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The History of the Basques is intertwined with Spanish and French history as well as other European and American countries. Their language, Basque, has a rich cultural heritage with various dialects such as Gascon, Navarro-Aragonese, and Erromintxela. The traditional cuisine includes Pincho, Txoko, and Txakoli, while the symbol of the region is the flag and the coat of arms featuring the Lauburu. The Basques have a distinct identity shaped by their history, culture, and traditions such as Korrika festivals and the Bertsolaritza poetic competition. The mythology of the Basques includes the legend of Olentzero and Saint John's Eve celebrations, showcasing the importance of folk music and dance in their heritage. Their sport, Basque pelota, has gained international recognition, and the region is home to several football teams like Athletic de Bilbao and Real Sociedad. The Basque language has also been recognized as a protected cultural asset by UNESCO. The Hand of Irulegi, an ancient bronze hand discovered in 2021, provides evidence of the Basconic script, which reflects Celtiberian influence, indicating that the Vasconic substrate predates previously estimated timelines. Although the direct ancestry of modern Basques remains uncertain, historical records suggest that they may be connected to the ancient Vascones, who spoke a language closely related to modern Basque. The area where the Basque language has been spoken for centuries is Gascony in France, which shares linguistic and cultural ties with the Basque region. Archaeological evidence suggests continuity of human habitation in the Basque area since the Aurignacian period, with many sites showing signs of uninterrupted occupation from prehistoric times to the Iron Age. Some scholars argue that the presence of ancient words like "aizkora" (axe) and "aizto" (knife), which contain elements reminiscent of the Stone Age, indicates a much deeper history for the Basque language. Genetic studies have also shed light on the origins of the Basques, with high levels of Rh- blood type and specific autosomal components suggesting a long-standing genetic stock that has been minimally influenced by external migrations. However, not all theories are supported, and ongoing research continues to refine our understanding of the Basque people's prehistoric past. About 6,000 years ago, with the rise of agriculture, some theories emerged about Basque origins. The only archaeological evidence supporting this is from the Ebro valley region. Basques are thought to have arrived alongside Indo-Europeans, linked to an unproven linguistic hypothesis connecting Basque and some Caucasian languages. However, even if such a connection existed, it would be too distant in time to relate to Indo-European migrations. Apart from Celtic presence in the Ebro valley during the Urnfield culture, archaeology offers limited support for this theory. The Basque language shows few certain Celtic or other Indo-European loans, except those transmitted via Latin or Romance in historic times. Some theories suggest Basques as an Iberian subgroup, citing occasional use of the Iberian alphabet and Julius Caesar's description of Aquitanians as Iberians. Similarities between undeciphered Iberian language and Basque have also been mentioned, but attempts to decipher Iberian using Basque as a reference have failed. In 2015, a scientific study published findings indicating that Basques are descendants of Neolithic farmers who mixed with local hunters before becoming genetically isolated from the rest of Europe for millennia. The study analyzed genetic material from Stone Age human skeletons found in El Portalón Cavern and showed that early Iberian farmers are the closest ancestors to present-day Basques. The official findings were published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, contradicting previous views that Basques trace their ancestry to Mesolithic hunter-gatherer groups. In the Basque region, various prehistoric cultures flourished, including Gravettian and Solutrean in sites like Bolinkoba and Ermitia, while Amalda and Koskobilo showcased Aurignacian and Solutrean influences. Aitzbitarte cave featured a mix of Aurignacian, Gravettian, Solutrean, and Magdalenian cultures. As the Ice Age drew to a close, Magdalenian culture gave way to Azilian, with hunters shifting focus from large game to smaller prey and exploiting marine resources. The southern Basque area was initially settled during this period, with Neolithic technologies gradually emerging from the Mediterranean coast, introducing pottery and sheepherding. This transition occurred slowly, as seen in Atlantic Europe, with more pronounced Neolithic sites found in the Ebro valley, suggesting possible Mediterranean colonization. In the 4th millennium BC, Megalithic culture spread throughout the area, characterized by collective burials and dolmen structures. The use of metals like copper and gold began around 2500 BCE, marking the emergence of urban settlements, such as La Hoya in southern Álava, which may have served as a trade link between Portugal and Languedoc. Caves continued to be used, especially in the Atlantic region, alongside the development of megalithic structures, which persisted until the Late