

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
ABOUT
BASQUE SYMBOLS



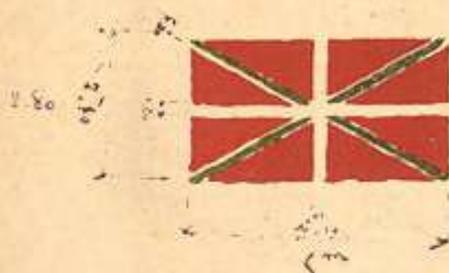
sabino
arana
fundazioa

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Bandera ancho azul blanco y verde 0,20 cada una



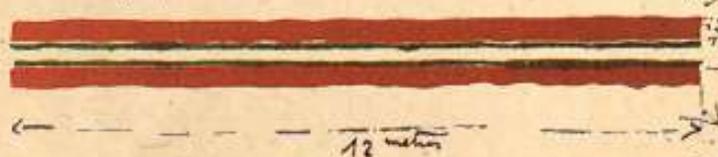
Escala 20.01 por metro

colores { verde
rojo bermejo
blanco

270
45
115
46
270
45
260

halegadura { colores { verde rojo
bermejo
blanco

dos fajas rojas de 0,40 cada una
dos fajas verdes de 0,10
una faja blanca de 0,20



1.20 metros

When and how was the Ikurriña created?



Brothers Sabino and Luis de Arana y Goiri came up with the ikurriña not long before July 14, 1894, when, at 6:00 pm, it first flew at the *Euskaldun Batzokija* in celebration of the inauguration of its headquarters on the third floor of (old) #24 Correo Street, on the corner of the Boulevard.

This first ikurriña, made of wool, was raised by Ciriaco de Iturri y Urlezaga.

On September 12 of the following year, it was seized by the Spanish authorities when they closed the Batzokija.

What is the meaning of the Ikurriña?

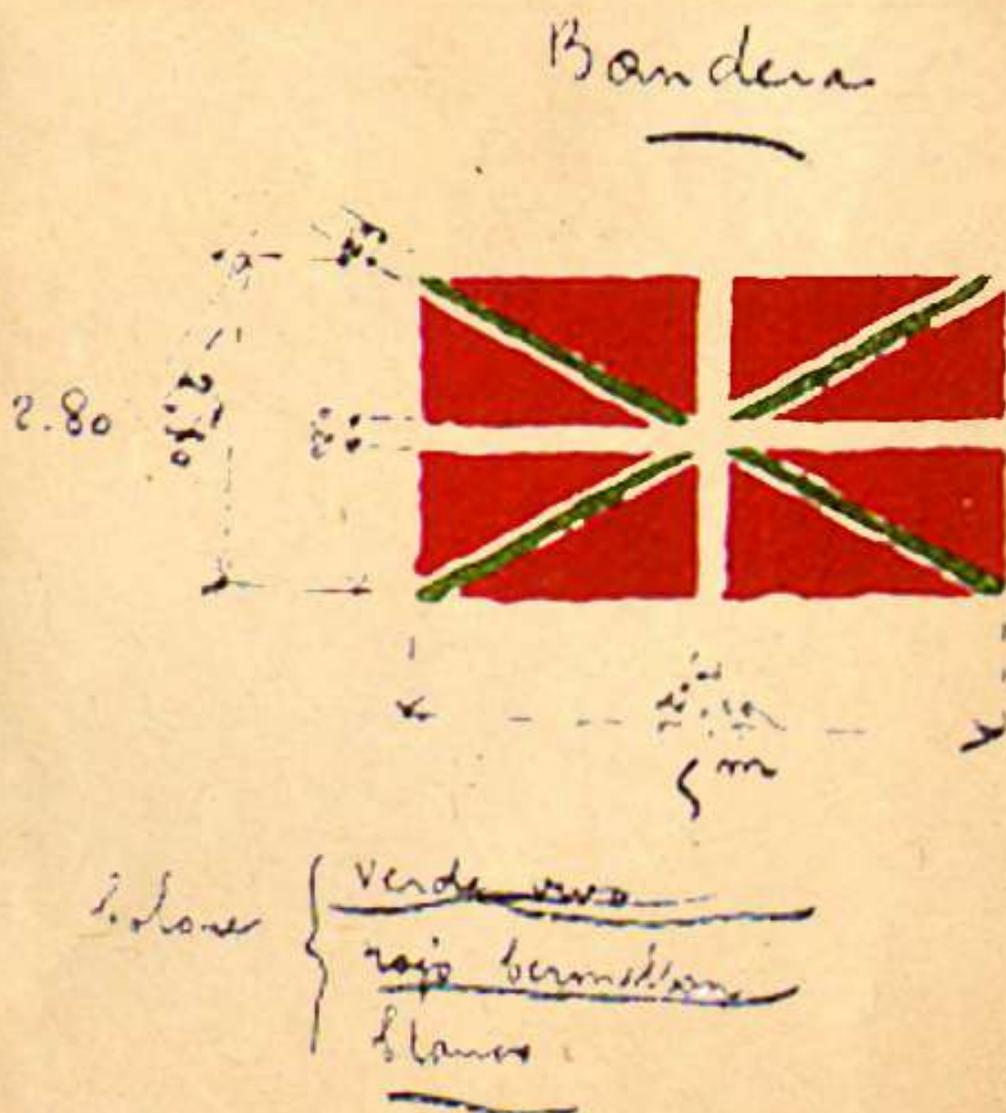
At first, the Ikurriña was meant to be the flag only for Biscay, as Sabino Arana was inspired by the emblem this territory already had, its shield, and his interpretation of it.

