been given title, even if only temporarily.<sup>32</sup> There is also the possibility, although it seems unlikely, that he may not have been involved in the venture at all. The term “Fagundes settlement” is thus used to refer to a Portuguese-Azorean settlement in lands for which João Alvarez Fagundes had title with the understanding that his specific involvement in the settlement has not been confirmed.

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<sup>28</sup> In Biggar, ed., *Precursors*, p. 196.

<sup>29</sup> An “old genealogical manuscript quoted by Harris” also connects Fagundes to the region, noting that “Joam Alvarez Fagundes discovered Terra Nova, or the country now called Cabo Bretão, which the king granted him.” It further notes that Fagundes “established cod fisheries” there which “became a large source of profit to Portugal.” Quoted in Hoffman, *Cabot to Cartier*, p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” p. 16.

<sup>31</sup> Hoffman, *Cabot to Cartier*, p. 35, Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” p. 1, Patterson, “The Portuguese on the North-East,” p. 163.

<sup>32</sup> This seems a likely scenario, given that captains in Madeira and the Azores usually resided in the territories granted to them, as they “were expected to exert jurisdiction in the name of the crown.” Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” p. 16.

The voyage is thought to have taken place sometime between 1521 and 1525 – de Souza stated that it occurred 45 or 50 years prior to 1570.<sup>33</sup> The first leg of the journey would have been from Lisbon to the Azores, where a stopover occurred to pick-up people – and, presumably, provisions as well. A footnote (added in 1877) to de Souza’s text notes that the Azorean passengers would most likely have been from the Island of Terceira, given the close family and commercial connections between Terceira and Viana at that time. It is noted, for instance, that many of the “colonists” to Terceira had come from the province of Minho, and specific people with family ties to both places are named. One of the people mentioned is Rodrigo Affonso Fagundes (possibly a relative of João Alvarez de Fagundes?) whose granddaughter Beatriz Fernandes de Carvalho married Pedro Pinto, of Viana, in 1546.<sup>34</sup> The footnote also mentions the Conde de Bretiandos who, in 1877, owned a house in Terceira and was connected to an Azorean family.<sup>35</sup> H.P. Biggar also mentions a “Conde de Bertianos” – presumably either the same person, or a son – who (in 1911) still possessed a house at Vianna which came into his family as the property of Fagundes’ daughter. The Fagundes charter was, at least up to the beginning of the twentieth century, kept by the Conde de Bertianos at his “country seat in the north of Portugal.”<sup>36</sup> It seems, thus, that the knowledge of commercial opportunities in the land of Codfish, as well as family connections between northern

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<sup>33</sup> Given that Fagundes received his copy of the letter patent on May 22, 1521, the earliest the voyage could have taken place is probably the end of May or beginning of June of 1521. Morison is of the opinion that “they crossed the Atlantic in summer,” although no source is given for the information. Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 229.

<sup>34</sup> It is further noted that, in 1877, that alliance was represented by D. Maria Izabel Freire d’Andrade, from Lisbon, who also had houses in Terceira and São Miguel. *Tratado das Ilhas*, p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> The count appears to have been connected to D. Maria de Souza, wife of Damião de Souza de Menzes and daughter of Antonio de Souza Alcoforado and Cecilia de Miranda from Terceira. *Tratado das Ilhas*, p. 10.

<sup>36</sup> Biggar, ed., *Precursors*, p. 129.

Portugal and the Azores, were factors present in the motivation and make-up of the settlement project.

Departing from Terceira, the vessels would have continued on to the *terra Nova do Bacalháo*, arriving in northeastern North America by two possible routes. Sailing north from the Azores to Greenland, more or less, and then heading west to Newfoundland or – if sailing in May or June when the northeasterly winds prevailed over the westerlies – sailing in a more direct northwesterly direction, thus making the rocky shores of Newfoundland the first land sighting. According to de Souza, the two vessels sailed to a region that was found to be too cold and from this point “they sailed along the coast from east to west until they reached that running northeast and southwest, and there they settled.”<sup>37</sup> De Souza goes on to give the following account of the settlement:

“And as they had lost their ships, nothing further was heard of them, save from the Basques (*Biscainhos*) who continue to visit that coast in search of the many articles to be obtained there, who bring word of them and state that they [the settlers] asked them to let us know how they were, and to take out priests; for the natives are submissive (*o gentio é domestico*) and the soil very fertile and good, as I have been more fully informed, and is well known to those who sail thither. This is at cape Breton (*capo do Britão*), at the beginning of the coast that runs north, in a beautiful bay (*uma formosa Bahia*), where there are many people (*donde tem grande povoação*) and goods of much value and many nuts, chestnuts, grapes and other fruit (*muita nóz, castanha, uvas, e outros fructos*), whereby it is clear the soil is rich.”<sup>38</sup>

The above passage, as was noted previously, represents the only document that has come to light providing a concise description of the actual settlement. As such, de Souza’s words are worth careful consideration and examination. On the one hand, one

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<sup>37</sup> In Biggar, ed., *Precursors*, p. 197.

<sup>38</sup> In Biggar, ed., *Precursors*, p. 197. Portuguese words in parenthesis are from *Tratado das Ilhas*, (1877), pp. 5-6. See Appendix for the full Portuguese text.

must consider that de Souza, writing approximately a half-century after the event he describes and in all likelihood not having traveled to the region himself, may not have provided accurate information on at least some aspects of the voyage and the settlement. On the other hand, if de Souza's writing can be seen in the broader context of Portuguese scientific writing that emerged during the early modern era, then it is likely that de Souza's reporting is accurate in many respects.<sup>39</sup> It seems that de Souza, preoccupied about the fate of the settlers, wanted to "go to this coast," to assist or rescue them. He makes mention of his knowledge of navigation and the "rules of the mathematical sciences," as well as a "good mind for all that is required in the said discovery."<sup>40</sup> The document, thus, may have been written in an attempt to enlist support for such a journey.

Francisco de Souza's account of the settlement provides important information on the location and nature of the settlement. It specifically mentions Cape Breton, for instance, as well as a coast that runs north and a beautiful bay. The document also notes that the travelers had found their original destination to the north of Cape Breton too cold, thus suggesting that Newfoundland might have been intended as the original site of the settlement. Given the connection to codfish, as well as the links to Viana – a Portuguese port associated with the Portuguese cod fishery – Newfoundland would have been a reasonable choice. If, however, de Souza was correct not only in his specific mention of Cape Breton but also in his description of the route taken – along the coast from east to west until reaching a land running northeast and southwest – it would seem that they sailed along the southern coast of Newfoundland before settling in Cape Breton, which

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<sup>39</sup> Russell-Wood notes that, although there existed a "rich tradition of veneration of the marvellous" in early modern Portuguese writing, this was paralleled, paradoxically, by writing related to intelligence-gathering that resulted in a "wealth of astronomical, scientific, mathematical, and geographical knowledge." Russell-

runs from northeast to southwest.<sup>41</sup> This is the same course described in the 1521 patent according to the interpretations of Patterson and Morison. It is possible that the east-west direction refers to the northern shores of Newfoundland and that they then turned into the Strait of Belle Isle, where the coast of Labrador runs from northeast to southwest. The northern shores of Newfoundland, however, do not run in a smooth east-west direction. They would have been more likely to sail from the southeast to northwest (roughly from present-day Bonavista to St. Anthony's). Furthermore, de Souza does not mention that a strait was entered. Finally, the mention of fertile soils, not to mention grapes and chestnuts, might have been a bit optimistic for Cape Breton, but it would have been unlikely indeed for Labrador or the north shores of the St. Lawrence. Cartier, for instance, noted that, along the "whole of the north shore" of the Gulf he "did not see one cart-load of earth," and that, except at Blanc Sablon, he found nothing but "moss and short, stunted shrub."<sup>42</sup>

Another factor that decreases the likelihood that the Fagundes settlement was in Newfoundland is that the patent specifically makes reference to lands south of those of the Corte Real, suggesting that Newfoundland could not be settled because of a prior Portuguese claim for a captaincy there. Although, as we saw in the last chapter, both Gaspar and Miguel Corte Real perished in their voyages to the region, the original captaincy granted to Gaspar had been hereditary. It was transferred to Manuel following Gaspar's death and, in September of 1506, was transferred to their brother Vasco Annes.

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Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, p. 15. De Souza's text appears to be more characteristic of the latter than the former.

<sup>40</sup> In Biggar, ed., *Precursors*, p. 197.

<sup>41</sup> Pope concludes that the passage "clearly suggests that they traversed the south coast of Newfoundland until they reached Cape Breton/Nova Scotia." Pope, "A Sixteenth-Century," p. 7.

<sup>42</sup> Jacques Cartier, *The Voyages of Jacques Cartier*, with an introduction by Ramsay Cook (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 9-10.

The 1506 grant notes that the elder Corte Real brother had “always assisted his said brothers with his own property, servants and men” and that he had assumed responsibility for his brother’s debts following their deaths. The patent also states the desire that Vasco Annes and his descendents “order real and actual possession to be taken of all the said land and matters set forth in the grant.”<sup>43</sup> Vasco Annes, however, does not appear to have acted upon the patent beyond requesting it be transferred to him. When he died on March 6, 1538, the king granted Vasco Annes’ son, Manuel, the governorship of the Corte Real lands in *Terra Nova*, a point that will be returned to below. This indicates that the Corte Real family continued to hold a claim in lands north of Cape Breton, if in name only, thus making it difficult for another Portuguese to lay claims to the same land.

L.A. Vigneras, contrary to the above, notes that the Corte Real claim was in eastern Newfoundland, thus leaving open the possibility that Fagundes may have tried to settle elsewhere on the island, probably along the south coast. Vigneras also contends that Fagundes would not have laid claim to Cape Breton because it “was included in the Spanish zone” according to the 1494 treaty.<sup>44</sup> This seems an unlikely preoccupation, however, given that lines of longitude were not precisely known, making it difficult to determine which lands lay on which side of the demarcation line. As was noted previously, Newfoundland is depicted too far to the east in the Cantino planisphere (or the demarcation line is too far west), and Fagundes may have made a similar assumption regarding Cape Breton.<sup>45</sup> Most historians have come to the conclusion that de Souza was accurate in naming *cabo do Britão* as an area that corresponds to present-day Cape

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<sup>43</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. 1*, pp. 153-4.

<sup>44</sup> L.A. Vigneras, “Fagundes, João Alvares,” May 2005. Online. *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. University of Toronto/Université laval, 30 August 2005.

Breton. Although the name was originally used only to refer to a cape on the northeastern part of the island, the designation “came to apply to the entire island.”<sup>46</sup> Various possible locations in Cape Breton have been put forth for the settlement, including Ingonish, Louisbourg, St. Ann’s and St. Peter’s.

