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Basques in the Atlantic World, 1450-1824

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Summary and Keywords

Basques formed a minority ethnic group whose diaspora had a significant impact on the history of colonial Latin America. Basques from the four Spanish or peninsular Basque territories—the Lordship of Vizcaya, the provinces of Álava and Guipúzcoa, and the Kingdom of Navarra—migrated to the New World in significant numbers; the French Basques were also prominent in the Atlantic, particularly in the Newfoundland fisheries.

The population density of the Basque Atlantic valleys, which was the highest of any region in Spain, was an important factor that encouraged emigration. And, in response to demographic pressure, in the second half of the 15th century most villages and towns adopted an impartible inheritance system that compelled non-inheriting offspring to seek their fortunes outside the country. Castile was the immediate choice for the Basque émigré, but after 1492 America gradually became an attractive destination. Outside their home country, their unique language and sense of collective nobility (*hidalguía universal*) were to become two outstanding features of Basque cultural identity.

The Basques' share of total Spanish migration to the New World increased significantly in the second half of the 17th century. By the 18th century they were one of the largest and most influential peninsular regional groups in America. The typical Basque émigré was a young, single man aged between fifteen and thirty. In the New World they left their mark in economic activities that their countrymen had developed in their homeland for centuries: trade, navigation, shipbuilding, and mining. Furthermore, Basques' collective nobility and *limpieza de sangre* (blood purity) facilitated their access to important official positions.

Keywords: Basque diaspora, Atlantic diasporas, Atlantic history, transatlantic migration, Spanish America, colonial merchants, silver miners, religious congregations

The Importance of Geography

In the early modern period, the Basque Country, or *Euskal Herria*—the home of the Basque people, situated in the western Pyrenees on the shores of the Cantabrian Sea, the coastal sea of the Atlantic ocean that washes the northern coast of Spain and the southwest coast of France—was divided into seven different territories that not only lacked sovereignty but were politically separate from each other. Four of them—the Lordship of Vizcaya, the provinces of Guipúzcoa and Álava, and the Kingdom of Navarra¹—were integrated into the Crown of Castile (later Spain), and the other three—Labourd, Basse Navarre, and Soule—belonged to the Kingdom of France.² They occupy a relatively small area: the Spanish or peninsular Basque territories cover 6,812 square miles, the French ones just under 1,158 square miles. They account for merely 3.48 percent of the total area of Spain, and 0.47 percent of France. With a total population that rose from 268,000 in 1530 to 535,000 in 1787, the Iberian Basque territories were home to between 4.5 and 5.7 percent of the inhabitants of Spain during the early modern period.³ Basques on either side of the Spanish-French border shared a common language (Basque, or *enskera*) and culture, but the two powerful early modern monarchies that they lived under exerted decisive and often divergent influences over their respective histories. For one thing, Spain's conquest and exploitation of vast territories in America was to provide the Iberian Basques with an array of economic and social opportunities that were not directly available to the French Basques.

The location of their homeland next to the sea is one of the crucial factors that explain the Basques' early involvement in the Atlantic world, but there were other, equally important geographical influences. The Basque Country's varied topography and distinct ecological zones gave rise to different ways of life. Given that along the coast there were rich fishing grounds and numerous natural inlets, the villages there were largely devoted to fishing and coastal trading. Famously, from the early part of the 16th century onward, the coastal Basques' fishing expeditions took them as far as Newfoundland and Labrador, where they pursued cod and whales, respectively. Along the Basque coast there were also important commercial ports, with populations ranging from 6,000 to 12,000, which were engaged in international maritime trade and shipbuilding activities, and privateering in wartime. These were Bilbao, San Sebastián (and the nearby Bay of Pasajes), and Bayonne. The sheltered port of Bilbao, in fact, was Castile's chief means of access to northern European markets.

Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa, and the northern valleys of Álava and Navarra are located on the "Atlantic slope" that descends from both the Cantabrian Mountains and the Pyrenees to the coast. This is an area of rippling green foothills and narrow river valleys. It is dominated by an oceanic climate with quite damp summers and mild winters. Though rich in vegetation, the region is not blessed with good agricultural land. The typical settlement was the peasant village, which usually consisted of a group of houses

surrounding a church and a scattering of farmsteads on the surrounding hills, either in single units or in small groups. The farmstead (*baserri* in Basque—or simply *etxea*, meaning “house”) was a fundamental element in a peasant agricultural system generally based on household subsistence. In these coastal lands, landowning peasants were more prevalent than in most regions of Spain.⁴ Crucially, the coastal provinces also had the highest demographic density of any Spanish region, which throughout the early modern period compelled many of their inhabitants to emigrate.

By contrast, the regions immediately to the south of the Atlantic slope, central Álava and Navarra, are higher up and have a harsh continental climate. They consist of a series of plateaus surrounded by secondary mountain chains. Here agriculture was more productive and was mostly concentrated on winter wheat. The main urban centers in this area, Vitoria and Pamplona, had populations of a similar size to those in the main coastal towns. Further to the south, as far as the Ebro River, the landscape gradually becomes flatter and the climate more arid. In this southern region the population was more concentrated in small urban centers and agriculture was for the most part devoted to the so-called Mediterranean trilogy: wheat, olives, and grapes.

It is important to bear in mind these topographic and climatic differences within the Basque Country, as to a large extent they explain not only the regional provenance of most Basque émigrés to Spanish America but also the skills they took with them. The geological composition of the land also played a crucial part in this. The Basque Atlantic slope, particularly the area around Vizcaya, contained rich deposits of high-quality iron ore that was transformed into wrought iron in numerous small water-powered bloomeries.⁵ Known as *burdinolak* in Basque and *ferrerías* in Spanish, these were built at the bottom of the valleys of both Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa. The fuel used in the forges was charcoal from the neighboring forests, the production of which supplemented the peasant economy. By the late Middle Ages the Basques had established an international reputation as manufacturers of metal, their production ranging from simple iron bars to more elaborate objects such as anchors, harpoon points, ploughshares, and steel weapons. The export of iron products to Spain and its colonies became a crucial activity for the local economy. Moreover, the iron industry and the easy availability of oak wood also explain the development of the shipbuilding industry and hence the local seafaring tradition.⁶ The Basque Country thus acquired significant geostrategic value for the Spanish monarchy: not only was it situated by the sensitive French border; it also produced a large part of the warships and arms that the Spanish military needed for its imperial endeavors. Not surprisingly, therefore, many Basques who moved to Castile and Spanish America were to leave their mark in crucial economic activities such as trade, mining, navigation, and shipbuilding.