Bronze Age. The Bell Beaker culture introduced distinctive pottery styles, mainly found around the Ebro Valley. In the Late Bronze Age, parts of the southern Basque Country were influenced by the Cogotas I culture, while in the Iron Age, bearers of the late Urnfield culture brought Hallstatt and Indo-European influences to the region, leading to the development of defensive settlements and a greater emphasis on agriculture. The megalithic structures and menhirs made their appearance in central Álava as part of a reconstruction project at Iruña-Veleia. Upon the Romans' arrival in south-west France, the Pyrenees region, and its surrounding territories up to Cantabria, several tribes inhabited the area, with most being non-Indo-European (the identity of others remains unclear, such as the Caristii). The Vascones showed the closest affinity with modern-day Basques but archaeological evidence suggests that people similar to the Basques extended beyond the Pyrenees and up to the Garonne river. Caesar's writings in De Bello Gallico, Aquitanian inscriptions, and place names all point to this presence. Most of the Aquitanian tribes were subjugated by Crasus, Caesar's lieutenant, in 65 BC, however, before this conquest, the Romans had already reached the upper Ebro region at the beginning of the 2nd century BC on the fringes of the Basque territory (Calagurris and Graccurris). Under Pompey in the 1st century BC, the Romans established a presence in Pompaelo (modern Pamplona or Iruñea) but it wasn't until the time of Emperor Augustus that Roman rule was consolidated. The Romans' laxity suited the Basques well, allowing them to maintain their traditional laws and leadership. Romanisation was more pronounced on the Mediterranean side while the lands closer to the Atlantic coast showed limited influence. The preservation of the distinct Basque language is attributed to the fact that the region remained relatively undeveloped by the Romans. There were significant Roman presence in Pompaelo, a city founded by Pompey and named after him. Further west, the conquest was followed by a fierce campaign against the Cantabri (see Cantabrian Wars). Archaeological remains show garrisons along the Ebro river protecting commercial routes and along a Roman road between Asturica and Burdigala. A unit of Varduli was stationed on Hadrian's Wall in northern Britain for many years, earning the title 'faithful' for their service to the Emperor. The Romans entered into alliances with local tribes, granting them almost complete autonomy within the Empire.[15] Livy mentions a natural division between the Ager and Saltus Vasconum, i.e., between the Ebro basin fields and the mountains to the north.[citation needed] Historians have long argued that Romanisation was significant in the fertile Ager but minimal in the Saltus where Roman towns were scarce. However, recent 21st-century findings question this assumption, highlighting the importance of fishing and mining sectors on the Atlantic coast (fish processing factories, caetariae), as well as other settlements dotting the Atlantic basin. The Bagaudae[17] seem to have had a significant impact on Basque history in late Empire times. In the late 4th century and throughout the 5th century, the Basque region from the Garonne to the Ebro escaped Roman control amidst revolts. Several Roman villas (Liédena and Ramalete) were burned to the ground. The proliferation of mints is interpreted as evidence for an inner limes around Vasconia where coins were minted to pay troops.[18] After the fall of the Empire, the struggle against Rome's Visigoth allies continued. Medieval artifacts at the San Telmo Museum in Ascain (Azkaine) reveal the slow process of Christianization among the Basques. Although early Christians and institutions played a role, the Basques clung to their pagan beliefs for centuries, even influencing Germanic peoples resistant to Carolingian expansion. The Christian poet Prudentius wrote about the town of Calahorra in his work Peristephanon (I) in the 5th century, highlighting its former pagan heritage and the martyrdom that occurred there. The area remained a stronghold of paganism until at least the late 7th century, with the collapse of the Roman Empire contributing to this trend. The rise of Christianity was gradual, with the first bishoprics emerging in the 4th century. However, it wasn't until Charlemagne's policy of colonization and Christianization in Aquitaine and Vasconia that the Basques began to adopt Christianity on a larger scale. Even then, Muslim accounts from the period described the Basques as pagan wizards or magi. It is worth noting that the process of Christianization was slow and complex, with various groups influencing one another over time. The arrival of the Vandals, Alans, and Suevi in 409 AD forced their way into Hispania through the western Pyrenees, leading to a period of turmoil and upheaval that would shape the region's history for centuries to come. Further information on the Duchy of Vasconia can be found elsewhere. The existence of the Vasconias is acknowledged by Hydatius, but he does not link them to the Bagaudae rebels as the Basques. Instead, the Visigoths claimed the region from an early date, yet were unable to subdue it. Sporadic military successes and confrontations with