Samuel de Champlain, in his 1613 *Voyages*, mentions two harbours in Cape Breton “where the fishing is carried on” – English Harbour and Ingonish – and goes on to note that the Portuguese “at one time wished to inhabit this island, and spent one winter there, but the severity of the season and the cold made them abandon their settlement.”<sup>47</sup> Champlain does not specifically say that the Portuguese settled in Ingonish or English Harbour (present-day Louisbourg), but the fact that he mentions the Portuguese settlement and the two locations together may be an indication that he had some knowledge of the settlement having been at one of the two locations. Morison concludes, in his usual assertive style, that the “beautiful harbour” where the Portuguese settled “undoubtedly was Ingonish” it being the only place in Cape Breton to have the advantages of two protected bays with sandy beaches and a “level area where they can cure their catch.”<sup>48</sup>

D.B. Webster, then Royal Ontario Museum Curator, traveled to Cape Breton in the 1970s to survey several sites that may have been connected to the Portuguese-

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<sup>45</sup> Pope notes that the Portuguese “tended to place the relevant line of longitude as far to the west as possible in the course of their New World activity (most notably in Brazil) and neither Newfoundland nor Nova Scotia actually fall within the Portuguese zone.” Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> A.J. B. Johnston, *Storied Shores: St. Peter’s, Isle Madame, and Chapel Island in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Sydney: University College of Cape Breton Press, 2004), p. 25. Recall, also, that the 1525 Miller I Atlas and 1558 Diego Homem maps both name Cape Breton.

<sup>47</sup> Champlain, *Voyages, Vol IV, Ch. 27*. Quoted in Patterson, “The Portuguese in the North-East,” p. 166.

<sup>48</sup> Morison, *The European Discovery*, pp. 229-230. Pope contends that, while Ingonish is well-suited to the fishery, other ports in Cape Breton are as well. Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” p. 12.

Azorean settlement. The survey was based primarily on local knowledge.<sup>49</sup> “If there is an anomaly on or just in the landscape, or an old but not forgotten story, or just something strange and unexplained,” he notes, “someone is going to be aware of it.”<sup>50</sup> One of the places surveyed was Ingonish. He noted evidence of French house sites from the eighteenth century on the north shore of the North Bay and on Ingonish Island, but “no sign whatever” of earlier occupation.<sup>51</sup>

Webster’s reference to local knowledge is worth noting. While it may seem unlikely that local knowledge on a Portuguese settlement would survive for almost five hundred years, oral history is sometimes passed on from generation to generation. Kenneth Donovan, a Parks Canada historian at Louisbourg National Historic Site in Cape Breton, has conducted, over a thirty-year period, oral interviews on the history of Ingonish. One of the oral history interviews was with Geoffrey S. Cornish, a golf course architect, who worked with Stanley Thompson in the construction of the Highland Links Golf Course in Ingonish in the late 1930s (Cornish turned 91 in August, 2005). The interview contains the following exchange regarding an early burial ground or cemetery that was discovered while work was being carried out on the fourth hole of the golf course in 1938:

Ken: There was one thing we were talking about last night and I have interviewed people that have talked about it. Down by number four near the beach, there was talk about a French graveyard at one time.

Geoff: Portuguese! Peter Dauphinee said so but I could never find out if it was pre-Columbus. The Portuguese kept fishing off this coast well into the 1800s, but the story was that they were here prior to Columbus and

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<sup>49</sup> He notes that, due to the length of the coastline, scientific methodologies, “except for the ever-faithful post-hole digger and trowel,” were not used. Webster, “On the Trail,” n.p.

<sup>50</sup> Webster, “On the Trail,” n.p.

<sup>51</sup> The evidence of French occupation included stone foundations, pottery, clay pipestem, brick and cast-iron pot fragments. Webster, “On the Trail,” n.p.

probably right at the mouth of the Clyburn. They had a community and buried people where the fourth green is now. That is strictly rumour. And then I think the French and British chased the Portuguese out. I heard the story two ways, pre-Columbus, and then much more recently. Peter Dauphinee was interested in Ingonish history and not likely to exaggerate.<sup>52</sup>

Peter Dauphinee was an “elder and tradition bearer In Ingonish” whose father (also Peter Dauphinee) settled in the area in the 1830s.<sup>53</sup> The reference to a pre-Columbus date for the site certainly supports the thesis, outlined in the previous chapter, regarding a fifteenth-century Portuguese presence in the region. It is more likely, if indeed the burial ground is an early Portuguese cemetery and not of French origin, that it dates to the sixteenth century at the earliest and is associated with the Fagundes settlement. While, as Cornish points out, the information is “strictly rumour,” the existence of oral history accounts describing the cemetery as Portuguese in origin nonetheless adds weight to the thesis that the location of the settlement was, indeed, in Ingonish, and points to the possibility of further oral history research on the question of the settlement’s location. As Webster points out, Helge Ingstad was led to the Norse settlement in L’Anse-aux-Meadows “simply through talking with people.”<sup>54</sup>

The other site mentioned by Champlain, English Harbour, also merits some attention as a possible location for the Portuguese settlement of the 1520s. Pope notes that, although bearing the name English Harbour at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the English “did not penetrate the area commercially until after 1588,” thus

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<sup>52</sup> Kenneth Donovan, “An interview with Geoffrey S. Cornish: Stanley Thompson and the Construction of Cape Breton Highland Links, Ingonish, Cape Breton, 1938-1939,” *The Nashwaak Review*, Vol. 14/15 (Fall 2004/Winter 2005), p 372. Many thanks to Ken Donovan for providing me with this and other materials.

<sup>53</sup> Correspondence from Kenneth Donovan to Emily Burton, 19 July, 2005. Copies of the letter were also sent to “officials in the field unit of Parks Canada as well as to some Parks Canada archaeologists” due to the interest that exists regarding the cemetery. It is hoped that, at some point, Parks Canada will assign the area a special designation due to the existence of a burial ground.

<sup>54</sup> Webster, “On the Trail,” n.p.

leaving open the possibility of an earlier Portuguese presence – either through an inshore fishing station or a settlement.<sup>55</sup> De Souza mentions that the settlers lost both of their ships, although he does not tell us how or where. Patterson suggests that the wreck may have occurred in or near Louisbourg Harbour due to the discovery there of a hooped cannon and other objects.

On the shore of Louisbourg Harbour, opposite to what is known as Sally Bush Pond, about half a mile west of the site of the old Grand Battery, Mr. Thomas Cannington, about fifty years ago, found embedded in the mud an old hooped cannon. It was composed of bars of forged iron, bound together by iron bands, and was a breech-loader as the old cannon of that construction were. At the same place was also found an old anchor, and I am informed that, at very low water, pieces of iron are seen embedded in the stiff clay of the shore, which some think may be guns. These all plainly indicate the wreck of some vessel or vessels at the spot.<sup>56</sup>

Patterson contends that “such guns were not used after 1540,” thus suggesting that the cannon could not have been associated with the French presence there after 1713. He further suggests that a cannon of this type would be used by “either men-of-war or vessels carrying the materials for establishing a colony,” but not by fishermen.<sup>57</sup> Since the only mention of such a colonizing venture prior to 1540 comes from Francisco de Souza, Patterson thus comes to the conclusion that the shipwreck in Louisbourg Harbour must have been connected to the Portuguese settlers who would have built a fort and used the cannon to defend their settlement. It seems that, although possible, Patterson’s conclusion may have been premature. Sixteenth-century fishing vessels were not built specifically as fishing vessels – indeed, as was pointed out in the previous chapter, they could easily be pressed into alternate service by European crowns – and it would not have

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<sup>55</sup> Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” pp. 13-14.

<sup>56</sup> Patterson was writing in 1890, which means the cannon would have been found around 1840. Patterson, “The Portuguese on the North-East,” p. 164.

been unusual for the vessels to be armed.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, extensive archaeological excavations at Louisbourg during the reconstruction of the eighteenth-century French fortress have not revealed evidence of sixteenth-century Portuguese occupation.<sup>59</sup>

Another likely site for the Portuguese-Azorean settlement is St. Peter's, site of the seventeenth-century trading post of Nicholas Denys, in southeastern Cape Breton. The Miller I (Jorge Reinel) map, as noted above, makes mention of a land of many people, and other early maps also use names such as "River of Many People" (*R. de mucho gente*) in that part of Cape Breton.<sup>60</sup> During the sixteenth century, St. Peter's was separated from the Bras d'Or lakes by a narrow strip of land (a canal now connects the bay at St. Peter's to the lake). Mi'kmaq oral traditions maintain that the isthmus was used as a portage route "for centuries" by the earliest inhabitants of the region.<sup>61</sup>

Around the time of first European contacts, the Mi'kmaq region extended from Cape Breton to the Gaspé Peninsula. The territory appears to have been divided into seven districts, with Cape Breton, being the seat of the head district of *Unama'ki*.<sup>62</sup> The portage at St. Peter's would have allowed the Mi'kmaq of *Unama'ki* access to both the water resources of the Bras d'Or lakes and ocean routes to other districts in Mi'kmaq

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<sup>57</sup> Patterson, "The Portuguese in the North-East," p. 164.

<sup>58</sup> Pope, "The 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Fishing Voyage," in *How Deep is the Ocean? Historical Essays on Canada's Atlantic Fishery*, eds., James E. Candow & C. Corbin (Sydney: UCCB Press, 1997), p. 18 and Pope, "A Sixteenth-Century," p. 11.

<sup>59</sup> Pope, "A Sixteenth-Century," pp. 40-1.

<sup>60</sup> Hoffman, *Cabot to Cartier*, p. 35.

<sup>61</sup> Johnston, *Storied Shores*, p. 15.

<sup>62</sup> Johnston, *Storied Shores*, p. 16 and Harald E. L. Prins, *The Mi'kmaq: Resistance, Accommodation and Cultural Survival* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1996), p. 35. Ralph Pastore points out that this categorization is based on descriptions from the eighteenth century and later and that it "is not at all clear if this formal division ... was characteristic of the sixteenth century." Pastore, "The Sixteenth Century: Aboriginal Peoples and European Contact," in *The Atlantic Region to Confederation: A History*, eds., Philip A. Buckner and John G. Reid (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 36-7.

territory. In addition, an oral tradition exists that district chiefs from other parts of the Maritimes would travel to the area “to discuss issues of common concern.”<sup>63</sup>

Early European charts, in other words, were likely correct in describing the area as one of “many people” and the reference to *gentio domestico* in the de Souza description of the settlement might also imply a concentration of people.<sup>64</sup> The area was known to Europeans involved in the inshore fishery by the 1520s, with Basque mariners in particular frequenting the coasts off southeastern Cape Breton.<sup>65</sup> It is thus likely that the Mi’kmaq would have already had at least some experience with Europeans. If the encounters led to a mutually desired exchange of goods, the initial reaction of the Mi’kmaq to the new arrivals might have been favourable. As we shall see, it appears that relations between the two soon soured. The presence, nonetheless, of a significant number of Mi’kmaq in the area lends support to the possibility that the settlers from across the Atlantic established themselves at St. Peters, which is also a “beautiful bay.”<sup>66</sup>

D.B. Webster, in his survey of Cape Breton, also considered Baleine Cove at the eastern tip of the island, White Point, in northern Cape Breton at Aspy Bay, and St. Ann’s Bay, south of Ingonish. Of the three, he concluded that St. Ann’s was the most likely spot, given its location. Indeed, of all the sites surveyed, Webster believed that St. Ann’s was the most likely location, although he acknowledged that the evidence is “slim

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<sup>63</sup> Johnston, *Storied Shores*, pp. 16-17. It seems likely that chiefs, or *sagamores*, possessed a certain “prestige and authority,” at least within the “bilocal extended family” of the chief, his wife, “some married sons and daughters,” other relatives and “some unrelated individuals.” Contact with Europeans, however, lead to an increase in the authority of the sagamores due to their “special relationship with the newcomers.” Pastore, “The Sixteenth Century,” pp. 36-7.

<sup>64</sup> The presence of many native people also “mitigates against Newfoundland” as a possible location, given that the Beothuk population at the time would have been quite small, possibly “only 500 to 1,000 individuals grouped in a number of small bands.” Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” p. 10.