The Inheritance System

After a devastating plague that hit the Basque Country at the beginning of the 15th century, the local population began to rise again. Castile experienced a similar demographic expansion, but its lower population density and far more productive agriculture meant it was less likely to suffer Malthusian population pressure, at least in the short term. For the Basque Atlantic region, with its narrow valleys and mostly infertile soil, demographic growth became a serious problem, particularly after 1450. What to do with the surplus population? Over the course of the 15th century most villages and towns gradually opted for a solution along the lines of what two leading Basque historians have called the “Oñate program,” named after the town that was the birthplace of the famous conquistador Lope de Aguirre (1510–1561).⁷ It would prove to be a fairly successful and long-lasting attempt to turn an adverse demographic into a blessing.

In the late 14th century there had been some Basque municipalities that allowed their citizens to bequeath money and property to whichever son or daughter they chose, a procedure that was at odds with Roman law. In practice this meant that both the land and the family house could be transferred to a single heir. As the 15th century progressed and demographic expansion left its mark, this impartible inheritance system was consolidated and spread across the Atlantic valleys, becoming an effective means of preventing Malthusian crises. An extreme example that nonetheless epitomizes the phenomenon was that of Oñate, where the *raison d'être* of choosing a single heir was unequivocally spelled out in 1477. The *vecinos* (inhabitants) of Oñate complained that the growing number of citizens was having a negative impact on the size of the plots into which family properties were partitioned. They therefore decided to favor a single inheritor, whether male or female, firstborn or otherwise. Their case was extreme in that the offspring not selected to be the heir would receive no inheritance at all, while in other Atlantic Basque municipalities the remaining children still received a small mandatory share known as *legítima*. The fear was that if the non-inheriting offspring were allowed to entertain the hope of receiving a share more substantial than the *legítima*—or, in Oñate, anything at all—they would linger unproductively in their home village or town and become idle. So the intention behind the impartible system was not only to preserve the household but also to instill an entrepreneurial spirit in the other offspring who, left with no rightful claim over the family property, would be compelled to enter a business, profession, or industry either in the Basque Country itself or, preferably, elsewhere. Leaving was vigorously encouraged, in fact, because for a person to move away to work and acquire new skills and wealth outside their village or town was understood to be for the benefit of the whole local community.

Thus, in the second half of the 15th century, both the impartible inheritance system and the demographic gap between the Basque Atlantic region and the neighboring Castilian

plateau became important factors encouraging emigration southwards. Crucially, it wasn't long before the expedition led by Christopher Columbus reached the New World, opening up new horizons and a whole new range of possibilities for the Basque émigré for the next three centuries. That is why their experience is best understood when seen through the lens of the Atlantic history paradigm, a specialty field in history that John Elliott has nicely defined as “the history, in the broadest sense, of the creation, destruction and re-creation of communities as a result of the movement, across and around the Atlantic basin, of people, commodities, cultural practices, and ideas.”⁸ Nevertheless, since Basques were also present in the Philippines and participated very actively in the trade between Acapulco and Manila, it is fair to say that they also provide a good case study for historians who favor global history over the Atlantic paradigm.⁹

The Basque Language

In the rural areas of the Atlantic slope the family house (*casa nativa* in the Spanish sources) was, as Juan Javier Pescador has put it, “the alfa and omega of the valley's local institutions and the main source of identity for [the local] people,” for they perceived themselves first and foremost as members of a *baserri* or *etxea*, then citizens or *vecinos* of the village, then parishioners of the local patron saint.¹⁰ If they emigrated to Spain or the New World, Basques' cultural identity was then reinforced with two additional elements: their unique language and their legally sanctioned collective nobility.

Euskera is the only surviving pre-Indo-European tongue in Western Europe, and is therefore unrelated to Spanish, French, or any other language. In fact, Basque is a “language isolate,” i.e., it has no demonstrable genealogical relationship with any other language anywhere. During the early modern period it was not spoken in the southernmost region of the Basque Country, and it seems that in the 18th century it also receded in parts of central Álava and Navarra. In Vizcaya (with the exception of its westernmost valleys), Guipúzcoa, and the north of Álava and Navarra, which together formed the main regional source of emigration to Spanish America, the majority of the population were monolingual Basque speakers. In practice this posed a problem that most families planning to send their offspring outside the country made great efforts to solve. In such cases it was of paramount importance that émigrés were at least fluent speakers of Castilian, even if they were not fully literate in the language. By the 18th century, most of them would attain a basic level of literacy and numeracy before leaving for America. Endowing young migrants with literacy was an investment in human capital that not all families could afford—but it was within the reach of both landowning peasant families (of which the Basque Atlantic valleys had a larger percentage than any other Spanish region, to a large extent thanks to their system of impartible inheritance that favored a single heir) and families with prosperous emigrants residing in Spain or Spanish America (most of whom were themselves landowners). As a recent study on late colonial Mexico City shows, investing in human

capital paid off since it contributed greatly to the prosperity of the Basque and other northern diasporas, and hence to local economic progress.¹¹

But, despite the emphasis on learning Castilian, or Spanish, before departure, it was only natural for Basques to use their mother tongue whenever they met their *paisanos* (compatriots) in Spain or the New World. No doubt their unique language was an important element of their cultural identity. Basque was chiefly an oral culture, barely used in written form and with only a limited, lackluster literary tradition. In their transatlantic epistolary correspondence with their families and *paisanos*, Iberian Basques often used Spanish and merely added *enskera* in the salutations—words such as *gorainciac* (regards), *adisquide* (friend), *jauna* (sir), or *agur* (goodbye), which operated as cultural markers. Letters written entirely in Basque were rare in the Spanish Atlantic. In stark contrast, in the 18th century the French Basques wrote letters to their relatives in French Canada and the Newfoundland fisheries wholly in Basque, not in French.¹²

Collective Nobility

The second additional element that contributed to form the Basque cultural identity originated from the so-called *fueros* (*foruak* in Basque). These were the systems for home rule in each of the seven Basque territories, which were tantamount to a constitution. Although they lacked sovereignty, each region had its own government and *fueros*, which gave them a considerable degree of autonomy within the Spanish and French monarchies. In the case of the Iberian Basque territories there were a great many laws, but some of them served to guide the territories' relationship with the crown of Castile. To begin with, each territory organized a militia that was in charge of its defense, which of course included protection along the French border. This service meant that Basques, wherever they lived, could not be conscripted into the Spanish army. The *fueros* also decreed that Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa, Álava, and Navarra formed a free trade area; customs houses were not located on the coast but only inland, on the route to Castile, and only goods in transit paid duties. This customs system gave rise to a considerable contraband trade with Castile. Moreover, depending on the region, Basques were either exempt from or paid only a fraction of the main Castilian taxes on consumption. The reason the Spanish monarchs ratified those economic privileges was because they were the only way the region, with its poor agricultural land, could maintain a relatively high population density, which was crucial in order to provide a strong militia. But, more importantly, the peninsular Basque *fueros* enjoyed two additional privileges that had far-reaching consequences for Basques outside their homeland and significantly influenced their perception of themselves. These were *hidalguía* (nobility without hereditary title) and *limpieza de sangre* (blood purity).