Romano-Gothic troops occurred between 435 and 450. Around the same time, the Suevi under King Rechiar ravaged the Vascones' territories, causing damage to settlements such as Calahorra and Pamplona. The Visigoths attempted to destroy the Suevic kingdom but are believed to have crossed the Pyrenees twice from Aquitaine between 456 and 469. The period following Hydatius' chronicle saw the emergence of the Basques as a "mountain roaming people" posing a threat to urban life. The Franks displaced the Visigoths from Aquitaine, placing the Basques between the two warring kingdoms. In 581, both Franks and Visigoths attacked Vasconia without success. The Franks launched a second attack in 587, which was defeated on the plains of Aquitaine. Despite initial failures, Basque settlement or conquest began north of the Pyrenees. The theory of Basque expansionism has been dismissed, but it is not necessary to understand the region's historic evolution. The Franks and Goths created their respective marches to contain the Basques, with the Duchy of Cantabria in the south and the Duchy of Vasconia in the north. In the 7th century, the Duchy of Vasconia was consolidated as an independent polity ruled by Duke Felix, who established a personal union with the Duchy of Aquitaine. The Basque-Aquitanian realm reached its zenith during Odo the Great's rule, but the Umayyad invasion of 711 and the rise of the Carolingian dynasty posed new threats. The state eventually fell and broke apart due to these challenges. In the aftermath of Odo's death in 735, Vasconia faced repeated bouts of resistance, spearheaded by Hunald (735-744) and his grandson Waifer (+768). The Franks, led by King Pippin, ultimately overran Aquitaine in 762, forcing the Basques to submit on the Garonne River (Fronsac, c. 769). This period saw a notable Basque presence in Aquitaine, stretching from Cantabria to the Loire River (7-8th centuries). The Frankish army then shifted focus to Charlemagne's interests in the Spanish marches, targeting Zaragoza and routing the Basques at the First Battle of Roncevaux (778). However, this setback was short-lived, as the Kingdom of Aquitaine emerged in 781 with direct rule from Charlemagne. The Banu Qasi, a Muslim state founded near Tudela (c. 800), served as a buffer zone between the Basques and the Cordovan Umayyads, bolstering the independent Kingdom of Pamplona after their victory at the Second Battle of Roncevaux. In Álava, the region was ravaged by Asturian and Cordovan forces, while in the west, Basque territory saw the rise of Enecco Arista (c. 824), who asserted his power in Pamplona alongside the Banu Qasi. The Basques managed to repel Frankish rule south of the western Pyrenees, but their allegiance eventually shifted to Christian realms under Sancho I Garces in 905. Meanwhile, Viking incursions ravaged Aquitaine in 844, culminating in the capture of Bayonne and Pamplona (859), with the king Garcia being taken prisoner. It wasn't until 982 that the Basque Duke William II Sanchez of Gascony defeated the Vikings, putting an end to their raids and allowing monasteries to flourish in Gascony. The first of which was the Saint-Sever of Caput Vasconiae, established by William to Pamplona, marking a shift in regional dynamics. By the 10th century, Vasconia (later Gascony) had fragmented into feudal regions like Soule and Labourd, while south of the Pyrenees, kingdoms like Castile, Pamplona, Aragon, Sobrarbe, Ribagorza, and Pallars emerged as major regional powers with Basque populations. Under Sancho III the Great, Pamplona controlled southern Basque Country, extending to Burgos, Santander, and northern Aragon. Through marriage, Sancho became Earl of Castile and held a protectorate over Gascony and León. However, in 1058, Vasconia transformed into Gascony, merging with Aquitaine through personal union under William VIII. William intervened in Peninsular kingdoms' dynastic struggles but Gascony gradually distanced itself from the Basque political sphere as its ethnic make-up shifted towards a more Gascon identity. Following Sancho III's death, Castile and Aragon became separate kingdoms, with Pamplona being absorbed and dwindling to benefit Aragón. The kingdom of Aragón expanded into the Ebro valley, shifting its power base from the Pyrenees to lowlands and urban areas, leading to a decline in Basque language and culture. Romance languages replaced Basque as primary communication tools in many central Pyrenean areas. The kingdom of Navarre was restored under García Ramírez the Restorer in 1157, with subsequent kings Sancho the Wise and Sancho VII asserting authority over Álava, Vitoria-Gasteiz, and other towns. A peace treaty signed in 1179 ceded La Rioja to Castile but acknowledged that central Álava, Biscay, and Gipuzkoa belonged to Navarre. In 1199, while King Sancho VI was away, Castile invaded the western Basque Country, leaving Navarre landlocked, under the reign of Alfonso VIII. The kingdom of Castile initially pledged to return territories like Durangaldea, Gipuzkoa, and Álava to their original owners, but ultimately failed to do so. Instead, the king ratified the Navarrese people's rights and gained their loyalty. The Navarrese were able to maintain a significant degree of autonomy and adhere to their native laws, which was upheld by all subsequent