The red background is considered to be a translation of the shield, since for Sabino Arana it wasn't supposed to be Argent but rather Gules, or red.

The Vert saltire, is also borrowed from the shield of Biscay, as a symbol of the Tree of Guernica. The St. Andrew's cross also makes reference to the struggle for the freedom of the Homeland and the legendary Battle of Arrigorriaga or Padura at the end of the 9th century between Biscaynes and Castilians which, according to tradition, occurred on November 30, the day of St. Andrew the Apostle, who was martyred on an X-shaped cross.

The white cross is placed over the other elements, as a representation of the transcendental superiority of the divine over the mundane.

Nevertheless, the more popular interpretation that ended up being given to the Ikurriña is that the red background represents the Basque People, the green saltire Independence, and the white cross the Christian concept of life.



What is the history of the Ikurriña?

At the beginning, the proportions established for the ikurriña were 4.5×2.5 m (14'9" \times 8'2"), which was later amended to 5.0×2.8 m (16'5" \times 9'2"); the crosses were made to be 20 cm (8") wide.

The first time the flag was raised outside the Euskaldun Batzokija was on the Bermeo boat Aketxe in 1895. It may have been the same flag that was raised at the meeting house, since it's believed that the second ikurriña was that of the batzokia in Busturia. This flag had a similar fate as the first, and as many of its successors.

On September 8, 1897, it was raised at the Kafranga home in Legendika, Kanala, to celebrate the town festival, and it was seized by the Civil Guard.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the ikurriña began to lose its ties to only Biscay, and ended up being considered the flag of all Basques. In 1925, it was adopted in order to preside over the meetings of the Euzkaltzaleen Biltzarra.

In September 1931, the City of Durango asked the Eusko Ikaskuntza which flag could be considered as the national Basque flag, or the flag to represent all of the Basque Country, and they were told that showing the Ikurriña “could not, today, have any partisan meaning, but is rather an expression of the spiritual unity of the Basques.”

It was not until October 19, 1936 when, on the behest of the Minister of Industry, Socialist Party member Santiago Aznar, the Government of the Basque Country (Euzkadi) made the ikurriña the official flag of the Basque Country. The only modification would be to widen the crosses to 43 cm (17”) so that they could be better seen by boats during the war.

During the Spanish Civil War, as the uprisers against the Second Spanish Republic slowly took over the whole of the Basque Country, they destroyed all the ikurriñas they found in their path. Some, which had been used by gudari battalions, ended up as war trophies in Spanish military museums.

After the Fascist victory, the ikurriña was outlawed throughout Spain, and anyone found with one, or hiding one, or drawing one, would be beaten, fined, or imprisoned (often, all three). Even tying together the colors red, white, and green on any object or piece of clothing was enough to unleash police repression.

After the death of Francisco Franco and the end of his dictatorship, the ikurriña would still be years in becoming legal, even though there were many who carried it and showed it publicly in defiance of the law (for example, on December 5, 1976, when the captains of Athletic Club and the Real Sociedad, Iribar and Kortabarria, ran out onto the field carrying it during a derby match between the two teams).

On January 18, 1977, the Minister of the Interior of the Spanish Government, Martín Villa, promised to “tolerate” any ikurriñas shown on municipal and provincial property. On January 19, 1977, the ikurriña was officially raised for the first time since the Second Republic, on Constitution Square at the old city hall in San Sebastian, on the day before its city festival.

After the establishment of the General Council of the Basque Country, on December 15, 1978, this pre-Autonomous Community body decided to use the ikurriña as its own.

On October 25, 1979, the Statutes of Autonomy for Alava, Biscay, and Gipuzkoa were approved in a referendum, and in the first section, fifth article, the Ikurriña, with its double cross, was named the official flag of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country.

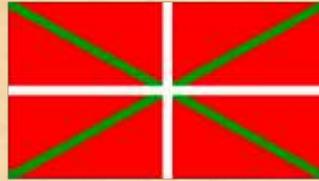
On April 4, 2003, at the behest of the Union of the Navarrese People party, the Parliament of Navarre passed Foral Law 24/2003 regarding the Symbols of Navarre, and the use of the Ikurriña by cities and other public institutions in this territory, regardless of the desire of the democratically elected members' will, shall not wave the ikurriña.



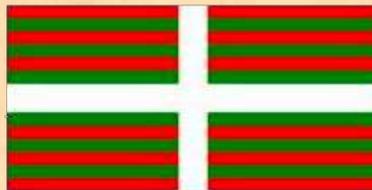
**Are there any other flags
considered ikurriñas?**



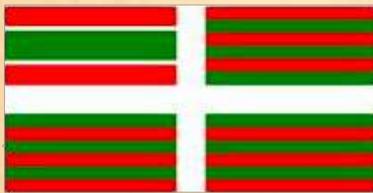
BIZKAIA 1894



EUZKADI 1907



ARABA



BIZKAIA



GIPUZKOA



LAPURDI



NAFARROA



ZUBEROA



EUZKADI 1939



Ikurriña for hanging

While the Arana brothers were designing the Ikurriña as a flag to be raised on a pole, they also designed another to be hung from the short side from balconies or tables. It was made up of five horizontal bands along a length of 1.2 m (47"); 40 cm (16") of red, 10 cm (4") of green, 20 cm (8") of white, 10 cm of green, and 40 cm of red.