Since the 12th century and in the context of the *reconquista* (a series of campaigns by Christian kingdoms to recapture Iberian territory from the Muslims, which culminated in 1492 with the fall of the last Muslim emirate, the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada), providing military services had gradually bestowed the status of *hidalgo* on a large number of the inhabitants of the northern regions of the peninsula. This lower nobility also expanded through other means, particularly marriage (transmission was patrilineal). By the 16th century most inhabitants of Asturias and modern Cantabria styled themselves as *hidalgos*. In the Basque Atlantic region it was 100 percent, although most of them were “peasants of noble condition.”¹³ In stark contrast, in the rest of Castile *hidalgos* represented only 5 to 10 percent of the population. And there were other crucial differences. In Castile *hidalgos* were exempted from paying direct taxes, whereas in the northern lands everyone paid. In Castile *hidalgos* refused “vile and mechanical” occupations (i.e., manual work) as not befitting their status, but in the north such occupations were considered perfectly compatible with nobility. That northerners valued such a watered-down version of nobility may seem odd: after all, having a population of nothing but *hidalgos* meant that being one was effectively worth very little. But by the 16th century, of course, Basques and their Asturian and Cantabrian (or *montañés*) neighbors had something else in mind. They were fully aware that to make their noble status really count they had to move to Castile or America.

Furthermore, in the Basque Country the status of *hidalgo* became closely intertwined with *limpieza de sangre*, another crucial institution of late medieval and early modern Spain (and Portugal). This was the result of the anti-Semitic fervor that spread across the peninsula from the mid-15th to the 18th century. Spanish society became obsessed with drawing a line between Jews and Muslims (and their descendants, even if they had converted to Christianity), whose lineage was thought to be tainted, and old Christians, whose blood was considered clean. Proving one’s *limpieza de sangre* required a thorough, expensive investigation of one’s family tree. Its ultimate aim was to prohibit those with “tainted” blood from occupying official positions. But Basques claimed that they had never been conquered and therefore their blood had always remained clean. In 1511 Queen Joanna of Castile recognized the blood purity of the entire population of Vizcaya, and in 1527 her son Charles I sanctioned their *hidalgúa universal* (collective nobility). This would subsequently also be granted to the populations of Guipúzcoa and the northern valleys of Álava and Navarra.

In the late 15th century the Italian author Annio de Viterbo popularized the extremely dubious theory of Tubalism, which some 16th- and 17th-century Basque authors embraced and helped to circulate because it served to support Basques’ privileged status. Notable among them were Esteban de Garibay (1533–1599), Andrés de Poza (?–1595), and the Mexico City-based painter Baltasar de Echave y Orio (1548–1620).¹⁴ According to them, Basques were the direct descendants of Tubal, a grandson of the pre-flood patriarch Noah. Tubal and his tribe had supposedly been the first settlers of the Iberian

Peninsula, but centuries of invasions had gradually pushed their people and culture to the northern mountains, where they had survived in an isolated and pure state. Was there any evidence to support this story? In fact there was: the Basque Country was the only Iberian region where the original language of Tubal, one of the seventy-two languages of the Tower of Babel, was still spoken. Needless to say, Tubalism was widely accepted among Basques, less so among Castilians. In fact, early modern Castilians felt more than a little resentment toward Basques' coarse *hidalguía*, which was far removed from the idea of gentility that they themselves held in such high esteem.

Transatlantic Migration

It is extremely difficult to furnish an estimate of the number of Basques that left their country during the early modern period. Many of them moved to Castilian towns and cities, particularly to Madrid, Seville, and Cádiz. For a good number of them western Andalusia was the first stage on their route to the New World, since early in the 16th century the Castilian crown decided to conduct all exchanges with the newly discovered territories through one single port located in southern Spain. Until 1679 it was the Andalusian river port of Seville. From 1679 to 1765 it was Cádiz. After 1765 more Iberian ports were gradually allowed to establish direct communication and trade with America, although right up to the Latin American wars of independence Cádiz retained most of the exchanges. However, even after the system of imperial free trade was adopted in 1778, the Basque ports of Bilbao and San Sebastián were not permitted direct access to the American colonies because they lacked customs barriers (a byproduct of the *fueros*). The exception to this rule was the Royal Guipuzcoan Company of Caracas (1728–1785) and its monopoly over trade with Venezuela. After 1778, Basques would primarily use Cádiz, as well as the Cantabrian port of Santander (47 miles west of Bilbao), to cross the Atlantic.

For the pre-1600 period, Peter Boyd-Bowman has identified the names and birthplaces of 54,881 Spanish migrants to America, 2,406 (or 4.4 percent) of whom were Basques. Most of them were men from Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa, with Basque women numbering only 92 in total, the lowest figure of any Spanish region.¹⁵ It is generally agreed that while those figures provide a valuable sample in the sense that they shed light on migrants' gender and regional provenance, they are less useful as a measure of total emigration since many migrants chose to circumvent the costly, time-consuming bureaucratic obstacles that the Castilian crown imposed on Atlantic migration. Nevertheless, historians have put forward some rough total estimates. The most widely accepted is that of Magnus Mörner, who estimates that approximately 250,000 Spanish migrants travelled to America before 1600.¹⁶ The Basque percentage contribution to transatlantic migration suggests that around 11,000 of them moved to the colonies in the 16th century, although that figure should be taken with extreme caution.

For the 17th century, both the official data and historians' estimates are more problematic. The discrepancies between the rough estimates are significant. While Mörner proposes that there were 200,000 migrants between 1600 and 1650, Carlos Martínez Shaw considers it more likely that there were only 100,000 over the course of the entire century.¹⁷ Whatever the actual figure, there is strong evidence that migration from the periphery of Spain, and the northern regions in particular, began to gain momentum. This was the direct result of both the 17th-century economic crisis, which hit the interior of the peninsula far harder than the periphery, and the emerging transformation in the demographic structure of Spain, which would intensify in the 18th century. For instance, a list of 1,182 peninsular Spaniards living in Mexico City in 1689 reveals that by then the Basques were the second largest group after the Andalusians, accounting for 18.4 percent.¹⁸

From 1700 to 1824, by one reasonable estimate, transatlantic migrants numbered around 125,000, with 28 percent of them travelling legally.¹⁹ And compared to the 16th century, the proportion of Basques and other northerners rose sharply. Between 1701 and 1750, nearly 20 percent of licensed migrants were Basques (out of a sample of 4,182).²⁰ From 1765 to 1824 they represented 14.7 percent (out of 6,693).²¹ Those percentages suggest that at least 20,000 Basques moved to the New World during the long 18th century, although again this estimate should be taken with great caution. As for the age and sex of the migrants, Basques followed the general pattern. In the first half of the 18th century, Spanish women accounted for barely 8 percent of all migrants, half of them being married. In stark contrast, 80 percent of the men were single when they crossed the ocean. Furthermore, 70 percent of the emigrants were aged between 16 and 30.²² Family migration was an uncommon occurrence in the Spanish Atlantic.