Castilian (and later Spanish) monarchs until the 19th century. In the following decades, the kings of Castile solidified their control over Navarre's borders and secured new trade routes, such as the Tunnel Route, by establishing new towns like Treviño, Agurain, Campezo/Kanpezu, Corres, Contrasta, Segura, Tolosa, Orduña, Mondragon (Arrasate), Bergara, Villafranca, and Artziniega. The Basques played a significant role in early European explorations of the Atlantic Ocean. The earliest recorded use of whale oil or blubber dates back to 670, while whalers from Lapurdi presented the oil of their first catch to the viscount in 1059. Although the Basques themselves did not consume whale meat, they successfully traded it and its byproducts with the French, Castilians, and Flemings. Following the 1199-1201 Castilian conquests, new towns were founded along the coast over the next two centuries. These towns thrived through fishing and maritime trade with northern Europe, as reflected in their coat of arms. The development of water-powered ironworks and shipyards further contributed to the Basque naval effort. Basque whalers used longboats or traineras, rowing near the coastline or from a larger ship. Whaling and cod-fishing are believed to have led to early Basque contact with both the North Sea and Newfoundland. The Basques began fishing and whaling in Labrador and Newfoundland as early as the 16th century. In Europe, the rudder appears to have been a Basque invention, based on depictions of three-masted ships in a 12th-century fresco in Estella (Navarre) and preserved seals in Navarrese and Parisian archives. The first recorded mention of using a rudder was referred to as "à la Navarraise" or "à la Bayonnaise". Magellan's expedition, which departed with 200 sailors, including at least 35 Basques, and saw the ship complete its circumnavigation with only 18 crew members, four of whom were Basques. The Basques mutinied in Christopher Columbus' expedition, a distinctive group that is reported to have set up a makeshift camp on an American island. Early international treaties severely undermined Basque whaling across the northern Atlantic. In 1615, Gipuzkoan whalers frequenting Iceland were massacred (32) by an Icelandic force commanded by Ari Magnusson, acting on orders from the Danish king. The act ordering the killing of Basques was finally revoked in 2015 during a Basque-Icelandic friendship initiative. However, fishing activities in the northern Atlantic persisted until at least the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, when the Spanish Basques were officially stripped of their traditional fishing grounds in northern Europe. The Basque region suffered greatly during the Late Middle Ages due to the War of the Bands, a series of brutal partisan conflicts between local ruling families. In Navarre, these conflicts escalated into a violent struggle between the Agramont and Beaumont parties, while in Biscay, the two main warring factions were known as Oñaz and Gamboa. The local noble families built high defensive structures called dorretxeak, or "tower houses," many of which were destroyed by fire, sometimes by royal decree. King Henry II convened the Parliament of Navarre in Saint-Palais in 1523, requiring all members to have a command of the Basque language. The Basques in the present-day Spanish and French districts of the Basque Country managed to maintain a significant degree of self-governance within their respective districts, effectively functioning as separate nation-states. They retained their home rule after the Kingdom of Castile's civil wars, pledging an oath to claimant Isabella I of Castile in exchange for favorable terms in overseas trade. Their fueros recognized separate laws, taxation, and courts in each district. As the Middle Ages drew to a close, the Basques found themselves sandwiched between two rising superpowers: France and Spain. The majority of the Basque population ended up in Spain, which was divided into multiple regions under the Habsburgs. Initially, there was repression in Navarre against the local nobility and population, but this was followed by a softer policy under Ferdinand II of Aragon and Emperor Charles V. Despite being heavily influenced by its geopolitical situation, the Kingdom of Navarre-Bearn remained independent, with attempts at reunification continuing until 1610. The Protestant Reformation made some inroads into the Basque region, supported by Queen Jeanne d'Albret of Navarre-Bearn, and the printing of books in Basque was introduced in the late 16th century. However, Reformist ideas were subject to intense persecution by the Spanish Inquisition and other institutions, particularly in border areas, due to the uncertain status of Navarre. The Parliament of Navarre in Pamplona repeatedly denounced King Philip II of Spain's breach of his oath-taking ceremony, with tensions coming to a head in 1592 and allegations of discrimination by Castilian abbots arising in 1600. In the early 17th century, Navarrese monks were subjected to trials allegedly for the sake of their nation. The Kingdom's Government viewed the Basques with suspicion, intolerance towards their language and customs, and saw them as a threat to their authority. This led to the Basque witch trials in 1609. The subsequent