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The Country of the Basque Language



On the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, at the very end of the Bay of Biscay and straddling the Franco-Spanish border, Euskal Herria (the Basque Country) opens up to the sea through its ports of Bilbao (Bilbo), San Sebastián (Donostia) and Bayonne (Baiona). Further inland, by way of contrast, beyond the mountain range running parallel to the coast, the horizon opens up to the southern lands, domains of sun and vineyards: these are the plains of Navarre with its provincial capital Pamplona/Iruña and Araba (capital city: Vitoria-Gasteiz). This is the country of the Basque people, the Kingdom of Navarre of old.

EUSKAL HERRIA
This is what Euskal Herria looks like geographically. Its 20,742 km² are included within two different countries and three administrative territories: the Basque Autonomous Community and the Foral Community of Navarre as well as in the heart of the French «Département» of the Pyrenees.



The unbroken presence of the Basque people on the Continent over thousands of years means that it is the most European of the Peoples of Europe, earlier than even the Indo-European peoples.

Here—in one single human community—country, people and language have been inseparably united since time immemorial: a fascinating oddity. It seems that the Basques have only ever lived here, and that this is the only land where their language has thrived.

It is not surprising, therefore, that all of this can be expressed in just two words: *Euskal Herria*. The term designates both land and people as well as serving as a self-definition: «the Basque speech community».

The Basque Country has a surface area of 20,742 sq. km., approximately half of which is taken up by the Charter Community of Navarre. According to 1982, 1987 and 1988 figures, the total population is 2,884,900, 91.9% of whom live in the part of the Basque Country situated in the Spanish state, and the rest in the part in France.

History has divided the Basque Country into the so-called Historical Territories of Araba, Biscay, Gipuzkoa, Lapurdi, Navarre, Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, thus reflecting the historical and administrative peculiarities of each.

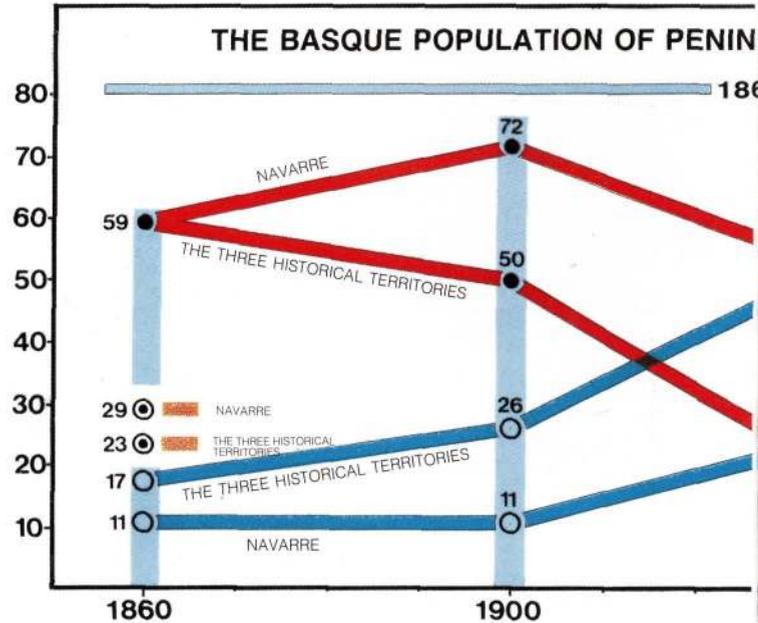
Today the territories on the Iberian peninsula, included in the Spanish state, are divided into two autonomous or self-governing administrative regions, with Navarre forming the Charter Community of the same name, and Araba, Biscay and Gipuzkoa making up the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (*Euskadi*). The territories to the north of the Pyrenees (Lapurdi, Lower Navarre and Zuberoa) fall within the French *Département des Pyrénées-Atlantiques*.

During the last 130 years, the Basque Country within Spain has undergone substantial changes in its social and economic structure. In just over a century (1877-1988), the total

Euskal Herria Today

SOURCE: VELASCO, N. (1879): «Los Euskaros en Alava, Guipuzcoa y Bizkaia». Barcelona pp. 479-490.
 ALTADILL, J. (1918) «Provincia de Navarra» in General Geography of the Navarren Basque Country. Barcelona, p. 13.

| TOTAL OF BASQUE SPEAKERS (1866-1868) | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|-------|
| HISTORICAL TERRITORIES | POPULATION | BASQUE SPEAKERS | % |
| CONTINENTAL BASQUE COUNTRY | 123.000 | 80.000 | 65,04 |
| PENINSULAR BASQUE COUNTRY | 780.217 | 391.000 | 50,11 |
| NAVARRÉ (1867-68) | 300.328 | 60.000 | 19,97 |
| ALAVA (1867) | 120.494 | 12.000 | 9,59 |
| BIZKAIA (1867) | 183.098 | 149.098 | 81,43 |
| GIPUZKOA (1867) | 176.297 | 170.000 | 94,42 |



- Primary Sector
- Secondary Sector
- ⊙ Tertiary Sector

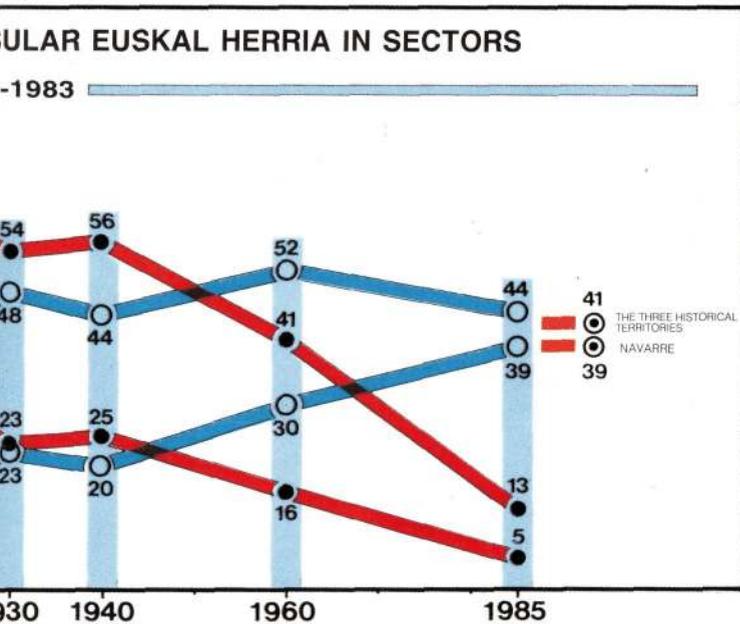
SOURCE: Banco de Bilbao, *Situation*, 1986/1, pages 36, 43, 49.

BASQUE SPEAKERS (1866-1868)

During the last hundred and twenty-five years the numbers and percentages of the Basque-speaking community have varied significantly. The bilingualization process has absorbed almost the whole of the population.

DEMO-ECONOMIC SECTORIZATION (1860-1985)

In peninsular Euskal Herria, the industrial revolution of the last century generated important changes in the population, not only quantitatively, but also in the sectorial distribution of its population's working activity. This is an important factor if we want to understand the present socio-linguistic situation, and ultimately its planning.



population of the peninsular Basque Country has increased from 754,000 to almost three million. Moreover, in 1860, in the two Autonomous Communities, 59% of the population was employed in the primary sector, a

percentage which had been reduced to 13% (Navarre) and 5% (Autonomous Community of the Basque Country) by 1985. This startling change in demography can be explained in terms of two revolutions, one industrial and the other migratory. The industrial revolution occurred in successive stages, beginning with the coastal provinces of Biscay and Gipuzkoa (1876-1930), and extending later on to the inland areas of Araba and Navarre (1950-1980).

As far as the continental or French Basque Country is concerned, the population has increased from 126,000 inhabitants (1801) to 240,000 (1982). In the forty years between 1936 and 1975, there was a substantial population movement from the interior to the coast (Baiona-Angelu-Biarritz, etc.). In 1936, 61% of the population lived in this coastal area, whilst by 1975, the proportion had reached 94%.

In 1982 the sectorial distribution of the population showed that 12% was occupied in the primary sector, 28% in the secondary sector and 60% in services. These figures can be explained by the rapid growth of the tourist industry.

| | ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORICAL TERRITORIES | Km ² | POPULATION |
|--------|---|-----------------|------------|
| FRANCE | THE CONTINENTAL BASQUE COUNTRY (LAPURDI, NAFARROA BEHEREA, ZUBEROA) | 3.060 | 233.000 |
| SPAIN | BASQUE AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY (ALAVA, BIŽKAIA, GIPUZKOA) | 7.261 | 2.136.000 |
| | FORAL COMMUNITY OF NAVARRE | 10.241 | 515.000 |
| TOTAL | | 20.742 | 2.884.000 |

Demographic figures for 1988 (Basque Autonomous Community, Foral Community of Navarre) and 1982 and 1987 (The Continental Basque Country: Coastal and inland regions respectively)



Centuries before Isabel II of Spain and Napoleon III brought tourism to San Sebastián and Biarritz, European routes already crossed through the Basque lands: the route from *Burdigala* (Bordeaux) to *Asturica* (Astorga) was used by Roman troops; the route from Aix-la-Chapelle to Zaragoza, via Roncesvalles (*Orreaga*), by Charlemagne's; and the route to Santiago de Compostela, through Zangoza, Eunate and Lizarra, by medieval pilgrims... Both these and other routes linked the Roman towns (*Pompaelo* and *Veleia*), the pilgrims' hospices, the merchants' boroughs, the monasteries, the Romanesque treasures... Europe entered into the very heart of the Basque Country.