Basques' migratory tradition did not vanish after 1824. Quite the opposite, in fact: The data of the colonial period contrasts sharply with those of the post-colonial era. Between the 1830s and the 1900s (though particularly in the last decades of that period) around 200,000 Basques (both Spanish and French) emigrated to the New World. Although by then, as Molina and Oiarzabal have stressed, Basques' personal, economic, cultural, and political transatlantic ties were "modified by the emergence of the nation-state both in Spain and in post-colonial America."²³

Destinations and Motivations

As with most Spanish migrants, Basques' main destinations in America were the urban centers of New Spain and Peru. Their distinct surnames crop up virtually everywhere in Spanish America (though there were Basques with Spanish surnames too). In the 16th century Basques played a prominent role in the exploration and colonization of the north of New Spain, where they founded the province of Nueva Vizcaya and its capital

Durango in the 1560s. Data for the first half of the 18th century shows that New Spain remained their preferred destination, with half of Basque émigrés moving there.²⁴ Another region they headed to in particularly large numbers was 18th-century Venezuela: during the existence of the Royal Guipuzcoan Company of Caracas at least 3,200 of them arrived there, mostly from Guipúzcoa.²⁵ Peru, more specifically Lima, also remained an important destination: it appears that, in the first six decades of the 18th century, nearly 30 percent of the *limeño* peninsular elite were Basques, with northerners (from Asturias, Cantabria, La Rioja, and the Basque Country) accounting for 53.6 percent.²⁶ Further to the south, in Chile and the Buenos Aires area, Basques were also very prominent, particularly after the creation of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata in 1776.

Transatlantic migration was motivated by both push and pull factors. Statistical data that could help to measure their evolution are very hard to come by. It appears that push factors were more prevalent in the 16th and 17th centuries, although both the costly transoceanic journey and the lack of a Spanish equivalent to British indentured servitude (which would have facilitated emigration for those of more modest origins) meant that the majority of the emigrants were of a middling sort. In contrast, the economic expansion of the 18th century suggests that pull factors gained in importance.²⁷ On the relatively few occasions when Basque migrants declared what had prompted their departure, the reason most commonly reported was that they had been called by a relative (usually an uncle or a brother) already established in the New World. In fact, successful migrants often sent money back from America to their families in their hometown, hard cash that was used, among other things, to assist relatives, redeem debts, buy properties, provide dowries, donate to the local church, and of course cover the cost of the transatlantic passage for young émigrés. The second most common reason reported upon departure was that they were leaving to seek their fortune. A third group of motivations consisted of push factors such as unemployment, poverty of the land, debts, the need to assist older family members, and a large family.²⁸ It seems reasonable to assume that in most cases it was a combination of factors that led Basques to leave the country. The typical pattern of emigration would include the impartible inheritance system as the push factor and the call of an uncle established in America as the pull factor.

At the American end historians confirm the prevalence throughout the 18th century of the pattern of recruitment and integration of young peninsular northerners.²⁹ Indeed, once established in the New World, Basques, just like other diasporic communities, tended to encourage further migration from their hometown. Inevitably this process left its imprint on the mentality of the migrants, who saw themselves as part of an intergenerational chain, an idea that is brilliantly condensed in a sentence from a 1779 letter sent by a wealthy Basque merchant long established in Lima to a *paisano* resident in Cádiz. Juan Bautista de Gárate, the Lima merchant, explained that his decision to send his nephews from the Navarrese valley of Baztán to Cádiz was “intended to help some

of them to leave the valley so that they can follow in our footsteps and help those that will come after them.”³⁰ It must be said, in addition, that there were successful émigrés, the so-called *indianos*, who chose to return to their hometown after a long stay in America, but unfortunately the extent of that important phenomenon is also difficult to quantify.³¹ Returning *indianos* not only brought wealth, contacts, and useful information about the colonies to their hometown; they also set an example that local families tried to imitate by sending their offspring to the New World.³²

Merchants, Miners, and More

The historiography on Basques in America provides a myriad of biographies of notable emigrants who, for one reason or another, left their mark on the New World. Some of them, particularly from the 16th century onward, are well known, such as Juan de Zumárraga (1468–1548), the first bishop of Mexico; Cristóbal de Oñate (1504–1567), an explorer, conquistador, and colonial official who founded the city of Guadalajara in 1531; Juan de Garay (1528–1583), a founder of cities in the Paraná River area, including (the second founding of) Buenos Aires in 1580; Lope de Aguirre (1510–1561), the conquistador who famously styled himself as the “Wrath of God” and rebelled against King Philip II by declaring an independent kingdom of Peru while descending the Amazon River; Andrés de Urdaneta (1498–1568), an explorer, circumnavigator, and friar who discovered a sea route from the Philippines to Acapulco in 1565; and Catalina de Erauso (1592–1650), also known as the Lieutenant Nun, whose autobiography is a sensational account of a cross-dressing novice who joined the army and fought in Spain’s colonial wars.³³ Nevertheless, despite Basques’ achievements, before 1600 it was the Andalusians and the Extremadurans who had a larger share of explorers, conquistadors, missionaries, and emigrants than those from any other Spanish region, at least according to Boyd- Bowman’s data.³⁴ If there was an occupation in which Basques stood out in the 16th century (and beyond), it was seafaring. In fact, they played an important role as “the nursery of Spanish seamen.”³⁵ They also showed a great inclination for commerce, an activity closely connected to navigation, although their participation in colonial trade would intensify in the 17th century.

Basque merchants were familiar with southern Spain long before 1492. A good number had established themselves in Seville and Cádiz, where typically they traded Basque iron in exchange for local wheat and olive oil. Apart from the iron trade, their presence revolved around another important economic activity in which, by all contemporary accounts, they excelled: maritime transport, linking the Mediterranean and northern Iberian markets. So, after the discovery of the New World, Basque skippers, ship owners, shipbuilders, and iron merchants found themselves in an excellent position to take advantage of the new economic opportunities that were presented to them. That no deposits of iron ore were found in America, and no other Spanish region was able to

produce iron in similar quantities, only magnified those opportunities. The export of Basque iron to America, which was legally protected from foreign competition, would thrive in the 16th century, collapse in the 17th, recover after the 1690s, and, after various milder ups and downs, collapse again after 1796.³⁶

By the 17th century, and despite the profound crisis affecting the Basque iron industry at the time, the number of Basque merchants established in Seville, Cádiz, and the main colonial cities increased significantly. They traded in all sorts of goods and were involved in diverse commercial as well as financial activities. After the 1640s, their names began to appear among the members and directors of important institutions such as the Seville *consulado* (the merchant guild founded in 1544 whose members had exclusive access to trade with the colonies; it was moved to Cádiz in 1717), the *Casa de la Contratación* (or House of Trade, the institution created in 1503 for regulating and overseeing private commerce and navigation to the New World), and even the *Consejo de Indias* (the most important administrative organ of the Spanish Empire). The Mexico City and Lima merchant guilds also bore witness to the ascendancy of Basques, although by the 18th century other northerners, particularly the Cantabrians, grew in numbers too. In the Mexico City *consulado* the increasing predominance of Iberian northerners was formally institutionalized in 1742, when the viceroy imposed a biennial alternation of major offices between the *vizcaíno* (Basque) and *montañés* (Cantabrian) factions in order to put an end to the ongoing quarrels between the two communities.