<sup>65</sup> Johnston, *Storied Shores*, p. 26.

<sup>66</sup> George Patterson notes that a hooped cannon, similar to the one described above found in Louisbourg Harbour, was also found at St. Peter’s. Patterson concluded that St. Peter’s was the most likely location for

indeed.”<sup>67</sup> St. Ann’s Bay would be easy to reach sailing from the southern coast of Newfoundland, and it is a beautiful bay at the beginning of a coast that runs north. Beyond this, however, there is no strong indication that the settlement might have been located somewhere along the bay.

Contrary to the more commonly held opinion that the settlement was somewhere in Cape Breton, Carl Sauer suggests “the Annapolis lowland on the Bay of Fundy” as the most likely site of the settlement.<sup>68</sup> Based on Sauer’s reconstruction of the first Fagundes voyage, outlined above, the Bay of Fundy could easily have been explored while sailing from Maine to Cape Breton, and Sauer also notes the Portuguese origin of the name Bay of Fundy. The bay, of course, could have been given this name as a result of traveling through – but not sojourning – in the region. With fertile soil and the “mildest climate of the Canadian maritimes,” the Annapolis Valley would have been a more likely place to find the grapes and good land mentioned in the 1570 document.

Of the three possible locations for the settlement – Newfoundland, Cape Breton, the Annapolis Valley – the only one where wild grapes would have grown is the latter. This leaves open a few interpretive possibilities regarding the reference to grapes in the 1570 account of the settlement. The most literal interpretation is that the settlers did in fact arrive at a land where grapes grew and this knowledge was passed on to the people who, in turn, provided de Souza with his information. This strongly suggests an Annapolis Valley location for the settlement.

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the settlement due to its geographic location and to the presence of the cannon. Patterson, “The Portuguese in the North-East,” pp. 168-9.

<sup>67</sup> Webster, “On the Trail,” n.p.

<sup>68</sup> Sauer, *Sixteenth-Century North America*, p. 50. Sauer does not address the geographic information provided by de Souza and focuses only on the ecological dimensions of the settlement.

The French lawyer Marc Lescarbot, who spent a year at Port Royal in the first decade of the seventeenth century, noted the discovery of grape vines on an island at the opening of the Saco River in southern Maine (in Chouakoet, the district of the Chief Olmechin), and noted also that grapes were thought to exist near Port Royal:

... for though they exist in places near to Port Royal, as, for example, along the St. John river, there was as yet no knowledge of them. Here they were found in great abundance with a stem three or four feet in height, as thick as the root of a man's fist, bearing fine grapes, some as large as plums, others small, and so black that where their juice was split they left a stain.<sup>69</sup>

Lescarbot's account confirms that grapes grew in the region at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and it is probable that they did eighty or ninety years prior as well. Another possibility is that the settlers may have noted the abundance of berries of some sort, and referred to them as *uvas* because the latter was a known commodity in both Portugal and the Atlantic Islands. Although Madeira, in particular, was known for its wine, some cultivation of grapes occurred in the Azores as well.<sup>70</sup> The same would be true for chestnuts. Pope has suggested that both grapes and chestnuts "would have been vivid symbols of agricultural potential, whatever their botanical reality."<sup>71</sup> It is also possible that the settlers reported seeing something other than the grapes and, in the process of filtering stories of the settlement through several people over fifty years, it was grapes and not cranberries or another type of berry that was reported. Finally, perhaps neither grapes nor cranberries nor berries of any kind were reported, but de Souza, giving

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<sup>69</sup> Marc Lescarbot, *History of New France, Vol. II* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), p. 323.

<sup>70</sup> Grapes were grown in Terceira in particular, although often unsuccessfully, and wine was also produced in the western island of Pico. Other agricultural commodities associated with Terceira included oranges, salted pork, woad and, especially, wheat. T. Bentley Duncan, *Atlantic Islands: Madeira, the Azores and the Cape Verdes in Seventeenth-Century Commerce and Navigation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. 4, 120-1.

<sup>71</sup> Pope, "A 16<sup>th</sup>-Century," p. 22.

himself a broad interpretive license, assumed them to be there because the “married couples” from the Azores and other settlers had gone to the region to establish an agricultural settlement. The last two interpretive possibilities also would be based on the importance of grapes (and wine) in Portugal and the Azores.

Historians have faced a similar interpretive problem with respect to early Norse settlement. The Norse sagas make reference to grapes, grapevines and grape trees as well, even giving the area the name *Vinland*, but grapes could not possibly have grown around L’Anse-aux-Meadows in northern Newfoundland. “For centuries, notes Birgitta Wallace, “scholars debated whether the name *Vinland* stemmed from first-hand experience of grapes or if it simply symbolized paradisaical qualities perceived in a country previously unknown to the Norse.”<sup>72</sup> It had also been suggested that the word *vinber* in the sagas is a reference to “wineberry,” not “grape,” and could have referred to wild red currants, gooseberries or mountain cranberries.<sup>73</sup> The commonly held understanding at present is that the Norse did in fact see grapes and send them back to Greenland. L’Anse-aux-Meadows is thought to have functioned as a base for exploration as well as a “transshipment station for resources collected further afield.”<sup>74</sup> Butternuts recovered from the site indicate that the Norse had been further south, given that the northern limit of butternut is approximately present-day northeastern New Brunswick. This is also the northern range of wild grapes, indicating that the Norse “did, in fact, visit areas where grapes grew wild.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Birgitta Wallace, “The Norse in Newfoundland: L’Anse aux Meadows and Vinland,” *Newfoundland Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2003), p. 27.

<sup>73</sup> This was originally suggested by Harvard botanist Merrit L. Fernald in 1910. See Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 51.

<sup>74</sup> Wallace, “The Norse in Newfoundland,” p. 27.

<sup>75</sup> Wallace, “The Norse in Newfoundland,” p. 27.

The scholarship regarding the Norse presence in the region and their connection to grapes has been highlighted to show that, as is the case with the Portuguese, many interpretations are possible. It took a considerable amount of time and scholarship to come to the present conclusion regarding the grapes of Vinland. Perhaps the most that can be said at present regarding the Portuguese is that a number of possibilities exist. In addition to those mentioned above, it is also possible, drawing upon potential parallels with L'Anse-aux-Meadows and Vinland South, that the Portuguese settled in Cape Breton but had seen grapes in their travels – along the coast of Maine and in the Bay of Fundy – and assumed them to grow throughout the region. This interpretation accommodates both a reference to actual grapes and a Cape Breton location. Whether the settlers actually saw grapes, or saw something else and called them grapes, or saw nothing of the sort, however, the reference to grapes – along with other fruits, nuts and chestnuts and fertile and good land – is significant in that it suggests (or reflects) that the settlement was envisioned as, at least in part, an agricultural one.

Cape Breton – given the specific reference in the de Souza documents, as well as the more commonly held interpretation of the route taken as described in the 1521 patent (from Newfoundland south to Cape Breton) – seems to have been the site of the Fagundes settlement. The question of its exact location on the island, however, remains unanswered. Due to rising seawater levels, many of the coastal areas that existed in the 1500s are now below water.<sup>76</sup> In addition, except for stone foundations and fireplaces, many of the material remains associated with the settlement might have been carried away by native people (iron tools for example) or may have simply disappeared over time

(such as the wooden stages, flakes and boats associated with the fishery).<sup>77</sup> Even ceramic pots or other vessels – the “only culturally and chronologically sensitive artifacts likely to endure such a context” – would not in and of themselves provide definitive proof because they were marketed to other mariners.<sup>78</sup> As such, the archaeological evidence of material culture required to locate the Portuguese-Azorean settlement more precisely may never surface. On the other hand, historical archaeologist Peter Pope concludes that an association with aboriginal materials might make possible the dating of “a sparse European occupation of the period.”<sup>79</sup>

Other indications, apart from those suggesting an interest in cultivation of the land, can be extracted from both the Fagundes patent and the de Souza account regarding the nature of the colony. The 1521 patent mentions, as was noted previously, that Fagundes was to receive white and black soap houses. It is not clear if an assumption was being made that the soap houses already existed or if the reference is there because a similar clause might have been included in Portuguese charters. The original patent also states that the office of governor was to have the same legal and commercial privileges granted to governors in Madeira and the Azores. This reference in the patent may also shed light on the economic configuration of the colony. In the donatary captaincies, the governor exerted legal jurisdiction in the name of the crown in return for a portion of the revenue generated, with the latter potentially taking the form of a royal monopoly on the “local means of production.”<sup>80</sup> The 1500 patent granted to Gaspar Corte Real (Chapter 3),

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<sup>76</sup> It is estimated that sea levels in the Maritimes may have risen between 25 and 40 centimetres per century over the last several centuries. Sue Browne and Derek S. Davis, eds., *The Natural History of Nova Scotia, Vol. 1: Topics and Habitats* (Halifax, Nimbus Publishing and the Nova Scotia Museum, 1996), p. 61.

<sup>77</sup> Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” pp. 23, 39.

<sup>78</sup> Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” pp. 41-2.

<sup>79</sup> Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” p. 42.

<sup>80</sup> Royal monopolies were also granted on the sale of salt. Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” p. 16.

for instance, included the stipulation that he would receive twenty five percent of the revenue that was to be generated, either through trade or through some other means. Given the existence of the seasonal cod fishery focused on European markets, it seems a logical conclusion that the fishery was intended to be a source of revenue for the settlement.

Dona Violante, the only daughter of Fagundes, stated in a 1548 document that her father had “suffered many expenses” and “contracted many debts” as a result of his travels to *Terra Nova*. If he had become indebted as a result of the first exploratory voyage, the granting of a captaincy would have allowed Fagundes to possibly recoup some of his losses, as he would have retained a portion of any profits to be gained from the venture. The 1520s was still an early date for the migratory fishery. The French and Basque were already making yearly trips, along with the Portuguese, although the English had not yet become involved to any great extent. Did João Fagundes make the calculation – accurate or inaccurate only in hindsight – that a permanent base would permit more successful exploitation of coastal resources?

Taken together, the references to fertile soil, chestnuts, grapes and other fruit, to soap houses and to the generation of revenues all suggest the possibility of a settlement with a diversified economic base including, possibly, the cultivation of agricultural goods intended primarily for local consumption, the production of soap as a marketable commodity and, finally, a reliance on cod as the staple export product of the settlement. In other words, there are indications that the settlement was not intended solely as a permanent base from which to exploit the fishery – interestingly, the patent mentions cod only briefly and the 1570 document not at all – but as a small colony with a mixed

economy that included subsistence elements, a limited manufacturing base and an export commodity.