They came and we, the people of this land, left. People from Navarre went to European meeting places such as the Sorbonne in Paris (12th 13th centuries), the Councils of Basle and Constance, and the universities of Bologna and Salamanca. To the Royal Court of Navarre came the troubadours of Occitania, or those eager to learn the sciences of the Arab world; that same court provided the world with beautiful musical compositions such as *Leogundia* (10th century), a unique work and the first of its kind. This patchwork of cultures brought the Englishman Robert Ketton and Herman the Dalmatian together in

A land of migrations

LEIRE MONASTERY

In the documentation which exists in medieval monasteries we can find abundant material referring to the knowledge of Euskara at the time, even though, as was normal then this material was written in Latin.



medieval Iruña, to make the first translation of the Koran into Latin, at the behest of Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny (1143).

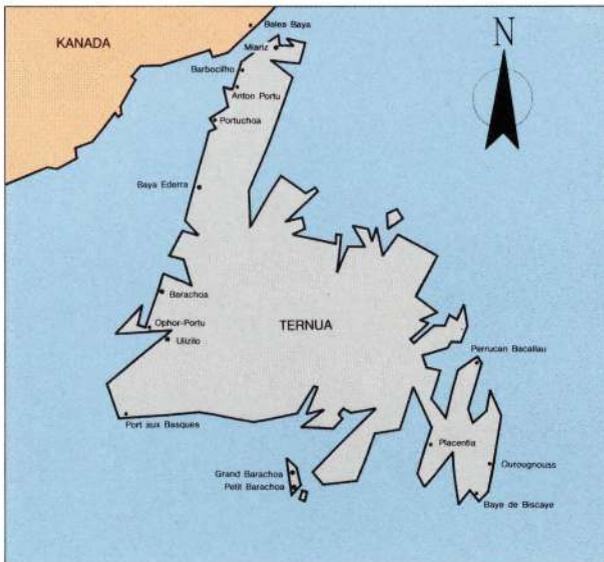
When, later on in the Middle Ages, the seas were opened up, thanks to new ship-building techniques (from the 13th century onwards), ships built in the Basque Country sailed the Atlantic

to England, the North Sea, Norway and Spitzberg, and the Mediterranean to Genoa and Palermo (15th century), sighting the Antilles, Newfoundland and the river Plate during the following century and reaching both the Moluccas and the Philippines with their men. Humble fishermen, reckless corsairs, arrogant admirals and discoverers, the Basque seamen left their plates and place-names in Newfoundland and Canada, created a pidgin Basque-Icelandic in the North Atlantic and took part in the great sea battles. They had been preceded by others with diverse occupations, and they referred to themselves mainly as «Navarrese» or «Biscayan»: they went to Paris, Bologna and Bruges.

Some of these people are well known: the navigator J.S. Elkano, who completed F. Magellan's round the world sea voyage in 1523; Legazpi and Urdaneta, who opened the Pacific route to the Philippines in 1565; J. de Garai and M. de Zabala who founded Buenos Aires in 1583 and Montevideo in 1730 respectively; Friar J. de Zumarraga (1476-1548), first Archbishop of Mexico, who also introduced the printing press to the New World; B. de Etxabe, Mexico's national painter and apologist for the Basque language (1607); Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), founder of the Company of Jesus: Francis Xavier,

NEWFOUNDLAND
 The traditional fishing activities of the Basque Country meant that Basque fishermen went to distant waters and lands where sometimes they even left remnants of their language which still exist today in some place names. This is the case of Newfoundland as can be seen from the map below.

SOURCE: BELANGER, R. (1971) *Les Basques dans l'estuaire du Saint-Laurent*. Montréal.
 BARDKHAM, S. «First Will and Testament on the Labrador Coast». *Geographical Magazine*. London.



leader of the Christian Mission in the Far East; or Lope de Aguirre, self-confessed rebel against Philip II of Spain, portrayed by W. Herzog in his 1973 film as «the Wrath of God»...

Crossing into the 18th century, the *Compañía Guipuzcoana de Caracas* had taken over the colonial trade with Venezuela (1729), whilst, somewhat later, the Country witnessed, together with the return of migrants who had made their fortunes in the New World—such as those who had their coats of arms sculpted on their family homes in the Baztan district—, the arrival of the ideas and projects of the European Enlightenment: it was the *Sociedad de Amigos del País* set up by the gentry of Azkoitia, and the *Amigos del País de Tudela* which paved the way for the thinking and reforms of the Age of the Enlightenment. The Royal Seminary of Bergara became an innovative educational model at the time of the Spanish Enlightenment (1776).

It was with the uncertainties and floundering of a new age at the very beginning of the 19th century that young Basque men from the North Basque Country experienced war under the leadership of Napoleon's Imperial Eagle; soon afterwards came the exile of pro-French peninsular inhabitants (1839), which was the first of a number of periods of exile to take

THE MUNT SARATZ FORTRESS

The first archbishop of Mexico, Friar Juan de Zumárraga is the author of the longest known text in Basque (1537) before the first book was published in Basque (1545). In this family letter he mentions the fortress which belonged to his ancestors in the Durango plains of Vizcaya.



LOYOLA

In the XVIIIth century, the Loyola Sanctuary, with the birthplace of Saint Ignatius (founder of the company of Jesus) was also a sanctuary of the Basque language. Here, important figures such as Larramendi and Kardaeraz worked.





BASQUE-SPEAKING EMIGRANTS

This family photograph (Elizondo, Baztán, 1924) reminds us that Euskal Herria has traditionally been a country of emigration (although also of immigration, to industrial-urban areas). In the XIXth century and the first half of the XXth century this emigrant population came from rural, Basque-speaking villages.



BASQUE ILLUSTRATION

The roads of illustration came into the country and were transmitted by the so-called »Gentlemen of Azkoitia«. The Intxausti palace became the cenacle of their ideas and initiatives, where they created a Basque dictionary and carried out theatre pieces and plays.



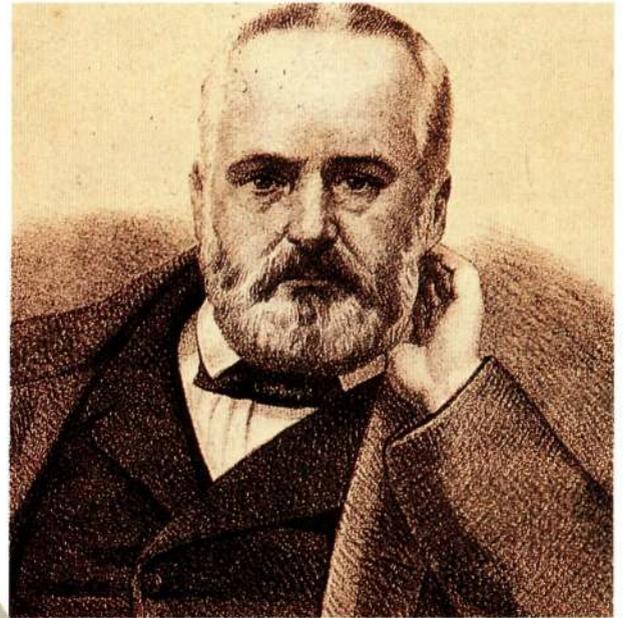
place during this century after each of the Carlist wars. J.M. Iparraguirre, author of the anthem «Gernikako Arbola», (1853), can be taken, in his bohemian life in Europe and America, as a symbol of the thousands of men and women —economic migrants or political exiles— who left Europe for the Argentinian Pampas or the American West (Idaho, Nevada).

During these comings and goings of its own children, others, too, stirred by curiosity, made the Basque Country the object of their visits and left their mark. Without forgetting the medieval pilgrims or later travellers (some of whom left us valuable testimonies of our language), these visitors included W. von Humboldt, founder of the University of Berlin (1816), Victor Hugo, who lived in the fishing village of Pasai Donibane (1841-1843) and Prince L.L. Bonaparte, founder of Basque Dialectology studies (1863), the German Romanist H. Schuchardt, who in 1900 re-edited the classic version of the Bible by Leizarraga (1571). Thanks to, for example, the interest shown by Basque scholars like the Frenchman Vinson, the Englishmen W. Webster and E.S. Dodgson, the Germans V. Stempt, H. Schuchardt and T. Linschmann, the Dutchmen W.J. van Eys and C.C. Uhlenbeck, Basque studies acquired a new status in scientific circles at the beginning of the century.

In the midst of all the historical changes down the ages, an exceptional cultural fact, the Basque language (*Euskara*), has given a unique sense of continuity to this community.

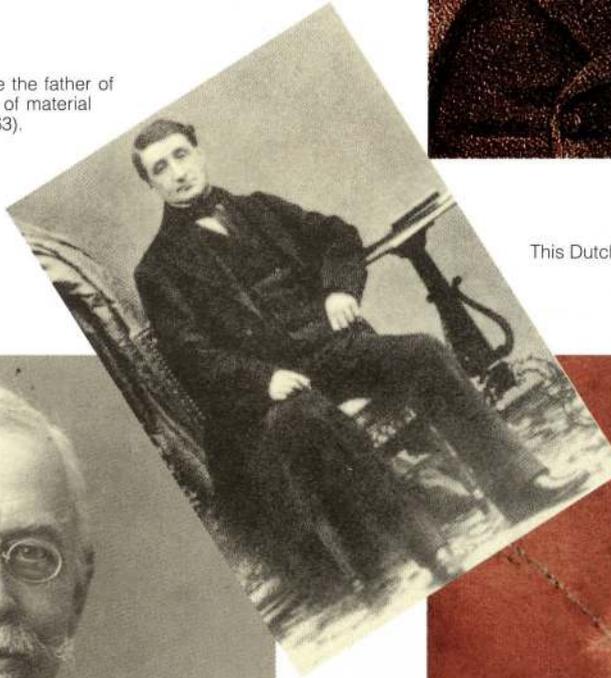
VICTOR HUGO (1843)

The french poet V. Hugo came to the Basque Country twice. After his stay in 1843 he wrote «Le vieux Navarre n'est pas un mot. On n'aît basque, on parle basque, on vit basque et l'on meurt basque. La langue basque est une patrie, j'ai presque dit une religion.»



