Basque Archive Feature: Classics Series from the Center for Basque Studies, University of Nevada, Reno

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Editor’s note. This is an ongoing series of features to draw attention to the micro and macro of Basque Studies research opportunities. The micro is a distinctive Basque source (e.g., photo, book, article, artifact) while the macro is a Basque archive where this source resides. While there is truth to the notion of Basques being the “mystery people” of Europe because of the lack of historical roots, there is plenty that can be found if we know where to look. Making that job easier—especially for an English speaking audience—is the press at the Center for Basque Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Featured Basque Sources:
Classics Series from the Center for Basque Studies
This collection seeks to provide in English translation key texts and authors in the cultural development of the Basque Country. The series totaling nine volumes at present (Spring 2014) will continue to also publish anthologies and possibly monographs of key near-contemporary scholars of outstanding worth who have made serious contributions to our understanding of Basque history, linguistics and culture.

Featured Basque Archive:
The Press at the Center for Basque Studies
University of Nevada, Reno
The Center for Basque Studies is primarily a research center, with the mission is to conduct and publish Basque-related research. Anthropology, history, women’s studies, cultural studies, literature, bibliography, and lexicography have thus far been their main fields of research, and varied topics including migration, nationalism, women and literature, ethnographies of Basque society, political violence, and the international discourse of terrorism. The press has also produced a Basque/English, English/Basque dictionary.
Thanks to the press at the Center for Basque Studies, all of us can begin to build our own Basque Studies archive starting with these classic works. This collection seeks to provide in English translation of key texts and authors in the cultural development of the Basque Country, that in most cases, have never been made available to an English-speaking audience. Here are the current volumes:

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- **Anthology of Apologists and Detractors of the Basque Language**
  - *Summary:* A thorough introduction is followed by texts from numerous authors presenting arguments on the excellence or inferiority of the Basque language. This anthology attempts to present the most important works of this polemic.

- **Koldo Mitxelena: Selected Writings of a Basque Scholar**
  - *This work brings together a number of texts by Koldo Mitxelena (also known as Luis Michelena), one of the foremost experts on the Basque language, exploring its history and literature. Also included is the text of his unification proposal that, since 1968, has made the written unification of the language possible.*

- **Linguae Vasconum Primitiae**
  - *Bernard Etxepare’s Linguae Vasconum Primitiae, is likely the first book ever printed in the Basque language, in the year of 1545. Written in the Lower Navarrese dialect of Basque, the poems have found enduring fame among the Basques for their celebration of the Basque language.*


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Part travelogue, part ethnography, and part treatise on the intimate relationship between language, history, and identity, the rich prose of Humboldt’s exuberant account transports readers back to the Basque Country on the eve of modernity. His is a first-hand observation of the Basques’ strong sense of national identity as the bedrock of what he viewed as their well-governed and efficient society.

Noted Basque ethnographer José Miguel de Barandiarán was an exceptional witness to an entire century of the history of the Basque Country. An ordained priest, he dedicated most of his life to researching the past of his homeland. His research included excavating caves and dolmens as well as recording the traditional lifeways, legends, and superstitions of the Basque people.

Caro Barojo was a clear proponent of the primacy of cultural differences in human affairs, including their capacity to define distinctive ethnic groups. He rejected the notion, still prevalent in some academic circles of his day, that explanations of human difference derived from inherent racial propensities. His is an expansive exploration of what makes the Basques Basque.

Text sample: Map of dolmens, prehistoric caves, etc in the Basque Country from Selected Writings of Jose Miguel de Barandiaran.
Answering the call by the director of the Basque Museum (Musée Basque) in Baiona to “write a new book about the Basques . . . and to make a portrait of the Basques available to all,” Philippe Veyrin started this book in 1941, one year into the German occupation of the Basque coast. The author sought to explain the Basques and their land and, at every turn, to link the present with the past.

In 1452, Bizkaians assembled beneath their sacred Oak of Gernika and approved a redaction of the laws and customs that had informed their legal practices for centuries. Text provides clear insight into the Bizkaian concept of community and its participation in the elaboration of law, encompassing an extraordinary range of individual and collective liberties, that later observers like John Adams took as a useful model for the new nation of the United States.

Julio Caro Baroja remains one of the central figures of twentieth-century Basque ethnography and anthropology. Here are included his essays on a number of topics relevant to the Basque Country from prehistory through to the 1950’s. Of particular interest are essays about the Basques and the sea, about the role of the house in the culture, and about industrial development in the Basque Country.

Eskerrik asko—Many thanks to our friends at the Center for Basque Studies press!