The control exerted by northerners over colonial trade was a distinct feature of the long 18th century. By 1792, two-thirds of the approximately 10,000 *peninsulares* living in New Spain (merely 2 percent of the total population) came from the northern valleys of Spain, and nearly half of them were devoted to commerce.³⁷ This pattern was replicated in practically every colonial urban center of some commercial significance, from Mexico City to Buenos Aires, from Manila to Havana. In fact, from 1765 to 1824, nearly 32 percent of the 491 Basque émigrés (a small sample that is probably biased toward the middle-upper tiers) who declared their profession upon leaving for America said that they were merchants; another 62.7 percent declared that they were *criados*, or servants (although many of them would work for some merchant house in the colonies); and the remaining 5.5 percent attested that they were either bureaucrats, members of the Church, or members of the military.³⁸ The fact that in the 18th century peninsular northerners' relative contribution to the merchant elite was above their, by then, large share of Spanish immigration poses the question as to why that was so. That most of them started off as apprentices and employees makes it even more striking. The answer seems to lie in the fact that northerners benefitted from greater human capital (i.e., higher literacy rates) and robust transatlantic connections (they were also numerous in Cádiz and Madrid), although historians disagree on which of those factors was more decisive.³⁹

Silver mining was another economic activity in which Basques were prominent. In Zacatecas, which was founded by three Basques and a Castilian, they were not numerically preponderant in the 16th and 17th centuries, though some Basque families did become especially influential.⁴⁰ By the second half of the 18th century their presence as miners and refiners had increased significantly.⁴¹ Basques also had a significant presence in the South American mines, particularly in Potosí, where they arrived, as did many other Spaniards, following the discovery of rich silver deposits in Cerro Rico in 1545. In the 17th century they became the most powerful ethnic minority in Potosí. As for the reasons that lay behind their close connection to mining activities, two stand out. On the one hand many Basques had become familiar with both iron mining and ironmaking back in their hometowns, learning useful skills that were not so readily available to other Spaniards. On the other, the Spanish American silver mines consumed a large quantity of imported iron and steel, which was provided by Basque merchants and their transatlantic networks.

Although they played a pivotal role in the Spanish Atlantic trade and beyond, to describe Basques' geographical dispersion merely as a trade diaspora would be somewhat simplistic.⁴² It was more than that. Basques enjoyed legal privileges that potentially gave them access to all social strata and all sorts of positions, whether in government, the military, or the Church. Unlike other renowned early modern Atlantic diaspora groups such as Sephardic Jews and Huguenots—diasporas that were the result of social exclusion and persecution, and where a lack of other opportunities meant those groups were fully devoted to commercial and financial activities—Basque merchants had access to official positions and power, either directly or through some relative or *paisano*. Together they all formed a diasporic community.

Basque Associations and Ethnic Solidarity

Family was the primary sphere of solidarity and trust for Basques, as for other Atlantic diaspora groups, but the classic features attributed to diasporic communities also played an important role in bringing Basques closer together. “All diasporic communities settled outside their natal (or imagined natal) territories,” writes Robin Cohen, “acknowledge that ‘the old country’—a notion often buried deep in language, religion, custom or folklore—always has some claim on their loyalty and emotions,” and that adherence to their community is “demonstrated by an acceptance of an inescapable link with their past migration history and a sense of co-ethnicity with others of a similar background.”⁴³ Moreover, distance seems to have cemented rather than weakened the cohesiveness of diasporic communities. Basques would have subscribed to Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert's words about maritime trading diasporas in the Atlantic: “The experience of departure, dispersion, and movement, which threatened to stretch the ties of community past the breaking point, instead motivated an intensification of collective relations.”⁴⁴ The

historiography provides plenty of examples, but perhaps the quote most often used by historians to demonstrate Basques' ethnic solidarity is a passage from *Cartas marruecas* (Moroccan letters), the 1793 epistolary novel published posthumously by Colonel José de Cadalso, the Cádiz-born son of a Basque merchant and one of the canonical authors of Spanish Enlightenment literature. Referring to "all those who speak the Basque language," i.e., the inhabitants of "the Lordship of Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa, Álava, and the Kingdom of Navarra," which some people called "the united provinces of Spain," Cadalso wrote that "when a Basque is absent from his country, in a sense he returns to it when he meets his *paisanos*. They have such unity between them that the best recommendation one may have for another is the mere fact of being Basque."⁴⁵ Naturally the bonds between people of the same town or valley were even stronger, as shown by the example of the most thoroughly studied Basque valley, that of Baztán in Navarra.⁴⁶ Along with ethnic solidarity, there was also fierce competition between Basques, particularly between merchants, a fact that is often overlooked in the historiography.

Basque solidarity translated into the creation of several religious congregations and confraternities scattered across the Spanish Empire, although those created in Spain did not always include Basques from the four peninsular territories. For instance, Vizcayans and Guipuzcoans resident in Seville created the *Cofradía de la Nación Vascongada* in 1540, which did not include Basques from Navarra and Álava. In Madrid the Navarrese had their own congregation, the *Real Congregación de San Fermín de lo Navarros* (f. 1683), whereas the natives of the other territories gathered in the *Real Congregación de San Ignacio de Loyola* (f. 1684). In Cádiz and Spanish America, their religious associations included natives from the four territories. In Cádiz they founded the *Cofradía del Cristo de la Humildad y Paciencia* in 1626, located in the Church of San Agustín. In New Spain, Peru, and elsewhere their associations were typically named after *Nuestra Señora de Aránzazu* (Our Lady of Aránzazu, or Arantzazu). That of Lima was founded in 1612, and that of Mexico City in 1681. The members of the latter would construct the Royal College of Saint Ignatius of Loyola (popularly known as *Colegio de las Vizcainas*) in Mexico City in the mid-18th century, spending over half a million pesos on the project. Its aim was to provide education for orphan girls and destitute widows. The Basque congregations were created for religious worship (always in connection with one of their preferred religious orders: the Franciscans, the Augustinians, or the Jesuits) and for helping *paisanos* in need of assistance. Gradually they came to form a veritable Atlantic network, playing an important part in conveying economic and political aspirations, both collective and individual.⁴⁷