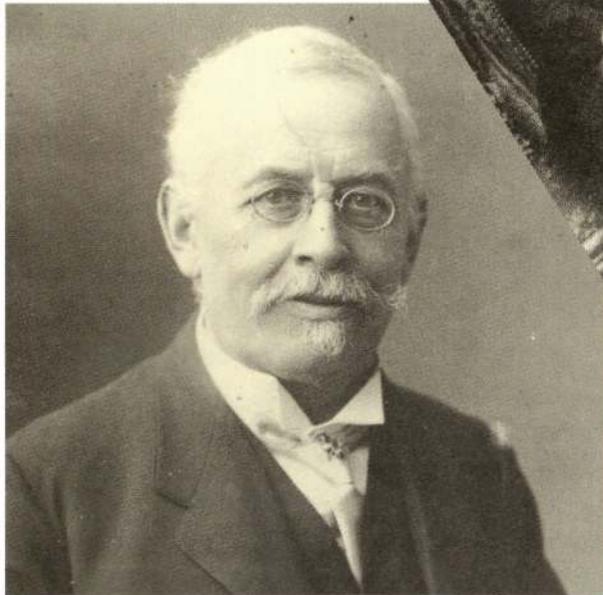
L.L. BONAPARTE (1813-1891)

Prince Luis Luciano is considered to be the father of Basque dialectology: he collected a lot of material and he drew up a map of dialects (1863).



H. SCHUCHARDT (1842-1927)

This great German linguist was a great scholar of latin and other romanian languages. Schuchardt also studied Euskera: Baskische Studien (1893)



W.J. VAN EYS (1825-1914)

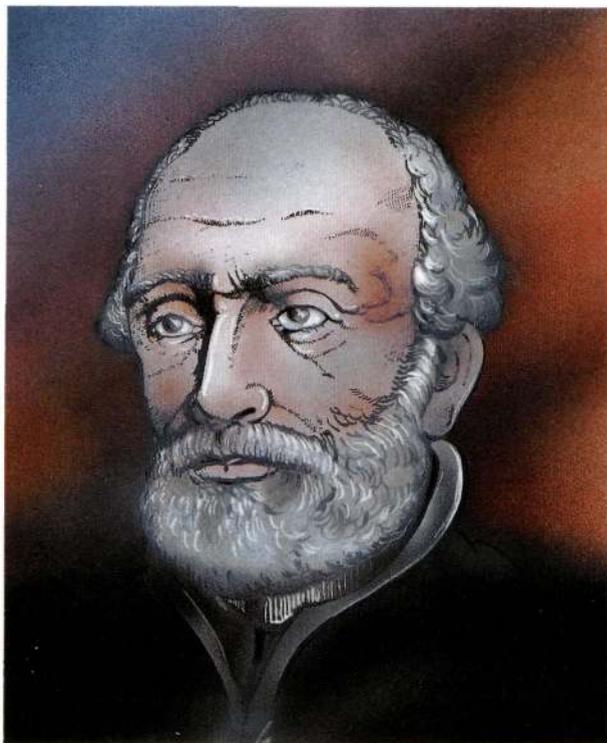
This Dutch linguist dedicated his life to Euskera, and he was the author of a dictionary (1873) and a grammar book (1879).



The language of a people

FATHER MANUEL DE LARRAMENDI (1690-1766)

A polemicist who wrote easily and passionately, his intellectual contribution to the ideas of the Basque Country was decisive for the birth and development of Basque Literature in the peninsular Basque Country. The generations which followed him regarded him, up until the XXth century, as their maestro and their guide.



The Basque language has been shown to be the last remaining European language from before the introduction of the Indo-European languages on the European mainland and so, in its present location, dates back to before those which invaded Western Europe from around 1000 B.C. onwards.

Both because of the fact that it has existed here since prehistoric times, and because of the words it has lent and borrowed through contacts with different languages and, of course, because of the very fact (for which no adequate historical explanation has been found) that it has survived, Basque is a privileged instrument for the study of Europe's ethnolinguistic past.

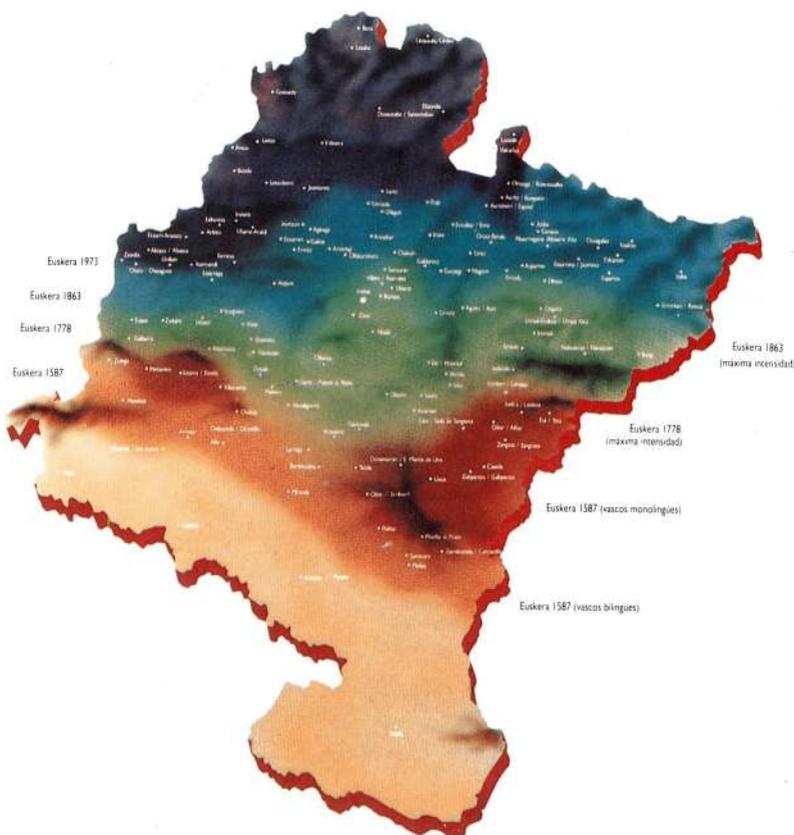
Similar to the historiographies of other languages and, in this case, stimulated by the very historical and linguistic singularity of the language, the debate about the origins of Basque has a long history, in which European linguists and historians at different moments in history and from different countries have taken part: for example, J. de Valds (1535), Marineo Sículo (1539), Mariana (1590), J.J. Scaliger, Aldrete (1606), Mayans (1737), Flórez (1786), Hervás y Panduro (1778-1808), W. Humboldt (1817, 1821), without forgetting, of course, those writers who come from

Territorial changes, institutional uncertainties

EUSKARA IN NAVARRE

The historical territories of the Basque periphery have a geolinguistic history which is sometimes forgotten. This historical map of Euskara in Navarre indicates the successive interlinguistic borders.

SOURCE: «Euskara denona» Exhibition, Navarre Government



The broad expanse of territory where the language was spoken 2,000 years ago may surprise the 20th century spectator: it stretched from the Garonne to the Ebro rivers, with the Pyrenees acting as pivot or axis. It is true that, in general, it is difficult to know what that Basque was like from a simple analysis of its present features. Thus, in a search for clues to this ancient face of Basque, Aquitaine (now in south-east France) offers an abundant Basquoid epigraphy, which has allowed researchers to talk of an eusko-aquitainian proto-Basque. Some of the more recent epigraphic discoveries (namely the Lerga tombstone, discovered in Navarre in 1960) clearly underline the linguistic unity of both sides of the Pyrenees, the peninsular and the continental.

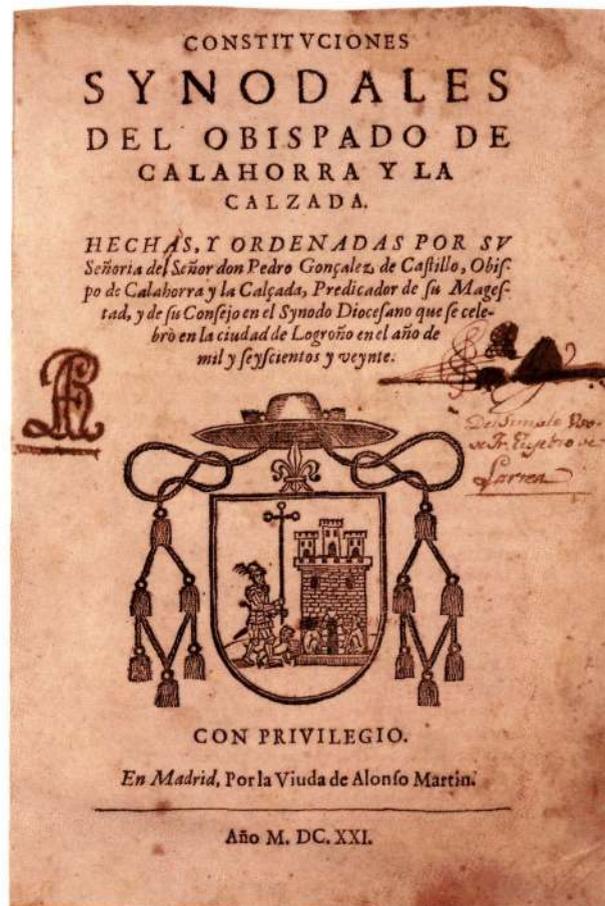
The development of colonies, more especially Roman ones, on the Mediterranean provided classical writers with an opportunity to describe Western Europe; in the case of the Basques too they are the source of the first literary references to the Vascones (who mainly populated the Navarre region) and to other tribes traditionally regarded as Basque-speaking in the remaining Historical Territories (*Varduli*, *Caristii*, *Autrigones*). Romanization affected this ethno-linguistic community in different ways: earlier from the south than from Gaul

(2nd and 1st centuries B.C.) and with varying degrees of intensity on the plains (*ager*) and in the mountains (*saltus*).