Factors related to the social and religious make-up of the settlement described in the 1570 document may also help paint a possible profile of its nature and aims. The mention of married couples clearly suggests that this venture was not intended to be a fishing station only. Women did not generally participate in the seasonal fishery of the sixteenth century. The presence of women, and by extension possibly children as well, points to the intention of more permanent occupation. Secondly, the request – via a group of migratory fishermen from the Bay of Biscay (French or Spanish Basque) – for a priest is another indication that the settlers planned to be there for the foreseeable future. Finally, the document also makes mention of people living in the area where the Azorean-Portuguese had settled. There is an indication of a desire for missionary activity associated with the request for a priest. No mention of any exchange of goods between the two parties is included in the document, although it could be inferred that some mutually beneficial contact had occurred, since the people of the region are reported as not being hostile.<sup>81</sup>

The presence of aboriginal people may have been a decisive factor in the eventual outcome of the settlement, although other factors, such as climate, disease or crop failure may also have come into play. Jean Alfonse, the pilot in the French expedition of 1541/2 to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, noted in 1544 that: "...formerly the Portuguese sought to settle the land which lies lowest, but the natives of the country put an end to the attempt

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<sup>81</sup> The English translation (quoted above) describes the native people as "submissive." The original Portuguese word, *domestico*, however, may have intended to have the connotation of being non-hostile (from "non-wild" or "tame") – or even friendly – rather than "submissive." It is also possible that the behaviour of the Mi'kmaq was not "submissive," but one of "avoidance of face to face embarrassment,"

and killed all those who came there.”<sup>82</sup> Jean Mallart, writing in 1547, also noted that the Portuguese had attempted to populate Cape Breton at some time, but the people of the island had killed them.<sup>83</sup> This account differs significantly from that of de Souza regarding interaction between the settlers and the aboriginal people, probably Mi’kmaq, of the region. It is possible that the settlers misread their original encounter with the Mi’kmaq, who might have already been pre-disposed towards a hostile reaction to the newcomers. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the Portuguese were among the Europeans to have kidnapped aboriginal people during early voyages of exploration. Harald Prins has suggested that the people kidnapped by Estevão Gomez might have been Mi’kmaq, and that this “would have spelled disaster for Cape Breton’s fledgling colony.”<sup>84</sup>

It is also possible that the Mi’kmaq had established, by that time, friendly relations with the Basque and other fishermen, but would have responded with hostility to the Portuguese “when they realized that the Europeans intended to stay instead of merely

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which would have been “typical of Algonkian cultures.” For the latter point, see Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” p. 36.

<sup>82</sup>Hoffman, *Cabot to Cartier*, p. 35. Hoffman notes that “the land which lies lowest” would be a reference to Cape Breton or some other part of Nova Scotia. Although he was believed by some to be Portuguese, Jean Alfonse, or Jean Fonteneau, was born in the French village of Santionge. He sailed to Spain and Portugal as a young man, and married a Portuguese woman, Valentine Alfonse, from whom the surname Alfonse originates. The name Alfonse, and his knowledge of Portuguese, seem to have led to the belief that he was Portuguese. See “Fonteneau, Jean,” May, 2005. Online. University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2 August, 2005. It is of interest to note that the final section of *Tratado das Ilhas Novas* mentions Jean Alfonse. It is entitled *Roteiro do descobrimento das Ilhas Novas, feito por João Affonso, francez o qual esteve n’ellas e em uma emmastreou uma não sua, e tomou altura e fez roteiro*. Furthermore, an 1877 footnote to the document discusses Jean Alfonse at length, including his supposed Portuguese citizenship. His connections to Portugal may have given him a predisposition towards collecting information regarding a Portuguese settlement in northeastern North America.

<sup>83</sup> “Les Portuglais l’ont quelque fois peuplee / Mais ceux de L’Isle ont ces gens tuee.” Quoted in Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 248 and Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” p. 27. The original publication is: Jehan Mallart, “Premier livre de la description de tous les port de mer de lunivers,” Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, ancient fonds francais ms 1382.

<sup>84</sup> Prins, *The Mi’kmaq*, p. 45. This assumes that the Fagundes settlers were in the region after, if not before, the Gomez expedition of 1524 or 1525.

calling to fish and trade.”<sup>85</sup> Pope argues that this interpretation implies a “proprietary interest” in the land being settled on the part of the Mi’kmaq, which the “Algonkian peoples of the period” did not have.<sup>86</sup>

Another possibility is that Mi’kmaq hostility was related to evangelization efforts on the part of the Portuguese. Christian conversion of aboriginal populations was certainly a stated objective of Portuguese efforts elsewhere. In Brazil, Pedro Vaz de Caminha reported on the potential for conversion among the existing inhabitants during Cabral’s 1500 voyage. The Portuguese did not, however, initially act upon this interest and focused instead on the commercial possibilities of the region. It seems less likely that a small settlement, struggling to establish itself and lacking a priest, would have devoted much time to evangelization efforts at this early stage.

A more likely possibility is that the settlers did not properly acknowledge the existing inhabitants. For instance, they may not have seen the importance of engaging in a trading relationship and developing an alliance with the Mi’kmaq – a key factor for instance with the French and Mi’kmaq at Port Royal.<sup>87</sup> This insensitivity, coupled with the possibility that the Mi’kmaq were aware of – or had experienced first hand – previous hostile encounters, might have been enough to create conflict between the two. Finally, although Alfonse and Mallart state that the settlers were killed, it is also possible that they – in particular the women and any children present – were taken prisoner and then adopted by the Mi’kmaq, given that this strategy was used by Algonkian peoples of the northeast.<sup>88</sup> Whether eliminated or absorbed into aboriginal society, the reaction of the Mi’kmaq to the

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<sup>85</sup> Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 230..

<sup>86</sup> Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” p. 30.

<sup>87</sup> Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” p. 34.

<sup>88</sup> Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” pp. 37-8.

Portuguese, if accurate, supports the premise outlined in Chapter 1 that aboriginal people made strategic decisions regarding their interactions with Europeans, and in particular with respect to a possible permanent presence of Europeans in their lands.

It is also possible that the demise of the settlement may have been more directly related to climate than to hostility with the Mi'kmaq. Champlain's commentary on the one winter in Cape Breton, for instance, gives an indication that cold was a factor in Portuguese settlement attempts – even if his reference was to a Portuguese settlement other than the Fagundes endeavour. Europeans were accustomed to arriving in northeastern North America in the spring and leaving in the fall – with some exceptions such as the Basque in Labrador – thus making an awareness of the harshness of the northern maritime winter slow to sink in. John May, an English traveler who had spent five months in Bermuda in 1593-4 after being ship-wrecked there, complained about thunder, lightning, rain and the lack of fresh water or large animals on the island. In the spring, he travelled towards the northeast, spending four short hours in Cape Breton in May. In contrast to Bermuda, May described the area as a “very good countrey,” with fresh water, wild ducks, “very fine champion ground” and woods, and he also traded with the Mi'kmaq. “Given a choice between Cape Breton and Bermuda,” notes John Reid, “there is no doubt which island May would have chosen.”<sup>89</sup> Appearances, thus, can be deceiving.

The experience of the French during their first winter at St. Croix is another indication that Europeans were ill prepared for northern winters. Even into the seventeenth century, European knowledge of climate patterns of the northeast was

imperfect. Nicolas Denys, for instance, believed that places in New France and France of the same latitude should have equivalent climates and that New France was colder and had more snow because of the forests.<sup>90</sup> “If once the woods are farther removed from their lands,” he proclaimed, “they will have no more winter than in Paris.”<sup>91</sup> If Cape Breton could be considered a more favourable locale than Bermuda at the end of the sixteenth century, and New France an acceptable place to live after the felling of some forest trees shortly thereafter, it might not be a stretch to think that the Fagundes settlers – from the temperate zones of northern Portugal and even the Azores – thought they could reasonably make it through the winter months. The reality, however, of unrelenting cold, an inadequate food supply as livestock died and crops were covered with snow – and possibly also scurvy and other diseases – might have been enough to make them abandon the settlement.

Another Portuguese interest in settlement, several decades following the 1520s Fagundes endeavour, seems to have been associated with Sable Island and was connected to the Barcelos family.<sup>92</sup> Like the Corte Reals, the Barcelos were from Terceira. They also may have had a previous connection to the region. Pedro María de Barcelos as was noted in Chapter 3, may have travelled north with João Fernandes at the end of the fifteenth century, although the specific connection between Pedro Barcelos and

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<sup>89</sup> John G. Reid, “Henry May, An Early English Admirer of the Maritime Landscape,” in *The Red Jeep and Other Landscapes: A Collection in Honour of Douglas Lochhead*, ed., Peter Thomas (Sackville: Centre for Canadian Studies, 1987), p. 18.

<sup>90</sup> Denys, *The Description and Natural History*, pp. 247-251. Quinn states that this perception was a “basic obstacle” to early settlement attempts in North America which did not begin to change until the seventeenth century. He notes that eastern North America is influenced by continental climate patterns which create extremes of heat and cold, and also does not have the moderating effect of the Gulf Stream present in western Europe. In addition, the impact of a “little Ice Age” in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may have made the winters particularly unbearable. David B. Quinn, *Explorers and Colonies: America, 1500-1625* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1990), pp. 163-4.

<sup>91</sup> Denys, *The Description and Natural History*, p. 251.

<sup>92</sup> Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. 4*, p. 183.

subsequent Azoreans northern travelers with the same name is not known. Manuel de Barcelos Machado and his cousin, Marcos de Barcelos Machado, made several voyages to *Terra Nova* in the 1560s. In 1568, they acquired an interest in a ship which they planned to use to “colonize” the Island Barcellona de Sam Bardão – thought to be Sable Island.<sup>93</sup>

Documentary evidence of the desire to establish a settlement derives from a petition, dated January 1568, by Manuel de Barcelos Machado against an embargo on his ship by Portuguese authorities in Angra, Terceira. In addition to Manuel and Marcos, two other people, Diego de Vieira and Gaspar Rodriguez also gave testimony to the King’s Purveyor regarding the embargo. The testimony of Manuel de Barcelos includes the following statements:

Manoel de Barcelos Machado, who resides in this city of Angra in Terceira Island, says that he bought a new ship, whose master is João Cordeiro, to go and settle the Island of Barcellona de Sam Bardão, in which discovery his late father [Manoel Barcelos] and he spent more than 5000 cruzados, and in which they have been breeding herds of cows, sheep, goats and swine; and because the petitioner did not acquire the ship to go trading, but only to colonize the said island, and because he plans to leave in March or April with people to settle the said island; he asks Your Grace that you let him draw up certain testimonies proving what he says, and that orders be given so that his ship, which was embargoed to transport the King’s wheat, will not go beyond Lisbon and will return home in time to go to the said isle.<sup>94</sup>

As has been noted, the crown was known to embargo ships involved in fishing or other ventures. In this case, the embargo was to transport wheat, an Azorean agricultural product. The specific mention in the petition that the ship only go as far as Lisbon, and

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<sup>93</sup> Quinn notes that the island “has been identified with Sable Island,” although he does not give further details. He also notes the possibility that “there may have been Barcelos expeditions to Cape Breton Island as well.” Quinn, *New American World, Vol. IV*, p. 183. The reference to “Barcellona” is an indication that they were giving the island their family name.

<sup>94</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. IV*, p. 184.

that it return promptly, is of note. The petition also asks that, “for years to come,” the ship not be “requisitioned,” given that it had been purchased to “colonize and for no other reason.”<sup>95</sup> Marcos de Barcelos, in his testimony, states that the name of the ship was *A Vera Cruz* and that it had been bought on the island of São Jorge. Marcos also notes that the ship had been purchased to go to “São Bardão”, where he and his cousin had “set down much cattle.”<sup>96</sup>

The other two people who gave testimony as part of the petition mention two separate trips in which animals had been taken to the island and left to multiply. Diego de Vieira, the uncle of Manuel de Barcelo’s wife, for instance, notes that Manuel had sent two ships with cattle six years prior, “more or less,” and that two years prior to the 1568 testimony Manuel “also sent cattle there which were cows, sheeps and goats, which he set down in the said land and which they have fattened, flourished and multiplied.”<sup>97</sup> Gaspar Rodriquez, whom we know only as an inhabitant of Santa Barbara, Terceira, states that Manuel “had discovered the island Barcellona” about six years prior. Rodriguez also states that Manuel had taken “much cattle” to the island “which have there flourished and multiplied.”<sup>98</sup>

Samuel de Champlain, writing in 1612 about the French attempt to establish a settlement on Sable Island at the end of the sixteenth century, states that when the French arrived on the island they found “bullocks and cows which the Portuguese had carried there more than sixty years ago and which were very serviceable to the party.”<sup>99</sup> This

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<sup>95</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. IV, p. 184.