The Ikurriña of the Confederation

Since the initial goal of the Ikurriña was to represent Biscay, Luis de Arana sketched out a project for all of the Basque Country that didn't finish until 1907. In the end, since the Ikurriña had already popularly become the Basque national flag, this flag did not prosper.

This “Flag of the Confederation” had a red background, as a symbol of the Basque people, and on top six green stripes representing the six historical territories, and over that a white cross with the same meaning as the Ikurriña.



Really, the only difference with the Ikurriña was the replacement of the green saltire, which Luis de Arana believed only had meaning for Biscay, with six horizontal stripes of the same color.

The Gamazada “Ikurriña”

After the “Gamazada” and the February 18, 1894 reception the Navarrese representatives had in Castejón on their way back from Madrid, a group of Basque nationalists came from Biscay in solidarity with the Navarrese.



Among them were Sabino and Luis de Arana, carrying a flag that had been made the day before in Pamplona, with a red St. Andrew's cross with a white background on one side, and on the other, the motto: “Jaun-goikua eta Lagi-Zarra, Bizkaitarrak Agurreiten Deutse napparrei” (“God and the Old Law, those from Biscay greet the Navarrese”).

Years later, some came to think that it was because of the Gamazada that the Ikurriña was first raised; this was refuted by Luis de Arana, who highlighted the difference in the flags.

Curiosities

In 1934 in Buenos Aires, the 32nd International Eucharistic Congress of the Catholic Church was held. Mateo Múgica, the Bishop of Vitoria, and other Basque priests from that diocese were not allowed to participate at the last moment due to an “order from above”.

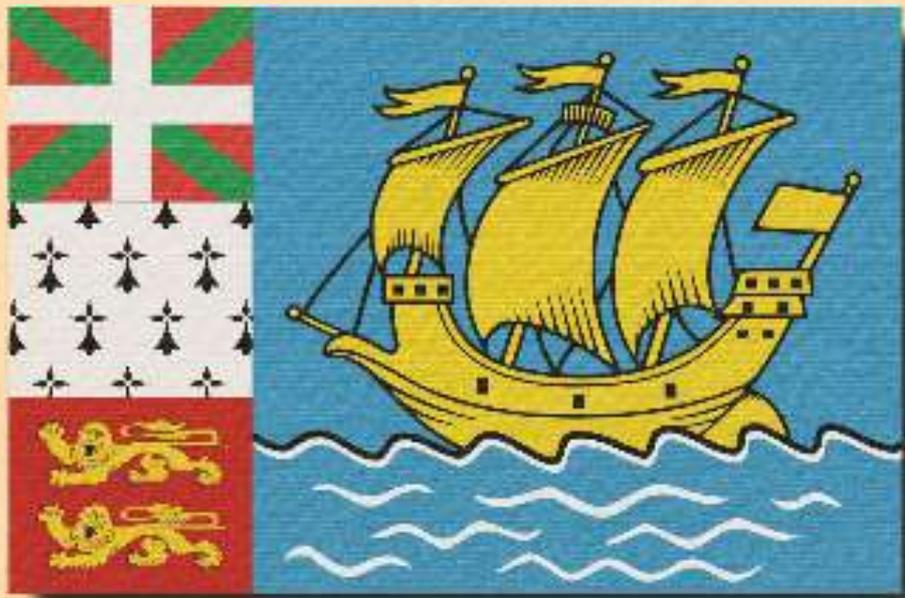
However, a group of Basques who lived in Uruguay never heard about this Vatican veto, and, with small ikurriñas in their hands, tried to greet the Basque bishop at the foot of the stairs coming from the boat he was supposed to have traveled on to Montevideo.

One of them confused Leopoldo Eijo Garay, the Bishop of Madrid, with the one from Vitoria, and, at the foot of the stairs, offered the bishop the best ikurriña the group had. Before the astonished gaze of the Basque youth, the Spanish bishop’s reaction was to take the ikurriña and tear it up, in an act unworthy of his dignity as a bearer of his ideology.

During the Franco era, when the combination of red, white, and green was persecuted even in kitchen cloths, a common “solution” used to be substituting green with blue (or teal if one was feeling daring) for Basque resistors who wanted to tacitly show off their feelings, in many different ways, from all types of publications to clothing and group dances.

The day when the ikurriña was first flown publicly and with permission after the end of General Franco's dictatorship, the Civil governor of Biscay, José Antonio Zarzalejos, quit because of it. Francoist ex-minister Manuel Fraga, who had promised that the ikurriña would only be flown over his dead body, didn't go to such extremes.