The relatively tenuous, uneven Latinization of this area and the posterior decline of Roman power prevented the disappearance of the language, which, shortly afterwards, assumed new vigour thanks to the demographic and political ascent of the Basque speaking population. This fact also prevented the disappearance of Basque during the slow implantation of Christianity which followed (5th-9th centuries). The Christian reconquest of the Iberian peninsula (8th-15th centuries), fighting against Islamic Cordoba and the Taifa kingdoms, facilitated the repopulation of the Rioja (10th-12th centuries) and the Navarrese Ribera (12th-13th centuries) with Basque speakers, taking the Basque language towards southern lands, recovering them or conquering them for the first time, not without simultaneously having to face up to a new and powerful linguistic reality; that of the new Romance languages surrounding this area. *Euskal Herria*, the Basque Country, once again became an area of transit and welcome, with a juxtaposition of languages in the rural world and in the multi-ethnic *boroughs*.

DECREES FROM THE SYNOD (Calahorra, 1621, 1700)

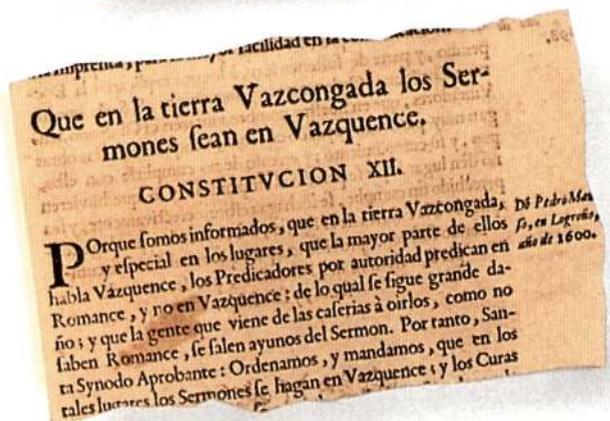
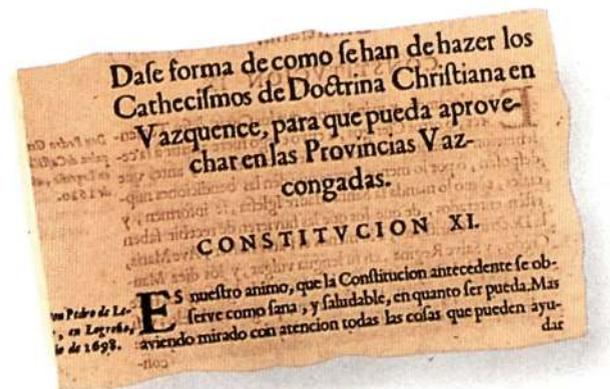
The Basque ecclesiastical diocese, who were also operating in a society which only spoke basque, had to establish a normative for the adequate attention to their faithful. The decrees of the years pointed out defined the characters of the ecclesiastical policy.



CATECHISES, PREACHING
 As you can see in the illustration, it was both catechises and preaching which needed a more express diocesan legislation. The Liturgy and the Bible were left in Latin, and more or less left out of the direct understanding of the faithful right up to the present time. This normative meant that several editions of catechises, and later of sermons were published.

The dependence of the Basque Country and its ruling classes on outside centres of power and the rule of absent dynasties (all of them Romance speaking), as well as the natural difficulties which the language faced in trying to take on the social functions which had spontaneously passed from Latin to the Romance languages, led to restrictive socio-political conditions being imposed on the use of written Basque in the administrative and cultural spheres, throughout the Modern and Contemporary Ages.

However, people retained their unflinching traditional linguistic loyalty to Basque, even at the level of the everyday functions of the language in the political and institutional spheres. Good proof of this are the Diocesan *Constituciones Sinodales* (Calahorra: 1621, 1700) which ordered both preaching and the publication of catechisms in Basque and established the linguistic organization of church staff in force in the Kingdom of Navarre (1587). Even after the independent part of this kingdom had been reduced to a small area north of the Pyrenees (1512), *Los Fors et Costumas deu Royaume* (1611), written in Gascon, made it compulsory for notaries to know the local language, and later required them, in the subsequent application (1666), to be Basque speakers.



The first literary works

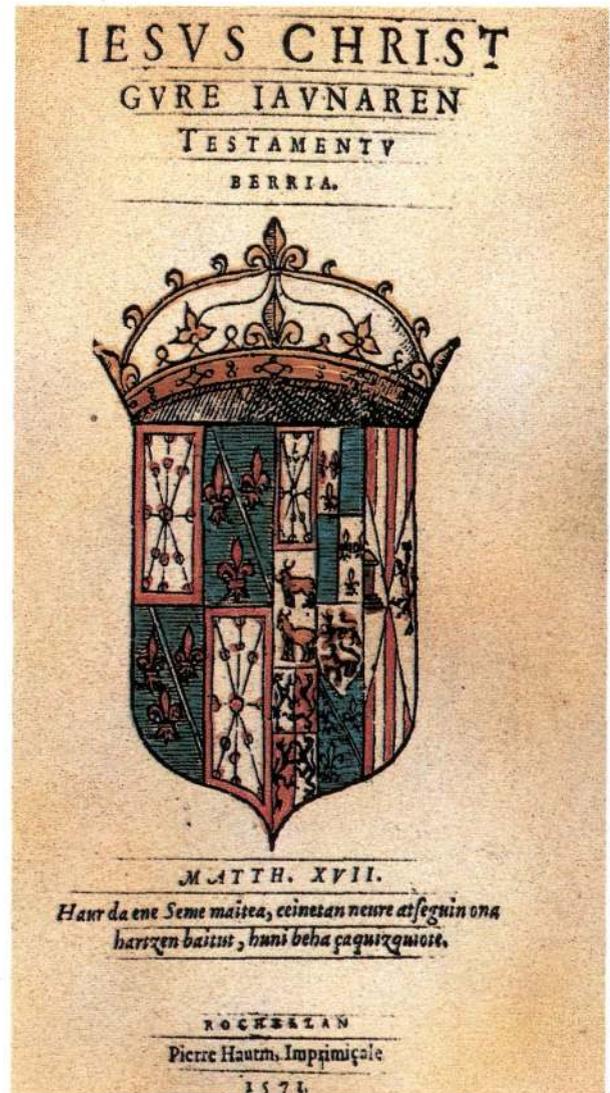
On the threshold of the Modern Age, the Basque speaking area was reduced, broadly speaking, to the limits of the present day Basque Country, having lost ground particularly in Aquitaine, the Rioja and the Pyrenees. At the end of the Modern Age, it was in Araba that the most notable territorial losses occurred.

Nevertheless, it was during the latter part of the Middle Ages that the first literary texts in Basque saw the light. They were texts from the previous two centuries, which have reached us thanks to 16th century writers. They are songs about the conflicts between feudal lords. In prose, the most extensive text dating from before the first known Basque book was written by the Biscayan Juan de Zumárraga, an illustrious figure from colonial Mexico (1537).

A short time later, the Renaissance, the language policy of the French and Spanish Monarchies, the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation provided new opportunities and risks which Basque could either benefit or lose from. The first Basque book (*Linguae Vasconum Primitiae*, 1545), written by Bernat Etxepare, was the result of a European trend of the period favouring the use of vernaculars for cultural purposes. A quarter of a century later, it was the royal initiative

THE VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (1571)

The translation of the New Testament, which was carried out by a group led by J. Leizarraga, should be situated within the European protestant tradition—in this case the Calvinist tradition—of the vernacular bible versions of the XVth century. This second publication of Basque literature was funded by the king of Navarre.



of the Navarrese crown, wishing to endow itself with suitable instruments for its policy of Calvinist reform, which was to promote the publication of the Basque version of the New Testament, a task carried out by a team led by Joanes de Leizarraga: *Testamentu Berria* (La Rochelle, 1571). What is surprising in both authors, and especially in Etxepare, is the foresight with which they understood the cultural and historical values of their respective works. Amongst apologists for the Basque language, who relied mainly on the mythical interpretations current in their day, it is virtually impossible to find a similarly developed linguistic awareness, until at least a century and a half later (1712).

It was the literary schools of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which expressed more assertively-both at a theoretical and a practical level-their collective decision that Basque should be a practical cultural instrument of the Basque speech community. The endeavours of the prolonged cultural practice of the Counter-Reformation bore their fruit in the literary school of Donibane-Sara, with an author who was a major figure amongst his colleagues and whose work stands out above their publications: Pedro de Agerre «Axular» and his *Gero* (1643). The literary possibilities of the language were thus confirmed.

THE «AXULAR» BASERRIA (FARMHOUSE)

In this rural farmhouse at Urdax (Urdazubi, in Euskara; Navarre), the writer Pedro de Aguirre, was born. He became the local priest of Sara (Lapurdi), although he is better known in Basque history as «Axular».

He was the author of *Gero* (1643), a literary version of the writer's parish preaching. In the history of Basque Literature, the literary quality of his texts have been highly praised.



A century later, the peninsular Basque Country witnessed the emergence of a group of writers led by a university professor, Confessor to Queen Mary Anne of Neuberg: Manuel de Larramendi (1690-1766). Together with his work as a polemicist in defence of the language he also wrote two remarkable works: *El imposible vencido* (1729) and the *Diccionario Trilingue* (1745). It was through these works that Larramendi affirmed his own conviction that Basque should aim for a new social and cultural status, fighting against age-old prejudices to do so, reclaiming rights which had been pushed to one side, and at the same time suggesting long-term sociolinguistic aims.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the influence of the dedicated Larramendi brought about the first peninsular literary school: Mendiburu, Kardaberaz, Ubillos and those that followed them kept it going well into the 19th century. To these must be added the interesting, albeit modest, works and projects of the so-called «Gentry of Azkoitia», promoters of Enlightenment cultural policy in the Basque Country.

But the political and cultural environment imposed by the centralism of the Illustrated Despotism of the Bourbons did nothing to help the written, literary or social

Literature and the consolidation of the written language

A TRILINGUAL DICTIONARY (1745)
An impressive lexicographic work of the jesuit, Father Manuel de Larramendi, in which true information about the language is mixed up together with apologist attempts of the times. It was the first general dictionary and its influence survived up until the work of R.M. Azkue (1905-1906).