Basques' strong sense of community occasionally brought about frictions and clashes with other regional peninsular groups. In most cases there was no physical violence, but there were notable instances where things got out of hand. The best known conflict between Basques and other Spaniards, which would escalate into a severe outburst of

violence, occurred in the mining city of Potosí (in modern Bolivia) from 1622 to 1625, against a backdrop of slowly declining silver production. The presence of a large number of young immigrants from Spain intensified competition among miners. The Basques were seen as a close-knit, thriving community of 100 to 150 people who, driven by their sense of *hidalguía*, purity of blood, and ethnic solidarity, occupied numerous official positions and used them to their own advantage. This caused much resentment among Andalusians, Extremadurans, and other Spaniards, who formed a large heterogeneous group called the *vicuñas*. Historians describe the incidents in Potosí as “the *vicuñas*’ war against the Basques.” The conflict led to at least sixty murders and forty executions, and left many more injured.⁴⁸ The climate of rivalry between regional peninsular communities lingered in the Peruvian mining areas for decades. Another violent outburst against the Basques occurred in the silver mines of Lacaicota (near Puno, in modern Peru) in 1668.

Along with the emphasis on the cohesiveness of the group, it is also important to bear in mind that the Basque diaspora was primarily made up of men, a large percentage of whom would end up marrying Creole women. Naturally, this facilitated their integration into colonial society, but it also raises important questions about the Basqueness of their descendants. Did they consider themselves Basques? It appears that they did. They certainly joined the congregations and confraternities of their fathers, kept close links with their relatives back in the Basque Country, and were very careful to document their genealogies in order to preserve their ancestors’ *hidalguía* within the family. Other important elements of the Basque culture, particularly the language, were not retained by the second generation. Thus, their Basqueness, as well as that of their Iberian-born fathers, is probably better understood in the light of Stuart Hall’s view of cultural identity, which recognizes that “as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute ‘what we really are’; or rather—since history has intervened—‘what we have become.’”⁴⁹ That view, which is not defined by essence or purity, but by heterogeneity and diversity, or by hybridity, offers a more flexible approach to the Basque diaspora experience.

In the 18th century there were two other Basque associations with strong Atlantic connections that had less to do with ethnicity and religion and more with the economy. They were the Royal Guipuzcoan Company of Caracas, known as the *Guipuzcoana*, and the *Real Sociedad Bascongada de los Amigos del País* (the Royal Basque Society of Friends of the Country), known as the *Bascongada*. The *Guipuzcoana* was a joint-stock company chartered by the Spanish crown in 1728. It was founded by a group of wealthy Basques from the province of Guipúzcoa, who became its main shareholders along with the king. The company operated from San Sebastián and Pasajes and was authorized to trade directly with La Guaira (near Caracas) and Puerto Cabello, although ships sailing back from the Venezuelan coast first had to stop and pay duties at Cádiz before returning to San Sebastián. After the success of the initial voyages, the company obtained a monopoly

of trade to Venezuela in 1742. The *Guipuzcoana* encouraged the production of crops such as cacao, tobacco, and cotton, and constructed both war and merchant ships, while its private army helped to defend the Venezuelan coast. The vast majority of its hundreds of employees came from the provinces of Guipúzcoa and Navarra. The company's authoritarian methods and strict control over prices resulted in a revolt among the Creole population of Venezuela in 1749. The confrontation, which took three years to put down, had a strong ethnic element. The company was financially successful for most of its existence, but its charter proved incompatible with the 1778 imperial free trade regulations and was finally terminated in 1784.⁵⁰

As for the *Bascongada*, or Basque Economic Society, it was founded in the province of Guipúzcoa in 1764 and was the first of its kind in Spain. It was an elitist society whose goal was to encourage the education, wealth, culture, and general progress of the Basque Country. Its motto, *Irurac bat* (the three in one), referred to Vizcaya, Álava, and Guipúzcoa, but not Navarra.⁵¹ The society was primarily concerned with the Basque economy, but its membership included Basques (including a good number of Navarrese) who were scattered around the Atlantic world. At its peak, in 1788, it had 1,300 members. Of them, 171 lived in Mexico City, 102 in Lima, 27 in Havana, 109 in Madrid, 40 in Cádiz, and 40 in Seville. The *Bascongada* suspended its activities in 1808, following Napoleon's invasion of Spain, only to be re-founded in the late 19th century.

Discussion of the Literature

Because in the early modern period the Basque country was divided into seven territories that were under the sway of three monarchies (two after 1512), its history has seldom been part of a single narrative. In the case of the Iberian Basque territories, the Kingdom of Navarra (it shared a monarch with Castile after 1512) has its own historiography, while the other three, the so-called *vascongadas*, have theirs. Basque immigrants in colonial Latin America felt themselves to be, and behaved as, a single community. This is a fact too often overlooked by historians.

Until the 1970s, the historiography of the Basque diaspora in colonial Latin America concentrated chiefly on the achievements of Basque conquistadors and explorers, emphasizing heroic feats while ignoring the darker aspects of conquest. An important work of the first half of the 20th century was Segundo de Ispizua's six-volume *Historia de los vascos en el descubrimiento, conquista y civilización de América*.⁵² The Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) brought about a new Basque diaspora, this one motivated by political reasons. For three decades the most interesting research on the Basques in colonial Latin America would be published on the American continent itself, written by exiled Basque historians or their descendants. A good example from this period is Jon Bilbao's *Vascos en Cuba, 1492–1511*.⁵³ Meanwhile, in Spain, two books were published that would have a

great influence on the next generation of Basque and Spanish historians. They were Julio Caro Baroja's *La hora navarra del XVIII: Personas, familias, negocios e ideas*⁵⁴ and Alfonso Otazu Llana's *Hacendistas navarros en Indias*.⁵⁵ The former does not deal with Latin America; instead its significance lies in its having been the first to draw attention to the growing presence of Navarrese people (and other Basques) in the upper economic and political echelons of the Spanish Empire during the 18th century.

A major historiographical landmark was the publication of *Amerikanuak: Basques in the New World*, co-authored by William A. Douglass and Jon Bilbao.⁵⁶ It was published by the Center for Basque Studies of the University of Nevada, Reno, an institution that was founded in 1967. Most of the book is devoted to Basque emigration to America in the 19th and 20th centuries, with special emphasis on their presence in California, Oregon, Nevada, and Idaho, but four decades later the chapter on Basques in colonial Latin America still provides a useful, coherent overview.