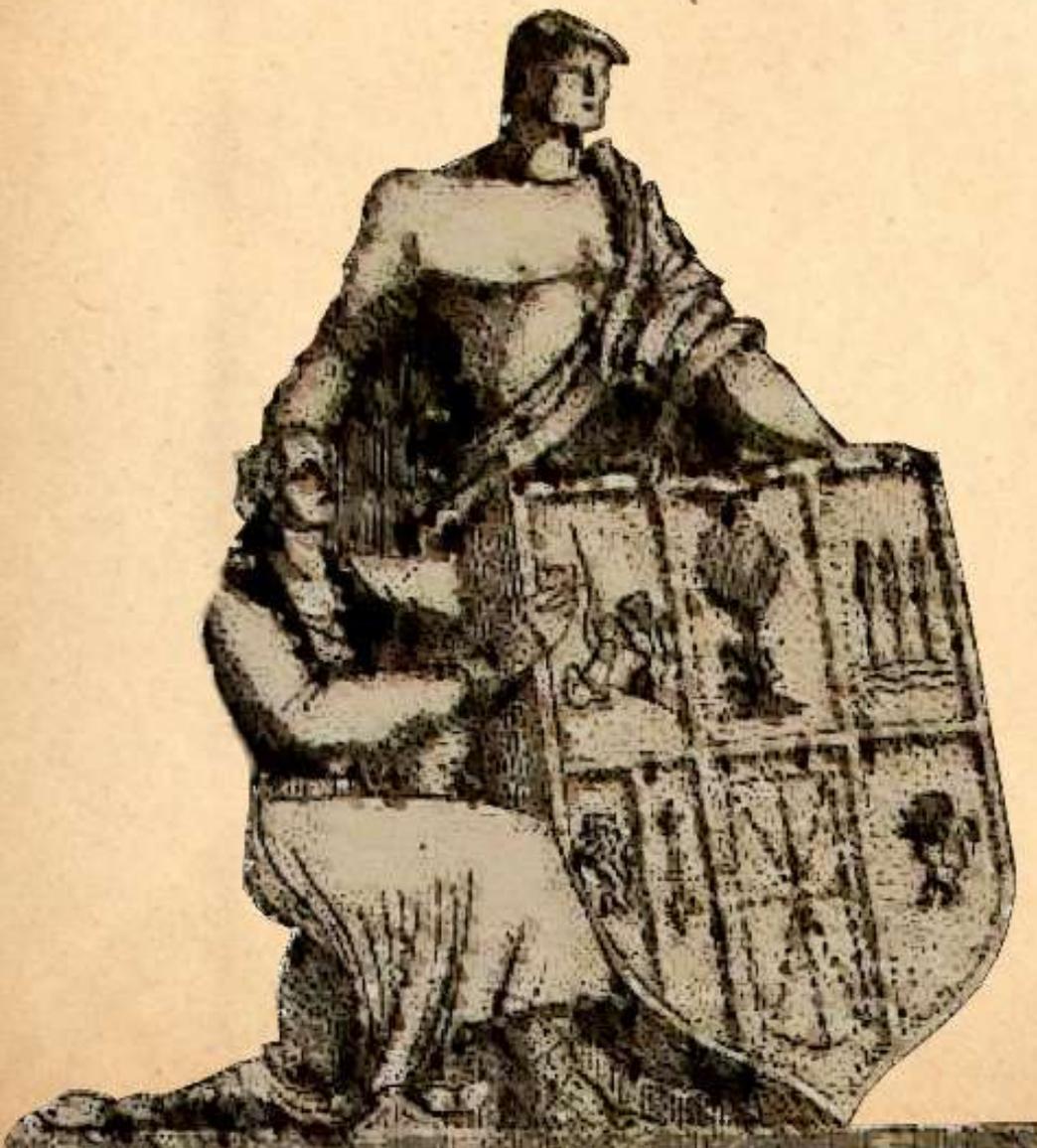
The flag of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, I pair of islands off the Newfoundland coast which are under French administration, includes the ikurriña, in reference to the participation of the Basques in this archipelago.



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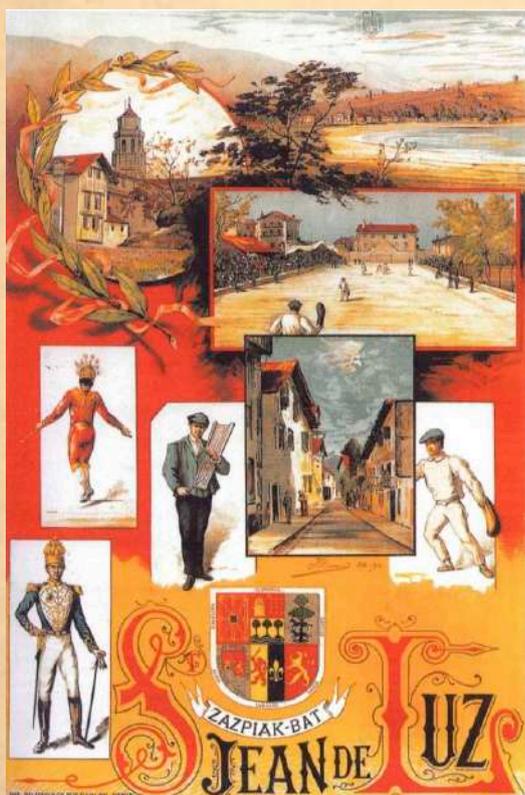
The Coat of Arms (Zazpiak Bat)



What is the origin of the Basque Coat of Arms?

The idea of representing the Basque Country in a coat of arms made up of those of all seven of the territories (Zazpiak Bat: The Seven in One) took many different forms at the end of the 19th century, on both sides of the Pyrenees. Before that, there were also coats of arms for Araba, Biscay, and Gipuzkoa (Hirurak Bat: Three in One), and another of those three plus Navarre (Laurak Bat: Four in One).