THE IMPOSSIBLE IS OVERCOME (1729)
 In this book Larramendi explained the grammar of Euskara. The book had at least two aims: firstly to disprove the opinion that it was impossible to systemize into rules a language such as Basque, and secondly to contribute something towards a way of standardizing and learning the language.

development of the Basque language. Any publication which was not written in Spanish was forbidden according to a general ban which appeared in a document from the Count of Aranda, minister under Charles III, refusing permission to publish a pious biography of St. Ignatius of Loyola (1766).

In the part of the Basque Country on the Iberian peninsula, this official policy seriously hindered the free and normal publication of texts written in Basque during almost a century, even though almost all the early works were religious, with censorship reaching such extremes that a work in Basque over a thousand pages had to be translated completely into Spanish.

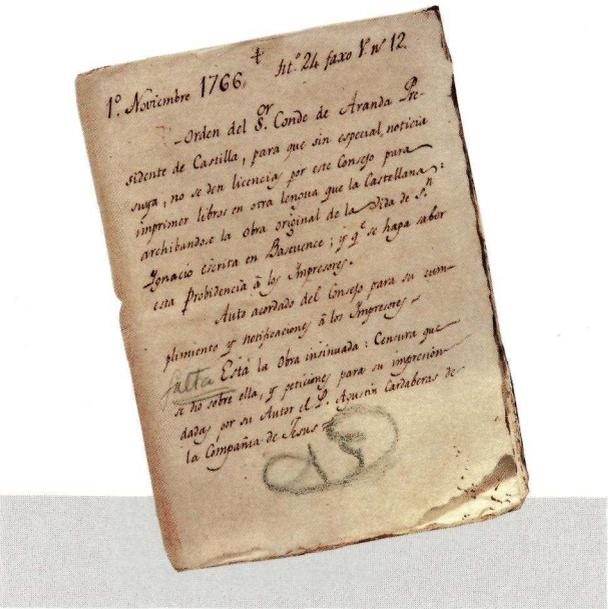
Soon the North Basque Country became caught up in the revolutionary maelstrom (1789), and the Southern Basque Country, with the *Ancien Régime* in crisis (1804-1814, 1833-1839), had to cope with the defence and development of its language in precarious political conditions (suppression of self-government: 1791, 1839, 1876).

THE POLICY CARRIED OUT BY ARANDA (1766)
 This order of Count Aranda prohibited the publication of a biography of Saint Ignatius of Loyola in Basque, precisely because it was a piece of work which had been written in a language which was not Castilian. The author of this work was the Venerable Father Agustín Kardaberaz (AG of Navarre).

SOURCE: TORREALDAY, J.M. (1976): *Euskal Idazleak gaur*. Donostia: Jakin. 178

THE PUBLISHING OF BOOKS IN EUSKERA (1545-1789)

| DIALECT | EDITIONS | BOOKS | ORIGINALS |
|--------------------|----------|-------|-----------|
| VIZCAYAN | 76 | 26 | 14 |
| NAVARRÉ-GUIPUZCOAN | 195 | 76 | 47 |
| NAVARRÉ-LABORTANE | 259 | 78 | 34 |
| SULETINE | 58 | 14 | 6 |
| TOTAL | 588 | 194 | 101 |



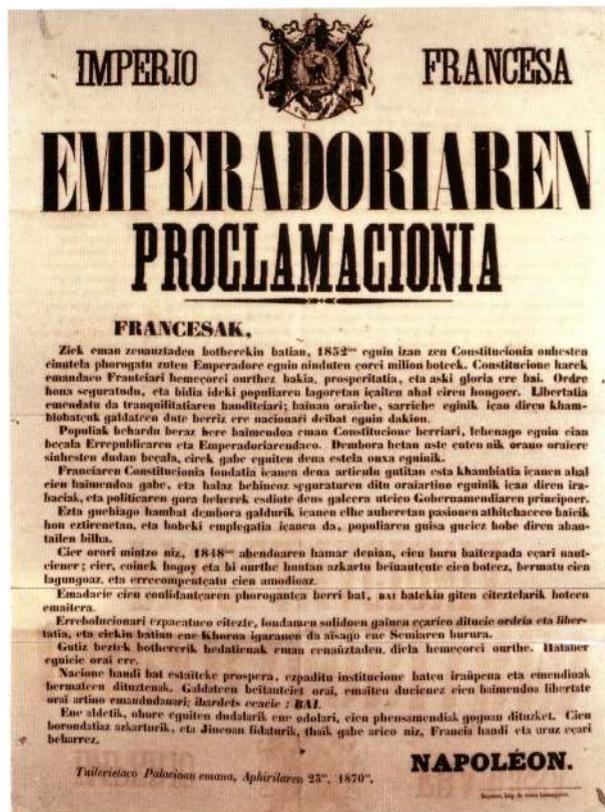
The decades between the French Revolution and the Spanish Civil War (1789-1939) show a wide variation of social acts for and against the Basque language. On both sides of the Pyrenees, new forms of political and linguistic co-existence originating from the liberal-bourgeois ideas of the State were imposed.

After initial false starts, the French Revolution finally gave the French language priority and it became the sole language of the republican state apparatus (in the administration, in schools, etc.). In the various French and Spanish educational projects of the 19th century, this criterion of exclusive use was increasingly enforced. In this way, as the organs of state power became more effective in their control of social life, a new obstacle grew up in the way of the standardization of the Basque language which was to prove even more difficult to overcome.

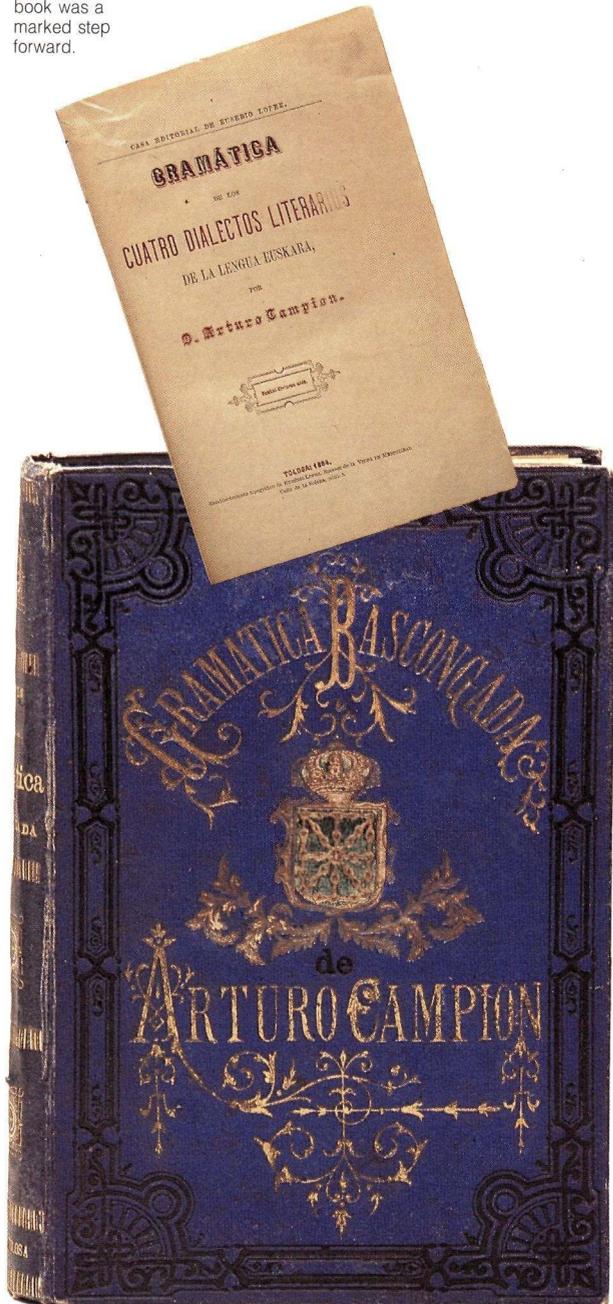
It is hardly surprising that these added difficulties (loss of self-government, the imposition of the monolingual Spanish and French education systems and compulsory military service, for example) should have generated a new resistance when faced with deterioration in the social life of the language and should have encouraged a nationalist awareness in defence of Basque. This

The challenge of a new age

AN IMPERIAL PROCLAMATION (1870)
Euskera, which was not recognized as an official language, was obligingly used at critical times, or moments which were of interest in political life, as can be seen from this Proclamation of Napoleon III.



A BASQUE GRAMMAR (1884)
Within the so-called Basque Renaissance (Eusko Pizkundea, 1876-1936), the Navarrese Arturo Campión directed his efforts at reviving the Basque conscience within the company and the spreading of a better knowledge of the language. During this time, his grammar book was a marked step forward.



occurred around the years 1825-1875, and more explicitly after 1876 (the year of the last Carlist war).

Together with the changes brought about at a political and institutional level as regards the Basque language, the demolinguistic changes of the industrial revolution (1876-1914) took on an unusual character in the Country: there was an immigration of monolingual people who could not become bilingual with the system established as it was at the time, to which was added the emigration overseas (mainly to America) of part of the Basque speaking population.

The many demographic, social, political and cultural changes brought about considerable sociolinguistic alterations which did not go unnoticed by the Basque speakers of the time. The rate of loss of Basque speakers in large areas of Navarre quickened its pace. However, the percentage of Basque speakers continued to be, in general, relatively high, with many areas remaining monolingual: 50.11% in the part of the Basque Country on the Iberian Peninsula and 65.04% in the continental part.

It was the Navarrese intellectual minorities (with Campión as their most significant spokesman) who were the first to complain about the adverse conditions imposed on Basque by the

policy in force: this led to the birth of a linguistic nationalism soon to be strengthened for political ends by S. Arana Goiri, founder of the Basque Nationalist Party (1892).