events were influenced by various factors. France absorbed Lower Navarre in 1620, while Spain maintained its claim over the region through the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659. The treaty established customs that didn't exist before and restricted free movement across borders. In 1660, the authority of the Assembly of Labourd was curtailed by French centralization. However, Labourd retained some autonomy and an independent fiscal system. Meanwhile, whaling, shipbuilding, iron exportation, and trade with northern Europe and North America thrived among the Basques during the 16th century. Their expertise in whaling led to the collapse of Spanish supremacy over the oceans after King Philip II's failed Armada Invencible endeavour in 1588. However, this also created opportunities for privateering, which became a lucrative business for many Basque sailors and seamen. The Vicuñas, formed from a mix of Spanish colonizers and Native Americans between 1620 and 1625, had their own unique identity shaped by this blend. The Basques initially welcomed Philip V, the grandson of King Louis XIV, to the Castile throne in 1700, but his absolutist views clashed with the Basque system of government. The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 and the subsequent suppression of home rule in Aragon and Catalonia further stirred up tensions among the Basques. The Spanish king's attempts to expand his tax base and create a unified market by controlling the Basque trade area only fueled more resentment. The western Basques responded with a series of rebellions, known as matxinadas, that affected 30 coastal towns in Biscay and Gipuzkoa. After crushing these uprisings, King Philip V relented and restored customs duties to the Ebro River. In the aftermath of this turmoil, an expedition led by the Duke of Berwick, backed by the Quadruple Alliance, entered Spanish territory from the west (1719). However, instead of fighting, the Basques of Gipuzkoa, Biscay, and Álava pledged allegiance to French rule on condition that their autonomy be respected. This move ultimately forced King Philip V to abandon his plans for centralized control. A royal pardon in 1726 and the founding of the Royal Guipuzcoan Company of Caracas in 1728 facilitated greater cooperation between Basque regional governments and Madrid officials. The company's success in exporting iron goods and importing products like cacao, tobacco, and hides greatly boosted the economy of the Basque districts. As a result, trade flourished, with merchandise imported into Spain facing no duties on customs. This prosperity led to an increase in building activity and the establishment of institutions such as the Royal Basque Society, dedicated to promoting science and the arts. Despite these successes, emigration to America continued, with many prominent Basques playing key roles in California's early development. However, by the end of the 18th century, the Basques faced new challenges: the decline of their traditional trade with America, the exhaustion of forests needed for ironworks, and the collapse of the Guipuzcoan Company's monopoly on American trade. Despite these setbacks, they maintained a vibrant internal market and continued to trade extensively with France. The estimated proportion of Basque people in France was 37.2%, with the majority residing in other Basque districts. In contrast, the Spanish heartland had only 0.5% Basque population. The French customs exactions imposed over the Ebro region favoured a more European orientation and encouraged innovative ideas, which were labelled as "un-Spanish" by many in Spain. The circulation of these ideas intensified cross-Pyrenean contacts among Basque scholars and public personalities, increasing awareness of a common identity beyond district-specific practices. This led to further information about the end of Basque home rule in France, the Battle of Nivelle, and the destruction of Donostia in 1813. The French Revolution's centralized government abolished regional powers recognized by the ancien régime, leading to the dissolution of the Basque identity into a new French nation. The period of the French Convention (1793-1795) saw indiscriminate mass deportation of civilians, confiscations, and hundreds of deaths in Labourd. Despite its 'fraternal' intent, the intervention of the French Revolution destroyed a highly participatory political culture based on provincial assemblies. The Southern Basque Country was mired in disputes with the royal Spanish authority, leading to talks deadlocking over Manuel Godoy's accession to office. The central government enforced decisions single-handedly, disenfranchising the different Basque autonomous governments. During the War of the Pyrenees and the Peninsular War, the threat to self-government was critical for war events and alliances. However, the liberal class supporting self-government was quelled by Spanish authorities following the War of the Pyrenees. The Zamacolada uprising in Bilbao was violently suppressed by the Spanish military in 1804. The Spanish government attempted to discredit Basque sources of self-government with a commissioned work, but native scholars contested it with their own works. The Basque people's dissatisfaction in Bayonne led to a project for establishing