On August 21, 1892, the first coat of arms of the Basque Country



that we know of was shown at the International Basque Country Festival put on in Saint-Jean-de-Luz by its mayor, Albert Goienetxe with the sponsorship and inspiration of Antoine d'Abbadie. The coat showed, alongside the motto “Zazpiak Bat”, a poster made up of typical vistas and characters from local folklore. These cultural festivals sought the participation of all Basques,

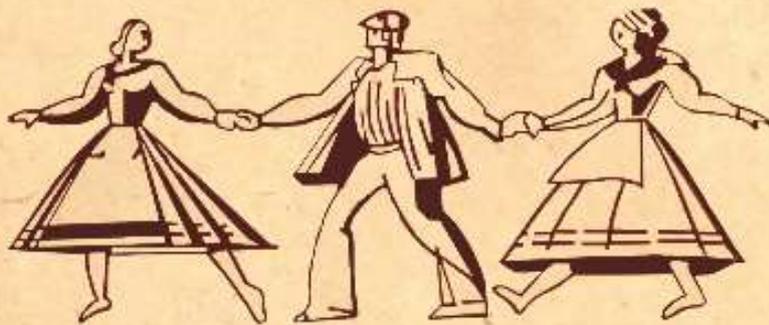
from both sides of the Pyrenees, so they started with a blessing of the flags from the “seven” Basque territories, which explains the “Seven in One” motto, as Lower Navarre was considered separate from Navarre.

The coat of arms is divided into two halves, upper and lower, and in each one are the coats of three Basque territories. In the top row, left to right, are Navarre, Gipuzkoa, and Biscay, and below, Araba, Labourd, and Soule. Each of their names appears on the border.

Heraldist Jacques Meurguey in 1918, unaware of that poster, attributed the first design to Jean de Jaurgain, commissioned by Alber Goienetxe, who was still the mayor of Saint-Jean-de-Luz in 1897 for the Congress and Festival of Basque Tradition, which was again held that year. Since Ceferino de Jemein was also unaware of that 1892 poster, he considered that the first coat of arms of the Basque Country to have been made in 1896 for the ex libris of the Bilbao publisher ‘Bizkaya’ren Edestija ta Izkerea-Pizkundia’, which had been created by brothers Luis and Sabino de Arana y Goiri, who arranged the design alphabetically (starting with Araba and ending with Soule), so that no territory would be more important than any other.

Regardless of which coat of arms was first or of the differences between them, both were based on the same idea: to create a single coat of arms of the Basque Country made up of the coats of arms of all the Basque territories.

It seems that the one created in Saint-Jean-de-Luz became more widespread, and with it the motto “Zazpiak Bat”, even though the design inspired Sabino Arana’s composition ended up winning out.



What is the coat of arms of the Basque Country made up of?

The six quarters of the coat of arms designed by Sabino Arana, from left to right, top to bottom, three on each row, are:

Álava / Araba



“Or, a tower on a base; out of the tower comes a armored arm blazing a sword, about to strike a lion rampant gules”.

The traditional motto, “Justicia contra malhechores (Justice against evildoers)” has been deleted. Traditionally, the arm came from within the castle, but now it comes out of the rock supporting the castle, as Basque nationalists wanted to symbolize that justice comes from the people. There are also historical seals of cities and shields in which the arm comes from the rock.

Basque nationalism interprets the coat of arms of Alava to symbolize the independences of the Country, “strong in its mountains and always ready to resist the strength of its enemies; and since the tower represented is that of Portilla, located on the southern border of Alava, on the way from Beratevilla to Logroño, it’s not hard to imagine which audacious invaders are represented by the figure of the lion.”

Biscay



Gules, an oak tree vert, terraced in the same; from its leaves the three ends of a cross argent; border argent with eight saltires vert. These saltires represent the St. Andrew’s cross, and are a symbol of the eight merindades of the province and of the Battle of Padura.

After adding the saltires, Sabino de Arana decided to remove the two wolves each with their lambs which, in his opinion, represented the Lords of Biscay and the House of Haro.

Gipuzkoa



Argent, with three yew trees vert in fess, terraces over three knolls vert; en pointé, water waves argent and azure.

The two upper quarters of the traditional coat of arms have been removed. They originally showed a king, considered to be Enrique IV, the first king of Gipuzkoa, and 12 cannons, given by Juana the Mad in memory of those taken by the Gipuzkoans from the Navarrese on the conquest of that kingdom on December 12, 1512 in the Battle of Belate.



Labourd



Or, with a lion rampant gules armed with a javelin held high in the right hand. The traditional coat of arms was split, with a golden flor-de-lis on a blue background, but this was changed because it had been a royal concession symbolizing the annexation of Labourd by French king Charles VII in 1541. This was the same criterion followed by Basque nationalism, as has been seen, on older coats of arms.

Navarre



Gules, a cross, saltire and orle of chains linked together Or, in the fess point an emerald vert. This is believed to reference the 1212 Battle of Navas de Tolosa, with the chains used to tie up the slave guard of the Muslim emperor, Muhammad al-Nasir, who was defeated. The emerald refers to his epithet, the Green, for the precious jewel-encrusted turban he usually wore.

Soule



Gules, a lion rampant Or. The Lordship of Maule gave his weapons to the city and the territory.

On all of these coats of arms, as can be seen, the things that were considered to be from monarchic or noble powers have been eliminated, considered to not be original to the Basque Country, along with any symbols that might represent fratricide between the Basque territories.

Why is the Basque Coat of Arms called “Zazpiak Bat”?