Pressure groups and prominent citizens came to the fore to foster the language through intellectual undertakings and popular action. A whole constellation of cultural initiatives (associations, Basque festivals, periodical publications, etc.) was promoted during the sixty years of the Basque Renaissance, (*Euzko Pizkundea* 1876-1936), until the Francoist uprising. The political revindication of the language became a part of party programmes and institutional reform projects, with it finally being recognized in the first Statute of Autonomy as an official language of the Basque Country, within an overall bilingual status.

In the context of the cultural campaigns of the time, one can mention the following as landmarks in the process of pro-Basque revindications and actions: *Revista Euskara* published in Navarre (1877), *Euskalerrria* and *Euskal-Esnalea* published in Donostia (from 1880 and 1908 on respectively), all of them of a cultural nature: the weekly magazine *Eskualduna* published in Bayonne and *Argia* published in Donostia (1921). Because of the international character

SABINO ARANA Y GOIRI (1865-1903)

There is a constant nationalistic revindication of the Basque language throughout Arana y Goiri's works. It was thanks to him (he was the father of Basque nationalism), that the demand for linguistic rights finally found their political expression.



of their scientific readers, two other magazines are worthy of mention: *Euskara* (1886), from Berlin, run by H. Hannemann and T. Linschmann, and *Revista Internacional de Estudios Vascos/Revue Internationale d'Etudes Basques*, edited in Donostia by Julio Urquijo (1907). Basque studies, which had been begun almost a century before by the founder of the University of Berlin, W. Humboldt, were going to bear fruit, thanks to the extensive co-operation of European university scholars and the tenacity of students like R.M. de Azkue, author of grammatical and lexicographic works which became the standard reference works almost up to the present day.

Meetings and conferences (Oñati, 1918), pro-Basque associations (*Eskualtzaleen Biltzarra*, 1901) and public institutions (such as the Provincial Governments), encouraged by the nationalist political groups, promoted plans for the legal recognition of the language. All this contributed to a symbolic and an operative level to the creation of the Academy of the Basque Language (*Euskaltzaindia*) in 1919, an academic institution born of the joint will of the Provincial Governments of the four peninsular Historical Territories and perfected by the subsequent election of academics from the continental Basque Country.

EUSKARA (Berlin, 1886-1896)

This was the Basque Association of Berlin's way of letting themselves known, and in this magazine, the most renowned Basquologists of the end of the XIXth century wrote: Van Eys, Bonaparte, Hannemann, Linschmann, etc.

„Euskara.“

Organ für die Interessen der „Baskischen Gesellschaft“.

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| <p>Kredibel völlig in advanceen, Tausend in der Stärke von 1 bis 1/2 Bogen.</p> <p>Verkaufspreis der einzelnen Nummer 50 Pf. incl. Zustellungsgebühren.</p> | <p>Verantwortlicher Redakteur Karl Hannemann in Berlin.</p> | <p>Bestellungen wolle man direct richten an Herrn Th. Linschmann in Lahnstedt bei Weimar.</p> |
|---|---|---|

1. Jahrg. || Berlin, den 1. October 1886. || No. 1.

Die gestiegenen Herren Einsender von Bestellungen, welche zum Abdruck in der „Euskara“ bestimmt sind, wollen nicht die gütigste so den Redakteur Karl Hannemann, Holtenauerstrasse 41, Berlin O., senden. Falls Besondere gewünscht wird, wolle man dies besonders bemerken.

Participamos á los Señores colaboradores de esta periódico „Euskara“ soni prós de vouloir bien envoyer leurs manuscrits directement au rédacteur, Monsieur Charles Hannemann, 41, Holtenauerstrasse, Berlin O. — Les personnes desirant de recevoir une réponse concernant leurs envois, voudront bien en faire formellement la demande.

Unbefugter Abdruck aus dem Inhalte dieser Zeitschrift verboten.

Título: Le dialecte de Dechepare (van Eys) — Die Bedeutung der baskisch-berischen Forschung (Th. Linschmann) — Das Lenz in Gunsten der Baskischen als Universalprache (K. H.) — Misszellen zur Einführung in die baskische Sprache. Mitglieder. Bibliothek. Sitzungen. Entwurf der „Baskischen Gesellschaft“.

Chiptasunan anditasuna lo egiten du!

Als wir am Schluss v. J. unsern „Anruf“ zur Gründung einer Baskischen Gesellschaft veröffentlichten, erwarteten wir von vornherein kein überaus glanzvolles Resultat desselben. Dennoch sind wir davon befriedigt, da sofort zwei der berühmtesten Forscher auf baskischen Gebiet, S. H. der Prinz L. Bonaparte und Herr Prof. Mahn, sich für unser Unternehmen erklärten. Diese letzteren aber selbst der übrigen Gelehrten, besonders der deutschen, amehinend unberücksichtigt gelassen, soll uns nicht enttäuschen, vielmehr ansporren, an dem uns gesteckten Ziele festzuhalten und weiter zu streben auf dem eingeschlagenen Wege. „Chiptasunan anditasuna lo egiten du!“ In der Kleinheit schliessen wir die „Euskara“, also wird auch unsere noch kleine Gesellschaft sich mit der Zeit kräftigen und vergrössern. Deshalb, um das Interesse für unser Unternehmen mehr und mehr wach zu rufen, und, wenn es gewickelt, wach zu erhalten, haben wir es unternommen, für unsere Gesellschaft eine eigene Zeitschrift zu gründen, deren erste Nummer hiermit allen Freunden der baskischen Sprache empfohlen sein möge. D. Red.

Le dialecte de Dechepare.

Bernard Dechepare était recteur de St. Michel le Vieux, (en basque Etxebarria, champ ou pâturage aride, petite ville de la Basse-Navarre) mais sa langue se ressent d'une influence légère, quoique évidente du dialecte Souletin. Les particularités qu'on peut appeler aujourd'hui Souletines, déjà existantes à cette époque les frontières de la Soule? Il est difficile de répondre à cette question: le seul ouvrage d'un Bas-Navarrais de cette époque est le Nouveau Testament de Lizarague et cet ouvrage ne se ressent pas de motifs Souletins, ni de locutions qui exigent ce dialecte. La seule particularité que Lizarague se permette, et rarement encore, d'est le datif pluriel Souletin en ef. L'auteur lit expressément, dans le titre de son Souletin:

le fin du volume, que dans sa traduction il se sert de ey. Dechepare, par contre, écrit presque toujours: eri puis gira, zira pour gara, zara (nous sommes, vous êtes), als pour als; deyo pour darago; dugala pour duaja; et généralement tous les médians des flexions verbales sont élidés et remplacés par y, ce qui n'est pas le cas en Bas-Navarrais; p. ex. dak + n devient deyan. Comme la Basse-Navarre confine à la Soule, les dialectes se serent influencés réciproquement et la langue de Dechepare pourra être considérée comme appartenant à cette nuance intermédiaire. Quoique ce dialecte mélange n'offre aucun intérêt spécial au philologue, le Souletin et le Bas-Navarrais étant connus, il se trouve cependant dans la langue de Dechepare quelques formes ou locutions qu'on observerait vainement chez Lizarague, et qui ont leur importance; entre autres: le initial du présent de l'indicatif du verbe ean: dazut, dazak, datsa etc.

In the six decades of the Basque Renaissance, the Basque language was increasingly cultivated and appreciated, not only as a creator of static values, but also as an instrument for the social recovery of the language. The theatre, and above all narrative prose and poetry, reached new heights, with the works of the novelist T. Agirre (*Kresala* and *Garoa*: 1906, 1912) and the poets Lizardi (1932), Lauaxeta (1931) and Orixe (1934). It was a promising start which was curtailed by the civil war. Popular literature, the most traditional and widespread expression of which were the *bertsolari* singers (popular bards), was, for the first time (1918), the object of academic studies which established the basis for its prestigious social future and the widespread popularity which it enjoys in the nineteen-eighties.

But before jumping forward to our own day, the linguistic and cultural history experienced during the years of Franco's dictatorship needs to be explained.

R.M. AZKUE (1864-1951)

Throughout his long and hardworking life, R.M. Azkue made some fundamental contributions to Basque culture. It has been said that he was undoubtedly the person which the Basque Language most owes something to. Whatever he was, his personal publications on dialectology, lexicography and grammar opened up a new era in basquological studies, and also we should not forget that right up until the time of his death (1919-1951) he was constantly reelected President of the Academy of the Basque Language «Euskaltzaindia».

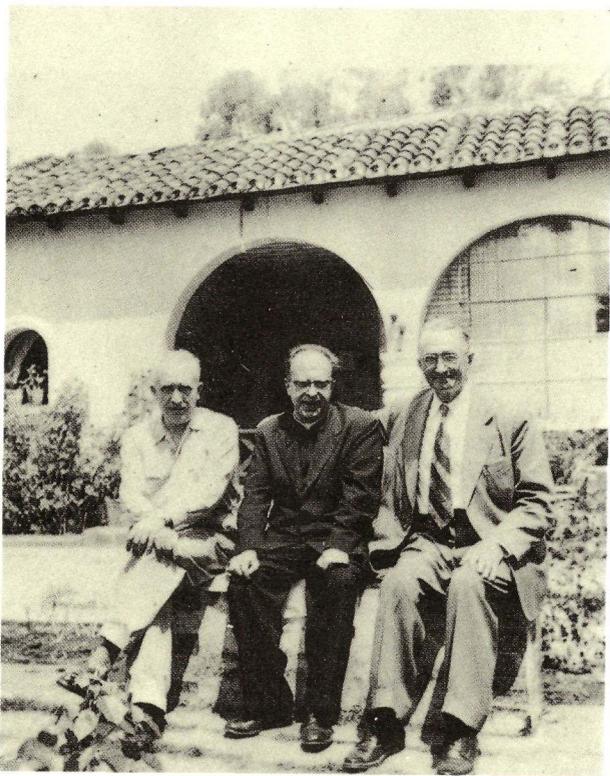


(1937-1975)

During the Dictatorship: cultural resistance

THE BASQUE LANGUAGE IN EXILE

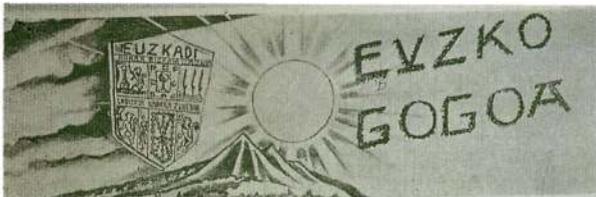
The photograph below shows the first management team of the magazine *Euzko-Gogoa* (1950-55), just before saying goodbye to the writer, *Orixe*, from Guatemala: the director, *Zaitegi*, and the two main editors *Ibinagabeitia* and *Orixe*. A symbol of literary exile.