a Basque principality, which was not implemented in the 1808 Bayonne Statute but acknowledged different identities within the Crown of Spain. The Peninsular War created two short-lived civil constituencies: Biscay and Navarre, with other territories to the north of the Ebro. The First Carlist War's conclusion marked the end of Basque home rule in Spain. The Embrace of Bergara in 1839 signaled the final act of this conflict. The construction of a railway bridge designed by Eiffel's company over Ormaiztegi, Tomas de Zumalacarregui's hometown, reflected the country's political landscape in 1854 after the war. Jose Maria Iparragirre, a Carlist volunteer and bard, had fled to America as an exile. The Basques feared losing their self-government (fueros) under modern liberal Spanish laws, prompting them to join the traditionalist army led by Tomas de Zumalacarregui. The opposing Isabeline Army received vital support from British, French, and Portuguese forces, along with government backing. However, the Carlist ideology did not prioritize Basque institutions, traditions, or identity but instead focused on royal absolutism and the Church. The Carlists presented themselves as true Spaniards, contributing to the centralizing drive. After Tomas Zumalacarregui's death during the Siege of Bilbao in 1835, the First Carlist War began to turn against the Carlists. This shift widened the gap between the Apostolic (official) and pro-fueros parties within the Carlist camp. J.A. Muñagorri led a faction advocating for separation from claimant Carlos de Borbón under the banner "Peace and Fueros." The dissatisfaction culminated in the 1839 Embrace of Bergara and the subsequent Act for the Confirmation of the Fueros, which included a promise to respect a reduced version of Basque self-government. The pro-fueros liberals strong in war-torn Pamplona confirmed these arrangements but signed the separate 1841 "Compromise Act" (Ley Paccionada), effectively ending Navarre's kingdom status and turning it into a Spanish province. The dismantling of the native political system had severe consequences, including widespread poverty, family struggles to survive, and large-scale emigration to America. The French Civil Code enforcement in the continental Basque region deprived many families of their customary common lands and led to cross-border smuggling. Many Basques followed the first one who left for a better life. This movement continued over several decades, with people setting out from Basque ports like Santander and Bordeaux. Even famous figures like Jose Maria Iparragirre, who wrote the Gernikako Arbola which is considered the national anthem of the Basques, joined this wave of migration. In 1844, the Civil Guard was established to promote a centralized Spanish state, especially in rural areas. The education system also played a role by promoting the use of Castilian language from 1856 onwards. The economy in the French Basque region was struggling due to wars and disruptions in trade since 1793. However, some industries like mining and salt extraction continued to operate on a small scale. Bayonne remained an important trading hub, while Biarritz became a popular tourist destination for the elite. The provinces of Álava and Navarre saw little economic growth during this period. The introduction of Bessemer blast furnaces in 1855 marked a significant turning point in the development of heavy industry, particularly in the Bilbao area. This was followed by further liberalization of iron ore exports and the construction of mining railways in 1863. The arrival of foreign investors, combined with domestic demand for iron ore, led to rapid industrial growth. The transfer of customs borders from within Basque Country to the Spanish-French border helped integrate Spain's Basque regions into a new market that favoured local industry. Railway expansion had a profound impact on society and economy, both positively and negatively. Industry also developed in Gipuzkoa but at a slower pace and with a focus on metallic manufacturing. The Southern Basque Country's autonomy was redefined following the instability of the First Spanish Republic (1868) and the struggle for royal succession in Madrid. By 1873, the Carlists had solidified their position in Navarre and expanded their control over the region, establishing a de facto Basque state with its capital in Estella-Lizarra. The Carlist government introduced its own judiciary system, currency, and stamps, but failed to capture the four capitals, leading to attrition and a decline in military strength by 1875. Meanwhile, other regions of Spain, such as Castile and Catalonia, also saw setbacks for the Carlists, contributing to King Alfonso XII's eventual victory. The Spanish army regained control over Irun and Estella-Lizarra by February 1876. In response, Prime Minister Canovas del Castillo issued the "Act for the Abolition of the Basque Charters," which abolished the region's autonomy and assimilated it into the Spanish provinces. This move sparked discontent among traditionalists, leading to two counter-movements: the Carlists and the Basque nationalists. The former emphasized Catholicism and absolutism, while the latter advocated for a mix of Catholicism and regional identity. Despite initial differences, both movements coalesced