<sup>96</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. IV, p. 184.

<sup>97</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. IV, p. 184.

<sup>98</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World*, Vol. IV, p. 184.

<sup>99</sup> Marc Lescarbot, also writing at the beginning of the seventeenth century, asserted that the cattle had been left on the island by the French in 1518 after a failed attempt at colonization. Both Lescarbot and Champlain are cited in Patterson, “The Portuguese in the North-East,” pp. 166-8.

would mean that the Portuguese left cattle on the island around 1550. Another account of cattle left on the island in the 1550s comes from Edward Hayes (in his account of Humphrey Gilbert's last voyage), who learned from a Portuguese fisherman that the latter had himself been "present when the Portugals, above thirty years past," put on Sable Island "neat and swine to breed, which have since exceedingly multiplied."<sup>100</sup> Although the references from Champlain and Hayes suggest the cattle was left on Sable Island in the 1550s and the documentary evidence from the Azores indicates they were left beginning in 1560, it is possible that Manoel and his father had been "breeding herds of cows, sheep, goats and swine" prior to 1560. It is also possible that Champlain and Hayes may have been off by a few years in their estimates. In other words, it seems likely that the cattle referred to were indeed the cattle left there by the Barcelos family of the Azores.

The choice of Sable Island as a suitable settlement site at first glance seems an unusual one. Lacking both sufficient forests for shelter and wood supplies and adequate availability of fresh water, the settlers would have had a difficult time. Some parallels exist in this regard with the island of St. Croix, where the French spent a fateful winter in 1604-5. The French had initially chosen the island location in part because it was deemed easier to defend against attack than a mainland site. The Portuguese may have had a similar objective in mind. Sable Island was uninhabited and a safe distance from the mainland. The livestock left there by the Portuguese may, however, have been a more decisive factor. This pattern of development – leaving livestock on uninhabited islands to proliferate prior to human migration – had been used effectively in the Azores, and the

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<sup>100</sup> Patterson, "The Portuguese in the North-East," p. 166 and Cuthbertson, "Early Portuguese Voyages," p. 12. See also David Quinn, "Gilbert, Sir Humphrey," May 2005. Online. University of Toronto/Université

members of the Barcelos family and other Azoreans involved in this venture may have been trying to emulate the Azores pattern. The grasses of Sable Island would have provided food for the animals. They would not have had natural predators and, most importantly perhaps, the animals had nowhere to go.

It is of note that the Barcelos interest in the region went beyond the possession of a nominal title. Livestock had been left in the region on at least two separate voyages – perhaps in conjunction with trips to the region to fish for cod. Manuel and Marcos had also purchased a ship with the intention of using it to establish a settlement in the region. This would have been a costly enterprise. Neither their motivation for such an endeavour, nor their legal claim to the lands they were to occupy, nor indeed the ultimate success of their efforts are known, but their interest in the region beyond the fishery is of significance.

The Corte Real family had also not forgotten its claims in the region and there is some evidence of a renewed interest in establishing a captaincy in Newfoundland around the same time members of the Barcelos family were setting livestock on Sable Island. As was noted above, the original hereditary captaincy of Gaspar was had been transferred to his nephew, Manuel Corte Real, by 1538. A 1567 document gives some indication that, almost thirty years after receiving a claim to *Terra Nova*, Manuel was expressing a tangible interest in acting upon it. Manuel, representing the third generation in the Corte Real family with a confirmed or possible connection to the region, was by this time governor of Angra. It seems that, rather than becoming governor himself, Manuel wanted the king's permission to appoint a person who would act in his name.

King Sebastião (1557-1578), in a letter to Gaspar Ferar, the magistrate (*corregidor*) of the Azores, makes known to his representative that Manuel and his fathers and uncles “had sent out the people who discovered the land called Terra Nova” and that Manuel was now sending “two ships and a caravel with people and provisions to begin to colonize it.”<sup>101</sup> The document also states the people were to come from Terceira and that Manuel needed to find someone who could act on his behalf, performing the duties of “governor, judge and administrator of justice.”<sup>102</sup> The king requests that the *corregidor* of the Azores choose a person from among the group going to Terra Nova who was “most suitable and proper to draw up all documents and record whatever happens in the said land.”<sup>103</sup> The king’s document also states that the person who is to be appointed as Manuel’s legal official should himself receive a letter signed by Manuel, “conveying the authority given by this deed.”<sup>104</sup> The king’s permission was to last for three years, but no further evidence has emerged to indicate that the settlement was in fact established.<sup>105</sup>

Manuel’s interest in pursuing his hereditary rights almost seventy years after the first Corte Real voyages gives an indication that the Portuguese interest in land in northeastern North America, albeit nominal, persisted into the second half of the sixteenth century. Manuel died sometime between 1574 and 1578.<sup>106</sup> He had received a confirmation of his Newfoundland charter in 1574, and following his death his rights to *Terra Nova* were transferred (between 1578 and 1580) to his son Vasques Eanes (or

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<sup>101</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. IV*, p. 185.

<sup>102</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. IV*, p. 185.

<sup>103</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. IV*, p. 185.

<sup>104</sup> In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. IV*, p. 186.

<sup>105</sup> According to Quinn, the settlement, if it existed, may have been in Labrador or in Newfoundland, along the Strait of Belle Isle. In Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. IV*, p. 183.

Vasqueannes) Corte Real. According to Quinn, Vasques Eanes Corte Real had been on a voyage to Labrador in 1574, but no information has emerged “to indicate that he or other members of his family continued to make exploratory voyages up the North American coast” after this date.<sup>107</sup>

The decade of the 1570s thus marks the end of Portuguese interest in establishing settlements in the region – a time also of decline for the Iberian fishery generally. During Sir Humphrey Gilbert’s sojourn in Newfoundland in August, 1583, the Portuguese present did not contest Gilbert’s taking possession in the name of the Queen of England. In fact, Edward Hayes noted that the Portuguese fishermen presented Gilbert with “wines, marmalades, most fine rusk and bisket, sweat oyles and sundry delicacies.”<sup>108</sup> Portugal had officially become part of Spain three years prior to Gilbert’s ceremonies of possession in St. John’s harbour. Perhaps the Portuguese preferred English sovereignty over Spanish, or perhaps they had simply lost interest in territorial claims in the region.<sup>109</sup>

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This chapter has focused specifically on Portuguese interest in settlement in the sixteenth century in northeastern North America. Much attention was given in the chapter to exploring the documentary evidence related to these ventures, including commentary

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<sup>106</sup> According to Morison, Manuel died in 1578, “in battle fighting the Moors by the side” of King Sebastian (Sebastião). Morison, *The European Discovery*, p. 217.

<sup>107</sup> Quinn, ed., *New American World, Vol. IV*, p. 187.

<sup>108</sup> Quoted in Patterson, “The Portuguese in the North-East,” p. 169.

<sup>109</sup> Patterson notes the possibility that “their relation at this time to the Spanish as their conquerors, and the known feelings of the English toward that people, may have rendered them willing to concur... in a rival taking possession of the rights granted both to Fagundes and the Cortereals.” Patterson, “The Portuguese in the North-East,” p. 170. The Portuguese fishermen may have been as concerned about appeasing potential English pirates as they were about taking a stance against imperial Spain.

on ways in which the evidence has been interpreted by historians. Of the three principle interests in settlement, that of a group of Azoreans and northern Portuguese in the early to mid-1520s in lands – most likely in Cape Breton – that had been granted to João Fagundes has been explored in most detail. It appeared to have been envisioned as a settlement with a mixed economic base, and met its early fate as a result of either severe climate or conflict with the existing inhabitants – probably Mi'kmaq. The Barcelos initiative was also significant in that the attempt to settle involved the prior shipment of livestock to the region, and indications of a possible Corte Real settlement in the 1560s highlight the continuity between early exploratory voyages and subsequent activity in the region.

Although evidence of early Portuguese settlements, or intended settlements, is sparse relative to other early settlements, such as those at Port Royal or Cupids Cove, the documentary trail does indicate that the Portuguese were interested in settlement in northeastern North America in the sixteenth century. Furthermore, the interest did not involve one isolated or exceptional case, but three separate instances between the 1520s and 1560s. If one includes the captaincies granted to João Fernandes in 1499 and Gaspar Corte Real in 1500, as well as the transfer of the Corte Real captaincy to various members of the Corte Real family up to approximately 1580, as indications of a Portuguese interest in the landward potential of the region, the Portuguese interest in settlement can be seen as one that existed – albeit intermittently – throughout most of the sixteenth century.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

The thesis has examined Portuguese interest in settlement in sixteenth-century northeastern North America. It has done so primarily through the lens of Atlantic history, which places emphasis on the interconnectedness of the early modern Atlantic world. To understand Portuguese activity in northeastern North America, it has been necessary to give consideration to Portuguese activities elsewhere, primarily in the Atlantic. The thesis is, however, primarily concerned with a cis-Atlantic, or regional perspective. The major aim of the research has been to take a fresh look at the Portuguese presence in the region and, in so doing, to make a contribution to the existing historiography regarding the absence of European settlement in the sixteenth century. An examination of Portuguese interest in settlement, in conjunction with other activities engaged in by Portuguese explorers and fishers, indicates that the Portuguese expressed an interest in the landward as well as seaward potential of the region from as early as 1500, if not before. This is not in keeping with the entrenched assumption that Europeans were not interested in land or settlement during this time. As such, the thesis identifies a cloudy area in the historiography and points to the need for a re-examination of the explanatory power of the existing historiography.

Following the introductory discussion in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 focused on the patterns of analysis in existing historiography. In a nutshell, the principal assumption made by historians regarding the sixteenth century is that the attractive resource was offshore and permanent settlement was not required to exploit it. This perspective has been developed in particular by Gillian Cell in her analysis of the extractive nature of the

coastal resources of the region, with subsequent generations of scholars accepting the general tenets, if not the details, of the argument. Cell's analysis focuses on the resource base of the region, and, in so doing, highlights commercial, rather than imperial, concerns. This emphasis on the commercial motivation of Europeans in the exploitation of resources had also been characteristic of other historians, notably Harold Innis, and represented a departure from even earlier interpretations which had defined the sixteenth century as a portion of the colonial period and emphasized the trials, tribulations and triumphs of Europeans in the march towards colonial progress. In other words, Cell's analysis should be considered as significant in terms of the historiographical moment in which it was embedded. In replacing colonization with commerce, however, the focus continued to be on one over-arching factor to explain the activity of Europeans in northeastern North America during the sixteenth century.

Thus, the pendulum swung from an emphasis on politics towards an emphasis on economics. The current historiographical moment seems to be allowing the pendulum to swing back and revisit imperial motivations from a new perspective. Considerations of empire can be factored into the analysis without being hampered by embedded assumptions regarding European superiority or the inevitability of a linear colonial narrative. In particular, scholarship in the area of Aboriginal history has contributed to an examination of the region from a perspective that views the European presence as much more peripheral than was assumed in colonial history. Although very little evidence exists regarding Portuguese interactions with aboriginal people, the inclusion of an aboriginal perspective is nonetheless a key component of the regional analysis because it helps us view northeastern North America in a more complex and comprehensive way.