After the armed defeat at the hands of the rebellious army (1937), the social and cultural collapse of the language was dramatic, even, partially, in areas of personal and private use. The social institutions of the language were wiped out (for example the *Sociedad de Estudios Vascos*), or reduced to an inoperative and harmless social presence (*Euskaltzaindia*, in the forties). The most active personalities went into exile or led a hidden cultural life. Literary creativity, even straightforward writing, was reduced or, more accurately, distorted to a minimum: not a single book was published in 1938-9.

The exemplary integrity and loyalty of the most active personalities (either exiled, or taking advantage of the slightest opportunity to return: *Editorial Itxaropena*) began to overcome that first decade of cultural silence at the end of the forties. Soon work-groups sprang up, especially amongst those in exile (in Paris, Mexico, Buenos Aires, Guatemala), which began to have a more operative importance within Spain as they came into contact with the new post-war generation, and especially with those who—in the absence of a university—taught themselves and developed their sensibilities in private centres which in

some cases possessed libraries in which knowledge of the history of the Basque language, banned from official education, could be gained at first hand. The incipient publishing activity (from 1950), the reprinting of classics (from 1954), the first Arantzazu Conferences (1956), and the reactivation of the academic life of Euskaltzaindia (publication of its journal, organization of literary prizes), together with the determined influx of youth into the cultural life of Basque, at the end of the fifties, established new social coordinates for action in favour of the language. Cultural magazines, which were exclusively in Basque, began to appear: *Eusko-Gogoa* (Guatemala, 1950), *Egan* (Donostia, 1954) and *Jakin* (Arantzazu, 1956).



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Registrada en la Subdirección de Correos de Guatemala, como correspondencia de segunda clase, el 28 de Febrero del 1950, bajo el N.º 228.

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EUSKO-GOGOIA (1950-1960)

Published first in Guatemala and later in Biarritz, the magazine covered a decade of cultural work, giving access to a varied and high-level range of subjects. Creative literature had an important role to play, but there was also a place, for example, for philosophy. The difficulties it had to cross the border were what impeded its later development.

THE BASQUE ACADEMY

During the first two decades of the post-war period this institution had innumerable difficulties. In the end, in 1956, they were able to hold their first public Congress in the Arantzazu Sanctuary.



AMERICAN VERSIONS

Mexico, Buenos Aires, Guatemala and Venezuela were all the headquarters of basque literary activities in the years which followed the civil war. In the photograph below you can see the cover page of the Basque version by Martin Fierro.



The sixties saw the (re)birth and gradual consolidation of the *ikastola*, (Basque school, with Basque medium teaching), the development of written (*Zeruko Argia*, *Anaitasuna*, *Agur*, etc.) and spoken journalism (*Radio Popular* and several bilingual stations), and the introduction of Basque in school texts: these were some of the more innovative actions. Literature (novels, poetry, essays) underwent a new phase of renewal with themes and techniques as yet untried in Basque literature: Txillardegi, Aresti, Gandiaga, Azurmendi, Saizarbitoria, etc. As for popular literature, spontaneous sung verse (*bertsolaritza*) returned with new vigour at the beginning of the seventies, so that in the last decade it has come to form part of school education. On the other hand, the first projects for a Basque literacy campaign (from 1968 onwards), the appearance of the *Kanta Berria* (modern song, in the mid-sixties), contributed to the sound of Basque being heard in urban areas, amongst youth and in works of a more modern content. All this occurred waveringly at the beginning with the added hindrance of numerous difficulties of an administrative and financial nature.

From the end of the fifties, the old plans for the unification and standardization of the common literary language (standard language) were

renewed, plans which resulted in the Academic Declaration of 1968 and the subsequent set of rules, not without, as is common in such cases, there arising bitter discussions which lasted almost ten years.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 1950.

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the separatism, the regionalism, the centrifugal forces that a dictator in Madrid must fear in the Basque country, as he does in Catalonia. Franco comes from Galicia, where separatism is also strong, but his propensities now are no different than any Castilian King, Caudillo or Cortes forced to hold such a disparate country together from Madrid. The Castilian character is constructive, authoritarian, institutional, pessimistic. The Catalans is naturally optimistic and romantic, and his reaction takes the form of anarchist violence. The fierce, proud, conservative Basque, especially in the countryside, takes refuge in his religion and above all in his profound conviction of racial superiority. Although Catholic, conservative and anti-Socialist, he Basques fought heroically against Franco in the Civil War because the Basque Nationalist party was won over to the Republic by a statute of autonomy.

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News from Spain that the Franco Government is continuing to attack Basque nationalism would indicate that its efforts to date have not proved successful. It is hard for those who know the Basques to figure out how repression could succeed, except superficially. The latest turn of the screw concerns the order to remove inscriptions in the Basque language from tombstones and replace them with Castilian (or, as we would say, in the Spanish language). One can leave to the philologists the endless arguments about the origins and practical values of the palaeolithic Basque language. The important point for Generalissimo Franco is that a language which was dying, like Gaelic in Eire, was revived in the Basque Provinces on a wave of nationalism. It is

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CULTURAL REPRESSION

Here you can see the editorial of the American newspaper «The New York Times», of the 1st of March 1950; in it the governments prohibition of tombstones in Euskara is condemned. The order was given to the neighbourhood, in this case, by the mayor of Gernika. ¡What a parody!

(1976-1990)

The new political era

A

fter the Franco era, the new political and institutional projects derived from the Spanish Constitution (1978), the Statute of Autonomy of the Basque Country (1979) and the Revision of Navarrese Charter Rights (1982) meant that all of the Basque Country situated in the Iberian Peninsula, and especially its Basque-speaking community, faced a general framework for establishing a sociolinguistic plan, which is a real challenge for this generation.

Once the possibility of recognising other languages, apart from Spanish, as official in the self-governing or autonomous territories became a constitutional reality, the Statute of the Autonomous Community of Euskadi consecrated the fact with the following words: *Basque, the Basque People's own language, shall, like Spanish, have the character of an official language in Euskadi. All its inhabitants have the right to know and use both languages.*

Meanwhile the Revision of Navarrese Charter Rights also stated in its declarations that: *Spanish is the official language of Navarre. The Basque language shall have the character of official language in the Basque-speaking areas of Navarre.*

The laws ultimately justifying the application of detailed rules relating to language use are the *Law of*



THE II WORLD BASQUE CONGRESS (1987)
Conference participants from a multitude of different countries were brought together in this Congress in which the most varied of subjects were studied. Undoubtedly, the basque language was one of the subjects.



Normalisation of Basque (Euskadi, 1982) and the *Basque Language Law* (Navarre, 1986).

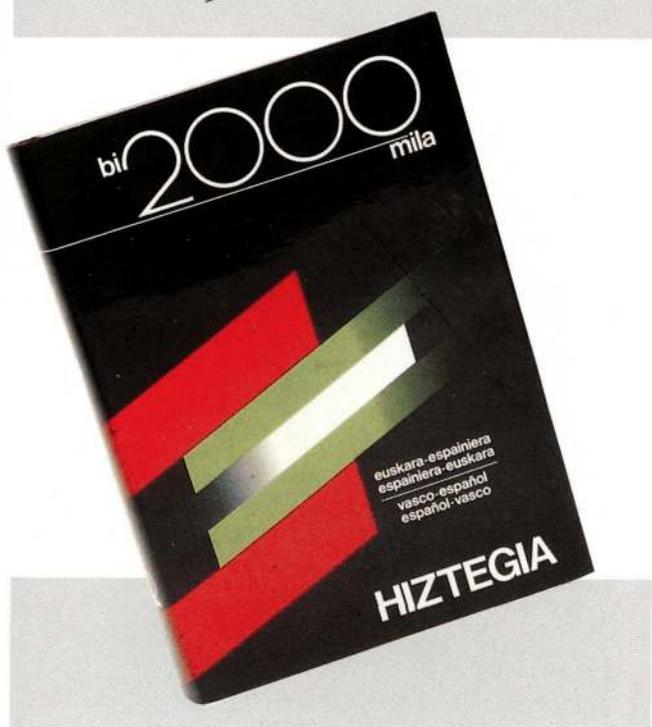
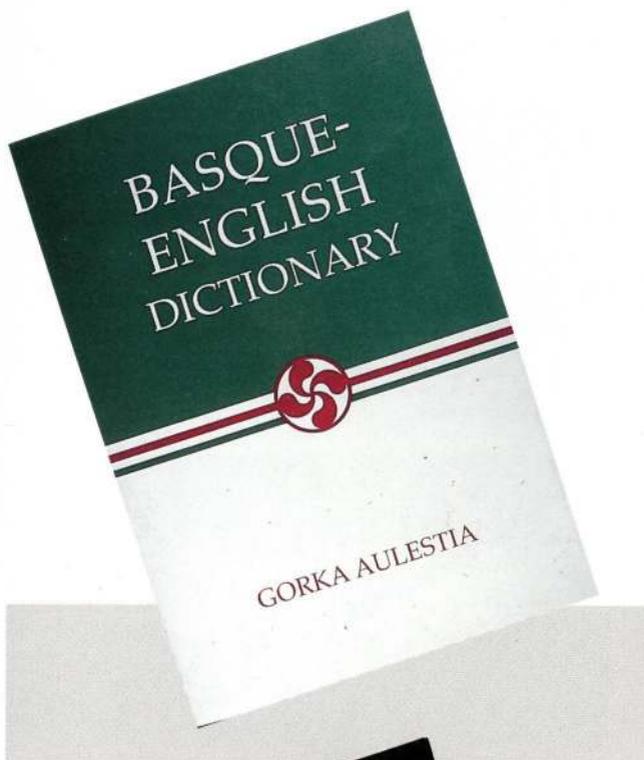
The last decade (1979-1990) has been characterized by the acceleration of two parallel courses of action: one stemming from the political and linguistic measures of the public authorities and the other from society itself. The former includes the creation of *Euskadi Irratia* and *Euskal Telebista* (both in 1982), Basque language radio and television under the control of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, and *HABE* (1981), a government created self-governing body for the management of adult Basquization and Basque language literacy courses in the Basque Country. The government has also played an important role in the implantation of Basque in the education system, and has created optional educational models differentiated by the role given to Basque and Spanish in each.