around the shared goal of preserving regional rights. The export of high-quality iron ore from the Basque Country to Britain during this period contributed to the local economy's growth, fueling an "industrial revolution" that spread across Spain. The region's entrepreneurs reinvested their profits in the steel industry, which helped stimulate economic development and paved the way for future industrial expansion in Bilbao and beyond. As industrialization took off in Gipuzkoa, blast furnaces and heavier mining required large numbers of workers, initially drawn from nearby regions but eventually drawing immigrants from impoverished areas like Galicia and Andalusia. This influx of foreigners brought different languages and cultures to the Basque Country, a region that had previously been a source of emigrants itself. Most newcomers spoke Spanish and were poor. The arrival of the French railway in 1864 connected Madrid and Paris, facilitating trade and tourism. San Sebastián became a popular summer destination for the Spanish elite, with pelota courts opening in Madrid as well. However, this influx also brought administration officials who were often hostile to Basque culture. In response, efforts emerged to promote and preserve Basque heritage. Meanwhile, the end of the 19th century saw the rise of socialism, anarchism, and nationalism, with the birth of Basque nationalism and the founding of the Basque Nationalist Party in 1895. The PNV pursued independence or self-government for a Basque state, combining Christian-Democratic ideas with anti-immigrant sentiment. Industrialization continued to grow across the Atlantic basin during World War I, with Spain remaining neutral. Thanks to the demand for the European war effort, Basque gunsmiths were able to flourish into a handgun making industry. They produced tens of thousands of pistols, including proprietary designs and variants of the Colt 1903 Pocket Hammerless, which were hand fitted to cause problems with magazine compatibility. The end of the European war in 1918 led to the decline and transformation of the Basque industry. In the French Basque Country, many inhabitants were drafted into the French war effort, resulting in heavy losses for the Basques, including 6,000 deaths. This also spurred the penetration of French nationalist ideas into Basque territory. In 1931, an attempt was made to draw up a single statute for the Basque territories in Spain, but it was met with controversy and eventually abandoned. The Basque nationalists continued working on a new statute, which was approved in 1936 for the western provinces of Álava, Gipuzkoa, and Biscay. During the Spanish Civil War, Basque nationalists in some regions sided with the Republicans, while others supported General Franco's Nationalist forces. Navarre, a stronghold of the Carlist movement, was particularly affected by the conflict, with many victims killed or imprisoned due to the terror campaign launched by the rebels. The figure rises to nearly 4,000 with memory associations. Another infamous atrocity from this war was the April 1937 aerial bombing of Gernika, a town of great historical and symbolic importance in the Biscayne region, carried out by Adolf Hitler's Condor Legion and Benito Mussolini's Aviazione Legionaria at Franco's behest. In August 1937, the Eusko Gudarostea, the troops of the new government of the Basque Autonomous Community, surrendered to Franco's fascist Italian allies in Santoña on condition that the lives of the Basque soldiers were respected (Santoña Agreement). The Basques fled for their lives by the tens of thousands, including a mass evacuation of children aboard chartered boats into permanent exile. France took approximately 20,000 children, Belgium 5,000, United Kingdom 4,000, Switzerland 800, Mexico 455, and Denmark 100 evacuee children. Additionally, 2,895 children went to the Soviet Union, becoming known as Niños de Rusia (Children of Russia), and became political pawns over the next 20 years. After the Spanish Civil War, the new dictator began his drive to turn Spain into a totalitarian nation state. Franco's regime passed harsh laws against all minorities in the Spanish state, including Basques, aimed at wiping out their cultures and languages. Calling Biscay and Gipuzkoa "traitor provinces," he abolished what remained of their autonomy. The French Basque Country became a forced destination for fellow Basques from Spain fleeing war, only to find themselves confined in prisoner camps. Francisco Franco spent his summers between 1941 and 1975 at the Ayete Palace in San Sebastián. The years leading up to Franco's death saw unrest, repression, and turmoil in the Basque Country, prompting two main stances: break or compromise. ETA opted for confrontation, while PNV and Spanish socialists negotiated with the Francoist regime. In 1978, a general pardon was granted for political offenses, affecting Basque nationalist activists like ETA militants. The same year saw a referendum on the Spanish Constitution, with electoral platforms closer to ETA advocating for a "No" option. In contrast, PNV called for abstention due to lack of Basque input. The 1970s and early/mid-1980s were marked by intense violence between Basque nationalist groups and state-sponsored forces. However, the central government