When the French and English began to experiment more seriously with permanent settlement in the seventeenth century – a topic explored in Chapter 2 – it was not due to a single causal factor, but due to a complex intersection of multiple factors. The remainder of the thesis, in essence, examined the Portuguese interest in the region in order to understand the complex intersection of factors that led to the Portuguese interest in settlement. Chapter 2 made the suggestion that not all Europeans related to the region in the same way or according to the same timelines, and that early Portuguese interest in settlement should be examined with respect to other early European settlement in addition to the dynamics of the fishery in the sixteenth century.

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 focused on the Portuguese in northeastern North America. Chapter 3 examined early Portuguese voyages, coming to the conclusion that, contrary to both contemporary and historiographical opinion, the early Portuguese experience may have been atypical. Unlike the French or English, or even Spanish, they were probably not searching for a northwest passage. From the very beginning, they were interested in establishing territorial claims and in the possibility of establishing Atlantic-style captaincies in the region. The chapter also examined the Portuguese participation in the fishery, with recent scholarship suggesting that Portuguese involvement has been overstated. This is another piece of the puzzle that suggests that the Portuguese may have had other motivations for their presence in the region. Chapter 4 focused specifically on three separate instances of Portuguese interest in settlement in the region in the 1520s and 1570s. Although the documentary evidence regarding these settlements, or possible settlements, is incomplete, it does demonstrate clearly that the Portuguese were interested in settlement in the region.

In this current chapter, central questions raised in the thesis can now be revisited in an attempt to gain insights both into the Portuguese motivation towards settlement and into the historical and historiographical significance of Portuguese-Azorean settlement endeavours. Specifically, the thesis proposed (Chapter 1) to explore three inter-related questions: What was the Portuguese motivation for attempting to establish permanent settlements in northeastern North America in the sixteenth century? What is the historical significance of Portuguese settlement attempts – in particular the 1520s Fagundes settlement? Is the current pattern of historiographical analysis with respect to early European settlement in northeastern North America applicable or misleading with respect to the Portuguese? The remainder of this chapter addresses the above questions.

The question of motivation towards settlement exists, broadly speaking, at three levels. The first involves the motivation of the Portuguese crown in either promoting, supporting or allowing settlement in the region. The second involves nobles or merchants – João Fagundes and other “gentlemen” from Viana, successive generations of Corte Real family members and in particular Manuel Corte Real and, finally, Manuel and Marcos Barcelos – and the reasons why they might have been interested in the landward potential of the region. Finally, the settlers themselves must be taken into consideration, although the motivation of these people is very difficult to assess given that their identities are unknown.

The Portuguese empire has been characterized as a “seaborne empire,” and as the empire of “merchant kings.” Although motivated in part by a desire to extend the reconquest of Moorish Portugal into northern Africa, initial Portuguese expansion was largely fueled by the desire to gain greater access to both the Venetian-controlled Asian

spice trade and the gold wealth of Africa. The cultivation of sugar in the south Atlantic islands, and later on in Brazil, also proved to be of great commercial significance.<sup>1</sup> It was an expansion motivated largely by commercial considerations. The Portuguese crown was not interested in establishing a Portuguese colonial presence in every corner of the world. The population base of early modern Portugal would have made this task a difficult one to carry out – not to mention the problems of financing such an undertaking. That is not to say, of course, that the Portuguese refrained from the establishment of colonies, as Goa and Brazil (after 1530) attest. The monarchy, however, was selective, and seems to have been adept at making strategic decisions regarding the extent to which territorial control was a prerequisite for effective control of commercial networks.

As noted in Chapter 2, for instance, the Portuguese crown established *feitorias* rather than settlements along the West African coast, as they did in the first three decades of the sixteenth century in Brazil. The Portuguese presence was commercially significant, but small from a demographic perspective. São Jorge da Mina in the Gulf of Guinea, for instance, had a total population of about 600 artisans and “armed men,” while Elmina and the other Portuguese settlements in the area “did not number more than two hundred in the sixteenth century.”<sup>2</sup> Although Angola eventually became a Portuguese colony, the initial sixteenth-century chartered colony was established in part in order to increase the supply of black slaves.”<sup>3</sup> Well into the seventeenth century, there were only 326 white

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<sup>1</sup> Madeira was initially “one of the most profitable of all Portuguese possessions.” Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Spain and Portugal, Vol. I* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> In the Congo, there were probably not more than 100 Portuguese in total “at any time in the sixteenth century.” A.J.R. Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire, 1415-1808: A World on the Move* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> David Birmingham, *A Concise History of Portugal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 27.

households in Angola.<sup>4</sup> The Portuguese began to express an interest in the establishment of captaincies in Brazil as a result of the encroachment of other Europeans, with the population of European descent in Brazil numbering about 25,000 by 1584.<sup>5</sup> The Atlantic islands, perhaps more so than in other areas of Portuguese influence, became “authentic extensions of metropolitan Portugal,” and were “incorporated politically and economically into the affairs of the mother country.”<sup>6</sup> By 1533, for instance, Angra had become an official *cidade* with a bishop and a cathedral chapter.<sup>7</sup>

The Portuguese crown experimented also with various commercial arrangements in its outward expansion. The first *feitoria* in Brazil was set up by merchants who had received a trade monopoly from the crown and subsequent trade was carried out directly through royal factories. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the *Casa da Índia* was established to regulate Portugal’s eastern trade, establishing a royal monopoly in some areas and giving the crown a thirty percent tax on trade profits in other areas.<sup>8</sup> Although illegal trading occurred, the *nãos* (carraks) and galleons of the Asian trade were required to unload their produce in Portugal and not, for instance, in the Atlantic Islands where stop-overs for provisions and repairs took place. Further north in the Atlantic, the seasonal fishery was carried out by merchant capitalists only indirectly connected to the

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<sup>4</sup> The Portuguese colony of Goa, by comparison, had a population of European descent of about 10,000 by 1540, Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, p. 60.

<sup>5</sup> Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, p. 61.

<sup>6</sup> Payne, *A History*, p. 237.

<sup>7</sup> Construction of the cathedral was not to begin until 1570. Thomas Bentley Duncan, *The Atlantic Island: Madeira, the Azores and the Cape Verdes in Seventeenth-century Commerce and Navigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 117.

<sup>8</sup> A royal monopoly existed, for instance, on trade in pepper, cloves and cinnamon. Up to about 1540, the revenue of the Portuguese crown as a result of the eastern trade (and also the gold trade with the Guinea coast up to about 1520) was considerable. By 1510, for instance, “the crown was gaining a million cruzados per year from the spice trade alone.” Payne, *A History*, pp. 232, 239. Archives of the *Casa da Índia* prior to the eighteenth century were lost in the Lisbon earthquake, but it has been estimated that almost one thousand Portuguese vessels sailed to the East between 1500 and 1635. C.R Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire 1415-1825* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1969), p. 219.

crown, for instance through the imposition of taxes on codfish or through the royal embargo of fishing vessels. In general, the Portuguese crown “experimented with exclusive State control over all aspects of trade” as well as with private companies and chartered trading companies.”<sup>9</sup>

Thus, while the Portuguese empire was in many ways a commercial empire oriented towards the oceans, it did not refrain from the establishment of permanent settlements. It also experimented with varying degrees of crown control in trade and settlement, with the crown promoting settlement in so far as a permanent presence helped promote trade or other commercial endeavours.<sup>10</sup> In areas where the commercial potential was as yet uncertain, the crown might have been interested in establishing territorial claims to ensure future access to potentially lucrative locations. This was the case in Brazil, and the interest in territorial claims in North America probably occurred for similar reasons. The Treaty of Tordesillas had only recently been signed with Spain at the time of the early Corte Real voyages, and North America remained a vast and unknown territory. The Portuguese crown was able to claim territories in unknown lands with little or no expense by providing titles to individuals who were willing to take the risk associated with travel, commercial exploitation and permanent residency. If an El Dorado of the north – or Saguenay of the northeast – were to be stumbled upon, the Portuguese would have been in a position to claim this wealth in the name of the crown. Portuguese

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<sup>9</sup> Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, p. 29.

<sup>10</sup> That is not to say, of course, that Portuguese settlements, once established, were defined only by commerce. The crown was also involved in religious activity in Portuguese colonies. The Order of Christ, for instance, had been led by a member of the royal family since the time of the Infante Dom Henrique (Prince Henry) and, in the fifteenth century, had been granted spiritual jurisdiction over lands to be discovered by the Portuguese by the Papacy. Boxer, *The Portuguese*, pp. 228-9. The Portuguese also “put an indelible urban imprint” on the places they settled through the construction of forts and churches and they were also involved in the creation of material culture which blended European and non-European “styles and artistic traditions.” Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, pp. 183-186.

monarchs, in other words, were hedging their bets. As it turned out, the sugar of the Atlantic Islands and Brazil turned out to be a better bet for the Portuguese than northeastern North America. This helps explain the lack of sustained imperial interest in northeastern North America beyond the sixteenth century. It may also help explain the decline in Azorean interest. In the seventeenth century, the Azores became a way-station for Brazil (and India) fleets and also provided settlers for Brazil.<sup>11</sup> Whether or not the specific families and individuals with interests in North America transferred their attention to Brazil might be a topic of further research.

Portuguese expansion did not occur only as a coordinated crown effort. Individuals sought opportunities in the expanding Portuguese spheres of influence, with or without official approval. In Asia, for instance, many people who traveled to India and elsewhere as soldiers or government officials “left the service of the Crown” to become traders.<sup>12</sup> Others did not abandon their official posts, but engaged in trading activity to supplement their salaries – often without censure – while for many trade and commerce were their sole livelihood.<sup>13</sup> Conflict between the monarchy and merchants often existed, especially when the crown imposed tight trade restrictions.<sup>14</sup> Commercial motivations thus loomed large in the motivation of individuals. Other factors, such as status (the desire to own or control land) and family ties (including questions of inheritance) may also have come into play.

For João Fagundes, the potential for profit must have been a key motivating force. According to his daughter, he had become indebted as a result of his explorations in the

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<sup>11</sup> Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese*, pp. 40-1.

<sup>12</sup> Boxer, *The Portuguese*, p. 319.

<sup>13</sup> Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, p. 95.

northeast, and the establishment of a captaincy in which he was to receive a portion of the revenue might have been seen as a viable venture and a way to recover some of his losses. In this regard, some parallels may be drawn with the Cupids Cove and Port Royal settlements almost a century later. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, John Guy and the English financiers and planters involved in the project believed that a permanent presence would allow for more effective exploitation of the fishery. At Port Royal, the French had similar notions regarding the fur trade. In both cases, some form of crown support for the trade in fish or furs was necessary. Also in both cases, the difficulties associated with a year-round presence – for instance with respect to climate and the ability to grow crops – were underestimated. In their first incarnations, both settlements were short-lived. All of the above, in other words, could be said of the Fagundes venture in Cape Breton. Given the relationship to the fishery, the Cupids Cove parallel in particular is of note. It seems that, like John Guy, Fagundes underestimated the difficulties involved in the venture. Or, perhaps he was aware of the odds and willing to take the risk nonetheless. A key point, however, is that he – and the other supporters of the venture in Viana – perceived a potential for profit and this perception was, in turn, related to their motivation in attempting to establish a settlement.