The goodwill of the people towards the Basque language has been expressed in mass rallies (*Bai Euskarari*, 1978) and in the promotion of social projects to recover the language (schools, the media, literacy campaigns etc.) both in one-off events and in sustained plans (festivals, demonstrations, creation of centres of learning, organization of courses, etc.).

THE BOOK FAIR IN DURANGO

The annual Basque book and record fair held in Durango (Bizkaia) is the meeting point for all the efforts and editorial projects in Euskara. At the same time it is place where writers can meet up an exchange ideas.





A considerable amount of attention has been paid to developing instruments to enable the modernization of the language: normative dictionaries, both historical and specialized; the creation of an official Euskaltzaindia grammar. In general, the publication of Basque books has experienced a spectacular development in the last decade, reaching a high in 1988 of 774 different publications (compared with 63 in 1970).

The literary activity of the last ten years has resulted in authors who were already well-known (Txillardegi, Peillen, Saizarbitoria, Arrieta, etc.) producing works of even greater importance; and in new authors (Sarrionandia, Aresti, Mendiguren, Iturralde, etc.) drawing the attention of the reading public. For the first time, a Basque writer has received the National Literature Award (which is conferred on writers in any of the official languages of Spain): Bernardo Atxaga, for his work *Obabakoak* (1989).

LEXICOGRAPHY

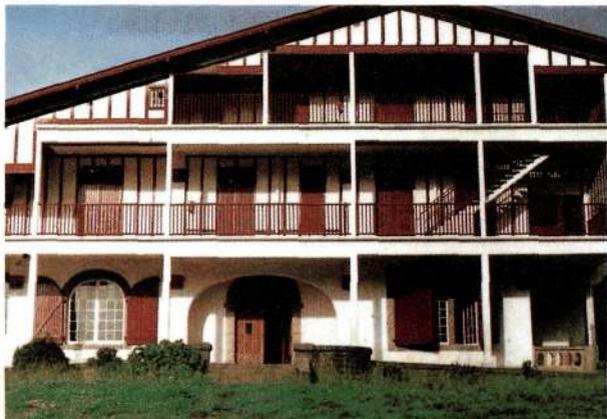
Basque lexicography has had to face up to two obligatory aspects of the modern situation of the language: the modernization of the vocabulary and its international accessibility. These two dictionaries by Kintana and Aulestia are examples of this tremendous effort.

This is the title which a well-known Basque sociolinguist has given to his analysis of the future of Basque, and it is also the hope and aim which we, the people who love Basque, work with: we need to improve the linguistic inheritance we have received from the Basque Country's past in order to project it towards a more dynamic and creative future.

The redirecting of the population's language habits, the preparation of an overall plan for the language and the strengthening of its transmission and use constitute some of the basic goals along the arduous path followed by the language policy of the Governments and social groups and bodies concerned for the Country's future sociolinguistic configuration.

IKASTOLA «XALBADOR»

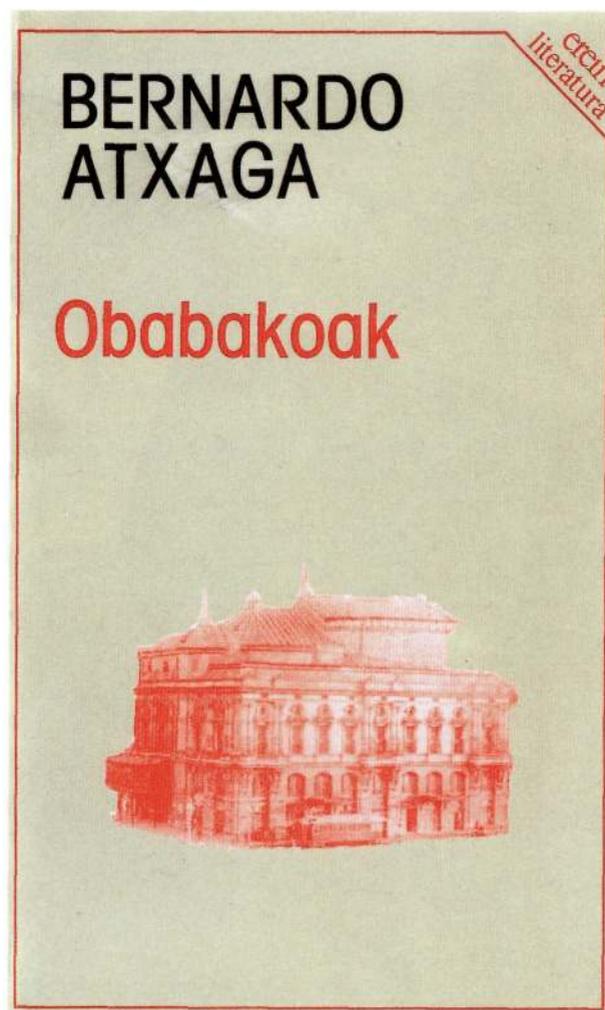
The bilingual Basque school, called an «ikastola» has proved to be an efficient way of resistance and normalization for the Basque language and its experience has made it possible to create linguistic models for the whole of the educational system. In the photograph you can see the «Xalbador» ikastola in Cambo, in the Atlantic Pyrenees «Département».



A future for the past

LITERARY RENEWAL

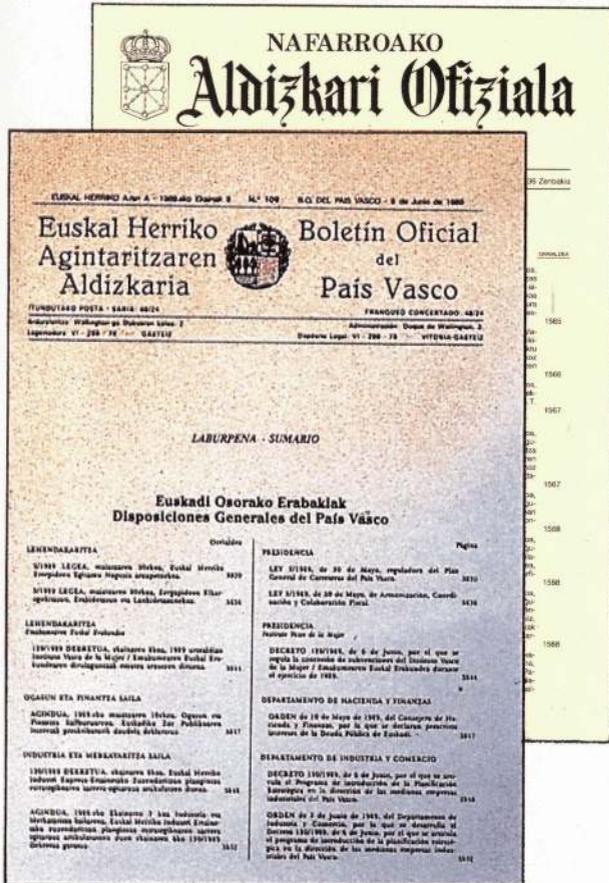
Although we still have not managed to attain the level of quality which we would hope for, the present literary renewal is undergoing moments of intense work, with some noteworthy successes. The book called *Obabakoak*, by the writer B. Artzaga was awarded the National Literature Prize in 1989.



Many of the data to hand are of a sort to inspire optimism, though others —some particularly worrying— give cause for concern with regard to the future. But whatever happens, we, the sons and daughters of Euskadi, also want the future generations to be *euskaldunak*, that is Basque speakers.

The present historic moment has provided us with a unique opportunity to ensure that through our foresight and tenacity Basque shall continue to be our people's language and a valuable part of the common heritage shared by all the citizens of the new Europe.

THE OFFICIAL STATUS OF THE LANGUAGE
 In both of the peninsular autonomous communities, the basque language is considered as an official/co-official language (1979, 1982).
 Thus the official Government Bulletins are written in both languages.



ETB: BASQUE TELEVISION

The presence Euskara in the media of the Basque Autonomous Community was ensured by EITB (Basque Public Television), with two television channels and radio stations.



*The General Secretariat for Language Policy
would like to thank the following people and
entities for having lent us material for this
publication:*

- *Azkue Biblioteka, Euskaltzaindia*
- *Camba, Kike*
- *Gerediaga Elkartea*
- *Gipuzkoako Foru Aldundia*
- *Irazabalbeitia, Miguel Angel*
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Design: José Julio Arregi

1st Edition: January 1992
a 2.000 copy edition.

© Administration of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country
Secretariat of the Presidency of the Government
General Secretariat for Language Policy.

Published by: The Basque Government's Publication Service
Duque de Wellington, 2
01011 Vitoria-Gasteiz

Photomechanics: DATA COLOR, S.A.

Printing: Itxaropena, S.A. • Araba kalea, 45 • Zarautz

Legal Deposit: S.S. 25/92