In the 1980s, young historians working in the newly created public universities of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) and Navarra (Universidad Pública de Navarra), and in older institutions such as the University of Deusto (Bilbao) and University of Navarra (Pamplona), set in motion a historiographical renewal. The aspects that have been explored in this article began to be analyzed with more scholarly rigor. Along with the Basque universities, the contribution of the scholars working at the Center for Basque Studies of the University of Nevada, Reno, also deserve special mention. In 1992, as part of the collection of history books that were published by the Fundación Mapfre to commemorate the five-hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America, two important works on Basques and America were published. They are *Navarra y América*, coordinated by José Andrés-Gallegos,⁵⁷ and *Vascongadas y América*, by Estíbaliz Ruiz de Azúa.⁵⁸ As with most publications on the subject, they cover five centuries of Basque emigration to America. Unfortunately, there is a conspicuous lack of books offering a general view of the early modern period. One notable exception is Alfonso Otazu and José Ramón Díaz de Durana's *El espíritu emprendedor de los vascos*.⁵⁹ Another book that deserves special mention is Juan Javier Pescador's *The New World Inside a Basque Village: The Oiartzun Valley and Its Atlantic Emigrants, 1550–1800*,⁶⁰ a well-written, highly readable example of what a microhistorical approach combined with the Atlantic history paradigm can offer to the study of the early modern Basque diaspora.

Primary Sources

In 1989 the National System of Basque Archives, Irargi, began to compile archival references related to the history of both the Basque people and the three provinces that make up the Autonomous Community, was created in 1979, of the Basque Country (namely Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa, and Araba) outside its territory. The references collected are

concerned with a wide range of political, economic, social, and cultural aspects from the 13th to 19th centuries. In 1998 this database, called Badator, was made available online. By then it contained not only references to documents held in Spanish archives but also material from a large number of Basque archives, including several private collections. Currently it provides access to 550,000 document references and is part of Dokuklik, a website that hosts three important databases on Basque history: Badator, Basque Catholic Church records (which provides online access to all registrations of baptisms, marriages, and deaths from 1500 to 1900, with a total of 5.6 million entries), and the Salazar and Castro Collection (genealogies compiled in the 18th century, with 60,000 descriptive entries). Badator contains abundant information on the Basque diaspora and its impact on the Basque Country. An increasing number of its documents are also available in digital form.

As for Navarra, the Navarra Archivos website provides information on the main repositories of the kingdom. The Archivo Real y General de Navarra has the most substantial holdings, including notarial sources and private collections.

In Spain, the Archivo General de Indias is the most important repository providing primary sources on Basques established in Seville, Cádiz, and Spanish America. Its catalogue is available on the Portal de Archivos Españoles (PARES). In Latin America the archives that hold sources regarding Basque immigrants are too numerous to be cited, although the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico, Peru, Argentina and Colombia are good places to start. In the United States the Jon Bilbao Basque Library at the University of Nevada, Reno, which is the leading library on Basque topics anywhere outside the Basque Country, holds interesting archival material, although most of it dates from the 19th and 20th centuries. In the United Kingdom the archive of the High Court of Admiralty in the National Archives, London, contains a huge number of documents seized by the British navy. These documents were on board hundreds of Spanish ships captured by the British during the wars of the 18th and early 19th centuries. Thousands of letters and other documents sent from Spanish America to the metropole are currently being properly catalogued for the first time, including the correspondence of Basques and other Spanish emigrants (particularly merchants).

As for printed material, there are three Basque websites that give digitized access to old books. These are Liburuklik (the Basque Digital Library), Hedatuz (the repository of the Society for Basque Studies), and the digital library of the Fundación Sancho el Sabio. Other key sources for finding digitized texts are Google Books and Internet Archive.

Links to Digital Material

[Dokuklik: Archives of Basque History](#)

[Navarra Archivos](#)

[PARES: Portal de Archivos Españoles](#)

[Liburuklik: Basque Digital Library](#)

[Hedatuz: Repository of the Society for Basque Studies](#)

[Fundación Sancho el Sabio's digital library](#)

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Notes:

- (1.) Navarra was an independent kingdom until it was invaded by Ferdinand the Catholic's Castilian and Aragonese troops in 1512. The monarchs of Navarra withdrew to the north of the Pyrenees, effectively splitting the kingdom into two regions: (Upper) Navarra and Lower, or Basse, Navarre.
- (2.) In their modern Basque spelling, the seven territories are known as Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa, Araba, Nafarroa, Lapurdi, Nafarroa Behera, and Zuberoa. In this article the Spanish and French forms, the forms appearing in the primary sources, will be used.
- (3.) Jordi Nadal, *La población española, siglos XVI a XX* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1984).
- (4.) Nadal, *La población española*; and Emiliano Fernández de Pinedo, *Crecimiento económico y transformaciones sociales del País Vasco, 1100–1850* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1974).
- (5.) Rafael Uriarte Ayo, *Estructura, desarrollo y crisis de la siderurgia tradicional vizcaína, 1700–1840* (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 1988).
- (6.) Álvaro Aragón Ruano, “Guided Pollards and the Basque Woodland during the Early Modern Age,” in *Cultural Severance and the Environment*, ed. I. D. Rotherham (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer, 2013), 147–160.
- (7.) Alfonso Otazu and José Ramón Díaz de Durana, *El espíritu emprendedor de los vascos* (Madrid: Sílex, 2008).
- (8.) John H. Elliott, “Afterward—Atlantic History: A Circumnavigation,” in *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800*, eds. D. Armitage and M. J. Braddick (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 233–249.
- (9.) For the global history perspective see Patrick O’Brien, “Historiographical Traditions and Modern Imperatives for the Restoration of Global History,” *Journal of Global History* 1 (2006): 3–39.
- (10.) Juan Javier Pescador, *The New World Inside a Basque Village: The Oiartzun Valley and Its Atlantic Emigrants, 1550–1800* (Reno: University of Nevada, 2004).
- (11.) Hillel Eyal, “Beyond Networks: Transatlantic Immigration and Wealth in Late Colonial Mexico City,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 47.2 (2015): 317–348.
- (12.) Xabier Lamikiz, Manuel Padilla Moyano, and Xarles Videgain, *Othoi çato etchera: Le Dauphin itsasontziko euskarazko gutunak, 1757/Correspondance basque du bateau Le Dauphin, 1757* (Bayonne, France: Centre de Recherches Iker, 2015).