Because when the first coat of arms was designed in 1892, it was done with this motto inspired by the idea that there were seven Basque territories: Álava, Biscay, Gipuzkoa, Labourd, Navarre, Lower Navarre, and Soule (“seven sister provinces”), even if Lower Navarre and (Upper) Navarre were represented by the same quarter.

What is the history of the Basque coat of arms?

As has been seen, it was designed in different ways by Basques on both sides of the Pyrenees at the end of the 19th century, and it would be adopted as the Coat of Arms of the Basque Country by the Basque Nationalist Party at the beginning of the 20th.

On October 19, 1936, the first Basque Government officially adopted it as its coat of arms, with the aforementioned specifications, with the coats of arms of the four peninsular Basque territories (Laurak Bat) in the same alphabetical order in the four quarters: Alava, Biscay, Gipuzkoa, and Navarre.

After the end of the dictatorship, the Basque Government revived this coat of arms in the General Basque Council meeting of November 2, 1978. On July 29, 1985, the Spanish Constitutional Tribunal, thanks to requirements from the Government of Navarre, ordered the Navarrese coat of arms to be removed. The red background was left, alluding to the arms of the house of Albret, the last legitimate kings of Navarre.

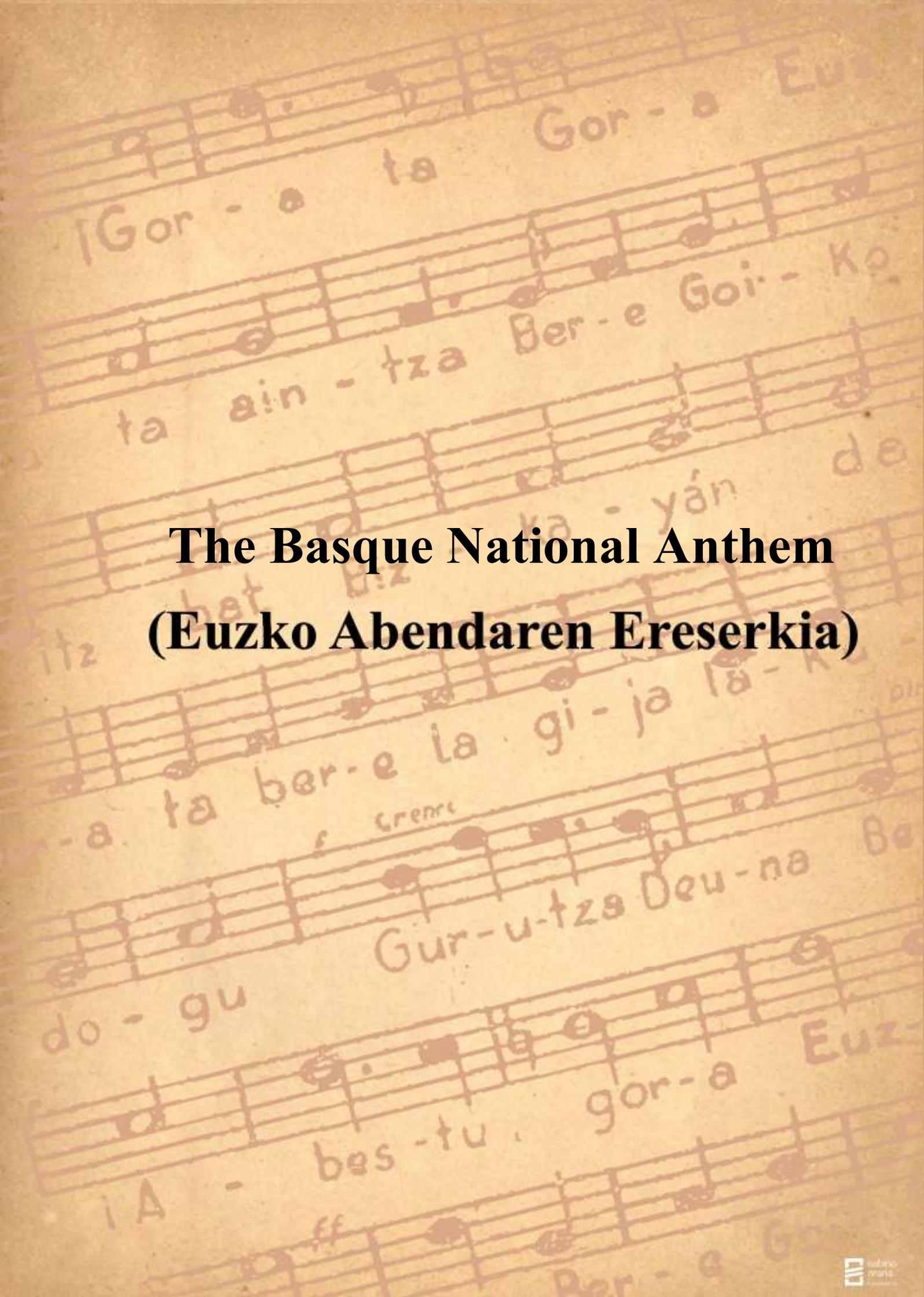
Curiosities

There was a similar flag to the Ikurriña, but with a wider white cross, at the beginning of the 18th century, which was the standard of the French “La Vallière” regiment. Waving this flag, this unit of the French army besieged and sacked San Sebastian in 1719. In the modern-day tamborrada, the students from the Ikasbide school of San Sebastian do a parade with this flag, which many confuse with the Ikurriña.