Their motivation, like the French and English several decades later, may also have been connected to a “gradual learning” – as noted in Chapter 2 – with respect to what the region had to offer. It seems likely that for Fagundes the idea of settlement was one that matured as a result of his travel to the region and exposure to the fisheries, rather than one which was held from the beginning. In this respect, the Fagundes experience may

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<sup>14</sup> Perhaps over-emphasizing the antagonism, Boxer states that nothing “is more characteristic of the old Portuguese seaborne empire than the constant complaints of its inhabitants about the pernicious activities of

have differed from that of the Corte Reals or Barcelos, in which settlement appeared to be at the forefront of their interest in the region.

It is also possible that Fagundes – whether or not he had the intention of residing permanently in *Cabo Bretão* – would have been interested in acquiring land and the title of governor because of its connection to social mobility. Strong associations existed between the aristocracy in Portugal – the nobility and the ecclesiastical orders – and the control or ownership of land. During the early modern period, the aristocracy continued to “receive most of their revenues from their landholdings,” while others aspired to ennoblement by translating commercial wealth into land wealth.<sup>15</sup> It is interesting to note that the charters granted to early modern entrepreneurs were “not unlike those used in the conquest of the Moorish lands” a few centuries prior.<sup>16</sup> Between 1550 and 1640, the number of nobles increased by 165 percent – mostly as a consequence of new fortunes being made from overseas trade.”<sup>17</sup> Financial gains in and of themselves did not, however, lead to social mobility.<sup>18</sup> In fact, despite the fact that the aristocracy was itself characterized by a greater involvement in commerce during the time period, it could also hold an “anti-mercantile” bias.<sup>19</sup> Those with “pretensions to nobility” either avoided

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monopolists and engrossers” – i.e. the crown. Boxer, *The Portuguese*, p. 318.

<sup>15</sup> Education (and the holding of a bureaucratic office) were also an early modern vehicle for social advancement. Darlene Abreu-Ferreira, “The Cod Trade in Early-Modern Portugal: Deregulation, English Domination, and the Decline of Female Cod Merchants,” PhD. Dissertation (St. John’s: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1995), p. 24. Success, for instance, in educated professions or “the royal employ” might “lead to a formal grant of noble status.” James Lockhart and Stuart B. Schwartz, *Early Latin America: A History of Colonial Spanish America and Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ), p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> Birmingham, *A Concise History*, p. 27.

<sup>17</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “The Cod Trade,” pp. 23-4.

<sup>18</sup> Abreu-Ferreira, “The Cod Trade,” p. 24.

<sup>19</sup> The extent to which the aristocracy was opposed to commercial pursuits is a debatable point. Boxer strongly emphasizes the “anti-mercantile” stance of the aristocracy. Boxer, *The Portuguese*, p. 319. Lyle McAlister sees the aristocracy as gradually becoming more commercially oriented at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries. During the reign of both João II (1481-95) and Manuel I (1495-1521) the nobility became increasingly dependent on the monarchy as the later attempted to curb the

maritime associations or “cloaked them under a surface of servants, land, and other symbols of rank.”<sup>20</sup> Fagundes, who has been described as both a merchant ship owner and a gentleman member of the king’s household, may have been one of the early modern Portuguese who made money in overseas trade and then attempted to use his wealth to acquire noble status. The title of governor, thus, would have had significance beyond its immediate commercial potential.

The Corte Real family may or may not have been landholders on the Iberian Peninsula. In the late fifteenth century, João Vaz had received a captaincy in the Azores, and subsequent generation of Corte Real men were to inherit the governorship in Terceira. The Corte Real family also, at least up to the reign of Manuel I, maintained a close connection to the monarchy. It does not appear, thus, that their interest in land derived from a desire for upward social mobility. The connection to land was nonetheless important. It appears that the Terceira captaincy was passed from father to eldest son (as in the case of João Vaz and Vasco Annes). This was a common inheritance practice in medieval and early modern Iberia, although property was also sometimes divided equally among heirs.<sup>21</sup> The original Corte Real captaincy involved approximately half of the island of Terceira. Given the limited land-base, equal subdivision among heirs would not have been a likely option. It seems plausible, then, that Gaspar and Miguel would have

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power and influence of the former. King Manuel, in particular, “bought the loyalty of powerful families” in part through the granting of licenses for overseas trade. Through these licenses, in turn, the nobility became the “most commercialized class of magnates in Europe.” Lyle McAlister, *Spain and Portugal in the New World 1492-1700* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), pp. 67-8. Stanley Payne states more emphatically that, unlike “their counterparts in Castile, many Portuguese aristocrats were not at all reluctant to involve themselves in commerce as well as piracy.” Furthermore, because many of the “middle class” who achieved success in overseas ventures became, according to Payne, “co-opted into the nobility,” overseas expansion remained to a large extent “under the economic control of crown and aristocracy.” Payne, *A History*, p. 224.

<sup>20</sup> Lockhart and Schwartz, *Early Latin America*, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> James Casey, *Early Modern Spain: A Social History* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 29, 145.

wanted to become governors of their own lands – and hence maintain their social standing – and looked to the Portuguese sphere in the north in terms of its landward potential. The same may have been true for Manuel and Marcos Barcelos, whose family also owned land in Terceira.

It is also potentially significant that four subsequent generations of Corte Real families were interested, to varying degrees, in *Terra Nova*. Family ties and networks were very strong in early modern Iberia, as were loyalties to specific localities and regions. “Nothing but family,” note Lockhart and Schwartz, “had as strong a hold on the emotions of Iberians or was as essential to their sense of self” as the neighbourhood, the city, the province and the region – *pátria pequena*.<sup>22</sup> People in both Portugal and Spain often maintained these connections in their overseas commercial associations. In fact, mercantile companies were often “fluid, transitory arrangements,” and it was the ties of family (including marriage) and region that provided underlying continuity and security.”<sup>23</sup> A strong example of this was the “Portuguese Nation,” a community of *Conversos* – people of Jewish ancestry forced to convert to Christianity – who became involved in economic activities in Spanish America and northern Europe. Trade and commerce were of central importance in “the life of this diaspora” of some twenty thousand people, with kinship and migration connecting the various “sojourner communities” of the nation across the Atlantic and elsewhere.<sup>24</sup>

Manuel Corte Real, in expressing an interest in following in the footsteps of his uncles, may have been expressing more than admiration through imitation. He was

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<sup>22</sup> Lockhart and Schwartz, *Early Latin America*, p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> James Lockhart and Enrique Otte, eds. and translators, *Letters and Peoples of the Spanish Indies: Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 18.

building upon the inroads established by previous generations of the same family. The same may have been true for Manuel and Marcos Barcelos, given the possible interest in the region of Pedro de Barcelos at the end of the fifteenth century. The family connections are less clear in the case of Fagundes himself, although they do appear to have played a role in terms of the other people involved in the voyage, as indicated above through the family connections noted between Viana and Terceira. These connections are worthy of further research.

Thus, in addition to commercial motivations, an interest in land could have stemmed either from a desire for upward mobility (Fagundes) or a desire to maintain social status (Corte Real and Barcelos) as well as from early modern Iberian notions of family and *pátria pequena*. The question of the motivation of the individual settlers who were involved in the Fagundes endeavour, and might have been involved in Corte Real or Barcelos attempts at settlement as well, is difficult to determine, given the anonymity of the people involved. A few general comments may, however, provide a glimpse into the general mindset that may have prevailed in such endeavours.

The Portuguese expansion that began in the fifteenth century was characterized by a constant movement of people with multiple motivations. “Some,” notes Russell-Wood, “were in the service of the crown, others servants of God, others servants of men, others captive of their own self-interest and cupidity, and still others who were essentially part of the flotsam and jetsam of empire.”<sup>25</sup> The settlers who were persuaded to leave the Azores were not in the direct service of the crown or God, it seems, nor merchants captivated by their own cupidity. They were farmers and labourers who might have

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<sup>24</sup> Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Sea: Portugal's Merchants of the Atlantic and the Crisis of the Spanish Empire, 1492-1650* (New York: Oxford UP, forthcoming), cited with permission, pp. 78-9.

worked on lands under the authority of the Corte Real, Barcelos or other established Azorean families. In addition to the importance of the family as a social unit, early modern Iberian society functioned to a large extent around the principle of patriarchalism. The proprietor of an estate, for instance, would rule “paternalistically” over his direct family, as well as relatives, employees and servants, through a series of patron-client relationships.<sup>26</sup> In Terceira, the ties between labourers and landowners (or farmers and governors) might have been strong enough to transfer the relationship to a new setting.

People were also more likely to migrate as part of a group than as individuals. In the “human flux and reflux” of Portuguese expansion, the movement of individuals was more characteristic of Asia, whereas in the Atlantic (and Brazil), movements of groups of people were more characteristic.<sup>27</sup> The migration of several Azorean couples at the same time, in other words, would not have been unusual. It would not have been, however, part of a wave of mass migration. In the Azores and other Atlantic Islands, outward migration to Brazil began only in the seventeenth century.<sup>28</sup> During the sixteenth century the Azores did not experience population pressures that required out-migration. This would have been particularly true during the first decades of the century – when Azorean families ventured to Cape Breton. The Azores were still in a period of “economic and

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<sup>25</sup> Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, p. 63.

<sup>26</sup> Although this principle manifested itself most in the family estates, it could also be seen in “merchants’ companies, artisans’ shops, and ecclesiastical and governmental organizations.” Lockhart and Schwartz, *Early Latin America*, p. 7.

<sup>27</sup> Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, p. 112.

<sup>28</sup> Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, p. 61.

demographic expansion” at this time, with the captaincies still a relatively recent phenomenon.<sup>29</sup>

Why, then, undertake the risk of northern ocean travel to an unknown land? Pope has suggested that the Azorean Atlantic expansion may have taken place precisely because the Azores were not as yet a well established colony. Azorean families “subsisting on a varied resource base... and a rapidly-depleting wood resource would have been much more likely adventurers,” he notes, than their later “peasant counterparts” who would have become more specialized, and also more dependent upon staple production (primarily of wheat).<sup>30</sup> This “tramp” strategy of island expansion was also typical of the Norse in the North Atlantic.<sup>31</sup> Would-be Azorean settlers, in other words, might have made the calculation – aided by the power of persuasion of their patrons – that the islands to the north would offer them a way of life not completely different from the one they knew, but with new opportunities. As noted in Chapter 4 in the discussion of climate and other hardships the settlers likely endured, their perception of the region might have differed vastly from its realities, but it is the perception that would have guided their initial motivation, not the actual reality that confronted them – the later having more bearing on the outcome of the venture.

The motivations of the people who attempted to settle in northeastern North America were not exceptional – profit, status, the opportunity for a new life, perhaps also a sense of adventure. The timing of the ventures, however, gives them a unique historical significance. All three expressions of interest in settlement outlined in last chapter

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<sup>29</sup> Peter Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century Azorean Portuguese Colony in Cape Breton: A Speculative Analysis,” Final Report for the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism and Culture (Torbay, Newfoundland: Past Present: Historic Sites and Material Culture Consulting, November, 1992), p. 19.