- (13.) José Ramón Díaz de Durana, “Sobre la condición hidalga o pechera del campesinado en el entorno de la Cordillera Cantábrica al final de la Edad Media,” in *La pervivencia del concepto: Nuevas reflexiones sobre la ordenación social del espacio en la Edad Media*, eds. J. A. Sesma Muñoz and C. Laliena Corbera (Zaragoza: Universidad de Zaragoza, 2008), 381–407.
- (14.) Bernd Hausberger, “Limpieza de sangre y construcción étnica de los vascos en el Imperio español,” in *El peso de la sangre: Limpios, mestizos y nobles en el mundo hispánico*, eds. N. Böttcher, B. Hausberger, and M. Hering Torres (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2011), 77–111.
- (15.) Peter Boyd-Bowman, “Patterns of Spanish Emigration to the Indies until 1600,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 66.4 (1976): 580–604.
- (16.) Magnus Mörner, “La emigración española al Nuevo Mundo antes de 1810: Un informe del estado de la investigación,” *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 32 (1975): 43–131.
- (17.) Mörner, “La emigración española”; and Carlos Martínez Shaw, *La emigración española a América, 1492–1824* (Colombres, Spain: Archivo de Indianos, 1994).
- (18.) David E. Brading, “Los españoles en México hacia 1792,” *Historia Mexicana* 23.1 (1973): 126–144.
- (19.) Martínez Shaw, *La emigración española*.
- (20.) Isabelo Macías Domínguez, *La llamada del Nuevo Mundo: La emigración española a América, 1701–1750* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 1999).
- (21.) Rosario Márquez Macías, *La emigración española a América, 1765–1824* (Oviedo, Spain: Universidad de Oviedo, 1995).
- (22.) Macías Domínguez, *La llamada del Nuevo Mundo*.
- (23.) Ultimately, in the post-colonial period “Basques re-elaborated and reconstructed their own sense of identity to accommodate the diverse host-society identities, particularly the national identity.” Fernando Molina and Pedro J. Oiarzabal, “Basque-Atlantic Shores: Ethnicity, the Nation-State and the Diaspora in Europe and America (1808–98),” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32.4 (2009): 698–715.
- (24.) Macías Domínguez, *La llamada del Nuevo Mundo*.
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- (27.) Martínez Shaw, *La emigración española*.
- (28.) José Miguel Aramburu and Jesús María Usunáriz, “De la Navarra de los Austrias a la hora Navarra del XVIII en América,” in *Navarra y América*, eds. J. Andrés-Gallegos et al. (Madrid: Fundación Mapfre, 1992), 19–261.
- (29.) Xabier Lamikiz, *Trade and Trust in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World: Spanish Merchants and Their Overseas Networks* (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell Press, 2010).
- (30.) Lamikiz, *Trade and Trust*.
- (31.) José Miguel Aramburu Zudaire, *Vida y fortuna del emigrante navarro a Indias, siglos XVI y XVII* (Pamplona: Gobierno de Navarra, 1999).
- (32.) José María Imízcoz and Rafael Guerrero, “A escala de Imperio: Familias, carreras y empresas de las élites vascas y navarras en la Monarquía borbónica,” in *Redes familiares y patronazgo: Aproximación al entramado social del País Vasco y Navarra en el Antiguo Régimen, siglos XV-XIX*, ed. J. M. Imízcoz (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 2001), 175–201.
- (33.) The original manuscript of Erauso’s autobiography, entitled *Vida y sucesos de la Monja Alférez doña Catalina de Erauso*, has never been found. The only existing copy is an 18th-century transcription. This has led some historians to question its authenticity. What doesn’t seem to be in doubt is that the text was written during the lifetime of Erauso. See Sonia Pérez-Villanueva, *The Life of Catalina de Erauso, the Lieutenant Nun: An Early Modern Autobiography* (Lanham, MD: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2014).
- (34.) Boyd-Bowman, “Patterns of Spanish Emigration.”
- (35.) John Lynch, *Spain, 1516–1598: From Nation State to World Empire* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 165.
- (36.) Lutgardo García Fuentes, *Sevilla, los vascos y América: las exportaciones de hierro y manufacturas metálicas en los siglos XVI, XVII y XVIII* (Bilbao: Laida, 1991).
- (37.) Brading, “Los españoles en México.”
- (38.) Márquez Macías, *La emigración española*.
- (39.) Hillel Eyal, for instance, argues that “immigrants’ economic mobility and success was determined by who they were, rather than whom they knew.” Eyal, “Beyond Networks,” 319. For a view that emphasizes the importance of whom they knew, see Lamikiz, *Trade and Trust*.
- (40.) Peter J. Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society in Colonial Mexico: Zacatecas, 1546–1700* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

- (41.) David A. Brading, *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico, 1763–1810* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1971).
- (42.) Trade diasporas are “trade communities of merchants living among aliens in associated networks.” Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 3.
- (43.) Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), ix.
- (44.) Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, “*La Nación* among the Nations: Portuguese and Other Maritime Trading Diasporas in the Atlantic, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries,” in *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500–1800*, eds. R. L. Kagan and P. D. Morgan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 75–98.
- (45.) Lamikiz, *Trade and Trust*.
- (46.) José María Imízcoz, “Patronos y mediadores. Redes familiares en la Monarquía y patronazgo en la aldea: la hegemonía de las élites baztanesas en el siglo XVIII,” in *Redes familiares y patronazgo: Aproximación al entramado social del País Vasco y Navarra en el Antiguo Régimen, siglos XV–XIX*, ed. J. M. Imízcoz (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 2001), 225–261.
- (47.) Alberto Angulo Morales, “Tejiendo una red: las asociaciones de naturales y oriundos vascongados en la Monarquía Hispánica (siglos XV–XVIII),” in *Organización, identidad e imagen de las colectividades vascas de la emigración, siglos XVI–XXI*, ed. O. Álvarez Gila (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 2010), 15–32.
- (48.) Bernd Hausberger, “Paisanos, soldados y bandidos: la guerra entre los vicuñas y los vascongados en Potosí (1622–1625),” in *Los buenos, los malos y los feos: poder y resistencia en América Latina*, eds. B. Böttcher, I. Galaor, and B. Hausberger (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2005), 283–308.
- (49.) Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identities and Diaspora,” in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. J. Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 222–237.
- (50.) Montserrat Garate Ojanguren, *La Real Compañía Guipuzcoana de Caracas* (San Sebastián, Spain: Sociedad Guipuzcoana de Ediciones y Publicaciones, 1990).
- (51.) Jesús Astigarraga, *Los ilustrados vascos: Ideas, instituciones y reformas económicas en España* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2003).

- (52.) Segundo de Ispizua, *Historia de los vascos en la descubrimiento, conquista y civilización de América*, 6 vols. (Bilbao: J.A. Lerchundi, 1914–1919).
- (53.) Jon Bilbao, *Vascos en Cuba, 1492–1511* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Vasca Ekin, 1958).
- (54.) Julio Caro Baroja, *La hora navarra del XVIII: Personas, familias, negocios e ideas* (Pamplona: Institución Príncipe de Viana, 1969).
- (55.) Alfonso Otazu Llana, *Hacendistas navarros en Indias* (Bilbao: Ellacuría, 1970).
- (56.) William A. Douglass and Jon Bilbao, *Amerikenuak: Basques in the New World* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1975).
- (57.) Andrés-Gallegos, *Navarra y América*.
- (58.) Azúa, *Vascongadas y América*.
- (59.) Otazu and Ruiz de Díaz de Durana, *El espíritu emprendedor de los vascos*.
- (60.) Pescador, *The New World Inside a Basque Village*.

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