The coat of arms of Soule, with a red lion on a yellow background, was used in flags by the Bilbao dance troupe Dindirri during Franco’s régime as a tacit symbol of Basque nationalism. This was tolerated by the Francoist police because they didn’t know: they were more worried about the red, white, and green combination, and were never suspicious of a red and yellow symbol, as those are the colors of the Spanish flag.

The 1892 version of Zazpiak Bat features on the flag of the logistical support ship Garonne of the French navy, alongside the coats of arms of Guyenne and Gascony.



The image shows a page of a musical score for the Basque National Anthem. The score is written on multiple staves with musical notation and lyrics in Basque. The lyrics are: Gor - a ta Gor - a Euz - ta ain - tza Ber - e Goi - Ko ka - yán de - a ta ber - e la gi - ja la - Ko do - gu Gur - u - tza Deu - na Be - bes - tu gor - a Euz - A - Ber - e Gor - . The text is centered on the page.

The Basque National Anthem
(Euzko Abendaren Ereserkia)

What is the origin of the Basque national anthem?

Sabino de Arana first thought of a Basque National Anthem in 1886 in Durango, at a show held there for the last four ezpata-dantza dance groups left in Biscay, from Iurreta, Garai, Berriz, and Abadiño, in honor of Pedro Pablo de Astarloa. He came up with the idea of the music for this Anthem listening to the meters of the ezpata-dantza shows and the salute to the flag.

He wouldn't outline the lyrics, however, until 1895, when he was imprisoned in Larrinaga. When he was again imprisoned in 1902, he finalized the lyrics that would reflect the political thoughts that had deprived him of his freedom.

What is the history of the Basque National Anthem?

After Sabino de Arana's death, the leaders of the Basque Nationalist Party that he'd founded commissioned maestro Cleto de Zabala to adapt the lyrics to the ezpata-dantza chords and declared his composition the Anthem of the Basque Homeland - Euzko Abendaren Ereserkia, on April 29, 1905.

In 1936, the first Basque Government declared the Euzko Abendaren Ereserkia the Basque National Anthem.

When the dictatorship finally ended, on April 14, 1983, the Basque Parliament passed Law 8/1983 which again declared the music of the Euzko Abendaren Ereserkia the official Basque Anthem.

What are they lyrics to the Basque National Anthem?

The lyrics to “Eusko Abendaren Ereserkia” are as follows:

¡Gora ta gora Euzkadi!

¡Aintza ta Aintza

Bere Goiko Jaun onari!

Areitz bat Bizkaian da,

Zar, sendo

Zindo

Bera

Bere Lagija Lakua,

Areitz-ganian dogu

Gurutza

Deuna,

Beti geure goiburu

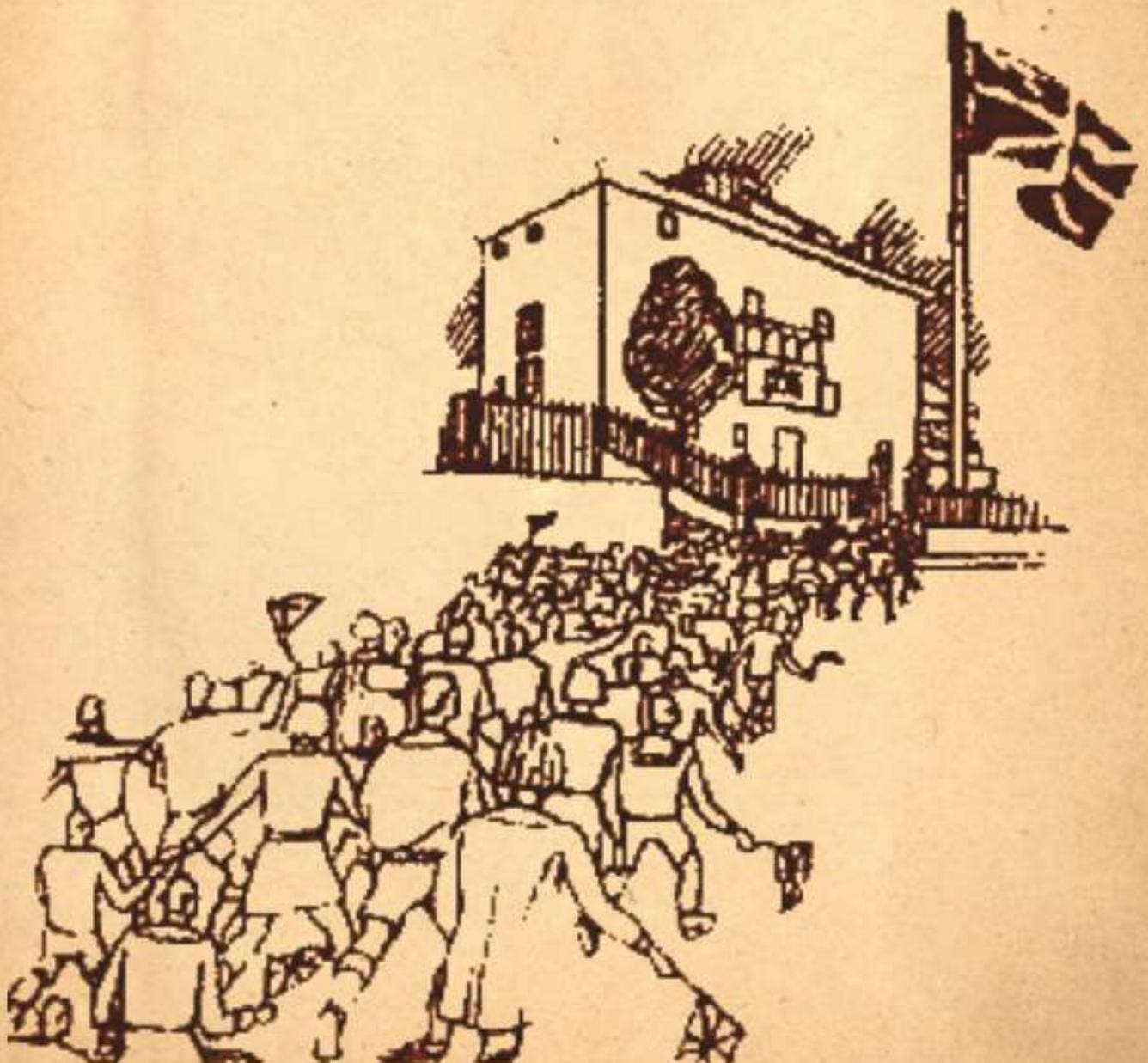
¡Abestu gora Euzkadi!