granted autonomy to Álava, Biscay, and Gipuzkoa after a referendum on a Basque statute, while Navarre was left out. Despite challenges, the Basque language education grew in importance, becoming a key actor in formal education at all levels. The political events were accompanied by the decline of the manufacturing industry in the Southern Basque Country following crises in 1973 and 1979. The crisis led to the end of the baby boom and halted internal Spanish immigration trends started after World War II. The newly established Basque autonomous government faced a major strategic challenge related to the dismantling of traditional industries subject to open international competition. Economic confidence was restored during the mid-1990s with the autonomous government's focus on modernization, R+D specialization, and quality tourism, backed by credit from local savings banks. The territory confirmed its status as an attractive tourist destination through cross-border synergies between the French and Spanish sides of the Basque Country. The Basque region has seen significant developments in governance and language preservation. In January 2017, a common administrative institution was established in the French Basque Country, marking a historic milestone. Meanwhile, many powers are still being transferred to regional authorities. Historically, the Basque people have maintained their distinct culture and language despite influences from other regions. The extinct Aquitanian language should not be confused with Gascon, which has been spoken in the region since the Middle Ages. Recent genetic studies have shed light on the origins of the Basque people. Research suggests that they are a blend of early Iberian farmers and local hunters who settled in the region thousands of years ago. In terms of governance, the Basque Autonomous Community has its own institutions, including the Basque Municipal Community, which was established in 2017. The text also touches on the history and culture of the Basque people, including their language, customs, and traditions. It mentions various events and celebrations throughout the years, such as pro-peace rallies and festivals to support ikastolas (Basque-language schools). The period between 1718 and the present day has seen significant events in Basque history, as documented by various historians and sources. In 1718, a major conflict known as the Matxinada de 1718 took place. The word "terrorism" was also coined during this time. The French conquest of the Pyrenees led to the establishment of a unified Basque state under Napoleon's rule, but this was short-lived. The Spanish government responded by revoking the foralism (autonomy) granted to the Basques in 1808. In the mid-19th century, the Gamazada movement emerged as a response to the liberalization policies implemented by Ferdinand VII. This movement advocated for greater autonomy and self-governance for the Basque region. During the Spanish Civil War, the Basque Country was a key battleground, with both sides experiencing significant losses. After the war, many Basques fled to France and other countries in search of safety. In recent years, there have been efforts to recognize and promote the Basque language and culture, including the establishment of the Abian da Euskal Elkargoa (Basque Community) in 2017. Sources: * Urzainqui et al. (2013) * Collins (1990) * Campbell (1987) * Kamen (2001) * Matxinada de 1718 (Auñamendi Entziklopedia) * Watson (2003) Note: I've removed the references to specific pages and sections, as well as some of the extraneous information. The paraphrased text provides a general overview of the events mentioned in the original text. Kamen's book "Philip V of Spain: The King who Reigned Twice" (2001) provides an insight into Spanish history. Kurlansky's work "Basque History Of The World" (2011) explores the history of the Basques. Larrea and Bonnassie's publication "La Navarre du IVe au XIIe siècle: peuplement et société" (1998) focuses on Navarre's population and society from the 4th to the 12th century. Lewis' book "The Development of Southern French and Catalan Society, 718–1050" (1965) examines societal development in southern France and Catalonia during that period. López-Morell's work "Rothschild; Una historia de poder e influencia en España" (2015) delves into the power and influence of the Rothschild family in Spain. Oroz Arizcuren's article "Miscelania Hispánica" (1990) discusses various aspects of Hispanic culture, language, and writing. Preston's book "The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain" (2013) sheds light on the Holocaust in Spain during the 20th century. Portilla's publication "Una Ruta Europea; Por Álava, a Compostela; Del Paso de San Adrián, al Ebro" (1991) describes a European route from Álava to Compostela and along the Ebro river. Sorauren's book "Historia de Navarre, el Estado Vasco" (2nd ed., 1998) provides an overview of Navarre's history and the Basque state. Urzainqui and Olaizola's work "La Navarra Marítima" (1998) focuses on the maritime aspects of Navarre. The Center for Basque Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno, offers a range of resources, including an encyclopedia and brief history of Basque whaling.

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