<sup>30</sup> Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” pp. 19- 21.

occurred in the sixteenth century, when the only permanent residents in the region were Algonkian. The establishment of a settlement – albeit a short-lived one – in the 1520s is of particular note in that it represents the earliest European settlement in northeastern North America in the early modern period – the first since the Norse presence several centuries before. As Webster has noted, it is curious that this Portuguese-Azorean settlement is still largely unknown.<sup>32</sup>

The absence of archaeological evidence may have much to do with the relative obscurity of this early endeavour. Archaeological discoveries at L’Anse-aux-Meadows related to the Norse base camp, and also along the Strait of Belle Isle in connection with Basque whaling stations, have provided valuable new insights and clarifications with respect to both of those communities. The same would likely be true for the Fagundes settlement. In addition, documentary evidence pertaining to Port Royal, Cupids Cove and other early European settlements is more complete than is the case with sixteenth-century Portuguese settlement. It is also possible, however, that the Portuguese attempt at a permanent presence remains relatively obscure for reasons that have more to do with historical interpretation. A re-evaluation of the historiography, with respect to early settlement in light of the Portuguese experience, offers the opportunity for a more nuanced interpretation of the sixteenth-century European presence in northeastern North America.

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<sup>31</sup> Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” p. 20.

<sup>32</sup> D.B. Webster, “On the Trail of a Lost Settlement,” *Archaeological Newsletter*, New Series, No. 159 (August, 1978), n.p. Pope also relates the significance of the Fagundes settlement to timing, noting that the “first post-medieval European attempt at settlement was underwritten and manned neither by the French nor the English.” Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” p. 43.

The pattern of historiographical analysis with respect to early European settlement in northeastern North America outlined in Chapter 2 generally examines settlement within the context of the seventeenth century, assuming any prior attempts at year-round residency to be exceptions or experiments. Furthermore, the main reason put forth for this is resource-based and commercially based – Europeans were present in the region in a seasonal pattern of labor migration because the coastal resources could be effectively exploited without the need for permanent settlements.

The Portuguese were among the Europeans involved in the seasonal fishery, although – as Abreu-Ferreira has pointed out – their participation in the fishery has been over-stated. In addition, it has been assumed that the early voyages of exploration revolved around a search for a northwest passage to Asia, when this may not in fact have been the case. It seems that the Portuguese interest in the region revolved to a significant extent around territorial claims and land. One of the first reports of a Portuguese voyage, for instance, mentioned timber. These early travelers also saw the potential in the land in terms of the availability of human labour, as evidenced through the kidnapping of over fifty people on Gaspar Corte Real's second voyage. The Portuguese crown, as we have also seen, was interested in establishing a territorial claim following the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas, with early maps referring to the area as the land of the king of Portugal or land of the Corte Reals.

The Portuguese – whether out of imperial concerns or individual motivations – were interested in land in the sixteenth century and Portuguese interest in settlement should be seen within the context of this interest as much as a phenomenon that evolved

within the “matrix” of the cod fishery.<sup>33</sup> While it seems clear that the settlements, or intended settlements, would have had a close connection to the fishery, this does not in and of itself provide sufficient explanatory power. In other words, assumptions that have been made regarding the seasonal fishery and the absence of settlement are generally correct when focused narrowly on the exploitation of coastal resources. This historiography, however, is misleading when examining the Portuguese in northeastern North America. The Iberian and mid-Atlantic presence brings to bear the need to look beyond the resource base of the region in the sixteenth century – as the Port Royal and Cupids Cove experiences do in the seventeenth century.

The reasons why the French and English became interested in settlement in the seventeenth century related in part to the exploitation of fisheries resources or the development of the fur trade. In Newfoundland, for instance, seventeenth-century participants and observers of both the migratory and planter fisheries – including the planters themselves, naval officers, some West country merchants, fishing masters and lobbyists – raised points in favour of settlement in the seventeenth century for reasons that were in part related to the cod fishery.<sup>34</sup> Although these observations do not relate to Cupids Cove but to subsequent English settlements, they reveal that opposition to settlement in Newfoundland was not as strong as has been emphasized in previous historiography. As Pope notes, although “historians have argued that successful exploitation of the Newfoundland fishery did not require settlement and that the fishery had no place for a settled population,” some “disinterested contemporaries thought

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<sup>33</sup> Pope concludes, for instance, that the Fagundes settlement “is an early or, indeed, a first example of the importance of the cod fishery as a matrix within which the European exploitation of the Atlantic Provinces was undertaken.” Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” p. 43.

otherwise.”<sup>35</sup> This perspective is pertinent to the Portuguese experience in that it would have been logical for João Fagundes and others to see settlement and the exploitation of the inshore fishery as mutually supporting activities.

Other factors more closely related to European concerns than North American ones, or imperial preoccupations over commercial enterprises, were also of significance in early settlement attempts in Newfoundland and Acadia. The same might be true with the Portuguese in that the crown’s interest in territorial claims led to the granting of governorships in the region. The present thesis suggests, thus, that the Portuguese experience of the sixteenth century had significant elements in common with later European settlement attempts in that it cannot be assumed that sixteenth-century participants in the process of settlement believed universally that the successful exploitation of coastal resources did not require settlement, and in that all early European interest in settlement was motivated by factors not directly related to the fishery or other local resources.

There are two aspects in which the Portuguese experience differs from that of the French and English, both of which are also significant in questions of historical interpretation. The first Portuguese attempt at settlement occurred approximately eighty years prior to Port Royal. Portuguese expansion into the Atlantic had begun in the first half of the fifteenth century – well before other European powers began to explore the ocean sea to any significant degree – and the Portuguese had already gained experience in Atlantic settlement by the beginning of the sixteenth century. The early Portuguese interest in settlement in northeastern North America should thus be seen as an extension

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<sup>34</sup> Peter Pope, *Fish into Wine: The Newfoundland Plantation in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), p. 66.

of their pre-existing activities. The strong connection to the Azores in the early interests in permanent occupation in northeastern North America further underscores middle and north Atlantic connections. Elements of Portuguese interest in settlement in northeastern North America – such as the granting of governorships, the prior transportation of livestock and the migration of women as well as men – emulate a mid-Atlantic pattern of settlement during the period in question. This also suggests that the difference between sixteenth-century Portuguese settlement and seventeenth-century French and English settlement (independently of considerations of subsequent outcomes) has to do with Portuguese, French and English pattern of expansion into the Atlantic rather than with the specific dynamics of resource exploitation in the region.

As was touched upon previously, the global pattern of Portuguese expansion in the early modern era included strong commercial motivations, with settlement or colonization not everywhere at the forefront of monarchical or mercantile motivation. In this regard, the mid-Atlantic experience of the Azores is not necessarily typical of Portuguese experience either. Timelines may again be a decisive factor. The Azores were charted and settled well before the voyages of Columbus and da Gama, and they functioned as territorial extensions of mainland Portugal. The interest in land in northeastern North America emerged out of this context as much as – or more so – than it did out of the more general expansionist context of the sixteenth century.

The second way in which the Portuguese land presence in northeastern North America differs from that of the French and English is more obvious. Both Port Royal and Cupids Cove lasted only a few short years in their original incarnations, but they did establish points of departure for further permanent settlement, with the English and

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<sup>35</sup> Pope, *Fish into Wine*, p. 66

French eventually involved in significant “colonial residency” in the region. The same cannot be said for the Portuguese, a factor which contains the overall significance of the Portuguese land presence, and rightly so. At the same time, there is a sense in which subsequent events cast a shadow backward, with the intrusions from future time periods hampering an analysis of the significance of the events of the 1520s or 1560s.<sup>36</sup>

Early Portuguese interest in settlement, in other words, is significant even though Portuguese did not emerge as the *lingua franca* of Newfoundland or Cape Breton in subsequent centuries. Just as late medieval and early modern navigators imagined a world across the sea, we might pause to imagine an alternate modern configuration of the Atlantic world had the Portuguese presence in the *Terra del rey de Portuguall* persisted. The sixteenth century was a time of serendipity as well as intention and it cannot be assumed that the unfolding of events as we now understand them was a foregone conclusion. In a historiographical sense, the Portuguese experience points to a need to examine the assumed absence of European interest in a permanent land presence as primarily an absence of interest on the part of the French and English. Generalizing unduly from this lack of interest has allowed historians to focus on commercial factors in examining the sixteenth century, leading to a dividing line between a seasonal migratory presence in the sixteenth century and an Age of Settlement (albeit with a few false starts) in the seventeenth century. The Portuguese experience, however, suggests that it might be a more productive exercise to view early European settlement on a continuum in which all Europeans functioned to a large extent within the matrix of the local resource base but,

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<sup>36</sup> The fact that the earliest settlement attempt was neither French nor English might, according to Pope, “have something to do with the obscurity to which the enterprise has been consigned in surveys of Canadian history.” Pope, “A Sixteenth-Century,” pp. 43-4.

by the same token, related to that resource base in a way that was predicated on unique priorities and timelines. The Portuguese imagined the possibility of establishing permanent settlements in the sixteenth century in the way the English and French imagined the same possibility at the beginning of the seventeenth century. That the French and English were ultimately successful in converting their imagining to concrete realities and the Portuguese ultimately were not is significant, but it should not detract from a critical examination of their interest in settlement.

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\* Obtained from Ruth Holmes Whitehead, Nova Scotia Museum, Halifax, in 2005.

Kenneth Donovan to Emily Burton, 19 July, 2005.

**Appendix:**  
**Francisco de Souza, *Tratado das Ilhas Novas*, 1570.**

[Excerpt]

Haverá 45 annos ou 50 (3)\* que de Vianna (4) se ajuntarão certos homens fidalgos, e pela informação que tiveram da terra Nova do Bacalhão se determinaram a ir povoar alguma parte d'ella, como de feito foram em uma náó e uma caravella, e, por acharem a terra muito fria, donde ião determinados, correram para a costa de Leste Oeste té darem na de Nordeste – Sudoeste, e ahi habitaram, e por se lhe perderem os Navios não houve mais noticia d'elles, sómente por via de Biscainhos, que continuam na dita Costa a buscar e a resgatar muitas coisas que na dita Costa há, dão destes homens informação e dizem que ihe pedem digam cá a nós outros como estão ali, e que ihe levem sacerdotes, porque o gentio é domestico e a terra muito farta e boa, como mais largamente tenho as informações, e é notorio aos homens que lá navegam; e isto é no cabo do Britão (5) logo na entrada da costa que corre ao Norte em uma formozza Bahia donde tem grande povoação; e ha na terra coisas de muito preço e muita nós, castanha, uvas, e outros fructos, por onde parece ser a terra boa e assim nesta companhia foram alguns casais das Ilhas dos Açores, (6) que de caminho tomaram como é notorio: Nosso Senhor queira por sua misericordia abrir caminho como lhe vá soccorro, e minha tenção é hir á dita costa de caminho quando fôr á Ilha de S. Francisco, que tudo se póde fazer d'uma viagem.

Porque ao tempo que os antigos dão informação d'estas ilhas a navegação ainda não era apurada como agora e, deve-se buscar nas ditas partes, ou por mais um gráo ao Norte ou ao Sul, e para oeste e Leste, resolvendo-se, como os mariantes melhor o saberão fazer, se Nosso Senhor não for servido que eu o faça, porque alem de saber a navegação tenho outras regras das sciencias Mathematicas e bom engenho para todo o necessario ao ditto descobrimento; e Nosso Senhor ordene o que for mais ao seu Santo serviço. E escrevi isto, e o mais que em meus papeis tenho escripto, porque não sei o que o Senhor Deus fará de mim; e por tanto se isto a alguem prestar, peço rogue a Deus por minh'alma como eu faço pelas dos que fizeram as informações que tenho; porque esta é a obrigação do bom proximo e dos meus; e tudo póde ser assim como... é o mais está habitado.

\* Footnotes added in 1877 publication.