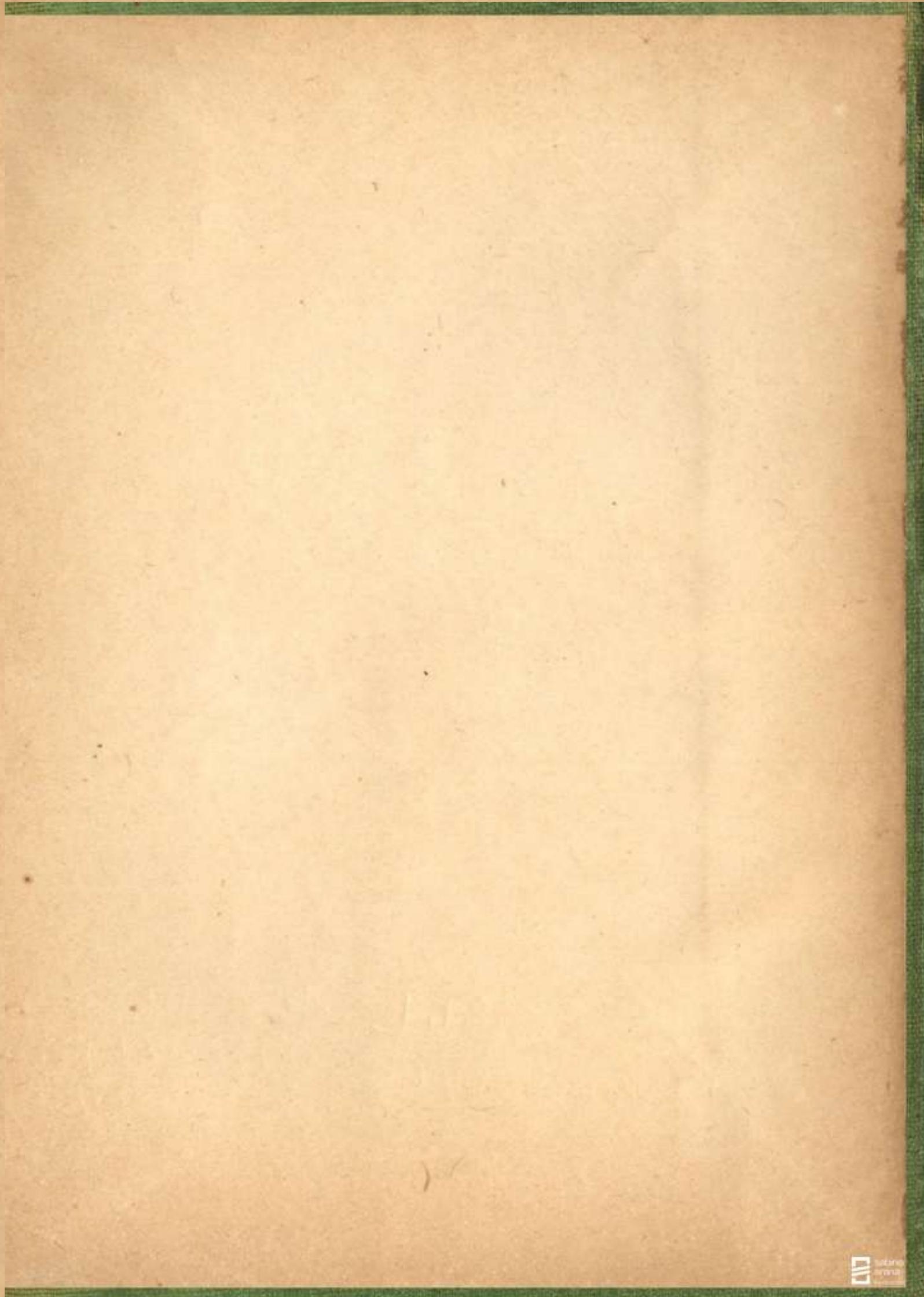
Aintza ta aintza

Bere Goiko Jaun onari.

Curiosities

During the dictatorship, Basque nationalists made the most of the fact that the Anthem was so similar to the ezpata-dantza music it was based on that txistulariak could play the tune publicly when accompanying the dance with music.







sabino
arana
fundazioa